

Riverside College



STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2021



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Chapter 1 | Vision, Values and Strategic Aims

Our Vision

Through the excellence of the education we provide, we will enhance and transform lives.

We strive to be sector-leading in everything we do.

Our Values

1. Teaching and learning is our priority and the needs and safety of our students always come first.
2. As members of the College we are partners in the success of the organisation and we are all accountable for our outcomes.
3. High standards are at the heart of all that we do. In our pursuit of excellence, we recognise that individually and collectively we can always improve.
4. Within our college community we treat each other with respect, trust, openness, care and consideration. We celebrate student and staff success.
5. We are an inclusive college where we promote and protect equality and diversity.
6. We work in partnership with employers and other stakeholders so that we can make a positive contribution to local, regional and national economic development.



Our Strategic Aims

1. To achieve high **quality** outcomes for our students by prioritising teaching, learning and progression.
2. To continue to improve levels of **efficiency** and remain in outstanding financial health.
3. To maximise opportunities for **growth**.

Strategic Aims

In the context of emerging into a post-COVID society

- 1 To achieve high **quality** outcomes for our students by prioritising teaching, learning and progression.

We will do this by:

- 1.1 Prioritising 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 Striving to create a college community with core values at its heart.
 - 1.3 Nurturing our students and staff so that we have high levels of morale and wellbeing, together with creativity, innovation and excellence.
 - 1.4 Providing exceptional levels of student care with an emphasis on good citizenship, employability skills and positive progression outcomes.
 - 1.5 Investing in our staff to sustain high quality provision.
- 2 To continue to improve levels of **efficiency** and remain in outstanding financial health.

We will do this by:

- 2.1 Maintaining financial stability through effective cost control and creating funds to grow.
 - 2.2 Investing in and modernising our centres to meet local and regional priorities.
- 3 To maximise opportunities for **growth**.

We will do this by:

- 3.1 Promoting growth areas, particularly 16-18, Higher Education, apprenticeships and full cost recovery courses.
- 3.2 Prioritising the needs of the people of Halton and the Liverpool City Region (LCR).
- 3.3 Continuing 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.
- 3.4 Working in partnership to engage those who traditionally do not participate in education and training.
- 3.5 Working with employers to develop a responsive curriculum to close the skills gap and provide a highly skilled local workforce.



2.1 External and Internal Assessment

2.1.1 In March 2020, the College was judged by Ofsted to be outstanding.

The inspection report highlights many positive aspects for the College including:

- ‘Learners and apprentices are **exceptionally well motivated** and demonstrate **extremely positive attitudes to learning**
- ‘Relationships between learners, apprentices and their teachers and assessors are **excellent**
- ‘Learners and apprentices develop their confidence, resilience and strong independence skills
- ‘Senior leaders and governors are **very ambitious** for their learners and apprentices
- ‘Senior leaders and governors promote **especially high standards** in all aspects of the college
- ‘Governors have **high aspirations** for their learners, apprentices and staff
- ‘Learners and apprentices enjoy a wide range of courses that **meet local and regional needs exceptionally well**
- ‘Leaders have **exceptional links** with local employers and regional business groups
- ‘Assessors, in conjunction with employers, ensure that apprentices benefit from **excellent and well planned** on- and off-the job training
- ‘Learners on advanced level programmes **greatly benefit** from the ‘prestigious universities’ programme that facilitates successful applications to universities. Consequently, **most progress into higher education with a significant number going to the best universities**
- ‘Learners experience a **wide range** of work experience opportunities and, as a result, they develop higher-level interpersonal skills
- ‘Managers, teachers and staff provide learners and apprentices with **excellent** and impartial careers information, advice and guidance before and during their programmes’

Link to inspection report: <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50151820>

2.1.2 The new Education Inspection Framework (EIF) started in September 2019. Under this framework outstanding providers will not normally be inspected again. However, they will inspect an outstanding provider if its performance declines or for other reasons, such as potential safeguarding issues.

