



Weymouth College

Annual Accountability Statement 2024 – 2025

Purpose

Weymouth College aspires to be an inclusive provider of education, training and skills meeting the skills needs of the local business community and creating 'Opportunities for All'. The key strategic priorities for Weymouth College are defined in the Strategic Plan. Our primary function is to provide the skills, education and training for individuals, businesses, and our local communities.

Our Vision

Your Future Our Strategy - Weymouth College

To deliver excellence in education and training across Dorset: we will transform lives, improve social mobility, and provide skills that lead to employment and contribute to a thriving and recovering local economy

In response to the Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning Opportunity for Growth White Paper (2021), we commit to deliver education and training to our communities with a focus on National, Regional and Local priorities. Section 52B of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 introduced a statutory duty for our Governing Body to review our provision in conjunction with local need as set out in the Skills and Post 16 Education Bill 2022.

Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIP) aim to improve employment outcomes, develop innovative new technical skills and support a more collaborative approach between colleges, employers, and key stakeholders to set out key changes which drive technical skills training to be more responsive to employer needs.

The Dorset Local Skills Improvement Plan, delivered through the Employer Representative Body (ERB), the Dorset Chamber of Commerce, is monitored through a Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) sub-group – the Dorset Skills Board. Membership of the Dorset Skills Board includes all local college providers, representation from private training providers, higher education institutions, LEP, local authorities, adult education and other key stakeholders.

The Weymouth College Accountability Statement is approved and monitored through the College Governance infrastructure.

One of three providers of further, higher and adult education in Dorset, Weymouth College serves a rural and coastal community challenged by high levels of deprivation and low social mobility. To ensure that our community are exposed to a range of opportunities, the College curriculum is broad, however, aims to be responsive by focussing on identified key priorities designed to meet the skills needs of our local businesses in addition to regional and national priorities.

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

CURRICULUM



To provide excellent education and training that is creative, innovative, and provides students with employability and life skills, whilst delivering occupational competencies needed by employers to support economic recovery and growth.

ENVIRONMENT



To be committed to the promotion and delivery of sustainable practices that positively impact on climate change emergency, through organisational, staff and student understanding and participation, leading change through partnerships.

FINANCIAL HEALTH AND RESILIENCE



To secure and sustain long-term financial health for the College, by developing a robust business model which reviews, identifies and creates opportunities for both income growth and operational efficiency, moving the College to Good Financial Health.

INVESTMENT GROWTH



To provide a sustainable foundation for future- proofing and growth, aligning with regional and local economic visions, skills priorities and agendas.

PARTNERSHIPS



To be recognised as a collaborative college, building positive and effective partnerships with businesses, the community, stakeholders and providers.

PEOPLE



To attract, recruit, develop and retain exceptional staff and governors who represent the College by embodying College values and behaviours, contributing to an open, honest and transparent culture.

QUALITY



To strengthen good and excellent practice, by setting ambitious expectations for high staff and student performance, that delivers excellence in education and training.

The Weymouth College Strategic Plan is published on a 3-year cycle and due for review in 2024. As a statutory duty, to ensure that providers of education and training review the curriculum in line with national skills policy, the statement will be published and monitored for impact and outcomes.

