COLLEGE PLAN

2025/26 - 2027/28

CONTENTS

1 **Statement of Strategic Intent 2025 - 2028**

In the context of

i. A new mission-led Labour Government with 5 missions underpinned by skills and education, who constantly remind us that they are making lots of 'tough' decisions

ii. A plethora of strategies, reviews, reforms and consultations that make the external environment difficult to predict

iii. A strong and stable college positioned to deal with whatever challenges and opportunities the turbulent environment presents to us

The College will:

1.1 Prioritise the delivery of **outstanding quality** in terms of teaching, learning and assessment and the student experience so that all our students progress and reach their potential.

1.2 Strive to create a **college community** with core values at its heart.

1.3 Nurture our students and staff so that we have high levels of morale and wellbeing, together with **creativity, innovation and excellence**.

1.4 Provide **exceptional levels of student care** with an emphasis on good citizenship, employability skills and positive progression outcomes.

1.5 **Invest in our staff** and their wellbeing to sustain high quality provision.

1.6 Maintain outstanding **financial stability** through effective cost control and creating funds to grow and invest.

1.7 Invest in and **modernise** our centres to meet local and regional priorities and to meet the net zero target of 2040

1.8 Promote **growth areas**, particularly 16-18, higher education, retraining and upskilling adults, apprenticeships and full cost recovery courses.

1.9 Prioritise the needs of the people of **Halton and the Liverpool City Region (LCR).**

1.10 Continue to be the first choice for school leavers, adult learners and employers while maintaining a market-led, **regionally responsive college** with an exciting and engaging curriculum to meet the needs of the of the Liverpool City Region Long Term Skills Plan launched in 2024.

1.11 Work in **partnership** to engage those who traditionally do not participate in education and training.

Overall, the College will aim to be **sector leading** in all its activities, developing a national reputation for excellence.

2 **Student Numbers, Financial Forecasts and Three-Year Targets**

Summary	25/26 £'000	26/27 £'000	27/28 £'000
Income			
16-18	32,267	32,007	32,007
Adult	3,127	3,127	3,127
Apprenticeships	2,300	2,400	2,400
OfS	1,856	1,856	1,856
Other Income (inc DLSF)	3,552	3,256	3,000
Total Income	**43,102**	**42,646**	**42,390**
Expenditure			
Pay	23,942	25,139	26,396
Non-Pay	15,130	14,994	15,093
Total Expenditure	**39,072**	**40,133**	**41,489**
Operating Surplus (prior FRS 102)	**4,030**	**2,513**	**901**
Capital expenditure - property	18,026	9,000	1,500
Borrowings yr end	-	-	-
Cash yr end	13,570	8,816	8,217
Financial Health	**Outstanding**	**Outstanding**	**Outstanding**

2.1 Student Numbers and Financial Forecasts

	Student Numbers 2025/26	Funding 2025/26 £'000		Student Numbers 2026/27	Funding 2026/27 £'000		Student Numbers 2027/28	Funding 2027/28 £'000
16 - 18 (inc. HN)	4,000	32,267		4,000	32,007		4,000	32,007
Adult	1,790	3,127		1,850	3,127		1,850	3,127
Office for Students (OfS)	374	1,856		380	1,856		380	1,856
Apprentices	555	2,300		575	2,400		575	2,400
Full Cost Recovery	100	100		100	100		100	100
Fee income/other		3,452			3,156			2,900
Total	**6,769**	**43,102**		**6,905**	**42,646**		**6,905**	**42,390**

2.2 Three Year Targets

    (i)   Financial Targets

Performance Indication	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Cash days in hand	136	86	80
Adjusted current ratio	3.13	2.12	2.00
EBITDA as a % of income – education specific	11.18	8.62	3.09
Borrowing as a % of income	-	-	-
Non-mainstream income	6.23%	6.29%	6.20%
DfE Annual Financial Assessment	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Staff costs as % of income	57.88	61.30	63.79
Class size	16	17	17

    (ii)   Staff Targets

Performance Indicator	2025/26 (%)	2026/27 (%)	2027/28 (%)
Absence rate	4	3.75	3.6
Agency staff	2	2	2
Staff utilisation	98	98	98
Fully qualified staff	95	95	95
Working towards qualifications	5	5	5

