



Lakes College

Annual Accountability Statement

2023-2024

Published May 2023

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1. Purpose

Our current three-year Strategic Plan is in its third and final year of implementation, to be replaced for the period 2023/24 to 2026/27. This accountability statement reflects detail from the current and draft replacement plan, however, given the submission date of May, its content and commitments reflect the first year of the new three-year Strategic Plan.

In relation to that plan, Governors have stated that matters of vision, mission and purpose will be adapted and refined, however, remain thematically unchanged from those currently described below.

Vision - An ambitious technical college that enhances the prosperity and prospects of our people and communities

Mission - Our mission & purpose is to enable people to recognise, develop and fulfil their potential

Values - The values that underpin our ethos, expectations and standards are that all staff and learners are **Ready; Respectful**, and all are committed to developing **Potential**

We are a long established and very successful technical college serving primarily the broad further and higher skills and training needs of West Cumbria.

We focus directly on the needs of employers within our region, and maintain a dynamic offer based upon vocational routes into employment and career development. As a technical college we focus on job roles and the workplace, developing the skills, experiences, and qualifications within levels 1 to 7 that our learners need to access the workplace and develop careers within our region. Progression to the highest relevant level, into employment, and within chosen careers are key drivers for us.

Our current strategic intent is summarised as:

High Achievement

To promote and deliver ambitious, high-quality, inclusive training and education which supports all learners to secure their potential and thrive

Delivering Priority Skills

Collaborate with employers and key partners to deliver national, regional and local skills needs priorities to support economic growth and the success of our communities

Our People

To be an employer of choice supporting our staff to build careers delivering exceptional services

Sustainable Operations

Secure financial viability by delivering excellent responsive provision well matched to needs

Why our provision is important

We serve a vital role in supporting the current and future talent pipeline needs of our regional economy and take great care in sustaining and developing a relevant, inclusive, broad and deep offer well matched to regional needs. Given our rural, sparsely populated, and remote location the communities and employers of West Cumbria rely upon us to have and an accessible, high quality, well planned and resourced range of courses, qualifications and training based on needs.

As a relatively small, rural college we value and understand the significance of partnerships and collaborations in this endeavour, resulting in a very wide and growing range of employers, colleges, universities, and other organisations to ensure our offer is up to date, appropriate and relevant, and directly supports economic growth and positive social impact in our region.



Added workforce skills impact:

£110.1 million Added income 3,864 Average-wage jobs

Through our extensive employer engagement and reputation, the reach of Lakes College has extended in recent years to regional and national delivery in specialist areas such as nuclear, safety critical engineering and manufacturing.

An Economic Impact Assessment report from 2021 (based on 2019/20 data, the height of the COVID epidemic) has calculated an added workforce skills impact of £110.1M on the immediate locality of West Cumbria, which is an indication of the value Lakes college adds to the local economy.

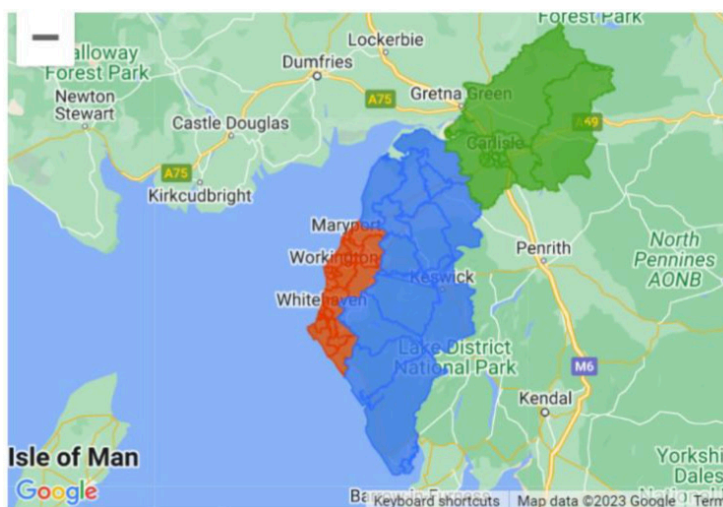
Our Ofsted Overall Effectiveness is currently Good (supported by Good in all judgments areas). During February 2022 we participated in a pilot of the newly adopted Ofsted judgement regarding the extent to which colleges meet regional skills needs.