Impact

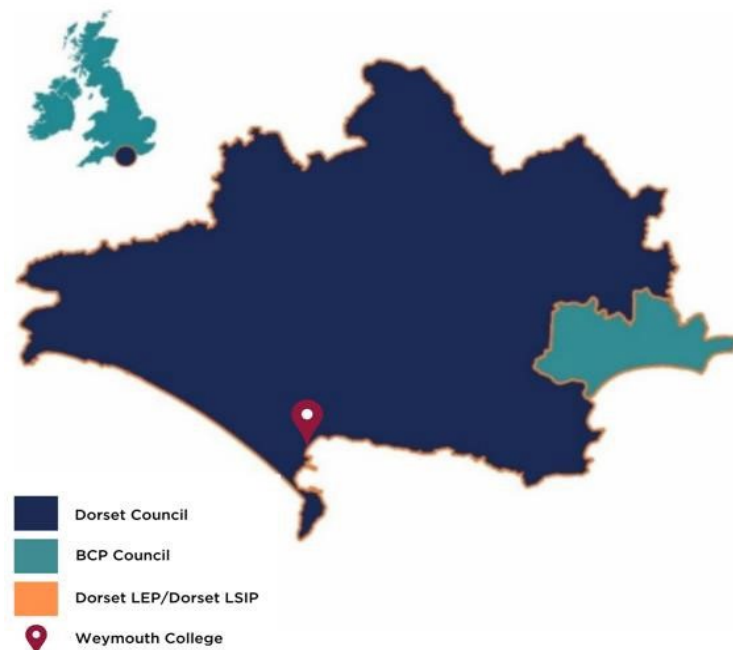
Outcomes, progression into employment or further/higher education are key themes of impact in addition to individual learner achievements and impact on local economic development. Published national data confirms that outcomes are strong, placed 2nd out of 20 colleges in the South-West Region of the country, Weymouth College ensures that learners achieve. The College aims to ensure that learners build resilience by gaining fundamental and transferable skills to support both social and career mobility.

Context, Place & Community

Weymouth College is small College and the only provider of General Further Education (GFE) in Dorset Council Area. Kingston Maurward College (KMC) is a Land Based Specialist College, 9 miles away, and Bournemouth and Poole College is 33 miles away in the east of the county and serving the conurbation of Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole. All 3 colleges are graded Good by Ofsted and positively engage with collaboration opportunities.

During the academic year 2023-24, the College is progressing through a Type B merger process with Kingston Maurward College with a planned merger date of 1st August 2024. If the merger is successfully achieved a new merged College Accountability Statement will be developed as a priority. Currently, both colleges are independently identifying the Local Needs Duty through individual Accountability Statements.

Our location



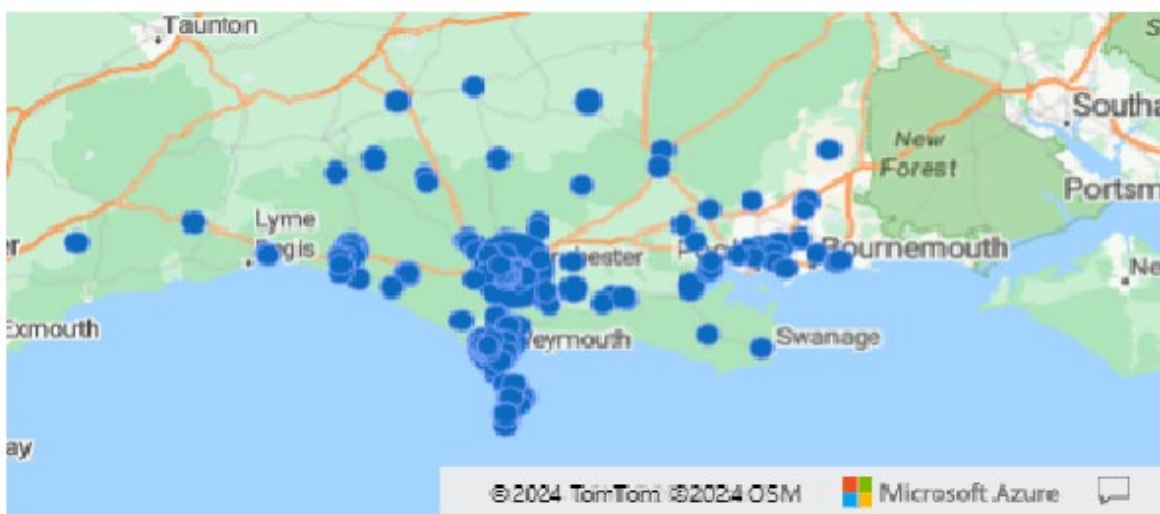
The three Dorset colleges provide education and training to three different environments within the whole Dorset County. Bournemouth and Poole College have the urban catchment with a considerable proportion of the Dorset employers, Kingston Maurward College are a land-based college, delivering a small proportion of general further education courses, alongside land-based provision and Weymouth College delivers a wide range of provision to the coastal rural community.

