

One College
One Future

Weymouth and Kingston Maurward College

Annual Accountability Statement

2025-2026

Weymouth and Kingston Maurward College plays a central role in Dorset's economic and social development. By responding to each of the LSIP's strategic priorities, we ensure that our provision remains responsive, inclusive and impactful.

We are determined to deliver a world-class technical education system for the county—equipping learners with the knowledge, skills and attributes to succeed, and ensuring employers have the skilled workforce they need to thrive.

Please use this link to access the Weymouth and Kingston Maurward Website where the Annual Accountability Statement 2025-2026 is available: www.WKMC.ac.uk



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Section 1: Key Purpose and Strategic Priorities

Our Vision and Purpose

Our vision is of a community where everyone has the skills, resilience and confidence they need to excel in life, at work, and in an ever-changing world.

Our core purpose is to partner with industry and our local communities to inspire and equip students and apprentices for individual success beyond expectation. Rooted in the needs of Dorset and the wider region, our provision ensures learners are future ready-prepared to thrive in today's fast-evolving industries and contribute meaningfully to tomorrow's workforce. Aligned with our strategic priorities, we focus on delivering high-quality, inclusive education, strengthening employer engagement, and driving local economic and environmental resilience through skills development and innovation.

"We partner with industry and our community to inspire students and apprentices for individual success beyond expectation – we ensure they are 'future-ready', prepared for today and tomorrow's world."

Values

We are Welcoming

"We celebrate diversity, ensuring a safe, inclusive, supportive and sustainable environment for all – a space where everyone is valued and treated with respect."

We are Connected

"Inspired by our heritage, we play a key part in a collaborative ecosystem – where everyone has a platform to grow, contribute and make an impact beyond borders."

We are Dynamic

"We embrace innovation, technology, industry advances and hands-on learning, in everything we do – helping and challenging employers to ensure they thrive in their sector."

We are Empowering

"We create opportunities for all; our staff, our students, our community, the economy and the world – opening doors and helping everyone achieve their full potential."

We are Courageous

"In our relentless pursuit of excellence, we embrace challenges both big and small – we have the determination to succeed, through deep-rooted curiosity and resilience."

Weymouth and Kingston Maurward College makes a strong contribution to local and regional skills development, and this was recognised by Ofsted in May 2025. This reflects a broad, inclusive and employer-responsive curriculum offer, a well-qualified and industry-aware teaching workforce, and sustained, high-quality learner progression into employment, further study and apprenticeships. Our

strategy has been informed by extensive recent stakeholder engagement; local, regional and national drivers, with particular alignment to the Dorset Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) 2025; the Department for Education's skills policy; and national sector priorities.

The College is a dual-campus institution, with a specialist land-based provision located at the Kingston Maurward Campus and a diverse vocational and academic offer based at the Weymouth Campus. Both campuses contribute uniquely to the regional economy and skills pipeline, and together we provide a unified offer that meets the evolving needs of learners, communities and employers.

This Accountability Statement outlines our strategic intent and operational commitments to develop a skilled, confident and future-ready workforce across Dorset and beyond. It is underpinned by the principles of local collaboration, employer responsiveness, inclusive participation, and a relentless focus on high-quality teaching, learning and assessment.

Our Strategy

In alignment with our mission statements at both the Weymouth Campus and the Kingston Maurward Campus, we will:

- Provide high-quality, responsive education and training that enables every learner to achieve their potential.
- Strengthen employer engagement to co-create programmes that deliver current and future workforce skills.
- Invest in facilities, digital infrastructure and staff development to ensure the continued delivery of industry-standard training.
- Build strong progression pathways into employment, further study and higher-level technical routes, including apprenticeships.
- Align our provision to the economic priorities of the Dorset LSIP and intelligence gained through our relationships with employers.

Section 2: Context and Place

Weymouth and Kingston Maurward College are central to post-16 education across coastal and rural Dorset. Their distinct yet complementary strengths—technical and vocational education at Weymouth, and land-based, heritage, and sustainability-focused education at Kingston Maurward—position the merged institution at the heart of a complex and evolving local economic and social landscape.