2. Context and Place

Cumbria is the second largest county in England covering 6,767 square km. With just under 500,000 residents, it is a sparsely populated county characterised by an outstanding rural landscape, but a comparatively poor road and public transport infrastructure.

This helps to explain why there are four General Further Education Colleges in Cumbria, largely situated around the periphery of the County where the largest centres of population lie; the challenges of transport to and from colleges have a discernible impact on a learner's choice of college.

¹Within the main catchment area identified on the adjacent map, there are 10 communities in the most deprived 10% of communities in England, a fact often masked by an otherwise well-paid local workforce employed by the nuclear industry and its supply chain, which dominates the local employment landscape. The demands placed on the college are therefore diverse, however by putting skills for jobs at the heart of what the College does, it is hoped to bring equality of opportunity for all learners.



- Main Area
- Outer Area
- Carlisle

This map highlights the Vector Defined Area used in the 16-19 and adult learner sections Vector. Each colour coded area represents a unique analysis area which will appear in the drop down analysis filters within the Vector dashboards, charts and tables.

The travel to learn area can be recognised as West Cumbria, but where there are specialisms, such as engineering apprenticeships or nuclear, the reach of Lakes College extends beyond this traditional catchment area. This includes some national initiatives under the banner of the National College for Nuclear and more recently moving into the apprenticeship market in other areas in Cumbria at the request of local employers.

3. Approach to developing the statement

Over the past two years we have worked in close collaboration with the long-established FE4 Group of Cumbrian Colleges and the University of Cumbria to successfully lead on and co-deliver outcomes and outputs within two SDF rounds: the pilot and round 2. This activity has been conducted in tandem with the LSIP work undertaken by Cumbria Chambers of Commerce (as the ERG) with employers and stakeholders in the County. This combined SDF work and the LSIP have formed a core evidence and stakeholder base used in developing this statement.

Within our SDF evaluation work we commissioned a deep review of stakeholder feedback by a 3rd party company, which we have analysed and used within developing our commitments next year. Furthermore, our Governors have recently undertaken a scrutiny and evidenced-based review to ascertain confidence in the work of the college in meeting regional skills needs – that confidence being assured.

We also continue to directly integrate into the skills and training needs work of Cumbria LEP (CLEP), particularly within the People Employment and Skills Strategy Group and the established Industry Panels. In addition, we collate, analyse and use significant volumes and value of labour market intelligence and feedback gained directly from our employer engagement work with hundreds of employers in our region, and utilise the array of LMI material issued by what was Cumbria County Council (now Cumberland for our region) via its Observatory service. In the context of the inter-relationships described above, we have undertaken extensive consultation and discussion regarding the content and objectives described in this statement.

4. Contribution to national, regional, local priorities

Our Strategic Priorities for the academic year 2023/34 will be based upon several core aspects, reflecting national and regional skills needs derived from multi-sources as summarised in section 3 above.

They are based upon further enhancing and deepening our already extensive collaborative work with a wide range of employers and industry groups throughout our service area. These priorities will be expanded upon in depth within our Strategic Plan 2023 to 2026, which will focus upon our objectives and plans for its first year of implementation next year, replacing our current plan (which is in year three of three).

