City of Liverpool College - Accountability Statement & Plan

1. Mission & Purpose

The City of Liverpool College's mission is to support the growth of Liverpool and the wider city region by developing talent from all social and economic backgrounds and unlocking opportunities for all.

The City of Liverpool College offers a diverse curriculum that ranges from GCSEs and A-levels to higher technical vocational skills and apprenticeships that reflect the industrial growth priorities of the Liverpool City Region. As an anchor institution, the College specialises in delivering training and skills for higher level technical occupations as well as using its strong relationships with business to recruit students into higher paid and higher skilled jobs. As part of this commitment, the College is passionate about lifetime skills and workforce development by attracting funding and providing responsive training solutions.

The College is driven by a strong sense of civic leadership and responsibility. Its strategic plan for 2021 - 2025 sets out 5 main goals and enabling priorities:

- **Strategic Goal – World-class Skills for Business:** Operating as the 'College for Business', with a focus on current need and industry innovations and supporting the post-pandemic recovery and economic growth across the City Region.
- **Strategic Goal – Delivering an Outstanding Student Experience:** Tailoring our approach to the needs of leaners, our city, and our communities as part of a dynamic partnership with all three.
- **Strategic Goal – Developing Talent for Sustainable Employment:** Upskilling and generating the talent of the future through a focus on careers not courses.
- **Strategic Enabler – Turing Disadvantage into Advantage:** Recognising our student cohort and delivering an experience tailored to their needs, taking a student-centred approach.
- **Strategic Enabler – Systems thinking by critical thinkers:** Changing culture across the College from top to bottom to realise an impact that goes beyond individual actions as a crucial part of the City Region's education and skills system.

Within this framework, the College has sought to develop its approach to employer engagement in terms of the processes it uses to ensure technical training meets industry need, and so that the talent it develops is ready for work. In achieving this, the College has established a range of interventions for its accountability plan that will support the implementation of its own strategic priorities, as well as those of the City Region's Combined Authority and the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP).

2. Context and Place

The College is recognised as an important anchor institution for training and skills provision across Liverpool and the wider City Region. It provides education and training for over 10,000 learners across 5 campuses covering the arts and creative industries, construction and engineering, academic studies, sport sciences and public services, digital technologies, hospitality, and health. As the region's largest FE College, it provides a substantial talent pool for the City Region's industries via its wide-ranging training programmes for 16 -18-year-old learners, adults, apprentices, and those from hard-to-reach backgrounds.

While the College is mainly focussed on education and training delivery for the residents of Liverpool City, its range of facilities, teaching expertise and city centre location helps it attract learners from across all six local authority areas of the City Region – comprising Sefton, Liverpool, St Helens, Knowsley, Wirral, and Halton. As a result of the significance of the College to the region's social and economic wellbeing, it is represented on key strategic boards including the City Region's LEP, Chamber of Commerce, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) and the Liverpool Business Improvement District. Such integration allows direct input into the region's strategic plans including the LCRCA Plan for Prosperity as well as enabling it to take a proactive role in shaping the region's skills strategy and LSIP.
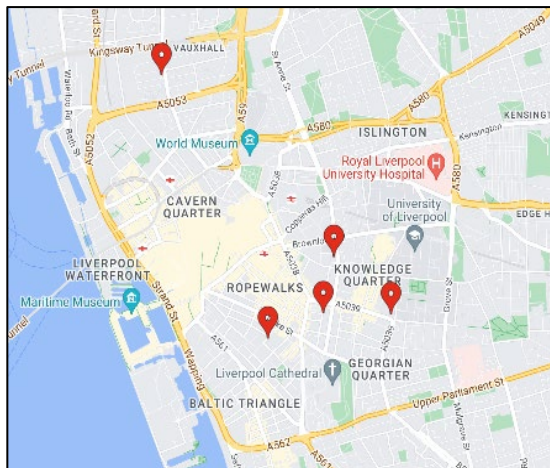
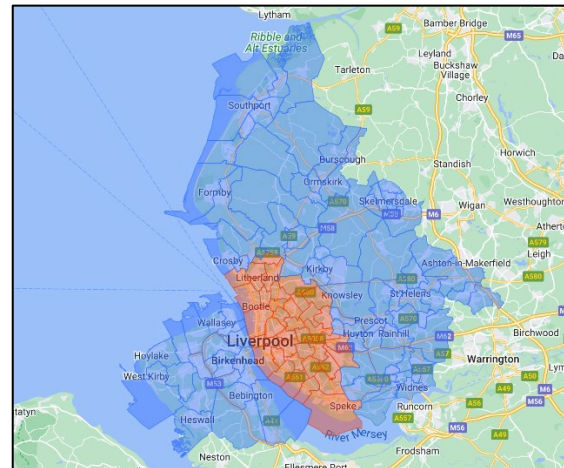Image 1: Map showing The City of Liverpool College's 5 campus locations.