Weymouth College is classified as 'rural' and reported as the 3rd most isolated GFE College in the country. The College has two campuses delivering education and training in Further Education, Higher Education, Apprenticeships, Commercial, Community and Leisure. The College offers a broad curriculum, with strong progression routes into further and higher education, apprenticeships, and employment. The College has a main campus with a small town-centre site focusing on English, mathematics and digital alongside employability skills supporting adults in the local community returning to work or improving skills.

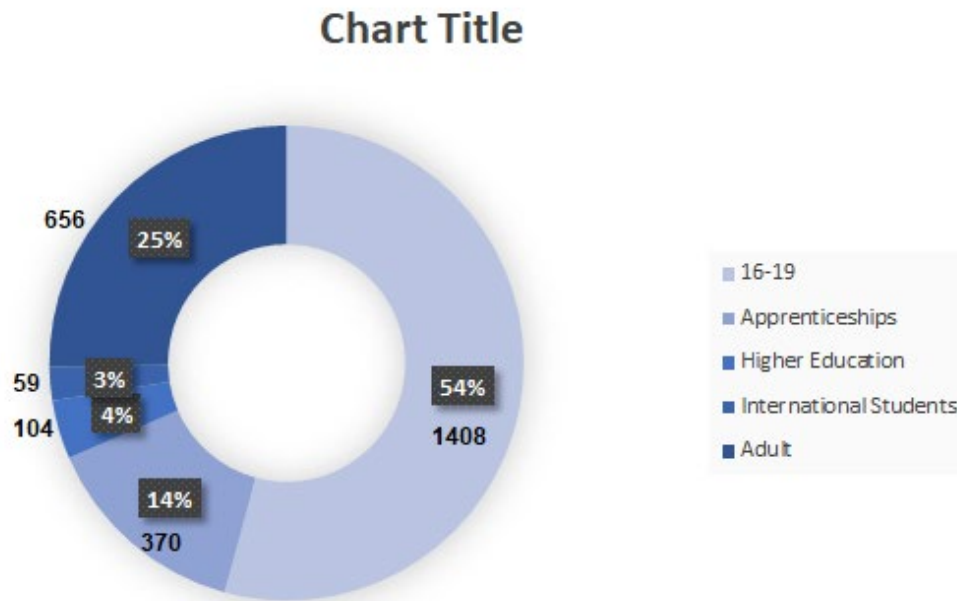
The College is also engaged with national government initiatives and currently delivering mathematics courses for adults through the Multiply project and delivering new innovative curriculum through the Learning and Skills Improvement Fund, through the Local Skills Improvement Plan. This provision is key to introducing new 'green skills' meeting a national skills priority need.

In addition to the local transport infrastructure, the College offers a transport service, but the rurality of our geographical area continues to be a challenge for our learners and can be a barrier to accessibility of employers within an apprenticeship opportunity.

