

Accountability Statement 2023 to 2024

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1. Purpose

Our purpose is to enhance economic prosperity that supports the regeneration of Wirral and the wider Liverpool City Region, through creating and providing high quality, work related education and skills. To achieve this, we provide an ambitious, inclusive, vocational curriculum that reflects local and regional employment needs, designed to support the most disadvantaged people within our community. To guide this, governors and leaders at Wirral Met College have created a Strategic Plan, organised into three strategic themes, each with a series of strategic objectives, set out in figure 1 below: Fig 1 – Strategic Plan: NB Current plan covers the period 2021 to 2024 and is underpinned by an annual business plan.

College Objectives 2021 - 2024

Theme 1 - Ensure our College's offer drives ambition and meets local needs, by:

- 1.1 Developing and delivering an employer-led curriculum that supports the regeneration of Liverpool City Region.
- 1.2 Ensuring our curriculum inspires ambition and supports the varied needs of students.
- 1.3 Attracting and developing a highly qualified workforce that reflects our values and is committed to delivering our vision and mission.
- 1.4 Building and developing partnerships that drive innovation and enhance the experience and quality of learning.

Theme 2 - Ensure we set, meet and continuously improve the quality of teaching and learning, by:

- 2.1 Providing relevant, high quality, work related teaching, learning and assessment.
- 2.2 Setting and meeting business goals that achieve high quality performance within a local, regional and national context.
- 2.3 Creating and improving the opportunities of vulnerable and under-represented groups to improve inclusion and eradicate performance gaps.

Theme 3 - Ensure we provide excellent value for money to deliver efficient, effective financial and social value, by:

- 3.1 Embracing opportunities to optimise public and other funding streams that provide good value.
- 3.2 Creating and maintaining an efficient, high quality estate and resources that inspire and support learning.
- 3.3 Actively embracing ways of developing sustainable, green energy and reducing carbon footprint.
- 3.4 Working to achieve and maintain outstanding financial health and viability.

An Operating Business Plan monitors these strategic objectives termly and reviews them annually, to ensure that the college's focus and curriculum content reviews and changing needs meet our purpose. Since the last strategic review and in line with the statutory duties and accountability required to operate within the public sector, the college has:

- Worked with all FE colleges in the Liverpool City Region to develop a response to the Skills Development Fund requirements, to develop sustainable, green skills across a range of areas to include sustainable modular buildings; electric vehicles and infrastructure; hydrogen power. Wirral Met College is the lead college in delivering this collaborative initiative.
- Worked in support of St Helen's Chamber of Commerce and with the local, Wirral Chamber of Commerce as they develop the Local Skills Improvement Plan.
- Worked with hundreds of employers in reviewing, designing and delivering a curriculum to meet the needs of local employers, including developing bespoke

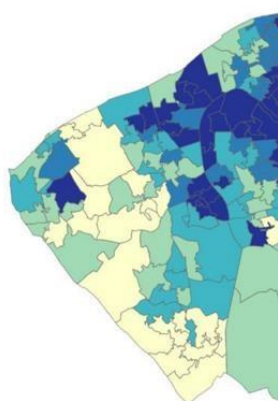
‘passports to skills’ programmes identified by key employers responsible for the regeneration of Wirral Waters.

To ensure the curriculum is fit for purpose, the college works with employers in every sector it operates within to define the core skills, knowledge and behaviours required to fit students with the learning and skills that meet employer needs. The curriculum model is designed to reflect employer needs and meet the needs of the local community, detailed in section 2.

2. Context and Place

Figure 2 – Wirral Borough, highlighting deprivation by ward.

Deprivation quintile and Local Super Output Areas (IMD 2019 by quintile)



Note: The darkest blue areas show the poorest areas. This is where the college has located all of its campuses.

The Estates Strategy was completed in 2021, to locate the college's provision in the areas of most need, linked to community needs.