Image 2: Map showing Liverpool City Region and the College's main recruitment areas in Red, and wider recruitment areas in Blue.

Business and Economic Profile - Liverpool City Region has a combined population of approximately c.1.6 million, c.1 million of whom are of working age.

- Overall, the Liverpool City Region produces £33bn of GVA annually (2% of national GVA) with an unemployment rate of 3.9% of its total working population.
- Liverpool is the largest economic centre of the City Region, contributing 39% of jobs and 40% of GVA. It is the commercial, cultural and transport hub of the region, with a strong public sector, thriving visitor economy, and growing ICT and professional sectors.
- There are approximately 40,000 businesses operating in the City Region providing nearly 741,000 jobs.
- Per head of population, the City Region's economy produces around £21,500 of GVA, which compares to around £30,000 nationally. This represents a 29% shortfall and reflects the lower levels of prosperity across the area.
- Based on 2019 ONS data, 88% of businesses operating in the City Region are classed as micro (0-9 employees), 10% are small (10-49 employees) and 2% are medium sized (49 - 250 employees). There are 185 businesses operating in the City Region that have over 250 employees.
- The City Region's overall productivity is 92% of the national rate.

Current employment is focussed on Health, Manufacturing (predominantly automotive and chemicals), Financial Services, Visitor Economy, Creative and Digital/Technology Industries, Construction and Port & Logistics. Emerging clusters include Health Innovation and Life Science, Advanced Manufacturing and the significant opportunities for business growth and inward investment resulting from the City Region's Free Port designation.

Social and Education Profiles – Liverpool and the wider City Region faces deep rooted and structural challenges associated with social deprivation and mobility. Some of the key considerations are:

- Residents are still more likely to be economically inactive (24%), and less likely to be in employment (73%), compared to the rest of the country, with national rates standing at 21% and 76% respectively. These gaps are longstanding and driven by a range of complex factors including poor health and wellbeing, poor skills, and a high prevalence of deprivation.
- There are a high proportion of residents with no qualifications, 9% compared to 6% nationally, and a low proportion of residents with at least degree-level qualifications, 38% compared to 43% nationally.
- Education levels are lower than national averages with 39.4% educated to NVQ Level 4 or higher compared to the national average of 43.6%.
- The educational performance of young people continues to be a concern with:

- 20% of learners joining the College do not have either English or Maths at Level 2.
- The proportion of pupils at Key Stage 4 achieving Grade 5+ (Inc English and Maths) is 5% lower in the City Region than across England.
- Those with low or no qualifications are more likely to be economically inactive, with 6% of 16- and 17-year-olds classified at Not in Education or Employment (NEET).

Hyperlinks to all evidence and reference documents can found in Section 6.

3. Approach to Developing the Accountability Statement

Fit with Regional Priorities

The College's strategic plan (2021 - 2025) is framed by the LCRCA Plan for Prosperity's strategic priorities for building an inclusive economy, one that is alive to the climate emergency and is well placed to attract inward investment. Its goals focus on delivering world class skills for business that support the growth and competitiveness of the region's economy as well as improving workforce productivity and enhancing social mobility. In facilitating this, it places equal emphasis on tailoring training provision to the needs of learners so that it is relevant to careers and opportunities for progression, helping the area differentiate itself as a place to live, work and learn.

The College's training provision encompasses the City Region's seven key priority growth sectors with wide ranging technical and vocational training being delivered at levels 2 and 3. This is supplemented by work-ready training for those furthest from education as well as the specialised and industry specific training at level 4 and 5 to support progression into management and higher technical occupations.

In developing the Accountability Plan, the College has sought to establish a range of priorities and outcomes that link directly to its longer-term strategic ambition, while enabling a tailored programme of measurable interventions to be delivered over the next academic year (2023/24). The approach also acknowledges the importance of clean growth and digitalisation in transforming the region into a sustainable, inclusive, and high performing economy. The College's plans therefore recognise the significant influence these innovations will have in determining training provision for entry level jobs, those seeking career change or progression, and reskilling of the region's existing workforce.