Weymouth College Employer Locations



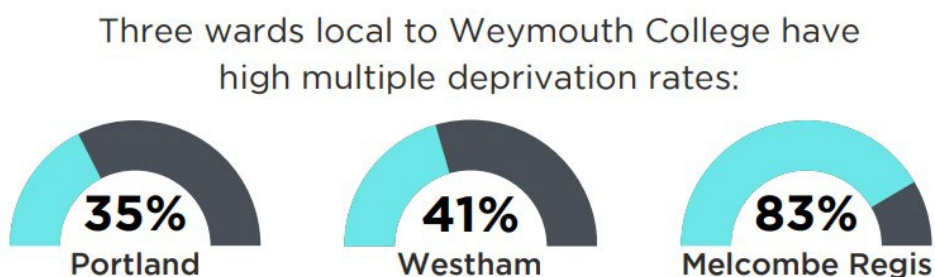
Student Population for Weymouth College Academic Year 2022/23



Within the student population at Weymouth College, 191 learners have an Educational Health Care Plan. The College commits to continue to grow dedicated, specialist and inclusive provision to maximise opportunities for the SEND and EHCP learners of Dorset.

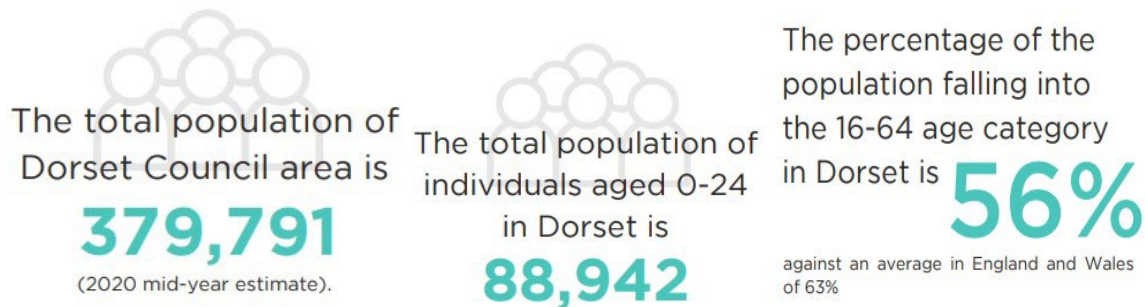
Social Context: Weymouth and Portland

Dorset has a known housing affordability issue and significant areas of deprivation. There are 11 areas (out of a total of 219) in Dorset within the top 20% most deprived nationally for multiple deprivation. Nine of these are in Weymouth and Portland. Twenty-five of Dorset's neighbourhoods are in the 20% most deprived nationally in relation to education. Earnings are below average and house prices are high with affordability issues for many young people and keyworkers.



Three of the wards local to the College have high multiple deprivation rates (% of households that are located in that area in the top 20% of deprivation nationally). Portland at 35%, Westham at 41% and Melcombe Regis, the ward most local to the College showing a very high rate of multiple deprivation at 83%, with income deprivation rate of 82% and an education deprivation rate of 44%.

In 2019, the Social Mobility Index report stated “Coastal areas and industrial towns are becoming real social mobility cold spots. Many of these areas perform badly on both educational measures and adulthood outcomes, giving young people from less advantaged backgrounds limited opportunities to get on”. In July 2021, the Social Mobility and the Pandemic report indicated “disadvantaged pupils in England are now as much as seven months behind their more privileged peers, including the gaps that grew in the last year. Young people have been more susceptible to job losses, with an 8.7% drop for working class men aged 16-24”. The report acknowledges that the key drivers of social mobility relate to College activity in relation to access to education, lifelong learning and employment opportunities/transition to employment.



The total population of the Dorset Council area is 379,791 (2020 mid-year estimate), this includes 74,305 children and young people aged 0-19 representing 20% of the total population (88,942 aged 0-24 years). 56% falling into the 16 - 64 age category (against an average in England and Wales of 63%). The projected growth in population within Dorset is estimated at 8.4% in the next 25 years, against the national growth of 11.7%, with the % of 65+ adults already 10% higher than the national rate, growth is expected to continue the same trend.

