



**Southport
Education
Group**

Annual Accountability Statement

2025

College History, Mission & Purpose

Sefton is a metropolitan borough of Merseyside; England and its local authority is Sefton Council. Sefton was formed, following the Local Government Act 1972, on 1 April 1974. It was an amalgamation of the former county boroughs of Bootle and Southport, and from the administrative county of Lancashire, the municipal borough of Crosby, the urban districts of Formby and Litherland, and part of the Rural District of West Lancashire. It also formed part of the then new county of Merseyside. It is named after the village and parish of Sefton, near Maghull, which had formerly served as the seat of the Molyneux family; and the watermill located there served as inspiration for Sefton Council's Crest. The Borough consists of a coastal strip of land on the Irish Sea and extends from the primarily industrial area of Bootle in the south to the traditional seaside resort of Southport in the north. In the south-east it extends inland to Maghull. Sefton has an approximate area of some 155km². The district is bounded by Liverpool to the south, Knowsley to the south-east, and West Lancashire to the east.

Southport Education Group consists of two colleges, Southport College and King George the Fifth Sixth Form College. The combination of the two colleges ensures a college-based A level provision within the town of Southport. The KGV Sixth Form College ensures that there is a locally delivered high quality comprehensive academic and vocational offer for school leavers. Southport College provides school leavers with vocational and technical options.

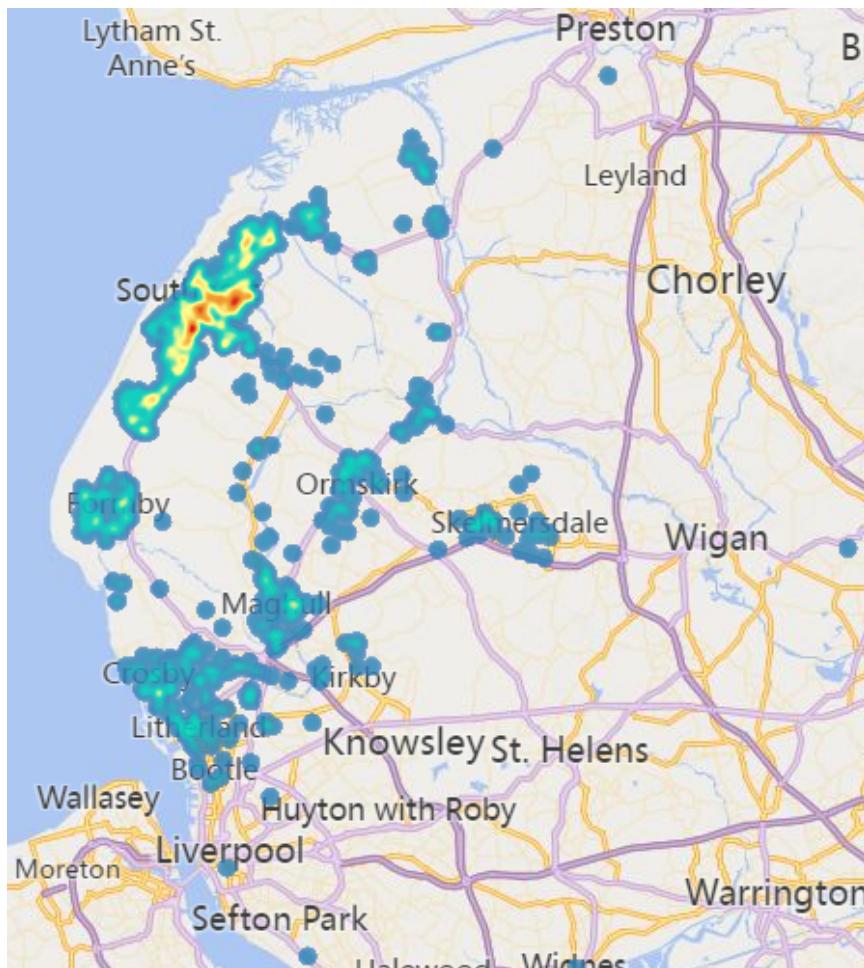
In addition, Southport College provides a wide range of adult education courses to over 1500 adults wishing to re-enter education, improve their qualifications, and enhance their employment / career prospects or progress to higher education. During 2025, Southport College's apprenticeship, bespoke and commercial training will operate as Compete Apprentices which will be the newest brand as part of Southport Education Group.

