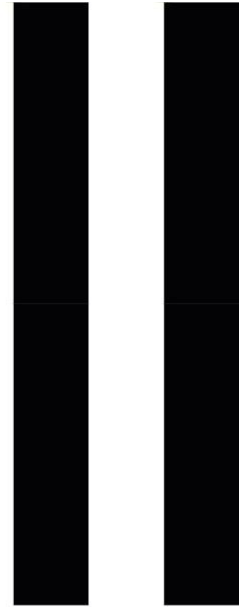
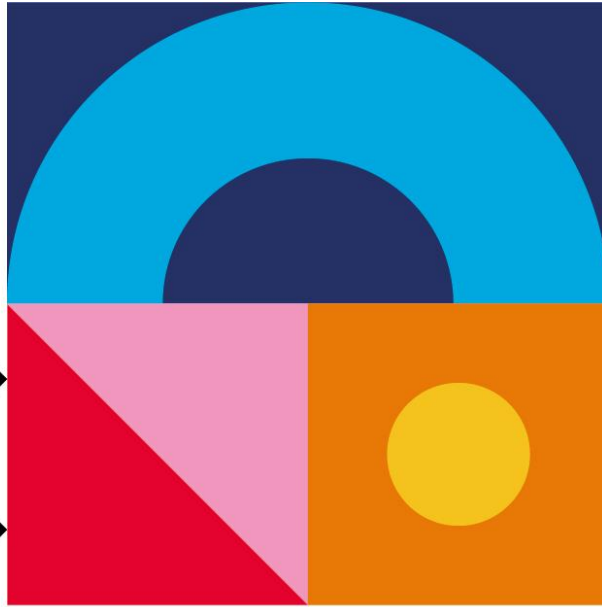
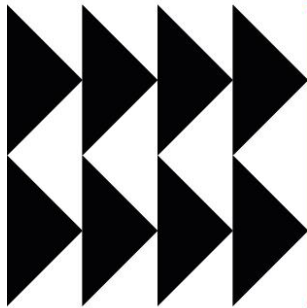
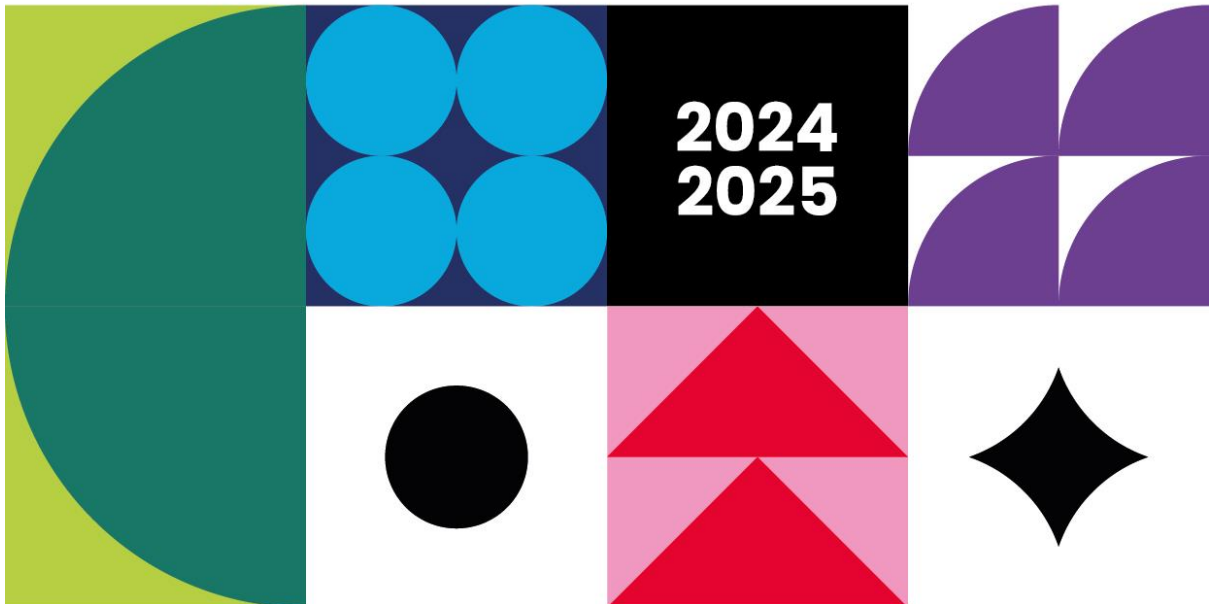


**HARLOW
COLLEGE**



Harlow College Annual Accountability Statement



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.

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

This document details our shorter term aims, priorities and targets focussing on curriculum changes and adaptations to provision that are planned for the 2024/25 academic year. Our strategic intentions for the next 5 years are contained within the 2024/29 Strategic Plan which is reviewed annually and was approved by Corporation on 13 June 2024. The Strategic Plan lays out our intentions as we continue our commitment to changing and transforming the lives of young people and adults in our community and focuses on three priority sectors for growth in Essex and includes six cross cutting themes. These sectors and themes align with the Essex Local Skills Improvement Plan.

Priority Sectors for Growth:

- Health Sciences;
- Aviation, Transport, Logistics and Engineering;
- Construction and Building Services.

Cross Cutting Themes:

- Career-led curriculum;
- Soft skills and behaviours;
- Excellent learning, teaching and assessment;
- Digital skills;
- Green skills;
- People.

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. With a population of 1.5m, Essex is a large and diverse county, located within 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 Level 3, compared to 61.5% nationally. This reduces to 24.7% qualified to at least NVQ Level 4 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.

