



**HARLOW  
COLLEGE**

**Harlow College  
Accountability  
Statement  
2023-24**



## Harlow College Annual Accountability Statement 2023 – 2024

### A. Purpose

Harlow College is a medium-sized further education college located in North West Essex. The College draws just under half of its students from Harlow, with the remainder coming primarily from West Essex, East Hertfordshire and North London. Originally consisting of one main site in Harlow town centre, in 2017 the college opened Stansted Airport College, the UK's first on-site professional training and skills centre and the first further education establishment in Uttlesford, in the north of Essex. In addition, there are two adult learning centres, one in Harlow town centre within walking distance of the main site and one at London Stansted Airport. The College offers 16 to 19 study programmes, adult learning programmes, apprenticeships and programmes for learners with high needs.

We are committed to changing and transforming the lives of the young people and adults of the communities we serve. We want all of our learners to achieve their ambitions, contribute significantly to the productivity of the economy and lead happy and purposeful lives. To this end we have a relentless focus on “More than courses. Careers”.

#### Values and mission:

**S: Students** at the heart

**T: Teamwork** - work together, achieve together

**A: Be Ambitious**, Build Futures

**R: Respect** each other, share similarities and celebrate differences

### B. Context and Place

We are situated in the heart of the UK's innovation Corridor (UKIC), Britain's fastest growing region incorporating Cambridge, Essex, Hertfordshire and London. The corridor provides a national innovation and knowledge hub and a major location for knowledge-based jobs. It is home to the largest bio-science industries in Europe and the fastest growing Airport in the UK which is also the largest source of employment in the East of England. This, together with Harlow Enterprise Zone and the planned relocation of UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) will bring over 3,000 STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) jobs to the area. With a population of 1.5m, Essex is a large and diverse county, located within the South East Local Enterprise Partnership and the UK Innovation Corridor it is within easy reach of London and Cambridge. Harlow is situated in the north west corner of Essex on the border with Hertfordshire and London. At the time of the 2021 Census, Harlow's population was 90,300, an increase of 13.9% since 2011, this increase was higher than the national average of 6.6% and is the 8th most densely populated of the 45 local authority areas in the East of England. Our second campus, Stansted Airport College, is located at London Stansted Airport in Uttlesford, a local government district in the north of the county. With a population of 91,300 in 2021, Uttlesford is a predominantly rural area.

The Essex economy is one of the country's largest with a £27.6bn gross value added, supporting 600,000 jobs and 75,000 businesses. It contains some of the most affluent but also most deprived areas of the country. With a GDP of £2.4bn, Harlow represents approximately 10% of this larger economy. Approximately 15 large employers are based in Harlow but its profile predominately consists of micro businesses, 88.7%, with 99.5% of its 3,235 businesses being classified as small or medium or micro enterprises.

Harlow has a significant skills disparity compared to the UK average, with only 38.9% of 16-64yr olds qualified to L3, compared to 61.5% nationally, this reduces to 24.7% qualified to at least NVQ L4 compared to 43.6% nationally. Of more significant concern is the high percentage of residents who have no qualifications, 8.6% compared to 6.6% nationally. Unemployment rates (Oct21-Sept 22) in Harlow were 3.4%, 0.3% lower than the national percentage, economic inactivity during this period was 22.3%, 0.8% higher than nationally. Claimant count in December 2022 was 4.4%, 0.6% higher than nationally. Of the 43,000 employees in Harlow, 34.9% work in wholesale and retail trade (8,000) and human health and social work activities (7,000). Other key employment sectors, accounting for 25.5% of the total workforce, are administrative and support service (4,500), education (4,000), professional, scientific and technical (3,500) manufacturing (3,500).

To facilitate the growth of the economy, Essex County Council has developed a 5-year strategy focussing on future proofing the Essex economy. The Sector Development Strategy identifies 5 economic sectors with significant growth potential that could be realised in Essex: Construction and Retrofit; Clean Energy; Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering; Digi-tech; and Life Sciences (including med-tech and care-tech).