2.1 Socio-economic characteristics and geographical area:

Wirral is the 77th (out of 317) most deprived boroughs in the country, with the saturation of poverty based in the East of our community where Wirral Met College is located. With a population of 321,000, the impact of the borough's East / West divide is profound, with East residents showing a borough attainment gap at year 11 of 17.1pp. Six wards are amongst the poorest in the Country with 33.3% of children in Birkenhead and Tranmere (where four of the college's campus are based) are classed as being from extremely low-income households and have a difference of almost 11 years life expectancy, relative to West Wirral. Averages for considering demographic needs are therefore not helpful for Wirral and we determine local needs at the level of ward, to plan an inclusive, relevant curriculum. Wirral schools include grammar, faith, private, local authority mainstream, special and academy schools with many having small 6th forms. A selective 6th Form College that is part of a Multi Academy Trust, provides A Levels and we work collaboratively with them and the Local Authority's Lifelong Learning Team, to provide strategic coherence for the borough's academic and vocational learning pathways.

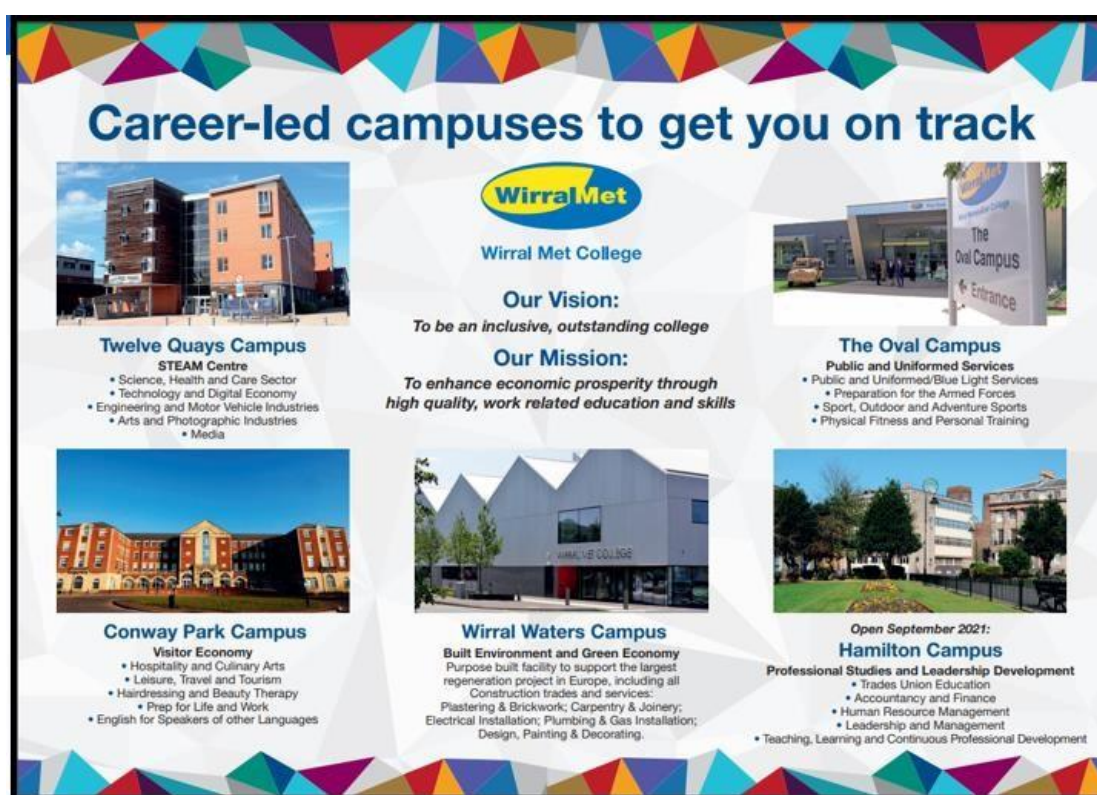
In Wirral 16.8% of children have identified learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) which is above the 14.6% national average. A significant proportion of our enrolments for young people (56%) and

adults (27%) identified LDD which required support for their Special Educational Needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Our curriculum supports dedicated provision for moderate and complex learning needs and we are the largest provider for students who have an Education, Health and Care Plan, with bespoke support provided in all curriculum sectors, at all levels, from milestone learning to higher education. Wirral has over double the national average population of children looked after and we are the largest single provider for 16-18s, children looked after and those with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) in Wirral. Wirral's Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups represent 5% of the borough community, whilst 22% of our enrolments are BAME, which includes a high proportion of refugees and asylum seekers.

