

Strategic Plan



Our Campuses

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2023-2028
2026 update

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PROFESSOR SHEILA SALMON
Chair of Governors,
Chelmsford College



DAVID WARNES
Principal & CEO,
Chelmsford College

Welcome

"All of this would not be possible without the people that make up our college community. Supporting their wellbeing and opening up opportunities for progression and growth; investing in and nurturing their talent are all critical to the success of this plan."

DAVID WARNES
Principal & CEO

This refreshed strategic plan for Chelmsford College reflects the changing world around us, recognising that any such plan needs to be agile enough to evolve and flex to deal with the unknown. It also reflects the College's alignment with the next iteration of the Greater Essex Local Skills Improvement Plan published in July 2026.

But there is one thing that does remain constant, our unwavering focus on unlocking the potential of our students and transforming their lives with exceptional education and training.

As Principal, I have been privileged to share so many remarkable success stories; our supported interns finding permanent jobs with the NHS and major retailers, our engineering students competing in the WorldSkills competition, our catering students travelling to Italy to have new experiences and our adult students in social housing finding the confidence to rebuild their lives, to name a few.

All of this would not be possible without the people that make up our college community. Supporting their wellbeing and opening up opportunities for progression and growth; investing in and nurturing their talent are all critical to the success of this plan.

As is our connection to the City of Chelmsford and wider Essex communities that we are a part of. Our role in providing technical and vocational skills will help shape the social and economic future of the region. We will connect with these communities through our influence, engagement and collaboration. In essence this strategic plan looks to establish Chelmsford College as instrumental in shaping the future of education by delivering excellence in all aspects of our work, to realise the ambitions of our people, our students and our communities.



Our College

The post-16 education and skills reforms introduced by government have fundamentally reshaped the role of further education colleges.

The Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper established a vision for a more employer-led skills system, placing colleges at the centre of economic growth, productivity and social mobility. The reforms strengthened the alignment between education and labour market demand through new Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs), expanded higher technical education, increased employer influence over curriculum design, and promoted lifelong learning through more flexible pathways and progression routes.

As a result, colleges are increasingly expected to act not only as education providers, but as strategic partners in local economic development, workforce planning and skills leadership. Chelmsford College is well positioned to fulfil this role through its strong employer partnerships, technical specialisms and commitment to responding to regional skills priorities.

Our campuses, located on two sites in the City of Chelmsford, the Billericay Skills Academy at the Billericay Town Football Club and the Skills Hub in the City Centre, have benefited from nearly £7m of capital investment over the last few years.

This includes immersive classrooms, cyber security and forensic digital labs and the Centre for Built Environment and Sustainable Technologies, with a focus on construction trades, retrofit and renewable energy training. This, together with a future investment in expanding our brick and trowel occupation training centre, means the College is equipped with the best industry standard facilities.

The College is also the main provider of courses for profound and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) students in the County and has invested in providing the best support for learners with mental health needs, those who have been electively home schooled or those may have experienced behavioural challenges whilst at school.

National policy now expects colleges to drive economic growth, improve productivity, tackle disadvantage,



support learners with SEND, reduce the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET), and respond rapidly to changing workforce needs. At the same time, devolution is creating new opportunities for skills providers to influence local decision-making and investment. We must prepare our students not only for the jobs that exist today, but for careers, technologies and opportunities that are still emerging.

Our newly opened Skills Centre in the heart of Chelmsford City Centre is an excellent example of working collaboratively, at a local level, to improve the skills of NEETs and those looking for employment, to drive the productivity and economic growth that Essex needs to prosper.

Whether you are a young person leaving school, a SEND student, an apprentice or an adult embarking on lifelong learning, the College provides an inclusive and diverse learning environment, that celebrates differences and encourages everyone to aim high and unlock their potential.

Our Context

Essex is one of the largest counties in England, with Greater Essex (including Southend and Thurrock) home to almost 2 million people and a highly diverse economy spanning urban centres, coastal communities and rural areas.