The college works with over 300 employers to provide Apprenticeships and training to improve the skills of their workforce and support their recruitment needs.

The college, with over 340 employees, is one of the largest employers in Southport and is proud to be part of the local business community and economy.

Southport Education Group was the first in the country to achieve the Rainbow Flag Award in recognition of its LGBTQ+ inclusiveness and recognising the commitment to equality and the celebration of diversity. In addition, the college is proud to be a Disability Confident employer.

Commitment to excellent student guidance is identified through the continued achievement of the Matrix Award. The support provided to all students is at the heart of the college culture, as was recently recognised through the achievement of a Young Carers Award.



Our Vision:

To be a driving force for educational and economic excellence in Southport and the region

Our Mission:

To create a positive, high expectation learning environment that allows people to excel in their future careers, education, training, and life.

Our Strategic Intentions are to be:

1. A place where learners fulfil their potential
2. A place where people want to work and are supported in their careers
3. A place where employers develop their skilled workforce
4. A place at the heart of our communities.

Progress

Southport Education Group has delivered economic value to industry and employers over the last 2 years which was informed by the Local Skills Improvement Plan. The table below highlights Southport Education Groups commitment and deliverables in ensuring the organisation provides training and the workforce of the future for the Liverpool City Regional and national picture.

Strategic Aim and How	Targets (1 year)	Outturn (year 1)	Targets (year 2)	Outturn (year 2)	LSIP Link
A place where learners fulfil their potential.	<p>1.To increase T Level recruitment from current number of 37 to 135.</p> <p>2. New T Levels to be introduced in Heath & Digital in 23/24.</p> <p>3. Ensure that all students in 2023/24 gain core transferable skills through a combination of:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social action • Embedded digital skills. • Participation in skills 	<p>1. 111 T- Level learners on programme.</p> <p>2. Effectively implemented into the college 16-18 offer.</p> <p>3. Recognition of learners developing significant new skills, knowledge and behaviour in addition to effective personal development in recent inspection.</p>	<p>1. To increase T Level recruitment from current number of 111 to 160.</p> <p>2. Introduction of T-Level in Building Services and Engineering</p>	<p>1. 169 T- Level learners on programme.</p> <p>2. Launched successfully with two full cohort in T- Level Engineering and introduced a Level 2 feeder programme in this subject area. T-Level in Building Services has not been delivered due to ongoing awarding body alignment and policy.</p>	<p>1. Continue to develop curriculum specialisations that meet national, regional, and local needs</p> <p>2. Ensure 16 to 19 vocational programmes all cover behaviours and job entry skills</p>

	competition s				
A place where employers develop their skilled workforce.	<p>1. Expansion of Construction Apprenticeship options by introducing Carpentry Joinery</p> <p>2. To train over one hundred Sefton residents on a bespoke programme (Building Better Customer Experiences) as part of the project to work with over thirty employers in this year.</p> <p>3. To launch two new courses to the employer community in domestic & commercial</p>	<p>1. Completed.</p> <p>2. Trained over 100 residents working with 15 employers.</p> <p>3. Programmes have been initiated, we are focusing on exploring funding opportunities linked to these programmes with the LCR with an aim to enhance accessibility and offer affordable options to businesses and individuals within the region.</p>	<p>1. To launch four new courses to the employer community in sustainability and renewal energy.</p> <p>2. To train over two hundred Sefton residents on a bespoke programme (Building Better Customer Experiences)</p>	<p>1. Launch of 7 new courses in sustainability and renewal energy which are being delivered in our brand new ECO centre facility</p> <p>2. Delivered high quality customer service training to 220 residents and engaged over 20 local business in this training.</p>	<p>1. Continue to develop curriculum specialisations that meet national, regional, and local needs</p>

	electric vehicle charging installation & electric/hybrid vehicle system repair and replacement , and to become a centre of excellence in this field.				
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Furthermore, a strategic review of the LSIP is anticipated in 2025. However, the following outlines the initial targets established in response to early feedback.