1. Skills Needs – make a significant contribution to meeting the current skills and employment needs of Cumbria as described and quantified in the LSIP and LMI derived from our direct employer engagement.
2. Turnover – generate a minimum 5% increase in annual turnover from 2021/22 based on growth in students numbers in regional skills priorities in: 16-18, Apprenticeships, Adult Skills and HE provision
3. Financial Health – return to Good Financial Health during 2023/24
4. Staff – retain and develop a staffing establishment with the necessary capability and capacity to deliver our objective of meeting regional skills needs in 1. above with outstanding quality
5. Estate – fully utilise the various capital investment projects undertaken during the past two years to significant positive effect and impact with regional employers and West Cumbrian communities
6. Continuous Improvement – meet the key improvement targets summarised in section Our Performance Improvement Priorities for 2023/34 below

Meeting Regional Skills Needs via employer engagement, partnerships, and collaboration

We will continue to embed and extend the positive skills and partnership developments and positive impact achieved to date within our successful SDF pilot and SDF Round 2 work. Directly informed by the Cumbria Chambers of Commerce LSIP FE4 and University of Cumbria (UoC) will further develop its collaborative work in delivering to the anticipated Local Skills Implementation Fund (LSIF), again directly reflecting the priorities evidenced in the LSIP.

Our primary focus and key objectives will be to meet the broad range of needs within the LSIP priority sectors, those being:

- Manufacturing/engineering
- Energy
- Construction/Built Economy
- Visitor Economy
- Social Care

Building upon our developing national interests, we will also expand our work in Advanced and HE Technical Skills within the Nuclear sectors and emergent Green Skills and Low Carbon Energy developments.

We will ensure a fit for purpose, well-resourced offer well matched to regional needs, further triangulated to the needs of the Cumbria LEP sector skills panels. Our growing national work within the National College for Nuclear will enable us to further enhance our Higher Technical Skills offer for nuclear decommissioning and energy developments, including support for the national nuclear submarine programme and SMR new builds. Similarly, our work within the growing network of low carbon energy skills groups will support our work in developing Advanced and Higher Green Energy Technical Skills.

Our headline skills priorities for 2023/23 will include:

- Housebuilding construction skills and retrofit – Commercial and short training courses
- All aspects of Manufacturing and Engineering – All Types of Provision
- Advanced and Higher Technical Skills for Nuclear: Decommissioning, Subs, and SMR programmes – HE, HTQs, and Degree Apprenticeships
- Green and low carbon technologies qualifications and skills – Commercial and short training courses; HE, HTQs, and Degree Apprenticeships
- Health and Adult Social Care: Adult Skills Budget (ASB), NVQs, apprenticeships
- Digital Skills at all levels – all Types of Provision
- Business, Leadership and Management, and Commercial skills – T Levels, Professional Courses in ASB and short/ commercially courses
- Supporting the Visitor Economy in partnership with FE4 and Cumbria Tourism - Commercial and short training courses, ASB
- Developing employability skills and passports to employment, including maths, English and digital skills – 16 – 18, ASB and routes to work

Labour Market Conditions

Cumbria is expected to have continued tight labour market conditions into 2023/24, placing an emphasis on supporting reskilling and upskilling into specific sectors skills shortages, e.g. visitor economy, engineering and construction; and continuing to support those not currently employed into sustained employment. This challenge is exacerbated by demographics and migration challenges that combine to reduce the number of people available for employment in Cumbria. We will continue our direct work with many hundreds of employers, sectors, partners and funded programmes e.g. Bootcamps and DWP contracts, to support this important work.

Capital development programme

We plan to fully deploy our extensive investment in first class resources and facilities to very positive effect and impact during 2023/24. This includes the specific developments within our already successful STEM Apprenticeship Academy; our Towns' Deal supported Digital Accelerator Hub, our Civil Engineering Training Complex, and the SDF-led Employer Skills Hub, with the widespread investment in repurposing and adapting across our estate. We also anticipate developing a retrofit training and stakeholder support hub, collaborating with industry, relevant stakeholders and FE4/ UoC.