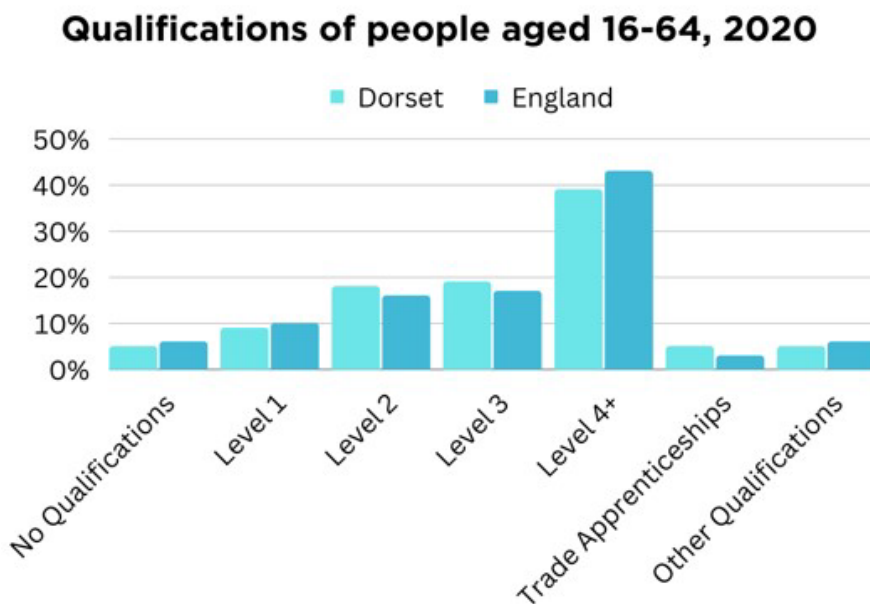


Higher Qualifications for residents in Dorset show a shortfall of 4% at Level 4 and above, with lower-level qualifications slightly higher as a national comparison for England.



Weymouth and Portland residents possess a degree or higher at a rate of **19.8%**, which is **13.8%** below the national rate

19.8% of Weymouth and Portland residents possess a degree or higher, which is 13.8% below the national rate. This is also below the regional rate of Dorset which is reported at 27.2%, 6.5% below the national average.



Economic and Business Context

The immediate community of Weymouth and Portland has a seasonal economy with few large employers – the 3 largest including the NHS, Dorset Council and Weymouth College. The UK Business: Activity, Size, Location 2021 data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) reported that over 99.8% of businesses in the Dorset Council area are Micro (0-9 employees) or Medium sized (0 - 50 employees), 90.11% are Micro with 77.5% of those classified as Small (0-4 employees)

Employment rates are high in Dorset, and higher than UK average, Dorset's established industrial strengths are in financial and professional services, engineering and manufacturing, tourism, culture and environmental economy. Dorset has above national average representation of advanced engineering and of manufacturing, in addition, there is also a continuing seasonal, low skill, low wage economy with the tourism and agriculture industries in Dorset, particularly in the College's immediate area.

The current average salary in Dorset is reported to be between £36,000 - £39,000/annum, with many vacancies advertised at a lower rate. Due to the aging population, there are more of the population leaving employment than joining the workforce. Attracting new employees into Dorset is a key priority, however it is challenged with limited access to affordable housing or accommodation to attract a new workforce into the County.

Scope

Due to the geographical position of the 3 college providers, there is minimal duplicated curriculum. The West of Dorset has a static and potentially declining demographic for young people from 2029, where the East of Dorset, serviced by The Bournemouth and Poole College, are projected to continue with substantial growth in the population of young people.

Approach to the Annual Accountability Agreement

Development

At the initial stages of the implementation of the LSIP, the Dorset Chamber of Commerce engaged with a range of stakeholders, employers and the researcher Insightful UX to gain a full understanding of the local skills needs and business challenges. The plan informs and provides educational establishments with a clear strategic direction to positively impact on local, regional, and national priorities.

Weymouth College fully engaged with the development of the LSIP, through LSIP stakeholder meetings and provider group meetings as well as conducting a complete mapping and reconciliation of employer needs against current College provision. This provided the opportunity to assess a detailed framework for future change to inform actions as well as developmental themes.