Strategic Aim and How	Targets (3 year)	LSIP Link
A place where learners fulfil their potential.	<p>1.To increase T Level recruitment from current number of 169 to 200+.</p> <p>2. Return Apprenticeship achievement rate to above national average consistently year on year (approx. 60% +)</p> <p>3. Ensure English and Maths achievement rates are above national average.</p>	<p>1. Continue to develop curriculum specialisations that meet national, regional, and local needs</p> <p>2. Ensure 16 to 19 vocational programmes all cover behaviours and job entry skills</p>
A place where employers develop their skilled workforce.	<p>1. Expansion of Electrical provision to ensure Southport Education Group can offer an increase CPD offer to local businesses/industry</p> <p>2. Further development Southport Education Groups Community Digital and AI offer to raise</p>	<p>1. Continue to develop curriculum specialisations that meet national, regional, and local needs</p>

	<p>awareness and increase productivity.</p> <p>3. To launch new provision which focuses on battery storage technology for domestic use.</p>	
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Our Approach

- Health & Life Sciences

Southport has prioritised health and social care for investment in capital, curriculum development and in the formation of partnerships. With T-Level funding support we are investing in care suite which was launched in September 2024. The new facilities provides students with a realistic representation of a work environment where they can practice patient care skills. They also include state-of-the-art immersive training facilities that simulate the sights and sounds of the workplace. Our Health T Levels delivery which is being supported by a very strong working relationships with each of the seven NHS Trusts in our area, which will facilitate T Level placements. We are currently delivery a range of apprenticeships in this area and adapt are approach to meet the needs of different employers and the current needs of the sector.

- Digital

We have developed a pathway through Digital T Level courses and are working with a specialist local IT organisation with specialises in IT systems for the Legal sector. The Digital T-level is an important part of supporting the national and local skills needs of Southport and Sefton businesses. This qualification provides a pathway for individuals to develop their digital skills and gain employment in the digital sector. It is designed to give learners the knowledge and skills they need to work in a range of digital jobs, such as software development, web development, cybersecurity, data analysis and more. The digital curriculum in the way it is co-designed and delivered will also help local business in Southport and Sefton engage emerging talent and have access a larger pool of talent with the right knowledge, skills and behaviours to meet their needs. Southport Education Group is delivering in 24/25 for the first time AI & Emerging Technologies course to local businesses, providing a valuable opportunity to explore how artificial intelligence can enhance their industry. Designed for those new to AI, this course offers a jargon-free introduction, covering essential topics such as machine learning, cyber security, cloud computing, and data analysis. Participants will gain hands-on experience with emerging technologies, including VR headsets and 3D printers, while learning practical applications like drafting letters and creating images. This initiative supports businesses in the Liverpool City Region by equipping them with the knowledge to leverage AI for innovation and growth. This programme is particularly important in a region where digital skills are in high demand, but there is a shortage of skilled workers to fill these roles.

- Financial, Professional & Business Services

Southport hosts a high proportion of professional services companies. Southport Education Group serves through its accountancy, leadership, and management offer. The leadership and management apprenticeship offer at Level 3 & 5 is important for Southport and Sefton businesses as it allows them to develop and upskill their staff to improve their productivity and competitiveness in the market. By developing these skills, businesses can grow, providing more jobs, better wages to local people and ultimately add value to the local economy. Our leadership and management (including T-Level) offer provides an opportunity for businesses to train new employees and to develop the skills of existing employees. This helps to ensure that

their workforce is up to date with the latest skills and technology, and that business can remain competitive in the current market.