Key components of our offer for 2023/24 include:

16 -18 Study Programmes (SPs)

We will continue investment in our T Level offer, further establishing it as a valuable route for young people in our region whilst working with employers to secure Industrial Placements and progression opportunities. Our emphasis will continue to be a SP offer that matches employment needs in our region, and most notably offers clear progression into apprenticeships and HE locally. Key sectors will continue to be: Construction; Engineering and Manufacturing, and Health and Social Care. Development areas will include Digital, Business and the Visitor Economy, Education and Childcare. In line with our mission to meet the broad range of needs in our locale we will endeavour to offer the broadest range where needs exist, including: the Visitor Economy, hair and beauty, Uniformed Services and Creative skills. We will also reflect the growing demand from a cross-section of employers for enhanced and better development employability and so-called "softer" skills in young people and adults seeking employment. This will include further developing the SDF work of an "employability passport" approach, and extensive use of work and industry placement. Our collaborative work with schools and careers support will continue to be prominent.

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships at all levels will continue to grow, in line with our strategy of progression for full time students and supporting our HE offer. There continues to be strong demand for apprenticeships at all levels in Cumbria, which we expect will exceed 30% of our funded provision. This work builds upon our strengths as a technical college with extensive employer relations and directly supports key skills and employment needs in Cumbria, and will reflect the priorities of the recently developed Cumbria LEP Cumbria Apprenticeship Strategy.

As we continue to grow, we will also rapidly progress our work on improving timely achievements for all apprentices. We will also extend our very successfully NCfN apprenticeship model of a pedagogy incorporating experiential learning and the very distinctive coaching model we deploy to great effect.

HE

In line with our revised HE Strategy supporting growth, we will deepen and extend our offer, primarily based upon:

- Local progression opportunities for SP students, thus retaining skills in Cumbria
- Meeting the needs of employers in Cumbria for degree apprentices and Higher Technicians/ technical skills in Engineering, Manufacturing, and Nuclear disciplines
- The evolving needs of Higher Digital Skills in Cumbria
- Meeting the recruitment targets set out in our successful Higher Injection Fund bid and growing HTQs
- Expanding our offer beyond our traditional Cumbrian Boundaries

We have joined the emergent Lancashire and Cumbria IoT, expecting to plan to develop an HE offer linked to Green Skills and Low Carbon technologies. We will continue to explore and develop a modular and unitised offer within our HE and Adult Learning Programmes where applicable, demanded and fundable.

Adult Skills

We will continue to deliver an appropriate offer within our Adult Entitlement offer, extending this into our Digital Accelerator Hub in support of digital skills. We will remain active in Bootcamps and our DWP supported routes to work contract. We will also respond to the anticipated Lifelong loan entitlement, aiming to enable more adult learners retrain and reskill for skill shortage areas and priorities in Cumbria. This will complement our existing work within the Adult Entitlement offer, which will continue to include: Lean Management; Access to Higher Education Pathways, and professional routes within HR and Accounting.

We will reflect the growing needs for a range of Leadership and Management and commercial skills within various sectors, including Health and Social Care, the Visitor Economy, and Construction/ Engineering. We will also support adults with the wide range of English, ICT, maths and numeracy skills, to include the new national Multiply programme.

Commercial

We expect the trend of growth in “free standing” NVQs and qualifications in various skills demanded by regional employers to continue, particularly within: construction; business analysts; engineering disciplines and health and social care. We will also seek to meet growing demand for a suite of management and commercial skills, including project management and controls, IT and Digital applications, specific practice within Health and Safety, and 6 Sigma.

Our key commitments in relation to National and Regional Skills priorities are amplified below:

Construction

- We will develop Green Technical Skills training in Cumbria, to include construction and Civil Engineering. This will include plans to develop a Hub and Spoke Carbon Reduction Retrofit Training Hub developing training across the range of low carbon construction skills and heat pump installation, and continued collaboration within National Low Carbon Energy Skills group. The offer will include commercial and short courses within retrofit and green technical skills. Within the nascent Lancashire and Cumbria Institute of Technology we will develop and launch an HNC/D Low Carbon Energy Technician programme.
- Apprenticeships will further expanding into steel fixing, ground and form works, scaffolding and plant operatives with employer partners.
- 16 – 18 we will offer a L1/L2 full time 1 year course for General Construction, and Property Maintenance Operatives as a direct routes into apprenticeships.
- We will continue to grow our T Level provision in Construction within the Design, Surveying and Planning for Construction pathway, intending to grow numbers from 12 to 20.
- Adult We will increase our offer of free-standing NVQs in construction skills and trades and seek to develop a plastering option.
- HE – we will further develop our Higher and Professional Offer within Civil Engineering
- We will seek opportunities to run Bootcamps in construction skills and seek opportunities for upskilling and reskilling into construction employment via the emergent Lifelong Learning Loans.
- We will further develop and expand our re-engagement focused Princes Youth Trust pathways with local partners to support young people and risk of NEET progress into further training and employment

Manufacturing

- We will continue to develop our fabricating, welding and machining offer at Levels 2 and 3 within our 16 -18 Full Time, Adult and apprenticeship provision. Our recently completed STEM Apprenticeship Academy will continue to attract significant interest and applications. Similarly, our collaborative apprenticeship and skills development training centre with the Carrs Group via Bendalls will continue to expand, extending the number of partner employers, notably the Cumbria Manufacturing Alliance
- We will launch our Scholars programme with the ECITB, recruiting 12 trainees who are subsidised and supported to develop manufacturing skills.
- Our T Level offer will expand to three pathways within the Engineering and Manufacturing Route, with a total of 36 students planned.
- Our HE offer will include the development of a new Foundation Degree in Manufacturing for Nuclear.

Digital and Technology

- We will grow our T Level student numbers within the Digital Support pathway supported by a Transition Programme at L2. We will launch the Digital Accelerator Hub in direct support of Higher-Level Digital Skills in Cumbria, specifically at Level 4 and 5. This will include qualifications and skills development in: VR; 3D Modelling and Laser Point Scanning; Programmable Logic Control, AI and Robotics; Coding and Software Development and Augmented Reality. We will develop a range of digital skills development programmes for Adults within our Entitlement offer and potentially supported by the new Lifelong Learner Loans. We will develop and offer a range of sector specific digital skills of various sectors, e.g. digital marketing for the visitor economy and digital literacy and Office Suite IT skills for staff within Social Care sector.
- We will offer HNC Digital Network Engineer; HND Digital Network Engineer; HNC Software Developer; HND Software Developer; HND Cyber Security Analyst; HNC Cyber Security Analyst.

Health and Social Care

- **HE:** In addition to our continued growth in level 6 nuclear science degree apprenticeship (77 learners) and, 20 Applied Science level 4 & 5 learners, we will launch HNC and D Biology and Biotechnology, supported by our HE Injection Fund bid. We will develop the L4 and 5 offer for Social Care to include modular access within funding possibilities, to include option for Mental Health within T Levels. We will also seek to expand our sector specific routes within our Access to HE offer
- **16 – 18:** With employers and sector representatives we will seek to actively promote careers and recruitment in the Social Care sector. We plan to expand our T Level Nurse Cadet Programme with the NHS to 38 enrolments, and development of a Transition Programme at L2.
- **Adult:** further develop short course and commercial provision via ILM within Social Care to augment the apprenticeship offer and develop leadership and management skills, to include ICT and Digital Skills. We will extend flexible learning options to enhance employment opportunities, to include inter alia topics such as Safeguarding, EDI, Autism Awareness and Counselling.