Quality and Standards Dashboard

End of year indicators (targets and outcomes)				
Performance Indicator	24/25 target	25/26 target	26/27 target	26/27 target
Overall Achievement	88.2%	88.6%	88.9%	89.1%
16-18 Achievement	86.0%	86.4%	86.8%	87.0%
19+ Achievement	92.0%	92.2%	92.3%	92.4%
Overall retention	92.0%	92.2%	92.4%	92.5%
Overall Pass rate	96.0%	96.1%	96.2%	96.3%
Overall Achievement Apprenticeship	70.0%	71.0%	71.2%	71.4%
Attendance (E and T)	90.0%	90.0%	91.0%	92.0%
Positive Destinations (all FT)	95.0%	95.0%	95.0%	95.0%
Student Satisfaction	96.0%	96.5%	96.6%	97.0%
Employer Satisfaction	96.0%	96.2%	96.3%	96.3%
Progress Measures				
High Grades GCSE Maths	15.0%	20.0%	22.0%	25.0%
	33.0%	35.0%	36.0%	38.0%
High Grades GCSE English	40.0%	40.0%	41.0%	42.0%
	66.0%	67.0%	68.0%	69.0%
Functional Skills Maths Achievement	70.0%	71.0%	72.0%	75.0%
	85.0%	86.0%	87.0%	88.0%
Functional Skills English Achievement	70.0%	71.0%	72.0%	75.0%
	88.0%	88.0%	88.0%	88.0%
A level (A to B)*	50.0%	51.0%	52.0%	53.0%
A level (A to C)*	80.0%	81.0%	82.0%	83.0%
Self Assessment				
Ofsted Overall Effectiveness	1	1	1	1
SAR	1	1	1	1

3   **Supporting Strategies**

   3.1   Leadership and Management

   The College will:

   3.1.1   Create a learning organisation by investing in the **development of leaders of teaching, learning and support** throughout the College through the College Leadership Programme.

   3.1.2   Implement our strategies by continuing to gain commitment from our staff to engage in **achieving our ambitious vision** to be sector-leading and nationally recognised.

   3.1.3   Continue to create a **culture of celebration and recognition** where high standards result in achievement for all.

   3.1.4   Actively recognise **and promote individual care, nurture and support** both academically and pastorally to ensure our students thrive in a safe environment and feel valued as individuals.

   3.1.5   Take robust action to **address any under performance** in all areas of the College by the meticulous monitoring of key performance indicators to drive continuous improvement.

   3.1.6   Provide a **responsive curriculum** which is exciting, engaging and distinctive whilst meeting the needs of our students and our locality., including the Long Term Skills Plan/Local Skills Improvement Plan and the Liverpool City Region Freeport.

   3.1.7   Engage with **Liverpool City Region (LCR), colleges** and employers to deliver the Local Growth Plan

   3.1.8   Encourage governors to **actively challenge** the implementation of the vision and strategies by emphasising the key issues and adopting the AoC's Code of Good Governance for English Colleges.

   3.1.9   Concentrate on the **essential purposes** of the College especially teaching, learning and financial stability; avoiding the distractions of short-term policies which may overstretch organisational capacity.

   3.1.10   Ensure that all actions and activities are directed towards achieving the **College's 4 key priorities** of

   - Safeguarding and Wellbeing
   - Quality of Teaching and Learning
   - Efficiency
   - Growth

Overall, the College will provide consistently **high-quality provision** and seek **opportunities for growth** whilst maintaining **financial stability**.

3.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The College will:

3.2.1 Be recognised as a **centre of excellence** for teaching, learning and assessment.

3.2.2 Develop an engaging and innovative **digital strategy,** including the safe and appropriate use of Artificial Intelligence, that meets the needs of staff learners.

3.2.3 Reflect changes to **external quality assurance frameworks** through robust and responsive internal Quality Assurance (QA) and Quality Improvement (QI) systems.

3.2.4 Deliver **outstanding staff development programmes** that meet the needs of all teachers, trainers, assessors and support staff.

3.2.5 Further develop **Great Teaching** to reflect differentiated teaching, learning and assessment strategies that fully meets the needs of the staff

3.2.6 Develop **departmental plans** which focus on vocational specialisms and continuing professional development (CPD).

3.3 Curriculum

The College will:

3.3.1 Design a curriculum offer which reflects a commitment to **widening participation, inclusivity** and **lifelong learning.**

3.3.2 Deliver **nationally recognised** and **occupationally relevant** qualifications and training which maximise **progression opportunities** into employment, higher education and apprenticeships.

3.3.3 Embrace the opportunities afforded by study programmes to design a distinctive and **individualised** programme of study for students that focuses on **employability skills and technical skills** as well as curriculum knowledge.

3.3.4 Maximise the **achievement of maths and English** qualifications at levels 2 and 3 and reflect, in curriculum design and delivery, a commitment to the continuous improvement of these essential skills.