Equally, Southport Education Group provides a management pathway which can support young people and those from disadvantaged backgrounds to gain the skills and qualifications they need to secure employment. This helps to reduce inequality, and to ensure that disadvantaged groups have access to the same opportunities as everyone else.

Southport Education Group's accountancy course offer provides students with the necessary qualifications to become AAT qualified. This includes teaching students the principles and practices of accounting, financial reporting and taxation while developing the skills needed to manage financial information and interpret financial data.

- Tourism***

The value of tourism and the visitor economy to Southport is significant. Tourism is estimated to be worth around £131 million to the local economy, with 4.6 million visitors coming to the town each year. These visitors contribute to the employment of more than 4,500 people and provide an estimated £96.3 million in visitor spend.

This makes Southport an important destination for the leisure and hospitality industry. The town has a range of tourist attractions, including parks, beaches, museums, and a range of shops, restaurants, and cafes. This means that there is an increased demand for jobs in the hospitality and leisure industry, creating opportunities for businesses and individuals to develop their skills and provide services in this sector.

Southport College is key in providing training for the hospitality and leisure industry. The college offers a range of qualifications and training courses in a variety of hospitality and leisure related areas, including customer service, cookery and hospitality. Alongside these established sector-based programme Southport Education Group also support the tourism and the visitor economy function by providing education programmes including travel and tourism, business studies, construction, public services and engineering to name a few.

There is currently a large demand for professional chefs in the industry and the College while working with partners will promote opportunities and train students on this pathway to help with the skills demand in the sector. As well as the above there is a national shortage of staff that the college will look to address in its local area by working with employers.

In both the tourism and hospitality industries employers need the current workforce and the workforce of future to have a high level of professionalism, but also to have further skills and mandatory qualifications for example events management, food hygiene, health & safety, alcohol retailing and many more. The college will work with the local community and employers to offer training in these areas where there is a need.

- Basic Skills, Soft Skills and Employability***

Feedback from employers indicates that their main requirement when recruiting young people is that they demonstrate the right attitudes and behaviours. For this reason, we developed our personal development and careers education programme which is underpinned by our college values of positivity, trust, achievement, collaboration, and professionalism. This programme ensures the characteristics and skills which employers are looking for in our learners are incorporated into the activities of our learning programmes and supporting enrichment, and work experience activities.

We have outlined previously the importance of improving social inclusion within our communities and the impact of the tight labour market on large sections of the economy. Consequently, FE corporations will always be the major supplier of basic skills for learners of all ages, and we plan to continue to be a major player in this area.

- **“Green Skills” (Construction and motor vehicle)**

Supported by recent Skills Capital Grants through the SDF projects and, more recently, the LSIF, Southport Education Group has invested in specialist equipment to deliver training that addresses the national skills gap in the motor retail sector. This initiative focuses on green energy, electric vehicles, and the installation of EV charging points, ensuring that the workforce is equipped for the industry's evolving demands.

Additionally, these projects have provided opportunities to upskill our teaching staff in green construction technologies, including heat pumps, solar power, and other sustainable energy solutions. Southport Education Group has recently completed a major capital development, resulting in the creation of a state-of-the-art ECO Centre. This facility is dedicated to advancing future technologies, such as battery technology, ground and air-source heat pumps, and solar PV, reinforcing our commitment to sustainability and innovation in education and training.

- **Manufacturing**

The Engineering Level 3 course at Southport Education Group is essential in preparing students for a career in the manufacturing industry. We deliver the Engineering T-Level programme. The course provides practical training in engineering design, project management, and quality control, as well as theoretical knowledge of advanced mathematics, physics, and mechanics. This combination of skills is highly sought after by local businesses, particularly in the manufacturing industry, which contributes significantly to Southport's economy.

According to data from the Office for National Statistics, manufacturing is a crucial sector in the Northwest of England, contributing £28.4 billion to the regional economy in 2019. Local businesses require a skilled workforce to maintain their competitiveness, and the Engineering provision at Southport Education Group provides students with the necessary skills to excel in this field. In addition, the course emphasises practical, hands-on experience, enabling students to apply their knowledge in real-world settings.