While the county contains some of the most prosperous communities in the country, significant inequalities remain in educational attainment, health outcomes and access to opportunity. As a college rooted in our community, we recognise these disparities and our responsibility to create pathways to success for all learners.

Proximity to London is significant, with high levels of commuting to the capital, or home-based working for London-based employers. Similarly, proximity to areas such as Cambridge, Hertfordshire and Suffolk are factors for people commuting in and out of Essex.

At a local level, the devolution and local government reorganisation agenda is creating significant opportunities for Greater Essex. The establishment of a Greater Essex Mayoral Combined County Authority, alongside the reorganisation of local government structures, is expected to transfer greater responsibility for economic development, skills, infrastructure and investment to the region. This presents an opportunity for Chelmsford College to play an even more influential role in shaping workforce development, supporting regional growth priorities and helping to deliver inclusive prosperity across Essex.

The county remains a major location for growth and investment. Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects, substantial housing development, clean energy investment, healthcare expansion and advances in digital technologies are creating demand for highly skilled workers. The Essex Local Skills Improvement Plan continues to identify priority sectors including construction, engineering, digital technologies, health and care,



education, professional services and the creative industries. Alongside technical knowledge, employers consistently highlight the importance of digital capability, leadership, communication, adaptability and clean energy skills.

At the same time, the social challenges facing young people have become more pronounced. The number of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) has increased nationally, with growing evidence of the links between economic inactivity, poor mental health, special educational needs and reduced access to opportunity. The Milburn Review into Young People and Work describes this as one of the most significant social and economic challenges facing the country, highlighting the need for earlier intervention, stronger progression pathways and more integrated support for young people furthest from learning and employment.

Alongside this, the government's Every Child Achieving and Thriving White Paper reinforces a national ambition for greater inclusion, improved outcomes for children and young people with SEND, and

stronger collaboration between education providers and local services.

The world around us continues to be shaped by profound environmental, technological and economic change. The climate emergency remains one of the defining challenges of our generation. Artificial intelligence, automation and emerging technologies are transforming industries and redefining the skills required for future careers. Economic uncertainty and continuing pressures on household finances mean many learners require greater support and flexibility than ever before.

The convergence of these local, national and global trends demands a responsive and ambitious college. We must prepare our students not only for the jobs that exist today, but for careers, technologies and opportunities that are still emerging. Our role is to equip individuals with the technical expertise, resilience, adaptability and confidence needed to thrive in a rapidly changing world, while making a meaningful contribution to the social and economic success of Chelmsford, Essex and beyond.

Our Vision, Mission and Values

Our **VISION** is to unlock potential and transform lives through inspirational education and training.