3.3.5 Maintain a commitment to deliver a **wider curriculum** via tutorials, enrichment and enhancement which educates **the whole person** and **maximises life chances** for all students.

3.3.6   Utilise a full range of course delivery and assessment options to ensure that students develop **independent learning skills** and experience a range of delivery methods using **technology**.

3.3.7   Review the curriculum annually regarding **fitness for purpose** and **value for money**.

Overall, the College will provide a **distinctive curriculum offer** which will remove barriers to study and will enhance individuals economic and social well-being.

3.4   Support for Students

The College will:

3.4.1   Support all students by **improving their life chances** through the delivery of outstanding careers advice and guidance and educational experiences which lead to positive destinations.

3.4.2   Offer an **inclusive, supportive and safe learning environment**, which maximises access and success for all students via 'Know me to teach me' strategy.

3.4.3   Support students to **remove any barriers to learning and instil high aspirations.**

3.4.4   Engage students in progression activities that lead to **success**, **employment, apprenticeships** or **higher education destinations**.

3.4.5   Continually improve by actively seeking out and acting upon **student and employer voice** feedback.

3.4.6   Promote **enrichment, employment and enhancement** activities which meet the study skills needs of students and provide opportunities for vibrant learning at all levels of curriculum.

3.4.7   **Support students** to develop and demonstrate the **skills, attitudes and values** to safely participate and positively contribute to life in modern Britain.

3.4.8   Promote and raise **awareness of climate change** and the importance of sustainability for the future of the global population and the environment

3.5   Marketing

The College will:

3.5.1   Invest in **high quality, engaging content and new media/technology** to reach potential students both through

traditional methods such as school assemblies and online, whilst **supporting the green agenda.**

3.5.2 Aim for a **high-profile, high-quality presence online** which demonstrates the wide range of opportunities, vibrant culture and promotes student success to raise aspirations across a range of relevant and appropriate digital platforms.

3.5.3 **Prioritise school relationships and deliver high quality schools' liaison and admissions activities** to raise aspirations and ensure school leavers are supported during their transition to college.

3.5.4 **Provide direct transport links** for students to deliver growth targets.

3.5.5 Promote Cronton as the **first choice for high achievers** by continuing to invest in the High Achievers Programme, professional studies programmes, centres of excellence and the promotion of student success.

3.5.6 Develop the reputation of Riverside as a vibrant skills centre which provides students with **skills for the future job market and excellent progression** into employment and apprenticeships through the promotion of student destinations, prestigious work placements, centres of excellence and new green facilities/technology.

3.5.7 Develop **adult and higher education specialist marketing** and recruitment to become the first choice for adults locally.

3.5.8 Develop apprenticeship specialist marketing within the Employer Engagement team to **raise the profile of apprenticeships** and to meet the changing needs of employers**.**

3.5.9 Ensure that **recruitment supports teaching and learning** by developing entry requirements and admissions processes which identify the right course or apprenticeship standard at the right level for each applicant.

3.5.10 Monitor the effectiveness of all activity to check that **resource is being utilised in a cost-effective way.**

Overall, the College will provide a **comprehensive and innovative** marketing service.

3.6 Human Resources

The College will:

3.6.1 Promote **physical and mental wellbeing** through the effective delivery of the Employee Wellbeing Strategy.

3.6.2   Encourage a **culture** of professional accountability and responsibility which provides opportunities for all staff to reach their full potential.

3.6.3   Promote a cohesive **college community,** built on shared values.

3.6.4   Develop a culture where staff achievements are **recognised and celebrated.**

3.6.5   Provide opportunities for staff to be active members of the **local community** and contribute to the Green Agenda**.**

3.6.6   Provide and promote the most **attractive terms and conditions** for all staff.

3.6.7   Continue to manage the **recruitment and selection** process so it is safe, and values driven.

3.6.8   Ensure tailored, recognised programmes of **staff development** for all staff.

3.6.9   Deploy all staff **efficiently and effectively.**

3.6.10   Promote a suite of **policies** which support staff in balancing their personal and professional responsibilities.

3.6.11   Provide a forum for **two-way communication** to capture and respond to concerns and ideas.

3.6.12   Ensure access to **high quality staff areas** for both work and relaxation.

Overall, Human Resources will cultivate a **positive, high performing staff** culture in which all staff strive for excellence through motivation, innovation and creativity.

3.7   Estates, IT and Facilities

The College will:

3.7.1   Invest in the estate to provide accommodation, which is conducive to **outstanding delivery**, allowing for growing learner numbers and meeting the needs of the curriculum including any reforms.