- **Creative industries**

Southport Education Group is proactively addressing both local and national skills needs in the creative industries sector through a comprehensive range of courses and state-of-the-art

facilities. The college offers specialised programs in Creative Media Production & Photography, encompassing various disciplines such as television, film, radio, interactive media, computer games development, and photo imaging. These courses are designed to equip students with industry-relevant skills, preparing them for dynamic careers in the expanding UK Entertainment & Media industry, which is projected to be worth £96 billion by 2026.

To further enhance learning, Southport Education Group provides access to Creative Arts Studios, offering students personal workspaces, fully equipped fashion and print workshops, state-of-the-art Mac suites, a TV studio, design studios with the latest industry software, a professional gallery, 3D printers, a photographic studio with advanced equipment, and a darkroom. These facilities ensure that students gain practical, hands-on experience, fostering creativity and technical proficiency.

Southport Education Group has established partnerships to enrich student experiences. For instance, Southport Education Group students have visited SAE Institute's Liverpool campus, which offers accelerated degree courses in growth creative media industries such as Audio Production and Content Creation & Online Marketing. These interactions provide students with insights into higher education opportunities and industry expectations.

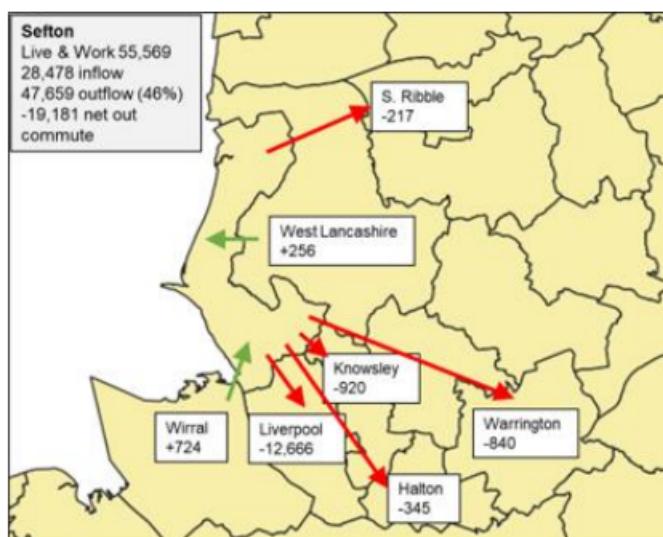
How Do We Engage with Stakeholders to Understand Skills Needs?

We have a variety of methods of assessing local and national skills needs and these are consistently reviewed and improved through our experience of collaborating with external stakeholders, be they from civic, employer, community, or education backgrounds. We utilise labour market intelligence to support future curriculum decision making. Data and analysis are typically drawn from the following areas:

- **LSIP Groups and Liverpool Combined Authority – through engagement in Skills Advisory partners, or the annual skills reports, association of Liverpool city region colleges.**
- **Employer representative bodies –such as Chambers of Commerce, CITB, etc.**
- **Sector based skills or employment reports –e.g., PWC Economic Outlook; City & Guilds, CITB, Learning, Vector, LSIPS & Work Institution etc.**
- **Employers supporting our curriculum design and delivery.**
- **The College has a close relationship with the Southport BID that has over access to over 800 local business in Southport from small to national.**

The employer engagement strategy for curriculum design and delivery outlines a three-tier system for each programme aimed at co-designing and delivering a curriculum that is highly impactful and effective, industry current, and supports the national and workforce development of the future.

Net commuting flows Sefton (>100)



Abstract from Sefton Economic Strategy Update (2022) - Office for National Statistics (2017):
2011 Census aggregate data. UK Data Service.

Meeting National, Regional and Local Needs

The College's mission statement is 'to create a positive, high expectation learning environment that allows people to excel in career enabling education and training' which is underpinned by our continued passion to enable our students to succeed, progress and thrive.

The vision is 'to be a driving force for educational and economic excellence in Southport and the surrounding area'.