As of May 2025, the college has 2087 learners studying on education programmes for young people, with just under half studying at level 3. The college has 330 learners studying adult courses across a number of different subject areas. The college has 52 T Level students in the current academic year.

The college has 295 apprentices across 30 different apprenticeships, with just over half studying at level 3. Most of the apprentices are over 19 years old. The largest numbers are in construction subjects.

Dorset has a relatively high overall employment rate (80.3% for ages 16–64 as of December 2023), above the South West average (78.8%) and national average ([ONS, 2024](#)). However, within the Weymouth and Portland area, this rate falls to 67.2%, and the region is among the 20% most deprived in England ([Public Health Dorset, 2023](#)). The area faces significant economic inequality and entrenched social immobility, with limited progression routes for disadvantaged learners—particularly those from rural and coastal communities.

Dorset's economy relies on a mix of sectors: tourism (a key employer in Weymouth), agriculture, health and care, the public sector, and increasingly, digital and low-carbon technologies. Dorset County Hospital, Dorset Council, the MOD (at Bovington and Portland), and tourism-based employers represent some of the largest employment bases in the area.

The region is dominated by small and micro businesses: over 98% of Dorset's 20,000+ businesses are SMEs, with 83.6% classified as micro-businesses (0–9 employees) in South Dorset alone (Dorset Council Insights, 2023). This business profile drives demand for flexible, adaptable, and entrepreneurial graduates—something the College addresses through vocational programmes, apprenticeships, and close employer partnerships.

Despite Dorset's relative affluence, social mobility remains a serious concern. The county consistently ranks among the lowest nationally for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds progressing to higher education or skilled employment (Dorset Council, 2022). Additionally, 44% of the workforce is aged over 50, underscoring the need to attract and retain younger talent. Pay levels are also an issue: 32,000 jobs in Dorset pay below the real living wage, with many young people forced to leave the area due to a lack of opportunities and affordable housing.

Against this backdrop, Weymouth and Kingston Maurward College support hundreds of learners each year to progress to higher education (including HE-in-FE and university), higher technical qualifications, and employment. Nationally, 70.2% of FE students progress to level 4+ destinations (DfE, 2023), and over 83% of HE graduates are in work within 15 months ([HESA, 2024](#)).

The College operates in a regional landscape that includes other key providers: Bournemouth and Poole College, Skills & Learning ACE, and private training providers linked through the Dorset and Somerset Training Provider Network (DSTPN). Together, they contribute to a coordinated skills strategy across the county.

The Dorset Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), led by Dorset Chamber, sets out clear priorities that the College addresses in its curriculum strategy. These include urgent demand for skills in digital and creative sectors, construction trades, health and care, agriculture and agri-tech, and environmental sustainability ([Dorset Chamber LSIP, 2023](#)). Labour market intelligence highlights high vacancies in IT, engineering, logistics, and care, alongside persistent needs in traditional rural industries such as farming and land management.

Kingston Maurward College is uniquely positioned to lead on the educational response to the ecological emergency. It is a regional leader in regenerative farming, rural skills, heritage crafts, and land-based sustainability. The college's close links with employers ensure training is up to date with sector needs and supports productivity in these essential industries. Both campuses support the wider ambitions of the Great South West initiative, contributing to food and fuel sustainability through local innovation, education, and workforce development.

Weymouth and Kingston Maurward College also use their commercial assets to benefit students and the community—investing in high-quality facilities, real-world learning environments, and enterprise opportunities. Their mission is not only to deliver qualifications but to ensure learners become confident, resilient, life- and work-ready individuals.

As a combined institution, the College continues to be a vital enabler of inclusive growth, regional sustainability, and opportunity for all across Dorset.

Section 3: Approach to Developing the Annual Accountability Statement

The WKMC accountability agreement sets out our local industrial heritage and explains how we will further strategically invest to maximise the opportunities to support our local business communities' success. The College is committed to designing a forward - looking curriculum with high quality learning resources to develop our business partners' highly capable workforce, ensuring that we can support our community and businesses to be globally competitive, delivering more and better jobs, with a clear line of sight to exciting local careers for all our students.