2.2 Campus and delivery locations.

In 2021, the College completed delivery of a ten-year Estates Strategy. This created five, career-based campuses that are now located in the heart of the community where the need for skills is most acute. Figure 3, shows the campuses and their locations.

Figure 3 – Five, Career-led campuses.

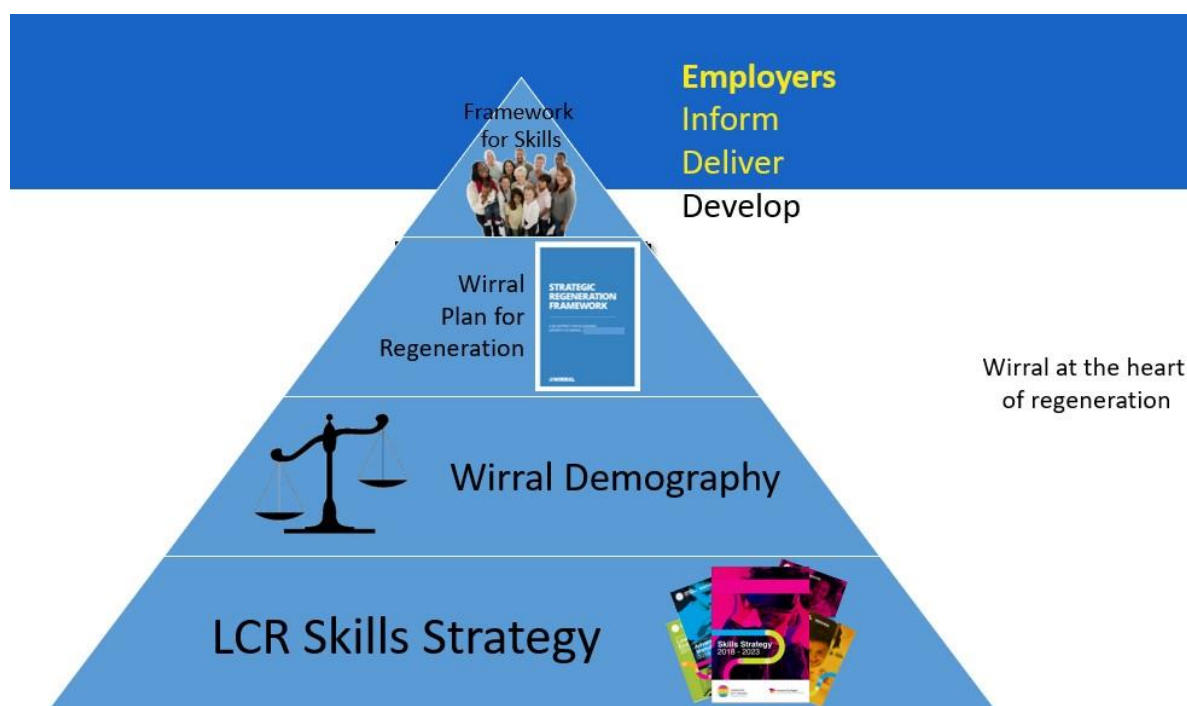


Understanding the needs of employers combines detailed, annually reviewed, analysis together with real time information provided through strong employer partnerships. By combining this with placing the college's campuses in the areas of higher economic need, this model acts as a catalyst to engaging the most deprived and vulnerable in our community. As a result of this, over the last 11 years, students from areas of high deprivation have increased significantly from around 50% to over 66%. Repositioning the estate to achieve this, was generously supported by Government capital funding,

the Combined Authority and championed and supported by the Local Authority who saw the college as a catalyst to address needs and enable local regeneration. The next section outlines the approach and rigour with which the systems approach to identifying and maintaining relevant needs analysis, is carried out.

3. Approach to developing the annual Accountability Statement.

Although the Accountability Statement is a new requirement since the re-designation of FE Colleges into the Public Sector, in November 2022, the requirement to meet the needs of employers and the local community is not. In this respect, the college has an annual review process that reviews need and evaluates the curriculum and supporting offer to ensure they are met. Strategic theme 1 (1.1-1.4) in figure 1, (page 1) sets out the outcomes required to achieve that, which are reviewed annually. This information is established in a number of levels, that are best summarised in figure 4, below.