Work related education and training is driven by the needs of employers and the curriculum offer should provide a suitably qualified talent pool from which employers can both recruit suitably qualified staff, or develop their existing workforce. Just as the needs of individuals within the borough are determined by data referred to in section 2, the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) provides information in relation to regional and sub-regional priorities. This includes a number of transformational themes that are supported by data, to include the Liverpool City Region Growth Plan.

In addition to medium and long term planning, provided by the LEP, Sector Skills Councils, Southport Town Deal and employers themselves also contribute to the overall picture. This data provides the information upon which the college develops an understanding of current and future employer needs.

How this will be implemented:

We will:

- Source and understand Government priorities for education and training to identify key targets that are backed by public funding.
- Create sector-based intelligence that analyses uptake, participation and competition.
- Work actively with the Association of Colleges (AoC) to both inform and understand the needs of the whole FE sector.
- Work with the Association of Liverpool City Colleges to affect a strategic approach to further education and training when responding to the needs of LCR.
- Work with the LCR Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to understand LCR priorities for education, training and skills to identify key targets that are backed by funding whether public, European or private investment.
- Work strategically with the Combined Authority to effectively plan and deliver adult education and training that meets the needs of LCR.
- Work strategically with Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council to plan and deliver effective education and training that meets the needs of the borough of Sefton.

- Work with other key stakeholders, as appropriate, to identify the range and scale of skills needs and gaps.

Southport Education Group has collaborated with other colleges in Merseyside to deliver the Strategic Development Fund (SDF) & Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF) project, which is aimed at promoting and providing courses in sustainable construction methods and electric vehicle (EV) maintenance. The project has been developed in collaboration with a number of partner colleges. Southport Education Group has had particular strong collaboration with including Hugh Baird College, Liverpool City College, Wirral Met College, Riverside College and St. Helens College.

The College will look to ask employers to sign up to a skill pledge and create a dedicated web page for this. This will benefit the College as mentioned in the above tiers but also, we help companies but given them access to the following.

- Have access to the talent of the future
- Help us shape our curriculum, ensuring that we are moulding your workforce of the future and narrowing the skills gap
- Benefit from a range networking opportunity at employer-based events
- Build the visibility of your business and promote industry sectors
- Enhance your corporate social responsibility agenda
- Take advantage of our campus facilities

Key Stakeholders

Our strategic commitment is to reposition the college as a key partner in a locality-based solution approach to labour market demand. In preparation for the introduction of LSIPs, over the course of the last 3 academic years, we worked with the Chamber of Commerce (as an Employer Representative Body) and key local stakeholders such as the Southport Business Group, Sefton Council, Careers Advice organisations, business representative groups (including the CBI and the FSB) and HE providers to establish a Skills and Productivity Board, that will review and validate Labour Market Intelligence (from primary and secondary sources) collated through growth sector mapped Skills Advisory Boards.

Engagement with Other Providers in the Area

We recognise that our commitment and ambition to reposition the college as a key strategic and operational partner in a model of locally sourced, partnership-based solutions to identified need will require a step change in how we work with schools, colleges, universities and independent training providers in our locality.

Over the course of the last 3 academic years, we worked with key local partners who have a presence in the local area (to include Hugh Baird, UCLAN, Edge Hill University and the Association of Merseyside and Liverpool College Group) to identify geographic areas of economic clustering and carry out a root and branch analysis of the skills offer across the various institutions.



Collaborative Statement 2025/26: LCR FE Colleges' Accountability Statement.

We are one of six FE Colleges / College Groups serving the Liverpool City Region (LCR), namely:

- Hugh Baird College, Bootle, Sefton.
- SK College Group -(St Helens College, St Helens and Knowsley Community College, Knowsley.)
- Southport Education Group, (Southport College and KGV Sixth Form), Sefton.
- Riverside College, Halton.
- The City of Liverpool College, Liverpool.
- Wirral Metropolitan College, Wirral.