The unemployment rate in Harlow is 5.7% (December 2023), 2.4% higher than the year ending December 2022. Claimant count in March 2024 was 4.8%, an increase of 0.7% on March 2023. 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) and manufacturing (3,500).

Although there are a number of high-profile large employers in West Essex, the table below illustrates the large presence of small and micro-businesses. Harlow, as well as Essex overall, has a slightly larger proportion of micro-businesses than the regional average, with 88.7% of all businesses employing fewer than nine people and 99.5% of all businesses being in the SME category. Small businesses often require additional support to engage with the skills system and to provide opportunities such as apprenticeships.

Enterprises	Harlow (numbers)	Harlow (%)	East Region (%)
Micro 0-9	2,870	88.7	90.1
Small (10-49)	295	9.1	8.1
Medium (50 to 249)	55	1.7	1.5
Large (250+)	15	0.5	0.4
Total	3,235		

In their role as Employer Representative Body, the Essex Chambers of Commerce, have published the Greater Essex Local Skills Improvement Plan which identifies the

sectors of importance to Essex, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock, as well as priorities for how the local skills system could be improved, as follows:

Skills priorities	Skills system priorities	Essex Sectors and Technical Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Soft skills and behaviours.• Basic English, Maths and ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages).• Digital skills and 'Digitech'.• Green skills.• Leadership and Management skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Skills planning system for Essex.• System access and flexibility.• Information, Careers Advice and Guidance.• Tutor shortages and capacity of providers to respond.• Inclusive employment.• Barriers to engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advanced Manufacturing, Engineering & Aviation.• AgriTech & Food Tech.• Community & Voluntary.• Construction.• Creative and Cultural.• DigiTech.• Education.• Health, Care & Med Tech.• Professional Services.• Transport and Logistics.

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 and stakeholders. We understand the importance continued and effective engagement plays in the success of supporting our learners to realise their full potential. Recently, as lead for the Greater Essex Local Skills Improvement Fund project, we have been driving a change in approach to employer engagement across Greater Essex with greater collaboration amongst training providers, supporting the 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.

In the identification of our key priorities and target outcomes we consulted with the Employer Representative Body for the Greater Essex Local Skills Improvement Plan, Essex Chambers of Commerce, and a range of our stakeholders to develop our plan.

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.

Please see the table on the following two pages.

National, Regional and Local Priorities	Our Objectives for 2024/25:
<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"> • Construction • Manufacturing • Digital and Technology • Health and Social Care • Haulage and Logistics • Engineering • Science and Mathematics 	<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 during 2024/25 we will broaden our offer to include pathways from Level 3 to Level 5 in the following subject areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electrotechnical • Engineering • Plumbing • Construction Management • Health and Life Sciences <p>These pathways will offer courses across T-Levels, Apprenticeships, Free Courses for Jobs, Skills Bootcamps and Higher Technical Qualifications.</p>
Local Skills Improvement Plan Priorities:	
<p>1. Soft-skills and behaviours</p>	<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. This includes continuing our commitment to providing our learners with experience of using digital technologies and we will, in the development of soft skills, adopt teaching and learning strategies that make use of advancements in virtual and augmented reality.</p>
<p>2. Basic English, Maths and ESOL</p>	<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>3. Digital Skills and “Digitech”</p>	<p>We will continue our investment in one-to-one devices for young people to ensure our learners are not disadvantaged through inaccessibility to devices.</p> <p>Digital skills will be embedded in our adult programmes to develop learners’ ability to navigate work and life.</p> <p>We will also offer a specialist IT and Gaming curriculum, to help develop the technologists of the future.</p>

4. Green Skills	Our Electric and Hybrid Vehicle and Renewable Energy Centres have been a great success and we will develop further modules for upskilling and reskilling taught through these facilities as the advancement of green technologies becomes embedded in society.
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We are proud of our strong contribution to meeting the skills needs of employers and the local, regional and national economy through the range of programmes that we teach and the content and planning of our curriculum. It is through our effective engagement and collaboration with employers and stakeholders that we have succeeded with this. In 2024/25 we will continue our approach to engaging with employers to co-design and co-deliver elements of our curriculum and will adopt a variety of approaches, ensuring large, medium, small and micro organisations are working collaboratively with us. Due to the nature of our local economy and the needs of our local businesses who are predominantly micro and small, we will employ specific approaches to ensuring these organisations are supported by us and involved in the design and delivery of our curriculum.

E. Local Needs Duty

In January 2024 the College brought together Principals, Chairs of Governing Bodies and Governance Professionals from all Further Education Colleges across Essex along with key stakeholders such as the local authority and the Local Skills Improvement Plan Employer Representative Body to review our provision. A key outcome from the event was the creation and the agreement of the Greater Essex Federation of Essex Colleges Commitment Statement detailing our collective commitment to supporting the region's economy through the transformational power of learning and skills development.

We have reviewed our curriculum and are confident that the education and training we provide to our learners meets local needs. Our 2024/29 Strategic Plan and the short-term priorities outlined in this document build upon the work undertaken to date and include actions arising from our review.

F. Corporation Statement

Under section 52B of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, as amended by the Skills and Post 16 Education Act 2022, specifically the requirement to review provision in relation to local needs and 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. This was approved by the Corporation at their meeting on 13 June 2024

G. Hyperlink

The plan is published on the College's website and can be accessed from the following link:

[Annual Accountability Statement - 2024/25](#)

H. Relevant Supporting Documentation

[Strategic Plan 2024-2029.pdf \(harlow-college.ac.uk\)](#)
[Harlow College - Equality & Diversity \(harlow-college.ac.uk\)](#)
[Harlow College - Financials \(harlow-college.ac.uk\)](#)
[LSIP | Essex Chambers of Commerce](#)