3.7.2   Invest in all areas to ensure that the College delivers on its **net zero target** and improves the ergonomics and the environment.

3.7.3   Ensure that adequate resources are available to address **maintenance** issues.

3.7.4 Maintain best practice in health and safety and **sustainability** practices.

3.7.5 Ensure all **learning environments and social spaces** are of a high standard.

3.7.6 Provide access to fast and reliable **IT facilities** that support and enhance learning.

3.7.7 Implement robust **cybersecurity** measures to protect against data breaches and cyber-attacks, including encryption and multi-factor authentication.

3.7.8 Ensure that **reflexivity** is embedded in all building works so that environments are adaptable to changing activity levels and curriculum needs.

Overall, Estates, IT and Facilities will aim to provide **first class accommodation** and learning environments which will provide a motivational and inspirational environment for both staff and students.

3.8 Employer Engagement

The College will:

3.8.1 Develop a **responsive employer-led curriculum** to respond to skills needs and priorities as identified in Halton and across the wider Liverpool City Region (LCR), including the Long-Term Skills Plan.

3.8.2 Respond to the changing needs of employers and maximise opportunities for students to **progress into sustainable employment and apprenticeships**

3.8.3 Develop strategic links with employers and key stakeholders to become a **regional leader in response to climate change**.

3.8.4 Raise the profile of work experience and develop employer engagement to provide **high quality T Level placements.**

3.8.5 Continue to maintain strong partnerships with other providers to enhance the range of excellent **training opportunities** for young people, adults and employers that complement the College's provision.

3.8.6 Collaborate with employers, HEIs and key stakeholders to **secure alternative funding streams** through employer-led activities and bids to support curriculum development and capital investment.

3.8.7 Drive through change with a **strong business-focussed governance and leadership team.**

Overall, the College will **make a significant contribution to the local and regional economic community.**

3.9 Finance

The College will:

3.9.1 Generate **operating surpluses** in each year of the Plan.

3.9.2 Ensure that the **cash** position at each year end is acceptable in terms of the college's risk profile.

3.9.3 Provide for a **pay contingency** in each year to cover implementation of the pay award, incremental progression and pension increases. Also assume that **inflationary** non-pay increases will be offset by a efficiency savings.

3.9.4 Ensure that **borrowing** remains within 25% of income.

3.9.5 Ensure that the **financial health** of the College remains **OUTSTANDING** over the medium term.

3.9.6 Provide for the effects of **fluctuations in student numbers** and funding**.**

3.9.7 **Grow HE fee income** by exploring partnership and direct delivery models.

3.9.8 Ensure that budgets are **tightly monitored** and controlled and all systems are rationalised for efficiency and effectiveness.

Overall, we will aim to deliver prudent financial plans that ensure the College remains in **OUTSTANDING** financial health and allows for some **creativity and innovation** to develop growth options in new or priority areas.

4 Departmental Plans

4.1 Cronton Sixth Form College

The College will:

4.1.1 Provide **learning experiences of outstanding quality,** where learning is challenging and enjoyable, ensuring students are prepared for university, employment, apprenticeships or other appropriate destinations in the Liverpool City Region and beyond.

4.1.2 Continue to **invest in teaching and learning** by attracting and retaining highly qualified and skilled advanced level teachers who will develop our students into expert learners and who will achieve success, high grades and added value, well above

national benchmarks whilst successfully navigating both A Level and vocational/technical curriculum reform.

4.1.3   Enrich the educational experience via 'The Cronton Experience' which offers students distinctive and **valuable opportunities to develop** personally, professionally and academically. This encompasses a comprehensive enrichment schedule, Professional Studies Programmes, Student Leadership Team and prestigious work experience placements.

4.1.4   Encourage staff and students to participate in **creative and innovative team projects** and celebrate their achievements.

4.1.5   Continue to develop the High Achievers Programme/**Oxbridge Programme and the Super Curricular strategy including the Student Leadership Team** in partnership with local high schools which will provide young people with a set of experiences to prepare them for entry into the most prestigious universities both nationally and internationally.

4.1.6   Provide distinctive opportunities for our students to engage with industry, employers, prestigious partners and leading universities through our **Centres of Excellence** in Science, Maths and Engineering, Sport and Performing Arts in addition to 'The Cronton Experience' and ASPIRE Tutorial programme.

4.1.7   Recognise that young people face challenges both academically and personally and provide **individual support** so that all our students reach their full potential and secure positive outcomes partly through the delivery of a fit-for-purpose pastoral curriculum.

4.1.8   Work with high schools to ensure young people receive high quality **advice and guidance** to make well informed decisions about their post-16 education. Young people will be supported in their transition from school to College via a well-planned and relevant induction period.

