Accountability Statement

2023/24

Be You. Be Extraordinary.

Section 1: Background and Approach

1.1 Background

In the Skills for Jobs White Paper the government set out their vision to transform further education. As part of this transformation, all further education colleges are now required to develop and submit an annual accountability statement that outlines what provision they are intending to deliver to support local, regional and national needs in return for funding from the Department of Education.

Department for Education guidance explains that Accountability Statements should set out a small number of outcome targets focused on curriculum changes and adaptations to provision planned for the coming year. These targets should reflect how the college is contributing to priorities outlined in Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) led by Employer Representative Bodies (ERBs), working with employers, providers and local stakeholders such as LEPs, Local Authorities and other agencies. All further education provision is in scope, and the statement should be a relatively concise public statement of key aims, targets and outcomes for the year ahead, which has been approved by the college's Governing Body.

1.2 Approach to developing the annual accountability statement

During 2021/22 the college leadership team and Corporation Board carried out a full review of the college's strategic direction and purpose, leading to a launch of a new strategic plan at the start of the 2022/23 academic year. The review process included extensive analysis of local and national labour market information and other data sources, as well as consultation with various external stakeholders, students and staff, and other local education and training providers. Given this relatively recent process, the college's strategic plan remains directly relevant and has been used as the basis of this accountability statement.

Section 2: Purpose

2.1 Mission, vision and strategic objectives

Be You. Be Extraordinary.

By nurturing and empowering individual students and staff to be the best they can be, we improve lives, communities and the economy through education. Together, we achieve the extraordinary.

Our vision is to be a college where everyone achieves more than they believe possible

We are ambitious for our students, staff, community and partner organisations. We are passionate about creating a sustainable College that supports everyone to achieve their goals, whatever their starting point.

Our students enjoy an extraordinary experience:

- Students look forward to engaging with a vibrant life at college; they are supported to be themselves and to achieve more than they believe possible
- Learning is inspiring, engaging, dynamic and transformative
- We go the extra mile to ensure students can succeed in their lives and their careers

Our staff are empowered to achieve extraordinary things:

- We are the Oxfordshire employer of choice; our team enjoy working here and are motivated by what we achieve alongside our students
- Our shared purpose and values enable each of us to develop and grow as individuals, within a team that inspires us

Our community and partners benefit from our commitment to the extraordinary:

- Together, our programmes, skills development, social responsibility and citizenship enhance community cohesion and strengthen the economy
- Our partners choose to work with us because of our values; we are embedded within our community, who see us as an important part of their success