4. Contributing to National, Regional and Local Needs

4.1 Meeting local and regional EMPLOYER needs

The base line (needs analysis – data) information in figure 4, reviews the economic development needs of the Liverpool City Region. This is reviewed by the Combined Authority (CA) and focuses around specific sectors, for example in Wirral, Wirral Waters is a significant regeneration area for construction. This also includes City Region initiatives such as Freeport and considers cross-cutting themes such as green and sustainable energy. This is now supplemented by the LSIP that independently to the CA, has been working with employers to determine needs. The college's curriculum and base campuses to house specific sector needs, reflect this and whilst it would not be sensible to replicate this within the body of this document, access to the base data and analysis are available. They are reviewed annually at a college level and broken down into sector specific details

that are shared with each curriculum team. It is this process that forms the basis of curriculum planning and in essence, checks that the college's curriculum meets local and regional needs.

4.2 Meeting national EDUCATION AND SKILLS needs.

The Strategic Plan, detailed in section 1, specifies the character, mission and key priorities of the college. This is underpinning by a curriculum that meets local needs, particularly within a devolved mayoral authority, centrally driven initiatives are also considered to ensure the college is playing a key role in delivery of such initiatives. They will continue to feature the roll out of the new T Levels and the college's current position on this is set out in figure 5, below.

Figure 5, 22/23 T-Level delivery

T Level programme:	Learners
T Level in Digital Support Services Level 3	5
T Level in Education and Childcare	7
T Level in Onsite Construction - Carpentry & Joinery	8
T Level transition programme in Construction	4
T Level Transition Programme in Digital	1
T level Transition Programme in Early Years Practitioner	6
Total	31

23/24 Planned T-Level delivery

T Level programme:	Target
T Level in Health	16
T Level Transition Programme – Health	32
T Level in Education and Childcare	21
T level Transition Programme in Early Years Practitioner	16
T Level in Onsite Construction - Carpentry & Joinery	21
T Level transition programme in Construction	12
T Level Building Services Engineering for Construction	12
T Level in Digital Support Services Level 3	5
T Level Transition Programme in Digital	12
T Level in Digital Production, Design and Development	12

T Level - Engineering, Manufacturing, Processing and Control	10
T Level Transition Programme - Engineering, Manufacturing, Processing and Control	10
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The college has and will continue to engage with the many other national initiatives to meet national priorities but these do not determine need, so much as stimulate uptake of supply and in this regard figure 6 shows the initiatives planned to continue into 2023/24.

Figure 6, Initiatives to meet national and regional priorities

Initiative	Planned Learners
Multiply	125
Test and Learn	150
National Skills Fund	100