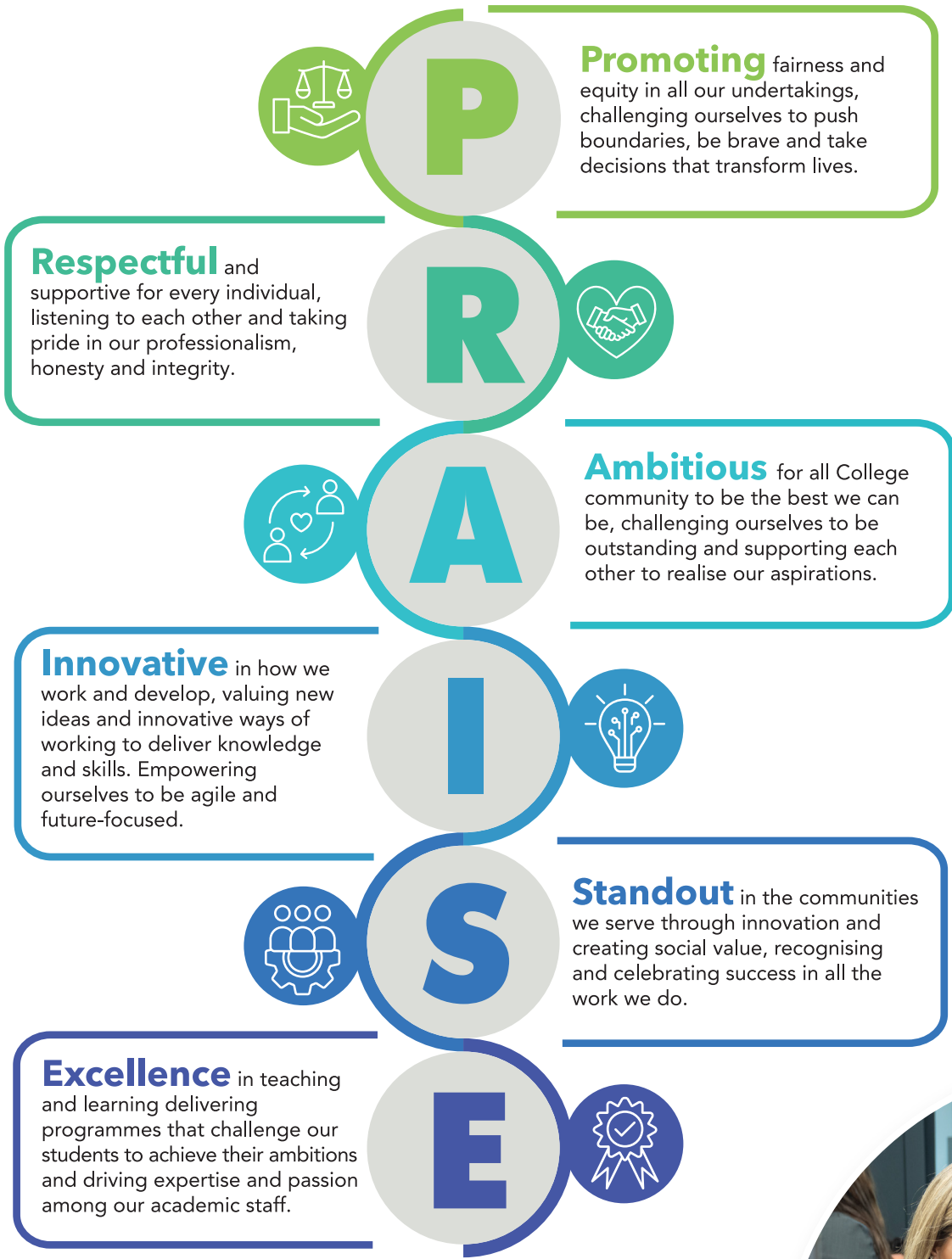
Our **MISSION** is a college that is at the heart of the community, with the power and ambition to transform lives through inspirational education and training, making a significant contribution to the social and economic success in the region and beyond.

Our **VALUES:**

Our College Values are embedded in everything we do, from the way we plan our lessons to the way we behave.

We promote discussions around our Values so people can discover what they mean to them and how they are demonstrated in their everyday lives.

Students are at the heart of everything we do. By demonstrating these Values we aim to create a productive working environment for our staff and a positive learning environment for our students.



Our Purpose

OUR BUILDING BLOCKS:

- Clear line of sight to employment
- Inclusive by design.

OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

We will deliver inspirational, inclusive and purposeful education that not only provides the skills needed for successful careers, but also supports and develops the whole person towards being an active, effective and valued member of their community.

- Our students and staff will embody our values and take these with them into their futures, to support this we will ensure they are equipped with the technical skills for their chosen career, the underlying core skills in maths, English, digital and climate literacy and the essential life skills in problem solving, teamwork and creativity.
- Whilst maintaining our foundation and entry level programmes, we will develop a wider suite of high technical courses aligned to high growth sectors identified in the LSIP.
- We will connect learning to the real world by ensuring every course has a clear line of sight to employment and has opportunities embedded for students to have meaningful encounters with external stakeholders.
- By developing powerful partners with stakeholders, we will provide opportunities for students to experience work, apply technical knowledge into practical scenarios and build self-confidence and a belief in themselves.
- We will provide the wrap-around support our students need to enjoy a healthy lifestyle and overcome any barriers to learning, ensuring no student is left behind.
- By building a strong caring culture, we will help staff and students to support and inspire one another, working harmoniously to build trust and confidence.
- By providing access to specialist support on relationships and sexual health, cultural literacy, sport and physical activities and other enrichment opportunities.