2.1 Mission, vision and strategic objectives *(continued)*

Strategic Objectives 2022/23 – 2026/27

Delivering the highest quality student experience

Developing a transformative and dynamic curriculum

Maintaining financial security

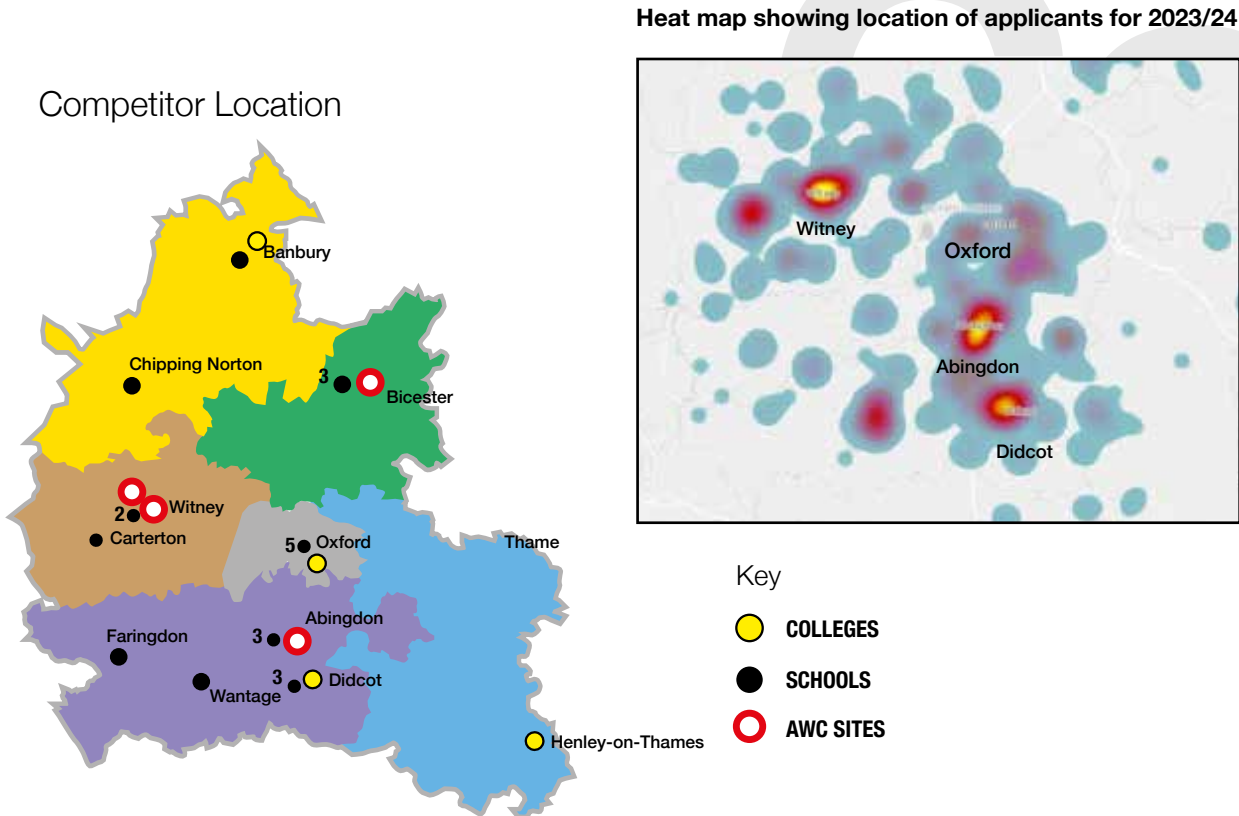Shaping an environmentally sustainable future

Being the employer of choice

Section 3: Context and Place
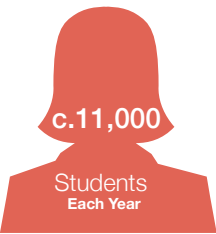
3.1 About Abingdon & Witney College

Abingdon & Witney College is a small to medium sized general further education college in Oxfordshire. The college has a strong reputation for its work across the county, particularly in relation to support for SEND learners aged 16 – 24, apprenticeships, and adult learners in the community. Full time provision for 16 – 18 year olds is of very high quality and has experienced a 10% increase in student numbers in 2022/23.

Abingdon & Witney College's primary focus is to support individuals and communities, including the business community, within Oxfordshire. The college works collaboratively and successfully with local and regional stakeholders, employers, education providers and community organisations in order to meet local and regional needs well. The college is contributing to the production of the Oxfordshire Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) being developed by the Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce and continues to work closely with Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP).
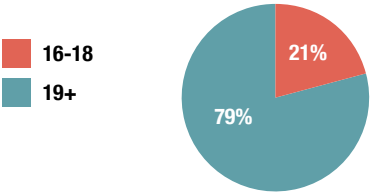
The college's main campuses are in Abingdon and Witney, with a farm campus on the outskirts of Witney, and a Construction Skills Centre for apprentices in Bicester. Provision for adults also takes place in community venues across the county. The vast majority of learners live in Oxfordshire, near to our main campuses.