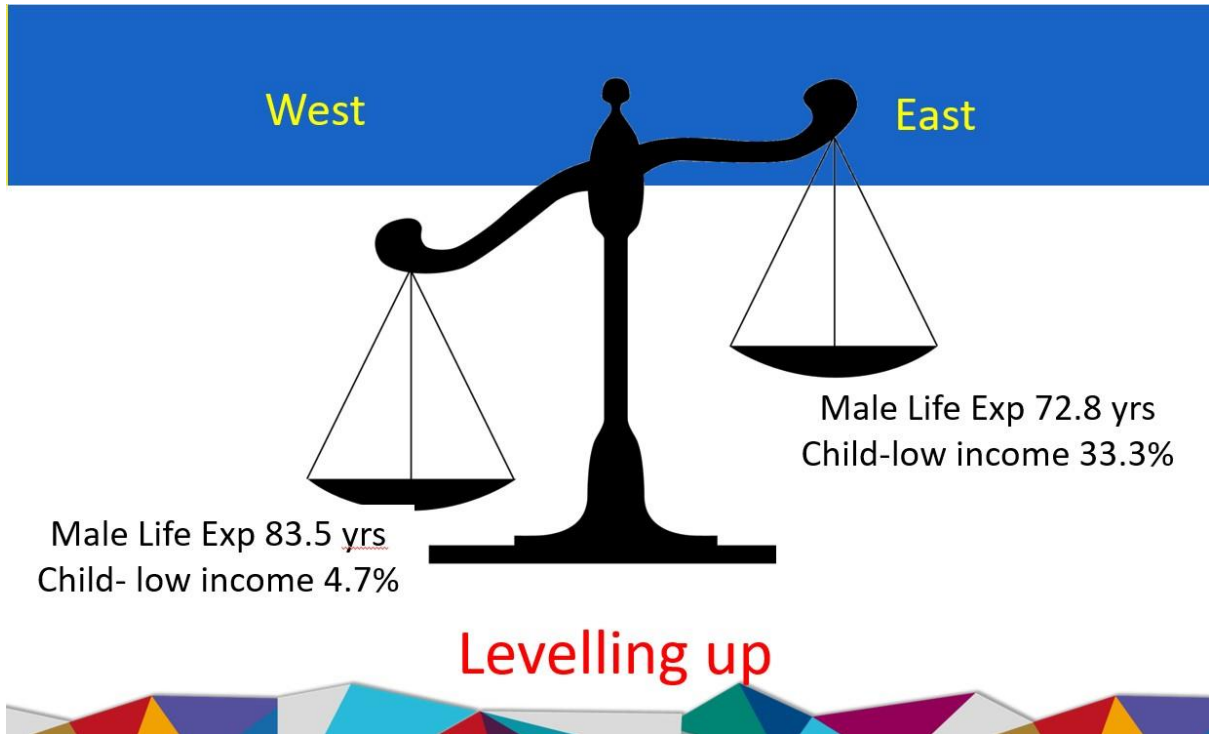
4.3 Meeting Regional EMPLOYER Needs

In relation to the LSIP, the Association of Liverpool City Region Colleges, working collaboratively, are delivering a Skills Development Plan as part of the complementary Skills Development Fund (SDF). This focuses upon different aspects of green and sustainable energy to support the City Region's objective to be net carbon zero by 2024 or earlier. The information provided by LSIP will feature in the Skills Strategy for LCR and informs any gaps that exist or are anticipated. In this regard, the college has strong, working partnerships with hundreds of employers who both inform design and in some cases support delivery of the curriculum. This is informed through working relationships that links employers from each sector to the curriculum specialists responsible for the design and implementation of the skills, knowledge and behaviours required to operate within those sectors. There is an extensive number of employers engaged in this regard and a hyperlink is available in Section 6.3, to confirm the key employers engaged in this process. In relation to responding to the needs of the LSIP, the college has provision in all of the priority areas and in 2021, opened a Centre for Professional Development to build the capacity of leadership and management within the region.

4.4 Meeting community needs – serving our demography.

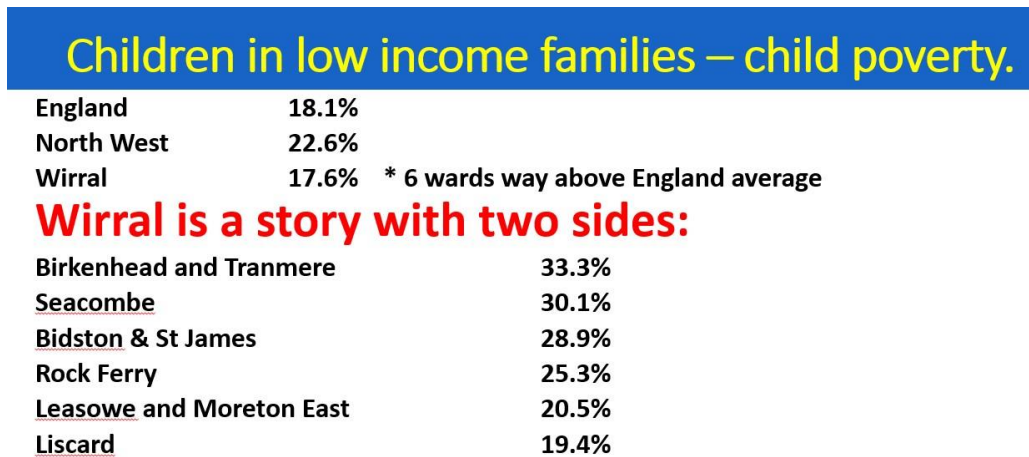
Serving the demographic profile of Wirral and Liverpool City Region, requires a detailed analysis and understanding of the needs of our population. In this regard, the Local Authority provides a Wirral Intelligence Service that defines a range of key indicators. The college reviews these at least annually, to inform curriculum planning and also works with large employers, such as the University Teaching Hospital and Magenta, largest social landlord, to interpret the information in order to create an offer that targets need. The 'East/West' contrasts detailed in section 2, can best be summarised in figure 7.