Students, staff, partner organisations, employer representatives and the college Board all contributed to the development of the Strategic Plan. The college closely engages with the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) and Employer Representative Body (ERB), the Dorset Chamber of Commerce, leading work as part of the LSIP and LSIF. The college has worked through the LSIP and Dorset LEP meeting structures, which include employers, public sector and private training and education providers (and representative organisations) on the content of our LSIP response and how it fits into the overall Dorset picture.

The Governing Body has continued to strengthen with the addition of the introduction of new members of the board, from key strategic positions from our stakeholders, securing the diverse skills base, experience and links to local business and community. The composition of board members has continued to evolve and incorporate the skills and experience required across a broad range of disciplines to further enhance a highly effective board with an excellent mix of skills and experience. The governors take a lead in setting a clear strategic vision, which is articulated through a robust annual strategic planning process, involving consultation with teams across the College. The governing body play an active role in The Association of Colleges, which provides a link into the local, regional and national FE sector.

The following activities have enabled the college to tailor it's approach towards meeting local, regional, and national skills priorities:

- LMI (Labour Market Intelligence) gathered directly from employers through business development activities and sector related industry boards.
- LMI published via Vector and Nomis used to inform objectives and curriculum intent.
- Established partnerships with local and county councils, and the Department of Work and Pensions to ascertain priorities across the region.
- Skills priorities published by the Dorset LSIP.
- Ongoing engagement with Chambers of Commerce, who are leading the local skills improvement plan for the region.
- Gained governor feedback and approval of our strategic plan and the objectives set out in the accountability statement.
- The Dorset LSIP aims to represent depth and breadth of Dorset employers. Within the region the following sectors have been identified as high need, growth and innovation sectors and will form the core priorities of the report (Dorset LSIP): Agriculture, Agri-tech and Aquaculture Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering including Aerospace, Defence and Marine Construction, Digital Tech and Creative, Health and Social Care

Section 4: Contribution to National, Regional and Local Priorities

To meet key national, regional and local priorities, and our Local Needs Duty, the College has identified key areas where we will prioritise our activities in the next year. Through these priorities we aim to have a transformational impact on the opportunities for our communities, delivering leading skills training to realise full potential and meet aspirations.

Alignment with the Dorset LSIP

We have undertaken a thorough review of the **Dorset LSIP March 2025 update**, and this strategy responds comprehensively to its **five core priorities** and associated employer feedback. We make significant reference to the specific sub-sectors, local growth drivers and identified skills deficits outlined across the LSIP.

LSIP Priority 1: Provision Aligned to Business Need

Employers across Dorset report persistent difficulties in recruiting skilled staff in technical roles, particularly in health and care, digital, construction, advanced engineering, agriculture, and visitor economy sectors.

Our Response:

- At **Weymouth Campus**, we have expanded Health and Social Care programmes to include Level 3 pathways with a clear progression to HE and clinical apprenticeships. For September 2025, this will include T levels in Health and Social Care.
- At **Kingston Maurward Campus**, we deliver industry-aligned qualifications in Agriculture, Horticulture, Equine Science and Animal Management. A new Agriculture Centre on the Kingston Maurward site will increase the focus on regenerative agriculture and biodiversity as part of the curriculum and this will be in place for September 2025.
- Launch of new T Levels in Health, Digital Production, and Construction, from September 2025 alongside higher technical qualifications (HTQs) in Engineering.
- Regular review of curriculum intent and employer forums to co-develop qualifications in emerging sub-sectors such as digital health, green construction, and marine conservation. These reviews will continue in the 2025-26 academic year.

LSIP Priority 2: Improve the Employer Engagement Infrastructure

The Dorset LSIP highlights that employer input into curriculum planning is inconsistent across the county. There is a need for a more structured and proactive approach to employer engagement.