Consultation & Engagement

The College adopts a comprehensive approach to consultation through its existing relationships with over 1000 employers, the use of industry insight (accessed through its regional strategic partnerships and employer surveys) and intelligence gathered through its employer led Industry Panels. The process is effective in aligning industry-specific relationships with the relevant school/faculty as well as informing wide ranging interventions including curriculum design; careers, information, advice & guidance (CIAG); student enrichment and the design of the College's T-level and apprenticeship programmes. The College is also using the insight and consultation framework to develop a range of industry specific Bootcamp training initiatives in conjunction with the LCRCA, as well as supporting the evidence base for determining the region's Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF) priorities.

At regional level, the College's Industry Panels feed directly into the LSIPs delivery structures (pending the final report) and combines national/regional industry bodies/institutes, with a representative mix of employers and our academic leads to ensure the expertise exists to inform occupational skills needs. The impact of these engagements is measured against a range of factors including curriculum development, investment secured to enhance the College's facilities and teaching, learning and assessment.

Establishing Our Priorities

Along with the findings of the region's draft LSIP, the College has used its continual process of consultation and engagement to establish a rich evidence base from which to determine its priorities for the Accountability Plan (see section 4). The key considerations for which are as follows:

- The increased emphasis employers are placing on FE to develop their talent pipelines as an alternative to graduate recruitment - specifically attainment of functional qualifications at level 2 (English and Maths) by all College learners as a pathway to higher level vocational training and progression into higher paid technical occupations.

- The strategic growth of Level 3+ qualifications to fill higher technical occupations experiencing skills shortages and high levels of replacement demand - particularly engineering, construction, health and social care and professional services. Combined with the range of employer facing training programmes, the College offers (T-levels, Apprenticeships, Bootcamps etc), there is an opportunity to establish a stronger relationship with industry to ensure a seamless access to talent.

- Broadening the profile and understanding of the range of funded training programmes available to employers for recruitment and ongoing workforce development. These include:
  - Raising awareness of the breadth of the College's apprenticeship offer and positioning advanced and higher-level apprenticeships as an effective approach for CPD.
  - Positioning T-levels with employers as a progression route to higher technical occupations and training across the City Region's industrial sectors.
  - Evolving the College's approach for co-designing industry Bootcamps with employers through modular and flexible delivery programmes - specifically in developing pre-employment skills and upskilling/reskilling of their existing workforce.
  - Strengthening the design of AEB-funded programmes to be more reactive to short term employer training needs and able to support progression into higher qualifications and employment opportunities.

- Enhancing the employability and 'work readiness' of our younger learners through (and not limited to) training in customer care, computer literacy, interpersonal skills, communication, and entrepreneurship as a supplement to their technical training.

- Ensuring all learners are equipped with the core digital skills required across all industries to enhance the region's economic competitiveness and productivity, as well as providing the pathway for specialisation in digitally intensive industries including the region's Advanced Manufacturing, Data, Science and Technology, Medical and Creative clusters.

- Building training facilities and innovation across green technologies to help meet the region's Net Zero targets through clean and renewable sources of energy. This will also include working alongside traditional industries including manufacturing and haulage to support their own decarbonisation plans. Specific opportunities will include new forms of renewable energy including hydrogen power, energy storage and efficiency, and local energy networks.

- Working alongside the region's emerging industries and transformation initiatives including LCR Freeport (Port, Transport & Logistics) and LCR Connect (Telecommunications) to deliver modular and industry-specific training for entry level and technical occupations. Specific skills interventions will also be needed for the local rail industry to support the introduction of new rolling stock across the Merseyrail network and regional infrastructure/investment programmes including Northern Powerhouse Rail/HS3.

- Further strengthening our evidence base through the smarter use of the College's sources of labour market intelligence to identify industry-specific occupational shortages and priorities.

- Strengthening linkages to the City Region's universities and structuring pathways into HE and professional qualifications that the College is unable to deliver.

Key Stakeholders

The City of Liverpool College works in a highly collaborative manner with its network of partners for the benefit of our communities and stakeholders. This has remained a core strength of the College in formulating its strategic plan and the broader engagement work it undertakes to inform its annual curriculum and wider training provision. The College will continue to work closely with a range of key stakeholders to achieve its strategic objectives. These include:

- Liverpool City Council
- Liverpool City Region Combined Authority
- Liverpool Chamber of Commerce
- Liverpool City Region LEP/Growth Company
- Anchor Employers within each of the City Region's Industrial Sectors
- Business Representative Groups, Networks, and Industry Specific Institutes
- Elected Stakeholders.