Whilst recognising that each individual college has a unique offer that serves its local community, LCR Colleges work collaboratively in support of the City Region. Collaboration involves the development of new and innovative curriculum; engaging employers and their representative bodies; building partnerships with schools; enhancing careers education and developing positive relationships with key stakeholders within the Liverpool City Region, all of which harnesses innovation and improves efficiency.

The Association of Liverpool City Region Colleges (AoLCRC) was established by the FE member Colleges and has been operating for over 20 years, to facilitate such collaborative work. In the last few years, in addition to representing and supporting developments within the FE sector as a whole; the LCR Colleges have developed collaborative projects for the Skills Development Fund, the Local Skills Improvement Fund and other project based devolved funding. This has facilitated capital investment, development of new curriculum, employer and school engagement and professional updating. Throughout this time, the AoLCRC and each of the colleges it represents, have worked closely with the Combined Authority, informing and contributing to the Long Term Skills Strategy and the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) which is led by Liverpool Chamber of Commerce.

Our FE Colleges are key strategic partners that support the socio-economic growth of our region, through the design, development and delivery of education and skills both regionally, as a devolved administration, and nationally, as public sector anchor organisations responsible for education and skills.

The collective commitment to, and engagement in, AoLCRC is a key component of our Colleges' focus on harnessing innovation and improving efficiency through collaborative work within the FE sector. <https://www.aolcrcolleges.ac.uk/>

Statement from the Board of Governors

Section 52B of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 places a duty on governing bodies of institutions in the further education sector to review how well the education or training provided by the institution meets local needs, and consider what action might be taken in order to meet those needs better.

To support with this, the Corporation has triangulated information and data provided by the College, with that available through external sources, including the published LSIPs, and an independent objective professional advisor, to ensure that the College considers the local context, education and labour landscapes, emerging trends as well as local institutions offers.

The development of the updated Strategic Plan was underpinned by the views of our stakeholders, developed collaboratively with full engagement of the Corporation at series of dedicated Strategic Days.

The Corporation actively supports collaboration and is proud of the improved engagement with other local providers and successful delivery of the Strategic Development Fund (SDF) and Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF) project as well as the commitment to employer engagement, underpinned by a comprehensive strategy. In recognising our unique local landscape, and ensuring our local employers are actively engaged in shaping our curriculum and workforce of the future, it provides reassurance to our Board that the curriculum is not only effective in meeting local needs, but is shaped by and adaptive to those needs.

Oversight and assurance are provided through regular reports, with the Principal ensuring the impact of collaborative work and community engagement is reflected in her report to the Corporation. More detailed information on specific aspects, including Employer Engagement, Staff and Student Voice, and Project Delivery are reported to the relevant Committee's.

The College Corporation, having triangulated this through a series of link visits, attendance at curriculum planning panels, the feedback from a recent Ofsted inspection, as well as that of an independent advisor, is satisfied that the curriculum plan, and targeted areas for improvement, which includes, for the Board, further enhancing stakeholder engagement are accurate and reflective of the needs of our local area.

Corporation Statement

On behalf of the Southport Education Group Corporation, it is hereby confirmed that the college plan as set out above reflects an agreed statement of purpose, aims and objectives as approved by the corporation at their meeting on 12th May 2025.

The plan will be published on the college's website within three months of the start of the new academic year and can be accessed from the following link:

Chair of Governors

Principal/Chief Executive and Accounting Officer

Dated:

Ofsted – Report and Monitoring Visit - <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50244621> & <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50275988>

Financial Statements -

<https://www.southport.ac.uk/documents/Southport%20Education%20Group%20Year%20End%20Accounts%2031%20July%202024.pdf>

Liverpool City Region Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)

The Lancashire Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)

Unit for Future Skills - Local Skills Dashboard

<https://department-for-education.shinyapps.io/local-skills-dashboard/>

Liverpool City Region Skills Reports

<https://liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/LCR-Local-Skills-Report-2022-23.pdf>

<https://www.liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/LCR-Green-Jobs-Skills-Plan-.pdf>