2.1.3 Alongside Ofsted the College receives a number of external assessments throughout the year including: Department for Education (DfE) performance tables; Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF); Quality Monitoring Reviews (QMRs); Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) audit; FE Choices; learner and employer surveys; and the Higher Education Annual Provider Review all of which acknowledge excellent performance and high levels of satisfaction.

2.1.4 In Autumn 2019 the College produced a Self-Assessment Report (SAR) for 2018/2019, with the following grades:

Overall judgements	SAR Grade 2016/2017	SAR Grade 2017/2018	SAR Grade 2018/2019
Overall effectiveness	Grade 2: Good	Grade 1: Outstanding	Grade 1: Outstanding
Leadership and management	Grade 2: Good	Grade 1: Outstanding	Grade 1: Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade 2: Good	Grade 1: Outstanding	Grade 1: Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Grade 2: Good	Grade 1: Outstanding	Grade 1: Outstanding
Outcomes for learners	Grade 1: Outstanding	Grade 1: Outstanding	Grade 1: Outstanding



2.1.5 The following key strengths were identified:

1. Students make excellent progress whilst at College. Achievement rates and Value Added are outstanding for almost all learners
2. The vast majority of students display a professional approach to developing their skills, knowledge and understanding.
3. Professional development and support processes are highly effective resulting in excellent classroom practice

4. Outstanding financial management has led to economic stability and effective deployment of resources and investment in facilities.
5. Learners receive a high quality, holistic and enriching experience whilst at College ensuring they are prepared for the next steps.
6. Arrangements for safeguarding are highly effective
7. The College has a culture of high expectations and transparency where health and well-being of staff and students are of the highest importance
8. Strong and effective links with external partners including schools, the Liverpool City Region, colleges, employers and the local authority has resulted in exceptional growth.

2.1.6 The Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) identified the key areas for improvement:

1. Increase timely achievement rates in the apprentice provision
2. High grades in GCSE mathematics
3. The quality of provision and the outcomes for learners in a very small minority of courses.

2.1.7 The College aims to address these areas for improvement in addition to those parts of the College which are not yet rated as outstanding. These are detailed in the Quality, Efficiency, Growth (QEG) Plan which acts as the College's 'to do' list.

2.1.8 The National Achievement Rates tables (NART) produced in March 2020 (based on results in 2018/19) demonstrate that the College performs well above the national average and places the College's performance in the top quartile nationally on most measures.

Qualification Type	Cohort	Riverside College Ach Rate %	National Average %	Variance +/-
Apprenticeships Overall	300	77	67	+10
Apprenticeships timely	280	68.8	60	+8.8
Education and Training 16-18	4,690	87	83	+4
Education and training 19+	2,930	93	90	+3

2.1.9 Overall, the College believes the delivery of outstanding quality is its overriding priority in the context of a volatile post-COVID external environment.