Figure 7 – the stark inequalities within Wirral, contrasting the East and West of the borough.



This diagram epitomises the need for the national initiative linked to ‘levelling up’. It shows that in West Wirral, a baby boy born today in our local hospital, is expected to live on average almost 11 years longer than one born who lives in East Wirral; Also contrast that in West Wirral, child poverty is 4.7% (all England average 18.1%); The Birkenhead and Tranmere Ward, where 4 of the College’s Campuses are based, has a child poverty index of 33.3% and the following surrounding wards, also have some of the highest child poverty indicators nationally, see figure 8.

Figure 8 – College’s estate set in the heart of the most deprived wards.



The detailed analysis, by ward and neighbourhood, is available through hyperlinks but figures 7 and 8 summarise the challenges faced to engage the most vulnerable in our community and turn need into demand.

4.5 Local intelligence to supplement data

The final aspects of ensuring we have a clear picture of need, the final two sections of the pyramid in Figure 4 are the partnerships with employers, the Local Authority and the Combined Authority in terms of plans to regenerate the area. Wirral Waters was the largest planning application in Europe, a 30-year plan to completely transform the area. At the time this was submitted the college committed to the first new building on the site, which became a UK Enterprise Zone, namely the Construction Campus. The college has developed mature, strategic partnerships with key developers, Local and Combined Authorities, such that it contributes to the development of the area, hosting events to support and attract inward investment. This process is constant and forms part of the college's relationships with employers to inform skills needs and developments. The intelligence gained through such partnerships would not become data for some years and this provides vital, current and relevant information that informs the design and delivery of learning to deliver the vision. To create a curriculum that maps against the needs of the community, the college had to build a front end to the curriculum that provides access points from Entry / Level 1 and to define the milestones and pathways in each sector, to ensure that those starting from a low level of attainment can see the potential as a basis for setting an ambitious pathway for every learner. When poverty of aspiration is a factor, particularly in third generation households, ambition and pathways to achieve it are crucial.

4.6 Key Stakeholders.

Civic organisations - Paragraphs 4.1-4.6 detail how the many different stakeholders have a role in informing and supporting the development of a relevant curriculum. The college works closely with the Local Authority (Wirral Borough Council) in relation to both supporting and enabling regeneration, through skills. The college is leading a Town's Fund initiative in relation to creating a place-based curriculum to reflect community needs, this is due to be fully established in 2023/24. As a Mayoral Combined Authority, the college works closely with the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Combined Authority (MCA) at all stages of design and delivery, to provide a local, place based curriculum that meets the needs of our City Region. This is kept under constant review and the college enjoys a positive working relationship with the skills team in the MCA and the Policy Team, in this respect, which the college works with as key stakeholders. In addition, the college has close links with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), the local Chamber of Commerce and St Helen's Chamber of Commerce, who lead LSIP for the region.