Engagement with other providers in the area

The College works closely with the other five FE Colleges in the City Region to support the LCRCA shape skills policy, prioritise the delivery of specialised training according to local need and the delivery of joint funding programmes.

Through the Association of Liverpool City Region Colleges, The City of Liverpool College was part of a proactive collaboration to deliver the Strategic Development Fund (SDF) project that attracted c.£340,000 for capital investment in green technologies. As a group of colleges, the development of facilities, resources and the teaching across the project were centrally planned, maximising efficiency by collaborating to avoid the duplication of provision. There are continuing opportunities for collaboration, including the development of the 'cross college' LCR Freeport Academy, which will deliver skills and training to support the development of the storage, tax and customs site planned as part of the project. The group will also oversee the development of a joint bid for LSIF following approval of the region's LSIP priorities.

The College has a dedicated Schools Liaison team and whilst the Region has a high number of school sixth forms, the College has good relationships with the secondary schools in the area, providing advice and guidance on further education options to over 1000 leaners across the City Region in 2022/2023. Over the same period, the College supported over 153 learners aged 14-16 years, providing transitional support and vocational taster sessions for young people struggling to engage with mainstream education.

The College has excellent links with universities in the City Region, including Liverpool John Moore's University, The University of Liverpool, and Liverpool Hope University. Students on Access to HE and HE courses participate in lectures delivered by university staff, as well as projects set by the universities. The universities support with curriculum and programme design, as well as ensuring learners are appropriately prepared for higher education.

The City of Liverpool College is also working strategically with several independent training providers to ensure that where gaps exist in its own training and skills provision (specifically around HGV, logistics and health) there are practical alternatives capable of meeting employer need. These collaborations are also supporting knowledge transfer back into the College with the intention of improving teaching provision, making the delivery of training more flexible and expanding the College's employer networks.

4. Strategic Aims & Objectives

Aims & Objectives	Contribution towards National, Regional and Local Priorities for Learning and Skills	Interventions and Measures

Objective 1:
 	
To roll out a full programme of sector-specific training designed to enhance the impact of vocational training and support progression into technical and higher technical occupations.
	• Delivery of T-level training programmes as an alternative to A-level for 16-19-year-old learners and option to progress into higher and advanced level apprenticeships. LCR sector focus for 2023/24 is the introduction of 17 T-level Pathways covering Business & Professional Services, Health & Life Sciences, Digital & Technology, Construction, Engineering, Manufacturing, and the Creative Industries.
	
	• To increase apprenticeship starts by expanding and diversifying provision to help:
	  - Address labour shortage in those sectors experiencing high levels of replacement demand – Construction & Engineering.
	  - Develop trailblazer apprenticeships that respond to the training and recruitment needs of the region's emerging sectors – green technologies, digital & creative industries.
	  - Support those sectors rebuilding from the pandemic and impacts of Brexit – Hospitality, Health & Social Care, Business & Professional Services.
	
	• Delivering industry Boot Camps through the development of the College's full-time curriculum into short courses for pre-employment training and professional development. The proposals have been tailored to meet employer need via the College's engagement framework and through market analysis. Subject to approvals, programmes will be delivered via funds devolved to the LCRCA and will fully align with their stated industrial priorities. The indicative Bootcamp programme will focus on:
	  - Providing entry level training and leadership skills for construction services and trades
	  - Enhanced digital skills to support workforce competency and progression in cyber security.
		- Introduce 6 new T-level programmes across Business & Professional Services, Engineering and Health & Life Sciences, whilst increasing the numbers of students on existing programme to double the overall number of starts for 2023/24.
		
		- Continue to grow the successful Engineering and Construction Apprenticeship provision, incorporating the new Low Carbon Heating Technician standard for 2023/24.
		
		- Grow starts in Professional & Business Services, Health & Social Care and Visitor Economy by 50% to contribute to wider City Region Growth Sectors recovery post covid.
		
		- Successfully deliver 3 Boot Camp programmes enabling 40 learners to access employment or achieve career progression, with a particular focus on Engineering and Construction skills to support the City Region's progress to Net Zero.