Our Response:

- Creation of a cross-campus **Employer Engagement Strategy Group** for the 2025-26 academic year.
- Continue to establish and develop sector-specific feedback from industry (e.g. land-based industries, health care, construction, and digital) to advise on curriculum content, work

placement design, and assessment practices, in the 2025-26 academic year to continue to shape curriculum against the needs of industry.

- Appointment of new **Work Placement Officers** across both campuses to provide a single point of contact for local businesses – these roles will be in place during the 2025-26 academic year.
- Engagement with Dorset Chamber, Dorset Engineering Group, and care provider networks to co-host skills roundtables and CPD forums.

LSIP Priority 3: Responsive Careers Information, Advice and Guidance

The LSIP identifies a need to strengthen CEIAG, particularly by raising awareness of the full range of technical pathways and by addressing misconceptions about vocational education.

Our Response:

- Comprehensive CEIAG programme aligned to the **Gatsby Benchmarks**, delivered across both campuses by trained Level 6 advisers and a refreshed approach to CEIAG as a newly merged college, which will be in place for September 2025.
- Sector-specific progression pathways prominently displayed on course literature and a new college website, in place for December 2025.
- Integration of local Labour Market Information (LMI) into tutorials, subject guides and parent engagement sessions from September 2025.
- Strategic partnership with Dorset Careers Hub, schools and employers to deliver careers fairs, employer encounters and curriculum-linked employer visits, which will be in place for September 2025.

LSIP Priority 4: Skills for Green and Net-Zero Economy

The Dorset LSIP calls for urgent upskilling in green skills, across sectors such as construction, agriculture, marine, logistics and tourism. Employers also emphasised the need for sustainability to be a core element of all programmes.

Our Response:

- Development of a **Green Curriculum Framework** to embed sustainability into all curriculum areas from September 2025.
- In the 2025-26 academic year, explore the potential of new modules and qualifications in areas such as renewable energy, low-carbon transport and sustainable land use.
- Industry partnership with NFU, local landowners and environmental NGOs to offer practical learning in biodiversity monitoring, regenerative farming and carbon offsetting.
- Greater utilisation of current resources, for example with the decarbonisation of the Kingston Maurward estate, including the use of biomass heating and solar energy, use this for student-led energy audits and research, during the 2025-26 academic year.

LSIP Priority 5: Boosting Essential and Work-Ready Skills

Employers consistently cite the need for enhanced employability, communication, confidence, resilience and digital fluency.

Our Response:

Within the 2025-26 academic year, we will ensure:

- Embedding of employability and enterprise skills within all study programmes.
- Bespoke work-readiness curriculum for learners with SEND or those on transition to employment programmes.
- Digital skills framework adopted to ensure learners gain practical skills in Microsoft 365, cybersecurity awareness, digital collaboration and data handling.
- Employer-developed scenarios used in assessment practices to contextualise learning.
- Focus on the building of confidence and resilience through tailored personal tutoring to empower every student to be their best.

The impact of Cost of Living and post-Covid trends on local communities and our people is felt at the College. We have a crucial role to play in promoting the value of skills and progression to good jobs and to further learning for those furthest away from the labour market and to families.

Our Strategic Approach for the 2025-2026 academic year

We will deliver a coherent, sequenced and ambitious curriculum that meets the needs of local students and employers. The College's offer will reflect key economic sectors as outlined in the LSIP and Dorset Local Industrial Strategy.

Health and Social Care (Weymouth Campus):

- Expanded provision from Level 1 to Access to HE, with integrated work placements and simulation labs.
- Employer co-designed curriculum aligned to local NHS and care home providers.

Construction and Engineering (Weymouth Campus):

- Delivery of T Levels and apprenticeships in carpentry, plumbing, electrical installation, civil engineering and digital construction.
- Strong progression into local firms and university engineering programmes.

Digital, Creative and ICT (Weymouth Campus):

- Investment in digital resources and ICT to ensure our students have access to the very latest state-of-the-art technology, which will be in place by September 2025, through specialist equipment T level funding.