OUR STRATEGIC GOAL

To unlock potential and make a positive contribution to the economic and social communities we serve.



OUR MEASURE OF SUCCESS:

- All of our students will progress into positive destinations appropriate to their starting point.
- All of our students will engage in meaningful work-related experience that prepares them for their next step.
- Staff, student and stakeholder satisfaction will use the net promoter measurement 'how likely are you to recommend the college to...' exceeding benchmarks with similar institutions.
- The college community to add significant social value using a prescribed national measurement tool.



How We Do Things At Chelmsford College



PIONEERING

Our Goal:

- To position the college as a leader in digital education and AI integration. Ensure students and staff are equipped with future-ready digital skill

How:

- Use AI for personalised learning, predictive analytics, and operational efficiency.
- Implement AI-driven learning platforms for personalised education. Develop digital literacy and AI competency frameworks for all students.
- Use data analytics to improve student outcomes and resource allocation.
- Create industry partnerships for emerging tech (AI, cybersecurity, green tech).

PRESENCE

Our Goal:

- To strengthen the college’s identity as a central hub for local economic, cultural, and social development. Enhance visibility through partnerships, events, and outreach. Develop programs that directly address local workforce needs and civic engagement.

How:

- Establish the college as a “go-to” partner for local businesses and councils. Launch community-based projects showcasing student skills and innovation.
- Increase participation in local events and regional development initiatives.
- Create a “Chelmsford College Skills Hub” for lifelong learning and community engagement.

READY RESPECT SAFE

Our Ready, Respect, Safe mantra exemplifies how we do things at Chelmsford College and applies to learners and staff. It sets the standard for how we expect our whole community to behave and inter-act with each other.

- **Ready** – Success begins with preparation. Be on time, be engaged, take charge of your own learning or work and be ready for taking chances.
- **Respect** – Treat others how you wish to be treated. Value different perspectives, listen actively and support your peers.
- **Safe** – A thriving environment is built on safety; physically, emotionally and online. Look out for each other and speak up when needed



Our Strategic Goals

Our Philosophy

OUR STRATEGIC GOAL

To prepare our students to be resilient, adaptive, and socially responsible citizens.



OUR BUILDING BLOCKS:

- Wrap around essential skills embedded.
- We exist to do more than just award qualifications.

OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

We recognise that we exist to do more than award qualifications. Our education philosophy is based on a holistic approach to develop each student as an individual. We will inspire them to unlock their potential through both careers focused technical and vocational skills, a broader set of 'core' skills and a wrap-around set of essential life skills.

Every full-time student and Apprentice that studies at the College will have a personalised learning programme that encompasses:

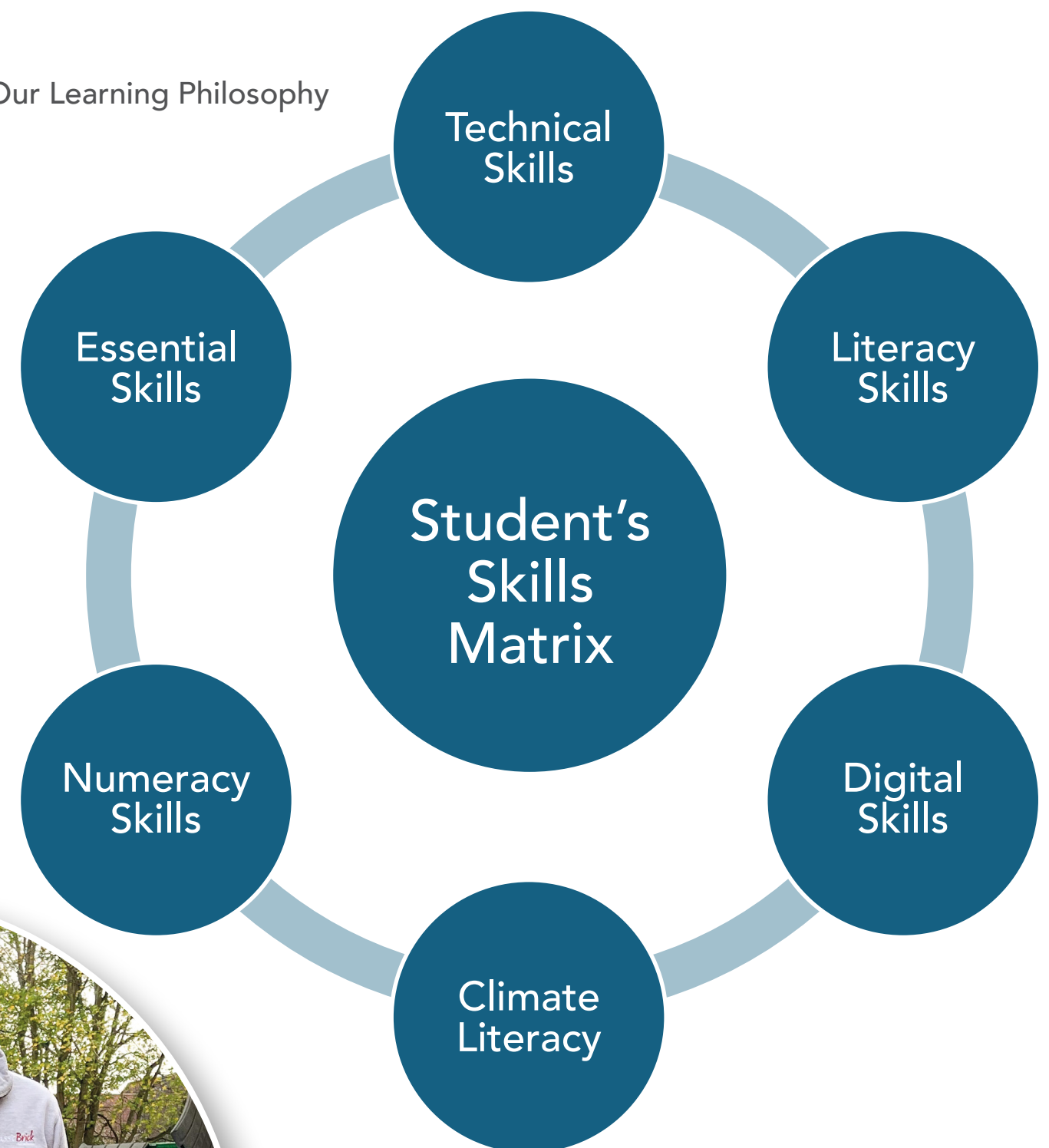
- A technical or vocational subject(s) that is focused on a specific career routeway aligned to LSIP priority or high growth sectors.
- A core set of skills in English, mathematics, digital and climate literacy
- A wider set of essential skills including, teamwork, problem solving, aiming high, speaking, listening, staying positive, creativity and leadership, delivered as part of an over-arching 'Life Skills' programme (which also includes money management, sexual health and mental wellbeing)
- We will invest in supporting students on this journey, including removing any barriers to learning and ensuring no student is left behind. Our approach is about ensuring they are fully equipped with the right attributes and character strengths to cope with whatever life throws at them, building their resilience and growing their confidence to become global citizens.

OUR MEASURES OF SUCCESS:

- Exceptional outcomes in English and maths that exceed national benchmarks.
- All students developing the necessary digital and climate literacy skills appropriate to their course and level.
- A life skills programme that is dynamic and engaging, co-designed and co-delivered with committed partners and stakeholders, resulting in very high levels of student satisfaction
- All students develop their essential skills and make significant progress relative to their starting point.