Heat map showing location of applicants for 2023/24
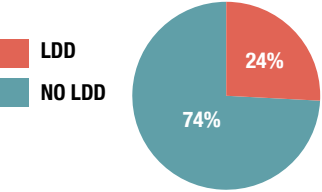
Competitor Location

Banbury

Chipping Norton

3 Bicester

2 Witney

Carterton

5 Oxford

Thame

Faringdon

Abingdon

3

3 Didcot

Wantage

Henley-on-Thames

Witney

Oxford

Abingdon

Didcot

Key

COLLEGES

SCHOOLS

AWC SITES

3.2 Abingdon & Witney College students

c.11,000
Students
Each Year

Age group

- 16-18
- 19+

21%
79%

Ethnic group

- MINORITY ETHNIC GROUP
- WHITE BRITISH

28%
72%

Learning Disability

- LDD
- NO LDD

24%
74%

Students by Level

- NO LEVEL
- ENTRY LEVEL
- L1
- L2
- L3
- L4+

37%
24%
6%
15%
14%
4%

Students by course type

Course type	Value
APPRENTICESHIP	522
COMMUNITY LEARNING	2,120
FULL COST	371
HIGHER EDUCATION	133
PART-TIME	1,858
SCHOOL	150
STUDY PROGRAMME	1,664
SUBCONTRACTOR	1,874

0   500   1,000   1,500   2,000   2,500
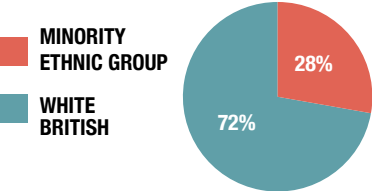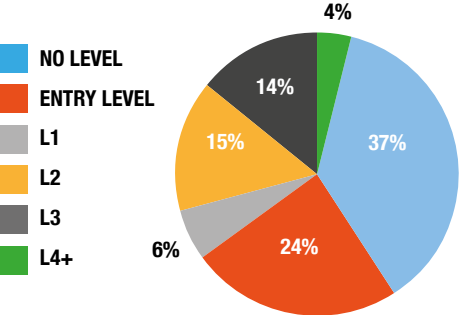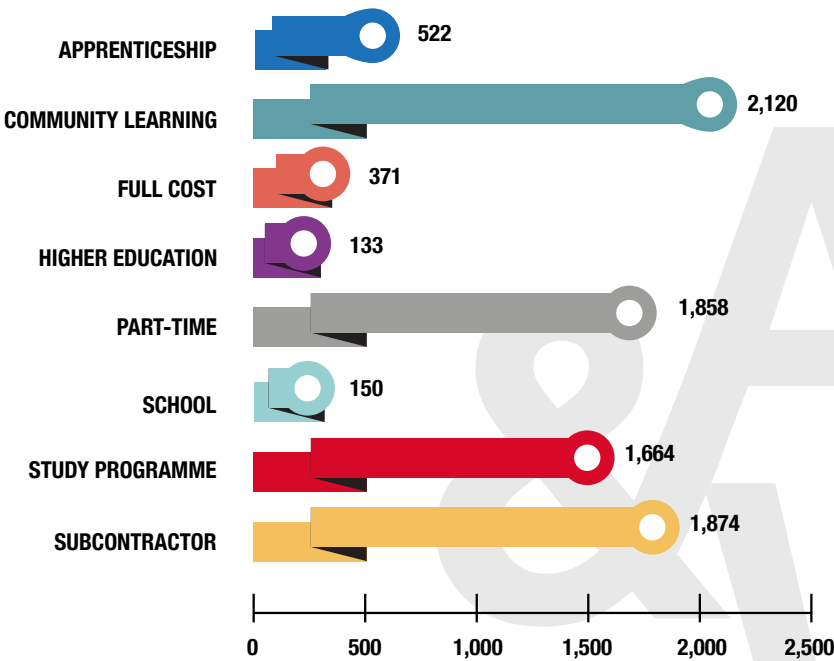
Students by Sector Subject Area