	- Upskilling and retaining for micro businesses and SMEs trading in the automotive service sector - electric/hybrid vehicles and accreditation through the national TechSafe register. - Logistics and HGV geared to addressing the skills needs required to advance LCR Freeport. - Health/Social Care - helping address the chronic shortages in the industry and delivering higher level training for progression onto management and other health related occupations. - Using Boot Camp recruitment to attract learners and employers into accelerated apprenticeships to further enhance workforce skills.	

Objective 2:
 	
To invest in training facilities that directly support the City Region's targets for Net Zero emissions and digitalisation
	• **Digital** - The City of Liverpool College has invested over £2.5m since 2021 developing its state-of-the-art Digital Academy, providing full time and part time training to Level 3 that ranges from basic computer literacy to coding, network management/maintenance and design technologies.
	
	These provisions align with the City Region's targets for digital skills participation and the transferability of these competences into industry. The College's independent employer research has also evidenced high demand for quality digital skills in Gaming/Content Production, TV & Film Production (technical & craft skills).
	
	• **Green Technologies** - The low carbon sector is estimated to support 140,000 jobs by 2040. The region has experience and existing capabilities within the green energy sector, having already invested in the development of a city-wide low carbon plan through work with employers and other HE providers. The LCR has significant natural capital resources, with the opportunity for creation of green renewable energy through tidal and offshore wind power, as well as extensive plans for district heat networks.
	
	Through a successful bid to SDF, The City of Liverpool College has secured capital investment for enhanced training in electric and hybrid vehicle maintenance, installation of clean energy devices and EV Charging points. This will support the breadth of training offered to learners on related FT/PT courses as well re-skilling for the significant number of micro and SME businesses operating in the region's automotive, construction and engineering sectors.
		- Increase enrolments to the Digital Academy across full time and part time provision by 18% to 550 learners.
		
		- Introduce the Software Development Technician Apprenticeship standard at Level 3.
		
		- Training programmes will be strengthened and developed across green technologies knowledge and skills for students on Building Services and Automotive programmes:
		  o Learners on electrical installation and maintenance courses will develop skills and knowledge of renewable energies, solar panels, and battery storage
		  o Learners studying automotive courses will have access to electric and hybrid vehicles to develop their skills.

Objective 3: Support those furthest from education to gain the entry-level qualifications to enter the workforce and progress into higher technical vocations and study.	• Deliver the Multiply programme (Government initiative to help adults improve numeracy skills) across the region to allow adults to access funded provision of Maths courses up to and including Level 2. The courses will be delivered to those in employment to aid professional progression and those not in employment to strengthen employment opportunities. The City Region has lower levels of maths achievement at Level 2 than those nationally – Multiply will enable parents and carers to support children and young people's maths development at home. • Increase the College's ESOL provision and include additional skills alongside the main provision, such as digital skills, to develop learners' overall skills and employability. • Tailor the delivery of English and maths in all study programmes to the sector-specific content delivered as part of their main qualification, contextualising content and providing transferrable skills that will increase employability. • Ensure all learners are supported to achieve Level 2 whilst studying at the College and can therefore progress onto higher study or into employment.	- Continue to deliver the Multiply programme, increasing number of adult skills learners from 76 in 2022/23 to 323 in 2023/24. - Increase the accessibility of Multiply by including evening and distance learning provision. - Increase the number of ESOL Learners engaged with additional skills programmes from 64 in 2022/23 to 120 in 2023/24 with a cross departmental delivery team combining ESOL and Digital lecturers. - Review of Schemes of Work and Personal Development Programmes for learners to ensure industry specific context is included in each term. - Develop clear interventions and action plans to support learners to complete Level 2 Maths and English. - Review delivery models to provide flexible and accessible training for Adults in Level 2 qualifications.

Objective 4:
 	
Develop a programme of support and enrichment, informed by employer need to strengthen learners'
	• Continue to develop a structured and holistic programme of personal and professional development activities, engaging all learners through:
	  - Personal Development Programme (PDP) - develop confidence and professionalism in learners through the Personal Development Programme strategy.
	  - Study Programmes - continue to design curriculum and learning based on employer feedback (given at Industry Panels) to ensure it includes all the relevant soft skills needed for employment in the specific sector.
		- Adapt the 2022/23 PDP Strategy to include:
		
		  o Key employability and soft skills identified by the LSIP (Details TBC awaiting publishing)
		  o Structured plans to engage employers to deliver Live Brief