Agriculture, Land-Based and Environmental Studies (Kingston Maurward Campus):

- Pathways in land-based engineering, animal care, horticulture, countryside management, and equine studies.
- New focus on regenerative farming, environmental stewardship, and sustainable business models within the existing curriculum.

Visitor Economy and Hospitality (Weymouth Campus):

- Courses in tourism, professional cookery, event planning and customer service.
- Local partnerships with Dorset tourism and hospitality employers to create realistic work environments.

Supporting Adults and Lifelong Learning

Adult learners are a key part of our strategy to boost participation and upskilling in priority sectors. We provide:

- Modular and flexible delivery models for adults in health, green skills, business and digital sectors.
- Sector-based Work Academy Programmes (SWAPs) in partnership with Jobcentre Plus.
- ESOL, English and maths provision at all levels to support migrant workers and adult returners.
- Free Level 3 adult courses aligned to the Lifelong Learning Entitlement.

Inclusive Practice and Social Mobility

We are committed to reducing barriers to education and ensuring our provision supports social mobility. Our provision includes:

- Foundation Learning pathways for learners with SEND or who are not yet ready for Level 1 study.
- Supported internships and inclusive apprenticeships, with wraparound support.
- Bursaries and hardship funds to reduce financial barriers.
- Mental health, counselling and safeguarding services across both campuses.

Workforce Development and CPD

Our staff are central to our ability to deliver this strategy. We invest in continuous professional development (CPD) to ensure teaching staff:

- Maintain occupational currency and industry-standard skills.
- Understand and embed green and digital skills in all delivery.
- Have access to teacher training and pedagogical development.
- Are supported through coaching, mentoring and peer-led improvement.

Investment and Infrastructure

To support the delivery of this ambitious strategy, we continue to invest in our physical and digital infrastructure:

- Development of the Agri-Tech Centre at Kingston Maurward to include green skills.
- Refurbishment of the Construction and Engineering Centre at Weymouth.
- Refurbishment of the specialist areas utilised by students with High Needs, to ensure the most up to date support
- Investment in immersive learning technology and online delivery platforms.
- Improved accessibility and transport links to widen participation.

Section 5: Local Needs Duty

At Weymouth and Kingston Maurward College, our purpose is to partner with industry and our community to inspire students and apprentices to achieve individual success beyond expectation. We are committed to ensuring all learners are future-ready—confident, resilient, and fully prepared for life and work in today's and tomorrow's world.

In line with our strategic objectives and our duty under the Skills and Post-16 Education Act (2022), we work collaboratively with local providers and employers across Dorset to ensure our curriculum meets evolving local, regional, and national skills needs. Through continuous curriculum review, employer engagement, and active participation in the Dorset Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), we align our provision with priority sectors and labour market demand.

We will lead on the educational response to the ecological emergency by embedding sustainability across our curriculum and championing regenerative farming, rural skills, and heritage skills. We are also proud to collaborate regionally through the Great Southwest partnership, contributing to joint efforts to address fuel and food sustainability, which are essential for long-term resilience and opportunity in the region.

We use our commercial strength strategically to benefit our students and our community, investing in high-quality learning environments, real-world experiences, and community-focused initiatives that enhance both educational outcomes and social value.

Our focus on technical excellence, sustainability, and inclusive growth ensures we contribute meaningfully to the prosperity and resilience of the Dorset region. We aspire to be a destination of choice—valued for our innovation, collaboration, and impact on learners' futures and the wider economy.

Section 6: Corporation Statement

The Weymouth and Kingston Maurward Board of Governors reviewed and approved this Annual Accountability Statement at a meeting held on 9 June 2025.

Approved by the Governing Body:

INSERT SIGNATURE

Chris Evans
Chair of Corporation
9 June 2026

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Section 7: Supporting Documentation

WKMC OFSTED Monitoring Report – November 2024
WKMC OFSTED Report – May 2025
Dorset Local Skills Improvement Plan (Dorset LSIP) Progress Reports

We are proud of our strong foundations and optimistic about our future impact.