Sector Subject Area		Value
HEALTH, PUBLIC SERVICES AND CARE	SSA 1	756
SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS	SSA 2	109
AGRICULTURE, HORTICULTURE AND ANIMAL CARE	SSA 3	516
ENGINEERING AND MANUFACTURING TECHNOLOGIES	SSA 4	294
CONSTRUCTION, PLANNING AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT	SSA 5	429
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY	SSA 6	170
RETAIL AND COMMERCIAL ENTERPRISE	SSA 7	227
LEISURE, TRAVEL AND TOURISM	SSA 8	472
ARTS, MEDIA AND PUBLISHING	SSA 9	2,110
HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY	SSA 10	5
SOCIAL SCIENCES	SSA 11	5
LANGUAGES, LITERATURE AND CULTURE	SSA 12	854
EDUCATION AND TRAINING	SSA 13	96
PREPARATION FOR LIFE AND WORK	SSA 14	2,109
BUSINESS, ADMINISTRATION AND LAW	SSA 15	541

0   500   1,000   1,500   2,000   2,500

3.3 The Oxfordshire economy

Oxfordshire has one of the strongest economies in the UK, growing at an average of 3.9 per cent year on year between 2006 - 2019. The county has significant assets in research and development, being home to two leading universities, the University of Oxford, and Oxford Brookes University. These anchor institutions support an international brand that draws talent and investment to Oxfordshire, and has led to the large number of science, innovation, technology and business parks located in the county. Oxfordshire has a highly skilled workforce, with 53 per cent of the working age population education to degree level or above. The county's unemployment rate is typically over 50 per cent lower than the UK average and has recovered well since the pandemic. The Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan emphasized that 85,000 new jobs and in excess of 100,000 new homes would be required in Oxfordshire by 2031.

However, despite the evident impact of the rich, knowledge-led economy in Oxfordshire, the county does have pockets of significant deprivation and wage disparity, and has low productivity relative to other regions in the south east of England. An ageing population contributes to skills supply challenges in Oxfordshire, as do difficulties with the attraction and retention of talent, linked to graduate retention and housing affordability. 3.5% of the working population do not hold a formal qualification whilst 5.9% are only qualified to level 1; 12.4% are qualified to level 2 and 15.8% qualified to level 3. The number of young people with recognised SEND needs across South Oxfordshire, West Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse is expected to increase significantly in the next five years; there are currently 2179 young people in years 9 – 11 with identified SEND needs; 577 of these are supported by an Education & Health Care Plan (EHCP).

Table 1: Largest number of businesses in Oxfordshire, by sector

Number of businesses	No	%
Professional, scientific and technical	6445	20
Construction	3995	12.4
Information & Communication	2860	8.9
Business administration	2735	8.5
Arts, entertainment and recreation	2285	7.1
Retail	2100	6.5
Accommodation and food service	1660	5.2
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	1540	4.8
Manufacturing	1435	4.5
Property	1280	4
Health	1210	3.8
Transport & storage	1110	3.4
Wholesale	1070	3.3
Motor trades	865	2.7
Education	750	2.3
Financial and insurance	515	1.6
Public administration	210	0.7
Mining, quarrying and utilities	130	0.4

Oxfordshire Local Skills Dashboard 2021

Table 2: Largest number of job roles in Oxfordshire, by role

Number of businesses	No	%
Elementary Administration and Service Occupations	38695	10
Administrative Occupations	32993	8.5
Business and Public Service Associate Professionals	30344	7.8
Corporate Managers and Directors	29486	7.6
Science, Research, Engineering and Technology Professionals	29372	7.6
Teaching and Educational Professionals	27609	7.1
Caring Personal Service Occupations	25208	6.5
Sales Occupations	22852	5.9
Business, Media and Public Service Professionals	19402	5
Health Professionals	17388	4.5
Skilled Metal, Electrical and Electronic Trades	12133	3.1
Other Manager and Proprietors	12120	3.1
Transport and Mobile Machine Drivers and Operatives	11810	3.1
Secretarial and related occupations	9499	2.5
Science, Engineering and Technology Associate Professionals	8295	2.1
Process, Plant and Machine Operatives	7979	2.1
Textile, Printing and Other Skilled Trades	7,887	2
Skills Construction and Building Trades	7400	1.9
Customer Service Occupations	6820	1.8
Leisure Travel and Related Personal Service Occupations	6168	1.6
Culture, Media and Sport Occupations	5808	1.5