soft skills and skills for work.	- Work Experience - ensuring that all learners receive support to complete a meaningful work placement, experience of work, industry placement or T-level Industry placement with local employers. - Live Briefs - collaborate with employers to set 'live briefs' for students to work on, giving them real-world experience and developing skills and experience to aid them in finding employment in the future. - Mentoring - build upon the existing mentoring programmes in place for Construction and Engineering students, to allow students across the College to access mentoring from employer partners.	projects, particularly in the School of Creative Arts and Fashion and Digital Academy o Engage employers from each growth sector to develop a mentoring programme that covers all areas of curriculum, beginning with Creative Arts and Expressive Arts and Media in Year 1 (2023/24).
Objective 5: Introduce processes for strengthening our evidence base - supporting curriculum planning and using insight to meet employer need.	• The College has access to numerous sources of intelligence including our ILR and destinations data, the insight gathered through our networks of business stakeholders and national labour market data. As the College for Business, the College understands the value in using these insights to assist the development and delivery of training provision with its business stakeholders, as well as creating the evidence base to attract new funding opportunities and measure our performance. These areas will be central for delivering the LSIP priorities and working effectively with other colleges (FE & HE) and training providers to fill intelligence gaps and quality of data being used to inform our regional skills policy.	- Creation of SMART action plan to co-ordinate research activities around our stated priorities and establish proposals to fill intelligence gaps.
Objective 6: Deliver informed Careers, Information, Advice and Guidance to all learners, underpinned by the Gatsby Benchmarks.	• Continue to deliver leading careers advice through: - Personalised, wide-ranging, and focussed advice and guidance by highly professional and committed staff. - Supporting and challenging students, increasing their awareness of career pathways, and enabling them to thrive and succeed. - A structured programme of careers events and workshops throughout the academic year, including mock interviews, CV writing workshops and meet the employer events each term. • Build a 'Talent Bank' of work-ready students and alumni that is easily accessed by local employers to aid with recruitment. The Talent Bank will also allow learners to easily engage with emerging apprenticeship or work experience vacancies.	- Engage a minimum of 15 employers related to each growth sector in CIAG activity, including mock interviews, meet the employer events and guest speaker visits. - Register 250 learners on the Talent Bank, with clear signposting to current opportunities and support developing their CV and work-ready profile.

Objective 7:
 	
Establish pathways into higher education with local HE institutions to retain local talent that will drive investment and development in the City Region's Growth Sectors.
	• Develop the College's Access programmes and support more students into local higher education institutes by:
	  - Placing an increased focus on those who are furthest from higher education, providing support and guidance throughout the application process.
	  - Developing programmes in collaboration with universities, to ensure that learners are prepared for further study.
	  - Collaborate with local universities to ensure places and provision is made available to college students on Access programmes, particularly for students from disadvantaged backgrounds or with protected characteristics.
		- 72% of learners that progressed to university from COLC in 2022/23 went to a university within the City Region. The College will work with local providers to ensure this is sustained and opportunities are available for COLC alumni locally.

Objective 8: Design a range of employability programmes to allow those furthest from education to develop the technical skills needed for work and improve social mobility.	• Deliver accessible and flexible employability programmes, designed for those furthest from education and focused on those sectors with the largest skills gaps and recruitment needs such as Health and Social Care, Digital and the Visitor Economy. • Work with employers to design programmes that include the essential skills needed to join the workforce in the specific sector, developing programmes that will produce candidates ready to join the workforce.	- Deliver 5 tailored employability programmes (approx. 75 learners) to support those furthest from education and work to develop skills needed for employment. - Develop a responsive and flexible delivery model for Employability, with high quality tutors and delivery plans that suit individuals' needs – i.e., parents with childcare responsibilities; those in part time work; etc. - Include anchor employers in the design of the course content within employability programmes, ensuring that industry voices are represented, and the programmes are current.

5. Corporation Statement

On behalf of The City of Liverpool College, it is hereby confirmed that the plan set out above reflects an agreed statement of purpose, aims and objectives as approved by the Board of Governors at their meeting on 19 July 2023.

The plan will be published on the College's website within three months of the start of the new academic year and can be accessed from the following link: https://www.liv-coll.ac.uk/the-college/corporate-reports/

Chair of Governors   Principal/Chief Executive and Accounting Officer

Dated

6. Further Information & Supporting Documentation

Links to: -

LCR Plan for Prosperity & Evidence Base
LCR Skills Strategy
LCR LSIP – Final publication and recommendations to be included once published.
City of Liverpool College Strategic Plan
City of Liverpool College Financial Statement
City of Liverpool College Ofsted Report