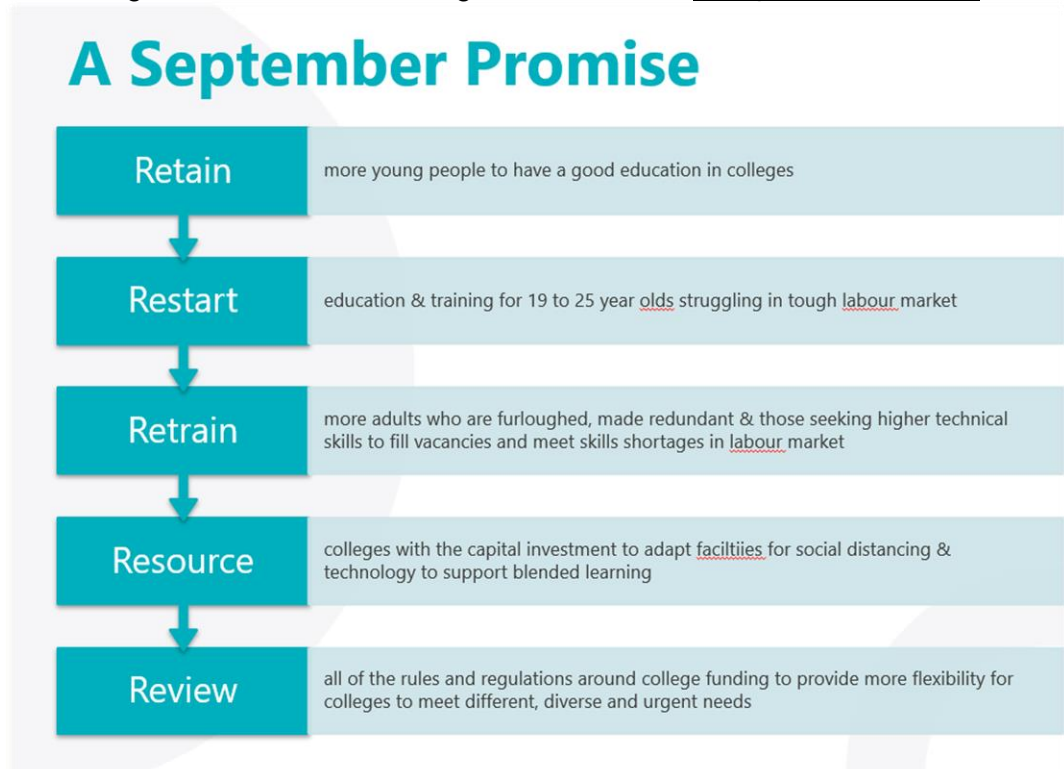
2.2 The Policy and Funding Environment

2.2.1 As the country emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic we move forward and live in different times.

2.2.2 The College has successfully shifted to on-line learning, working from home and dealing with qualification assessments.

2.2.3 We have worked closely with Halton Borough Council, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and the Association of Colleges to re-open the College albeit very slowly and safely.

- 2.2.4 There are concerns about the volatility of recruitment, catch up learning, apprenticeship numbers collapsing and extra costs. Most colleges are in a weaker financial position.
- 2.2.5 Flexibility has to be built into our planning so that we are in a position to respond to rapid and demanding changes as the country recovers.
- 2.2.6 The challenges for the Autumn term (AoC June 2020)
- i More young people – aged 16 to 25 – needing college places due to high unemployment and young people being crowded out of jobs.
 - ii A large cohort of young people needing support to catch up in learning after several months of lockdown.
 - iii A shortage of apprenticeship training places for new recruits and the potential for many apprentices to be made redundant.
 - iv Large numbers of adults requiring training to help them move from sectors in most difficulties into those which might expand.
 - v The need to plan for students returning to college, albeit with more students benefitting from blended learning.
- 2.2.7 In the longer term the AoC is asking Government for A September Promise



- 2.2.8 The overall message from the sector is that colleges are vital to the recovery and stand ready to deliver but need investment and flexibilities to support more young people, adults, communities and employers. The response from Government is positive so far but whether this turns into additional funding remains to be seen.
- 2.2.9 The pace of change and the wholly uncertain environment clearly poses risks to the College, however it is in a very strong position in terms of quality and financial health (both rated outstanding by Ofsted and ESFA) and is able to respond quickly to the challenges ahead.
- Over £20m invested in teaching and learning facilities since 2012 whilst maintaining OUTSTANDING financial health. The £7.9m in capital project

spend, including the Health & Wellbeing facility at Cronton is going ahead. Phase 1 is due to be completed by August 2021.

- Turnover has increased from £20m in 2016/2017 to £26m in 2020/2021. The College's main income streams 16-18 and Adult are secure for 2020/2021 and this accounts for 85% of income.



2.3 16-18 Students

- 2.3.1 The College set a target of recruiting 3,000 16-18-year-old students by 2020; this target was achieved in 2017 despite declining demographics and increasing competition and this has had a positive impact on the financial plan to 2020 and beyond.

16-18 learner number and allocations

2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
2,521	2,681	2,741	3,019	3,100	3,223	3,304

- 2.3.2 The College has increased its 16-18 provision by 31% since 2014/15 and believes that there is the potential to increase recruitment of 16-18-year-old students. With high quality provision and the opening of the IDEA (STEM) Centre, Weldtech Futures, The Cronton Playhouse the new health and sport facilities planned at Cronton for 2021/2022 is an opportunity to persuade more students from Halton and outside the borough to choose our College. Applications and offers for school leavers are ahead of last year and current projections indicate that our 16-18 income will increase by 4% for 2020/2021.