Oxfordshire Local Skills Dashboard 2021

3.4 Skills priority areas in Oxfordshire

Various recent publications and strategies have identified skills priority areas for Oxfordshire and have suggested a number of different approaches to addressing these economic challenges. The most significant of these are the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) in 2019 and the Oxfordshire Skills Strategy 2022-2024.

The Oxfordshire Local Skills Improvement Plan produced by the local Employer Representative Body, the Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce, is due to be published in May 2023 and will be the most current assessment of the skills needs of Oxfordshire; the emerging themes from the LSIP have been used to inform this statement.

Publication	Emerging sectors and areas of strength:
Local Industrial Strategy	Life Sciences, Quantum Computing, Space-led Data Applications, Robotics and Autonomous Systems, Cryogenics, Energy, Digital and Creative, Motorsport
Oxfordshire Skills Strategy	**Cornerstone businesses:** Health and Social Care, Wholesale and Retail, Manufacturing and Supply Chain, Education, Visitor Economy, Food Services, Real Estate **Breakthrough businesses:** Transformative Technologies, Space, Life Sciences, Education, High-performance Technology, Motorsport and Advanced Engineering, Digital and Creative, Cryogenics, Construction, Carbon Neutral Economy
Oxfordshire Local Skills Improvement Plan (draft)	**Priority sectors:** Skills for Net Zero, Digitalisation Construction and Built Environment, Health and Life Sciences, Care, Hospitality & Visitor Economy, Manufacturing (Science and Innovation), Transport and Logistics, Digital **Cross sector themes:** Transferable employability, Business & Administration, Leadership & Management,

3.5 National skills priority areas

National skills priorities have been agreed across Government and are areas with high volumes of vacancies which are expected to increase; long-term structural barriers to recruitment, retention and progression issues; and are important in providing opportunities for employment in key growth areas such as green jobs, creative industries, and science and technology (including AI and quantum computing). These sectors are:

- Construction
- Manufacturing
- Digital and Technology
- Health and Social care
- Haulage and Logistics
- Engineering
- Science and Mathematics

Education policy also asks that further education colleges focus on a small number of programmes, namely T Levels, Apprenticeships, Free Courses for Jobs, Skills Bootcamps and Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs). Providers are also expected to offer essential skills up to Level 2 in English and mathematics, and Level 1 in digital.

Section 4: Contribution to national, regional and local priorities

4.1 Current contribution to national, regional and local priorities

Abingdon & Witney College currently offers qualifications in 13 out of 15 subject sector areas, from entry level to level 6, with a large range of non-qualification based courses supporting work in the community. The college provision maps well to the existing skills priorities of Oxfordshire with two thirds of enrolments taking place in priority subject sector areas, despite the college's wider focus on community and adult learning, alongside skills for work. Despite the strong fit to skills shortage areas, there are opportunities to broaden the offer further, particularly in relation to the type of provision available. To date, the college has not offered any HTQs or Skills Bootcamps, and enrolments on Free Courses for Jobs courses have been relatively low. Enrolments on T Levels and Apprenticeships have continued to grow.

The table below shows the college's current curriculum offer mapped to national, regional and local skills priority areas and to priority qualifications.

Following the formal publication of the Local Skills Improvement Plan at the end of May, the college's course offer for 2023/24 will be further refined in line with priorities and projects identified through the LSIP process. The course offer for 2023/24 already shows a significant planned increase in T Level places and apprenticeship starts in priority sectors, along with a plan to offer Skills Bootcamps for the first time. Work is also underway to review our higher education offer, in line with current policy and initiatives relating to HTQs.