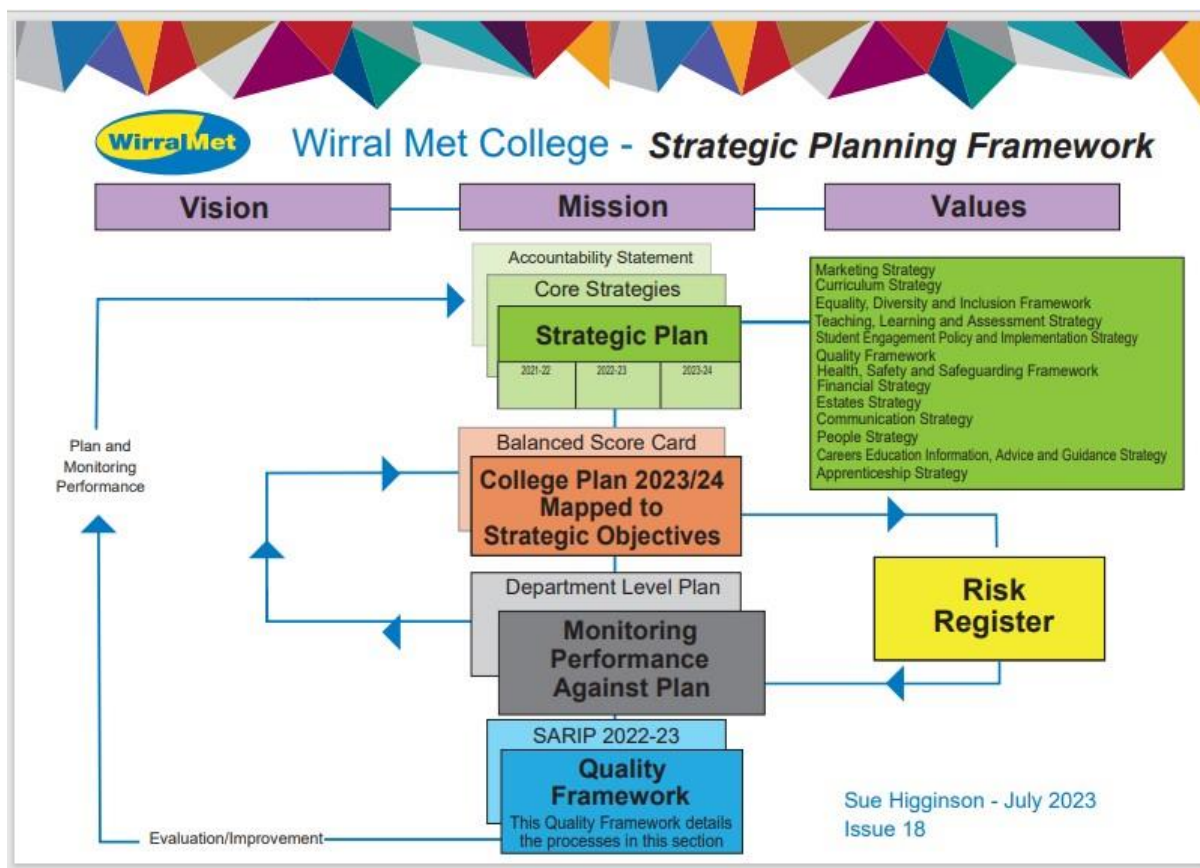
Other providers - The college is a member of the Association of Liverpool City Region Colleges, working collaboratively with all FE Colleges in LCR and leads the Skills Development Fund bid. In addition to this infrastructure of strategic partnerships, the college works with hundreds of employers, each specifically linked to the sector areas our curriculum reflects. The college has a positive relationship with the local Sixth Form College (SFC), part of an Academy Trust, to develop a complementary curriculum that serves borough needs with the SFC delivering

A Levels and the College delivering vocational pathways. A similar partnership approach exists with the Local Authority's Lifelong Learning (AEB) provision, where they provide basic feeder programmes and the college's community provision creates progression pathways.

4.7 Summary of contribution to national, regional and local priorities.

This document refers to the college’s Strategic Plan which defines the three strategic themes of meeting needs, providing quality provision and ensuring a financially stable and viable organisation that offers value for money. It is not intended to duplicate this, within this document, but in line with the requirements of the Accountability Statement, the next section provides a brief summary of the key components of provision and how they meet National, regional and local priorities. Strategic focus, implementation and intent is managed through the college’s planning framework which, in summary, is detailed in figure 9, below:

Figure 9 – The planning Framework.



This diagram provides a summary overview that demonstrates how the planning cycle works within Wirral Met College. This document will become part of the College’s Plan for 2023/24 and the next section summarises how our offer will meet needs which is the essence of strategic priority theme 1, within the Strategic Plan. This section highlights the curriculum model, to define both existing and new planned provision.