Our Learning Philosophy



Our Partnership & Political Landscape

OUR STRATEGIC GOAL

To create connected communities through our influence, engagement, and collaboration with stakeholders and political bodies.

OUR BUILDING BLOCKS:

OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE SOCIAL VALUE:

- Through Youth Social Action, volunteering and back to the floor opportunities for staff and learners.

SYSTEMS LEADER PROMOTING ECONOMIC GROWTH:

- Through sector led Industry Boards, engage with stakeholders on the co-design, co-development co-delivery of our training.

INFLUENCING DEVOLVED SKILLS POLICY:

- Through FEDEC partners to support the Mayor to shape a coherent skills policy for Essex.



Our People & Pride

OUR STRATEGIC GOAL

To empower and inspire our people, who bring passion to their job and are proud to celebrate success of their college.

OUR BUILDING BLOCKS:

HIGH PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS:

- Through continuously honing their professional standards, technical skills and embracing professional curiosity.

WELL-BEING AND WORKLOAD:

- Through a culture where work-life balance is prioritised and co-created.

EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE THROUGH COMPETITION PEDAGOGY:

- Through full commitment to the World Skills Centre of Excellence and Going for Gold Strategy.

TAKING PRIDE IN ALL WE ACHIEVE:

- Through taking pride in our achievements and celebrating success stories wherever and whenever they happen.



Our Performance & Prosperity

OUR STRATEGIC GOAL

To have exceptionally high standards and a transformation impact on learners, particularly those that face barriers to their learning.



OUR BUILDING BLOCKS:

INSPIRATIONAL TEACHING AND LEARNING:

- Through inspiring and motivating teachers to design and teach an exceptionally high-quality curriculum that inspires learners and apprentices, and promotes their interest and engagement.

STRONG LEARNER VOICE:

- Through empowering learners to influence and inform decision-making.

SOUND FINANCIAL CONTROLS:

- Through a meticulous focus on value for money and efficient practices that do not compromise quality and performance.

DIVERSIFIED INCOME:

- Through taking calculated risks with agility and responsiveness to opportunities that align to local, regional and national priorities.

Our Place & Planet

OUR STRATEGIC GOAL

To provide transformative learning environments that are sustainable, flexible, efficient and inclusive.

OUR BUILDING BLOCKS:

COMMUNITY & PLACED BASED:

- Through learning spaces that are inclusive, aspirational and innovative, on and off campus.

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES TRANSFORMING WORKING & LEARNING:

- Through embracing AI and digital technologies to transform, teaching, learning and assessment.

PROTECTING THE PLAN THROUGH DECARBONISATION:

- Through reducing our reliance on fossil fuel energy.



Glossary

TERM	MEANING
AoC	Association of Colleges
ARU	Anglia Ruskin University
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
EBITDA	Earnings before tax, depreciation and amortisation
ECC	Essex County Council
EHCP	Education Health Care Plan
EPN	Essex Provider Network
ESFA	Education Skills Funding Agency
ERB	Employer Representative Body
FE	Further Education
FEDEC	Federation of Essex Colleges
HNC	Higher National Certificate
HTQ	Higher Technical Qualification
HTE	Higher Technical Education
IAG	Information Advice and Guidance
IoT	Institute of Technology
LDD	Learning Disabilities and Difficulties
LMI	Labour Market Intelligence
LSIF	Local Skills Improvement Fund
LSIP	Local Skills Improvement Plan
SELEP	South East Local Enterprise Partnership
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SWAP	Sector-based Work Academy Programme
TLSA	Teaching & Learning Skills Academy

Contributions

We would like to thank the following stakeholders who have all contributed to the development of this strategic plan:

- Current students at Chelmsford College
- Current staff (business support and academic) at Chelmsford College
- Members of the Board of Governors from Chelmsford College
- Members of the Senior Management Team at Chelmsford College
- Members of the Stakeholder Scrutiny Committee at Chelmsford College
- Key strategic stakeholders and partners from Chelmsford and the Greater Essex region



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Chelmsford College

Strategic

Plan

2023-2028

2026 update