2.4 Apprenticeships

- 2.4.1 The College is in a strong position to respond to the challenges and significant impact of the Covid crisis and will build on the strengths identified by Ofsted as an Outstanding Apprenticeship Provider.
- 2.4.2 Existing markets will be consolidated and new relationships generated, especially with employers across the region in key priority sectors.
- 2.4.3 We will build on the success of offering apprenticeships as progression routes from our full time and work placement programmes.
- 2.4.4 There will be continued investment in new facilities and digital offers to increase flexibility and improve delivery efficiency.

2.5 19+ Adult Education

- 2.5.1 The Adult Education Budget comes from two sources, the ESFA and the Liverpool City Region, this budget is secure for 2020/2021.
- 2.5.2 The College, through the Merseyside Colleges Association, is working with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) on a recovery and retraining package for adult learners.



2.6 Higher Education

In 2020/21 the College aims to build upon its Higher Education offer by exploring further curriculum pathways at Level 4 and above and developing progression opportunities from Level 5 to Level 6. Riverside College continues to be a much-valued member of the Staffordshire University Collaborative Partnership and is also a partner provider in Shaping Futures (the Merseyside Collaborative Outreach Programme) - a Higher Education Outreach Programme for the Liverpool City Region. In June 2019, the College was awarded the TEF Gold Award for the quality of its higher education provision.

2.7 Community Confidence

The OUTSTANDING Ofsted grade has secured community confidence and established the College as a high-quality provider of education and training. This achievement is the result of a decade of work with key stakeholders. The College Management Team are involved in the key task groups, governing bodies, trustees of MATs, IFATE, MCA, Ofsted and a whole range of bodies offering advice and guidance to all phases of education.

2.8 Working in Partnership

- 2.8.1 The College wishes to continue to work closely with partners. In the context of more diverse post-16 provision, it is important to maintain support for a successful, strong and viable college in Halton.
- 2.8.2 The College has made the following commitments:
1. We will consistently perform as a high-quality college.
 2. We will address the issue of those Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) in a collaborative and creative way.

3. We will increase the percentage of young people achieving Levels 2 and 3 by the age of 19.
4. We will work towards closing the gap in attainment between those who were in receipt of free school meals and those who were not.
5. We will increase the number of young people starting on apprenticeships and traineeships.
6. We will seek to address the needs of people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who need clear progression routes within Halton.
7. We will respond positively to the requirement for young people to stay in education or training until they are 18 and beyond.
8. We will contribute fully to addressing local needs and priorities, by implementing the priorities in Halton's Children, Young People and Families Plan 2018-2021.
9. We will engage with partners to work towards key targets for adults.
10. We will work with partners to expand higher education opportunities in Halton.
11. We will seek to deliver an inclusive curriculum for the residents of Halton notwithstanding the impact of changing funding sources and levels.
12. We will work with Halton employers and other partners to provide training for workers. We will aim to focus on dynamic local sectors such as construction, engineering, science and technology.
13. We will work with the LEP to identify how we can contribute to the Skills Strategy for the LCR, in particular: Creative and Digital Industries; Advanced Manufacturing; Financial and Professional Services; Health and Life Sciences; Low Carbon; the Visitor Economy and Health and Social Care.



3.1 Monitoring of Performance

Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs) will be produced for all curriculum and support areas. These will be monitored throughout the year by:

- i. the quality improvement cycle as part of the self-assessment process;
- ii. the QEG (Quality, Efficiency and Growth) which summarises areas for improvement; where emerging concerns are identified bespoke recovery plans will be implemented immediately; and
- iii. Senior Management Team (SMT) monitoring meetings – 5 times per year.

3.2 Reporting Outcomes

Outcomes and external assurances will be reported to Governors through Committee and Board meetings by:

- i. the QEG (Quality, Efficiency and Growth) report;
- ii. dashboards for finance and quality;
- iii. strategic update reports by the Senior Management Team; and
- iv. reports by auditors, Ofsted, Office for Students, performance tables and funding bodies.