In addition to a range of statistical and data sources, the research included methods of online surveys, focus groups and 1:1 interviews. The geographical map of respondents for all priorities demonstrates a higher return within the conurbation of Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch. This is due to the nature of the employers and volume of employers within the East of the county. As one of the 3 main providers within the LSIP boundary, the Dorset Skills Priorities will be addressed in conjunction with further detailed data analysis for the Weymouth and Portland business community.

Key Stakeholders

Weymouth College develops and builds strong partnerships with key stakeholders, with many contributing to, or acknowledging the essence of, the College Strategic Plan. Relationships with partners and employers are key to moulding and developing the design of curriculum and promoting positive collaborations. Key Stakeholders include:

- ✓ Dorset Council: Education and Learning; Economic Development and Regeneration; Social Care for Young People and Adults; SEND
- ✓ Dorset Chamber of Commerce and local Chambers
- ✓ Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership
- ✓ Dorset Skills Board

- ✓ Employers, Business and Advisory Boards
- ✓ NHS
- ✓ Local Member of Parliament
- ✓ Dorset colleges
- ✓ Learning and Skills and Department for Work and Pensions

As the Accountability Statement and Local Skills Improvement Plan evolves over the 3-year lifespan, building on existing stakeholder engagement, we will ensure that our statement and underpinning action plan demonstrates a clear link and dialogue with our Stakeholders.

Provider Collaboration

Excellent provider collaboration has been demonstrated through the Government funded Strategic Development Fund, forming an innovative project between The Bournemouth and Poole College, Learning and Skills and Weymouth College. The project delivered new and innovative curriculum within the Green Construction sector, based on strong employer partnerships, the project outcome launched a new Green Skills Hub for Dorset employers. The project, launched in December 2022, aims to drive sustainability across Dorset – working towards the Net Zero priority within the LSIP, the aim is to continue to maintain and develop this platform across Dorset.

Weymouth College is active in its relationships with local schools through the Chesil Heads Partnership meetings, hosted by the College. This relationship provides an opportunity to ensure that the schools are updated on local further and higher education provision, promoting access to impartial guidance for learners.

Plymouth University is the partner for validated Higher Education provision at the College. This strong partnership is well established and provides opportunities for several Weymouth College Level 3 programmes to be studied at a higher level in the locality.

LSIP Success

The LSIP Plan states that “Success will be a collective challenge to the status quo, more piloting of new ways of working, more outward-facing behaviours and active partnerships, and more shared goals and measures.” Weymouth College is committed to supporting LSIP aims.

Contribution to National, Regional and Local Priorities

National Skills Priorities

The following priorities have been set by the government and are important in providing opportunities for employment in key growth areas such as green jobs, creative industries and science and technology:

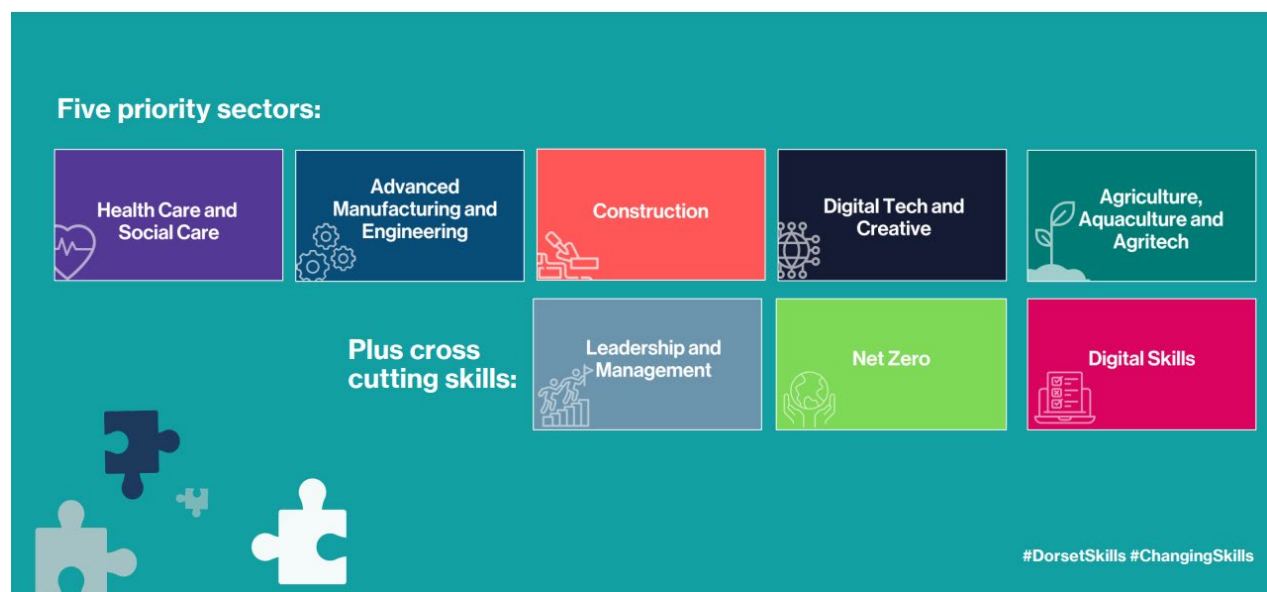
- ✚ **Construction**
- ✚ **Manufacturing**
- ✚ **Digital and Technology**
- ✚ **Health and Social Care**

- † **Haulage and Logistics**
- † **Engineering**
- † **Science and Mathematics**

The College is currently contributing to six of the national priorities through core curriculum, this is enhanced through the government Multiply initiative and leading innovative curriculum for 'green skills' through the Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF).

Regional and Local

Within the region the following sectors have been identified within the Dorset LSIP as priority sectors requiring growth and innovation underpinned by the need for cross cutting skills:



Weymouth College Actions 2024/25

The College will work towards the following actions addressing employer needs as identified through the Dorset LSIP. Actions are monitored and reviewed through the Curriculum and Quality Committee through to full Board, to ensure that impact and progress is maximised.

Key Priority Cross Cutting	Action Dorset Wide Employer Awareness Campaign	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To enhance our visibility and provide clarification of the Dorset training for employers. ✓ Employers will be aware that providers are responsive and willing to co-design curriculum and training. ✓ Employers will be aware that providers can provide bespoke commercial training in response to demand. 	Measure Increased knowledge of Dorset provision by employers and the local community – linking to outcomes of employer feedback.	

Key Priority Construction Net Zero	Action Dorset Green Construction Skills Hub
Impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Building on the development of the SDF and LSIF Green Construction Skills projects, further develop new curriculum linked to sector needs, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electric Vehicle Charging Installation • Installation and Maintenance of Heat Pump Systems • Installation of Small Scale Solar Photovoltaic Systems • Design and Retrofit • Surveying - Engaging with innovative digital equipment to improve efficiency • Innovative employer designed curriculum for modern methods of construction ✓ Continue to review and tailor our provision in response to employer demand and support local industry to adapt to Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) and low carbon technologies. ✓ Work with key employers and the sector representative body CITB to design training courses that will develop training provision in MMC 	Measure <p>We will deliver new training provisions in our curriculum for the 2024/25 academic year, covering the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electric Vehicle Charging Installation • Installation and Maintenance of Heat Pump Systems • Installation of Small Scale Solar Photovoltaic Systems • Design and Retrofit • Surveying - Engaging with innovative digital equipment to improve efficiency • Innovative employer designed curriculum for modern methods of construction
Key Priority Construction Digital Health and Social Care	Action Introduction of T Levels in Priority Areas
Impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To roll-out a suite of T Level programmes for Weymouth College in key priority areas: ✓ T level in Health (Adult Nursing) – Sept 2023 (<i>Achieved</i>) ✓ T Level in Education and Childcare – Sept 2023 (<i>Achieved</i>) ✓ T Level in Construction (Design, Surveying and Planning) – Sept 2024 ✓ T level in Digital (Support Services) – Sept 2025 ✓ Support new employer responsive curriculum with capital infrastructure for T-Level provision. 	Measure <p>To establish new curriculum with 85 learners recruited by Sept 2025.</p> <p>Through government T Level funding - Invest £130,000 in new equipment to support the transition to new curriculum.</p>
Key Priority Cross Cutting	Action Employability / Soft Skills

Impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Continue developing the cross-college tutorial program, utilising sector-specific data to identify common/soft skills priorities outlined by labor market information (LMI) for each sector. ✓ Deliver core transferable skills to learners through participation in the college's Priority Programs. 		Measure 85%+ positive student survey responses to 3 dedicated employability questions. Qualitative feedback during Autumn & Summer advisory panels for priority programmes.
Key Priority Digital	Action Improve Digital Capacity & Infrastructure	
Impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Future-proofing the College to ensure that the estate infrastructure and curriculum offer can meet the new growth opportunities and demands of the Digital industry. ✓ By having a new state of the art resource, it will help us to meet the needs of industry and prepare learners for the world of work or to progress into Higher Education. 		Measure As an element of the Estates Strategy connected to the potential merger with Kingston Maurward, there are plans to invest £500,000 in new facilities and equipment to accommodate the evolving needs of the Digital industry, (Sept 2025).
Key Priority Engineering Construction Digital	Action Apprenticeships & Higher-Level Technical Skills	
Impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To support the local skills gaps identified through the LSIP Report 2024 within health & social care, construction, engineering, and digital by reviewing/developing Apprenticeship programmes and level 4 or higher provision by September 2025. 		Measure Increase recruitment on Apprenticeship programmes and/or level 4 and above by 20% (Additional 47 learners/apprentices)
Key Priority Cross Cutting	Action Mathematics, English and Digital Skills (IT Skills)	
Impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Further support entrants to professions in key sectors with the requirement for English literacy, mathematical and digital upskilling. ✓ Review and increase promotion of all related provision (Multiply, part time funded Mathematics, English and Digital Skills courses) across delivery locations – 106 Adult Centre / Dorset Training Academy / Cranford Avenue Campus. ✓ Continue with the investment of extra online platforms using learning science, artificial intelligence, and neuroscience to create an individualised learning plan for each student. This will provide additional learning opportunities and flexibility for planned delivery. 		Measure Increase recruitment on adult (19+) related programmes by 15% from the 3-year average of 253. 1200 learners engage with online platform obtaining additional learning for Mathematics, English and Digital Skills during academic year 2024/25.

✓ This continued investment can be utilised across all provision types and be included as part of the central delivery with the aim of increasing studying time and improving skills development.	
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Merger


At point of merger (1st August 2024) the new College will develop a new Accountability Agreement.

Corporation Declaration:

On behalf of the Weymouth College Corporation, it is hereby confirmed that the plan, as set out above, reflects an agreed statement of purpose, aims and objectives as approved by the Weymouth College Corporation. This plan is available and published on the College website ([Link](#)), and will be reviewed and monitored by the Board on an annual academic year cycle.

Reference Documents:

Steve Webb
Chair of Corporation
Date 28/06/24



Julia Howe
Principal and CEO
Date 28/06/24



Sources:

[Dorset Chamber Local Skills Improvement Plan](#)

[Social Mobility Index](#)

[Dorset Skills Action Plan](#)

[Dorset LEP Skills Board Committee](#)

[Your Future Our Strategy - Weymouth College](#)

[Dorset LSR Annex Core Indicators 2022](#)

[Findings - Dorset Chamber](#)