Engineering

- We will develop and enhance our offer and progression routes within Engineering disciplines from Levels 2 to 6, focusing on the mechanical, electrical, instrumentation and control, and design skills needed by key engineering employers and sectors in our region. This will include the engineering skills needs of the growing energy sectors and the continued needs of nuclear decommissioning and waste management. We will expand our national interests and inputs via the growing National College for Nuclear, supporting the development of a national nuclear technician skills curriculum, particularly at the HE levels, and within specific national projects, e.g. Rolls Royce Nuclear Skills Academy and the SMR programme.
- Our Apprenticeship offer will be further enhanced and developed within our Academy models for Manufacturing and Engineering.
- Our T Level offer will include Mechanical and Mechatronic pathways with planned combined numbers of 32 learners.
- For Adult and Commercial provision, we will continue our interest in Bootcamps and retraining routes into skilled employment in engineering, and explore specific developments in short course provision in skills gaps including: Health and Safety; 6 Sigma, and Project Management.
- We will expand our provision and support within low carbon and net zero technical skills, including our HE offer within the National College for Nuclear e.g. new Foundation Degree in Low Carbon Technologies.

Maths and Science

- We will continue the work of the now concluded national Maths Centres of Excellence Programme, supporting improved maths qualification and skills development outcomes for 16 – 18 learners and all apprentices within GCSEs and Functional Skills.
- We will support Cumberland's national Multiply programme to help build confidence with people and communities currently some distance from employment.
- We will continue to offer and grow our T level Laboratory Sciences pathway, albeit with relatively low numbers. This complements our expanding Level 3 and HE apprenticeship provision in Safety Technician, Laboratory Technician, and Nuclear Technician and Scientist work with employers.

Energy

- We will continue to respond to the needs of nuclear and low carbon energy developments, expanding our NCfN offer of Advanced and Higher Technical Programmes to support emerging SMR needs, and the green energy technician skills demanded by the growing range of energy installations and projects, including wind, solar and tidal. Our current offer will expand to include specific routes for Green Energy Technical training.

Visitor Economy

- We will work collaboratively with Cumbria Tourism, FE4 and UoC, CLEP and the sector to develop programmes that enable employers to recruit more staff at all levels, and develop a range of middle tier leadership and management skills, including digital and ecommerce.

To note that in Cumbria, the needs of the Logistics and Transport, and Land Based Sectors are currently met by existing provider arrangements which Lakes recognises and supports but does not specifically deliver within.

Investment in People and Resources

We will continue to invest in maintaining a first-class estate and facilities, whilst starting to fully deploy the range of capital projects we have invested in over the past two years, specifically: STEM Apprenticeship Academy; the Digital Accelerator Hub; the Civil Engineering Training Complex, the Business Hub and our Apprenticeships Skills Centre Partnership with the Carrs Group. We also expect to extend our developments into establishing a Retrofit Training Hub and low carbon energy technician training.

Simultaneously we will continue our investment in recruiting, retaining and developing the competencies and capacity we need, a key area which has inherent risk concerns owing to the nature of the labour market in Cumbria and factors beyond our control. A pay award in line with the school sector will be unattainable without significant increased investment in core funding. To augment face to face TLA, we will also further develop our blended, open and offsite learning access and support across the range of our provision and seek to further develop approaches to flexible working that appeal to current and prospective employees whilst still enabling us to meet the college's operational needs.

Our Performance Improvement Priorities for 2023/24

In line with our ongoing Self-Assessment and Continuous Improvement Planning, we will priorities positive improvement impact in:

- Retention and attendance rates in 16 -18 and Adult Provision – overall floor target of 93% and 94% respectively
- Improved timely achievement and in year progress for Apprentices – minimum aggregated achievement rate of at least equivalent to national averages
- Improved examination pass and above outcomes in mathematics – GCSE pass outcomes of at least 35% for condition of funding learners

5. Corporation Statement

On behalf of Lakes 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 18th May 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:

www.lcwc.ac.uk/accountability

Michael Priestley, Chair of Governors

Chris Nattress, Principal and Chief Executive

Dated: 31st May 2023

6. Supporting Documents

Draft LSIP

Current Strategic Plan

Review of SDF 1 and 2

Cumbria Apprenticeship Strategy

https://www.cumbriachamber.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/LSIP_Report_2022_web.pdf

<https://www.thecumbrialep.co.uk/skills/>