2023/24 – Curriculum Plan Objectives	How this meets needs	Target Numbers.
Objective 1 – To roll out a suite of T Level programmes.	Creating an alternative to A Levels, by providing Level 3 technical qualifications that support National priorities for T Levels and reflect local needs in relation to area specific skill requirements.	T Levels for 2023/24 include: Volume of starts: 116 Value of Provision: £683,175
Objective 2 – to continue to build apprenticeship starts in all sectors, assisting the build back, post pandemic and economic challenges, of the Visitor Economy, Health and Applied Medical Services and Construction. Introduce Hairdressing Apprenticeships to respond to gaps identified by the Local Authority.	This will support National priorities to grow apprenticeships whilst also supporting regional and local building back, to support economic recovery.	Planned volume value £1,800,000 Volume planned in learning: 750 Volume new starts: 334
Objective 3 – continue to build adult progression to Level 3 and into HE to meet the skills gap needs of the Health and Life Sciences sector. Work with our University partners to develop progression from Access to HE to address local shortages of nursing staff.	Supports National priorities for levelling up by engaging adults who return to learn through pre-access and access provision. Supports local shortages of nursing staff within the University Teaching Hospitals.	Value of Adult Education Budget: £ 4,098,384 Value of Learner Loans £ £784,928 Value of Level 3 provision £ 420,000 Volumes of Adult Level 3 provision 220
Objective 4 – Deliver the Strategic Development Fund provision as a College and lead the project on behalf of the Liverpool City Region Colleges, to implement sustainable technologies across the range of projects in scope of this.	Supports National priorities for reducing carbon emissions and the Liverpool City Region’s target to be net carbon zero by 2040 or earlier.	Value of SDF (received in 22/23) £ 500,000

<p>Objective 5 – Increase numbers into Vocational Study Programmes to continue to support years 12/13 development in Wirral and meet demographic demands whilst reducing NEET.</p>	<p>Meets local needs to deliver a full programme of Study Programmes, leading to pathways to employment.</p>	<p>Contract Value 2023/24 £9,494,614 Volumes required 2275 This excludes the T Level Provision (see above)</p>
<p>Objective 6 – continue to deliver growth in adult learning, linked to the key priorities agreed with the Combined Mayoral Authority. Delivering £1m more than core contract in 2022/23</p>	<p>Agree and deliver growth of adult provision, negotiating needs and profile with the MCA, to secure the £500K growth consolidated into the 2023/24 contract and a further £500K growth that will require a proposal for in year growth.</p>	<p>Total Contract Value LCR AEB £3,894,483 Expected additional growth outside Contract £500,000</p>
<p>Objective 7 – Complete the Town’s Fund initiative to create a community hub and 8 community spokes across Wirral, to deliver education and training to the most vulnerable in our community.</p>	<p>Meets regional needs to engage vulnerable adults and local needs to create and deliver a place-based curriculum, designed by the community groups that form part of the project.</p>	<p>Achieve:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community Hub, within Hamilton Campus 2. Spoke – Spider Project. 3. Spoke - Tomorrow’s Women 4. Spoke – Probation Service. 5. Spoke – Wirral Change. 6. Spoke – Forum Housing. 7. Spoke - Care Leavers Hub. 8. Spoke – Birkenhead Library.

<p>Objective 8 – ensure curriculum reflects the requirements of LSIP, where possible, to include modular development and delivery to meet the CPD requirements of employers to upskill the existing workforce/</p>	<p>This meets regional needs of LSIP which is a dynamic position, working with Chambers of Commerce to continuously scan and respond to employer needs. At time of writing it is unclear from LSIP whether modular curriculum will be permitted and funded but it is consistently requested by employers. Subject to this, the college will develop provision to reflect this need.</p>	<p>Termly reviews to evaluate where we are meeting needs, whether there are any gaps and plans to address, if this is the case.</p>
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5. Corporation Statement and accessibility of Statement.

We are committed to complying with our duty under the new Section 52B of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, to review provision in relation to local needs, as detailed in the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill 2022. We will hold a formal review at least every three years to identify how well we are meeting local needs associated with progression into suitable employment. We will publish a report on our website, following this review and factor in any actions arising from it into the Accountability Agreement.



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Tim Kelly, Chair of Governors.

Dated: 14 July 2023



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Sue Higginson, Principal and CEO

Dated: 14 July 2023

6. Supporting Documentation

- 6.1 LSIP, Liverpool City Region.
- 6.2 Wirral Borough, Demographic analysis.
- 6.3 Employer and Stakeholder Links – for each of our curriculum sectors.
- 6.4 Curriculum Plan 2023/24