4.1.9   Continue to invest in our **estate, facilities and transport network** to ensure our students have access to state of the art equipment; are exposed to industry standards and can travel to College easily.

4.1.10   Seek **opportunities for growth** through our Centres of Excellence by developing higher education courses, occupational standards (T-Levels), and maximising the opportunities provided by the new health, science/sport/Music facilities.

4.2   Riverside College

The College will:

4.2.1   Provide professional technical learning experiences of **outstanding quality** which develop students' academic and technical skills to their full potential and increases their life chances.

4.2.2   Ensure students have access to an **inclusive and responsive curriculum** which removes barriers to entry, offers appropriate points of entry and **progression opportunities** and delivers a **highly differentiated** learning experience.

4.2.3   Prioritise all **skills development** and **professionalism** (professional, technical and occupational) through the continual development of innovative programmes that both enrich the lives of learners, whilst simultaneously meet the needs of the North West and its priority areas.

4.2.4   Design highly **innovative** programmes of study that respond to **industry need** and equip students for further study and employment through the development of English, maths and **digital literacy**.

4.2.5   Work closely with industry partners through a variety of forums and design programmes of study which incorporate employer and industry needs and reflect a commitment to **apprenticeships, employability** and **work placement.**

4.2.6   Surround students with **opportunities for growth and development** through targeted enrichment and enhancement.

4.2.7   Recognise that our students face challenges academically, financially and personally and provide **individual support** so that all our students reach their full potential and secure positive outcomes.

4.2.8   Invest in our **estate and facilities** to provide state of the art technical work environments which reflect industry standards.

4.2.9   Ensure that all our campuses **support individual learners with SEN** enabling independence.

Overall, Riverside College will position itself to be at **the forefront of technical training and education** and will enhance students' life chances to progress to university and employment.

4.3   SEN to Inclusion

The College will:

4.3.1   Ensure the **curriculum offer** includes a range of courses and pathways to suit the needs and aspirations of individual students.

4.3.2   Provide **high quality initial advice and guidance** to help appropriate choices to be made.

4.3.3 **Promote high quality teaching**, which ensures that lessons meet the needs of all learners and enables appropriate support for students who need it.

4.3.4 Provide opportunities to ensure the building of **independence and greater challenge** for high achieving students to be inherent in all programmes.

4.3.5 Ensure programmes are written to encourage learners to **progress to destinations that are ambitious** and appropriate.

4.3.6 Write all programmes from a **holistic student-centred approach** ensuring learners will have an individual learning plan with individualised targets, attendance and progress with their studies. The **views of the young person/adults** and their parents/carers are seen as central to this process.

4.3.7 Anticipate and respond to the **individual needs of students** to ensure they all feel included

4.3.8 Regularly **monitor student progress** to assess the impact the support is having and identify whether any appropriate adjustments are necessary.

Overall, Riverside College will continually work towards an inclusion model to develop knowledge, skills and behaviours that enable its learners to exceed their aspiration for learning, employment, independence and become an active citizen within their community.

4.4 Business Support

The College will:

4.4.1 Deliver an **excellent service** to our customers, both internally and externally.

4.4.2 Maintain **financial stability** by ensuring that financial plans are prepared prudently, financial risk is mitigated and working capital is available for creativity and innovation.

4.4.3 Support investment in **areas of growth** by ensuring that all approved business plans deliver a satisfactory return and that delivery in these areas is reported appropriately, monitored tightly and controlled.

4.4.4 Implement a phased approach to **property renewal** which is affordable and addresses growth, modernisation (including Net Zero) and maintenance.

4.4.5 **Support, mentor, develop and reward all staff**, cultivate high levels of morale and embed College values and community.

4.4.6   Provide a **safe and secure** environment for both staff and students which is in line with best practice and incorporates excellent sustainable processes.

4.4.7   **Develop technology** which expands the use of digital tools and platforms.

4.4.8   Use cloud technology and server virtualisation to increase the **efficiency, reliability and security** of all College data and systems.

4.4.9   Promote physical and mental **health and wellbeing** through effective delivery of the wellbeing strategy.

4.4.10   Ensure that risk management processes are adaptable to sectorial and environmental policy change so that the College is '**risk enabled**' in decision-making.

Overall, business support will deploy resources **efficiently and effectively** to enhance the learning experience and create an environment in which both staff and students feel **safe**, welcomed and **inspired**.

This plan is monitored through the Annual Strategic Plans, the Annual Report and the Quality, Efficiency and Growth Action Plans