The Essex Chamber of Commerce, Employer Representative Body for the Greater Essex Local Skills Improvement Plan have published their draft skills priorities covering a range sectors of importance as well as priorities for how the local skills system could be improved;

- Soft-skills and behaviours
- Basic English, Maths and ESOL
- Digital Skills and “Digitech”
- Green Skills
- Leadership and Management Skills
- Address the Lack of flexibility in the system
- Improve Information, Careers Advice and Guidance
- Address Tutor shortages and capacity of providers to respond
- Widen Inclusive employment
- Address Barriers to Engagement
- Improve the skills planning system for Essex

### **C. Approach to developing the Annual Accountability Statement**

Integral to our career-led curriculum are the close working relationships and collaboration we have with our employers. We understand the importance continued and effective engagement plays in the success of supporting our learners to realise their potential. Recently, as lead for the Greater Essex Strategic Development Fund programme we are driving a change in approach to employer engagement across Greater Essex with greater collaboration amongst training providers to transition towards an employer-led skills system that adapts to employers’ needs and develops technical skills programmes aligned to local skills opportunities. This has involved positive collaboration with members of the Federation of Essex Colleges and a range of Independent Training Providers through the Essex Provider Network.

We value the relationships we have with our local and regional stakeholders and are committed to working with them to ensure our learners and apprentices benefit from a curriculum that is informed by employers so they have the knowledge and skills employers require. Our priority is to engage with our stakeholders to not only understand the skills needs in our area but to play a leading role in the advancement of the local skills system. Our 5-year Strategic Plan outlines our intentions for the next 5 years as we continue our commitment to ensuring we change and transform the lives of young people and adults in our community. The 2019/24 Strategic Plan is

reviewed annually and was approved by Corporation on the 20th October 2022. As legislation and policy develops and reforms of the skills system progress this accountability statement outlines our targets focussed on curriculum changes and adaptations to provision that are planned for the coming academic year.

#### D. Contribution to national, regional, local priorities

This next phase of our provision builds on the key partnerships we have established with our local and regional stakeholders across the education, employer, civic and community sectors, to develop in our learners the skills needed for our thriving innovation corridor through a number of approaches.

National, Regional and Local Priorities	Our objectives for 2023/24:
<p>National Priorities:</p> <p>Prioritise delivery, through high-quality, employer co-designed programmes in the following subjects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction</li> <li>• Manufacturing</li> <li>• Digital and Technology</li> <li>• Health and Social Care</li> <li>• Haulage and Logistics</li> <li>• Engineering</li> <li>• Science and Mathematics</li> </ul>	<p>We will continue to develop a curriculum offer which prepares all our learners to achieve their ambitions, contribute significantly to the productivity of the economy and have happy and purposeful lives.</p> <p>To do this we will broaden our offer to include pathways from L3 to L5 in the following subject areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electrotechnical</li> <li>• Engineering</li> <li>• Plumbing</li> <li>• Surveying</li> <li>• Health and Life Sciences</li> </ul> <p>These pathways will offer courses across T Levels, Apprenticeships, Free Courses for Jobs, Skills Bootcamps and Higher Technical Qualifications.</p>
<p>Local Skills Improvement Plan Priorities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Soft-skills and behaviours</li> <li>2. Basic English, Maths and ESOL</li> <li>3. Digital Skills and “Digitech”</li> <li>4. Green Skills</li> <li>5. Leadership and Management Skills</li> </ol>	<p>We will continue to provide all our learners with opportunities to develop their soft skills and the behaviours required to be successful in their chosen sectors and will continue the work we do with unemployed adults to improve employability skills and support their search for employment through Sector Based Work Programmes.</p> <hr/> <p>We will further develop and widen the range of basic English, maths and ESOL courses available to 19+ learners including a continued involvement in the Multiply Numeracy project.</p>

	<p>We are committed to our Net Zero goals and are making good progress to reduce our carbon emissions. Our aim is to develop the breadth of courses we offer in the 'Green Skills' area, in 23/24 we will increase the number of learners completing our Electric and Hybrid Vehicle courses and roll out a new range of courses in Sustainable Energy from September 2023.</p>
	<p>Building on the success of the Greater Essex Strategic Development Fund in 22/23, our aim is to lead a Local Skills Improvement Fund in 23/24 in partnership with FEDEC members and the Essex Provider Network that will support some progress towards addressing the skills system priorities included by the Essex Chamber of Commerce in the Local Skills Improvement Plan.</p>

**E. Corporation Statement**

On behalf of the Harlow College Corporation, it is hereby confirmed that the College plan as set out above reflects an agreed statement of purpose, aims and objectives as approved by the Corporation at their meeting on 18 May 2023.

**F. Hyperlink**

The plan is published on the College’s website and can be accessed from the following link: [Harlow College 2023-24 - Annual Accountability Statement](#)

**G. Relevant Supporting Documentation**

- [Harlow College - 2019-24 Strategic Plan and Skills Statement](#)
- [Harlow College - Equality & Diversity \(harlow-college.ac.uk\)](#)
- [Harlow College - Financials \(harlow-college.ac.uk\)](#)