SSA	National Priority	Local Regional Priority	2022/23 of which						2023/24 Plan of which					
			Total enrolments	T Levels	Apprentice starts	Free courses for jobs	Skills Bootcamps	HTQs	Total enrolments	T Levels	Apprentice starts	Free courses for jobs	Skills Bootcamps	HTQs
Health, Public Services and Care	Yes	Yes	568		14	33			920	28	20	40		
Science and Mathematics	Yes	Yes	122						30					
Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care			476		16	2			601		20	5		
Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	Yes	Yes	351	31	40				268	44	52			
Construction, Planning and the Built Environment	Yes	Yes	798		81				685		104	10		10
Information and Communication Technology	Yes	Yes	129	49	7				236	54	10			10
Retail and Commercial Enterprise		Yes	365						484					
Leisure, Travel and Tourism		Yes	420						591					
Arts, Media and Publishing		Yes	2,074						2,851					
History, Philosophy and Theology			0						0					
Social Sciences			0						0					
Languages, Literature and Culture			606						646					
Education and Training		Yes	164	46					123	42				
Preparation for Life and Work	Yes		2,256						2,353					
Business, Administration and Law		Yes	610	42	123	5			587	72	147			
TOTAL enrolments			8,939	168	281	40	0	0	10,375	240	353	55	20	0
TOTAL enrolments in local priority areas			5,601						6,775					
% of enrolments in local priority areas			63%						65%					
TOTAL enrolments in national priority areas			4,224						4,492					
% of enrolments in national priority areas			47%						43%					

As well as ensuring that the course offer and provision available at the college maps well to local and national skills priority areas, Abingdon & Witney College also ensures it responds proactively to local and regional strategies and initiatives to improve the economy and address skills shortages. Examples of the college's involvement in local activities arising from the three most relevant local skills strategy documents can be seen in the table below.

Publication	Objective/ Proposal from the document	Abingdon & Witney College contribution
Local Industrial Strategy	• Establishing a Skills Advisory Panel for Oxfordshire • Championing T Levels locally • Establishing an Oxfordshire Entrepreneurship Hub • Working with education providers to improve social mobility for young people • Developing OxLife, a targeted programme to reskill and upskill older workers and armed forces personnel • Driving growth in apprenticeships • Working through the Oxfordshire Growth Board to form an Inclusive Growth Commission	• Principal is a Director of OxLEP; Skills Advisory Panel reports to the OxLEP board. FE representation is also in place on Skills Advisory Panel • Early adopter of T Levels, with five already offered and more to follow. Keen engagement locally to promote the offer • Close working with local schools, through West Oxfordshire Learning Providers and Abingdon Learning Trust to improve outcomes for young people • Involvement in innovative collaborative projects with schools such as supporting refugees living in Witney, and Student Council for Abingdon • Significant year on year growth in apprenticeships, particularly in priority sectors such as construction and levels such as degree apprenticeships • Signatory on Oxfordshire Inclusive Growth Charter, and member of committee

Publication	Objective/ Proposal from the document	Abingdon & Witney College contribution
Oxfordshire Skills Strategy	• Supporting the reform of vocational and technical skills provision, which includes promoting Apprenticeships and T Level offers • Help to provide clear, diverse and inclusive career pathways for young people and adults to ensure they are aware of the Oxfordshire labour market and sectors • Managing Oxfordshire's consistently tight labour market • Graduate promotion and retention • Business skills provision and support • Ensure training and re-skilling provision in identified priority sectors	• Early adopter of T Levels, with five already offered and more to follow. Keen engagement locally to promote the offer • Significant year on year growth in apprenticeships, particularly in priority sectors such as construction and levels such as degree apprenticeships • Highly committed to inclusive education pathways for Oxfordshire, including discrete programmes for learners with SEND where appropriate, supported internships, and other programmes supporting those Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) or those at risk of becoming NEET. • Involvement of employers in course design and delivery to students, promoting opportunities in industry • Clear focus on priority sectors including new construction provision • Broad ranging adult provision, including focusing on developing skills for work

Publication	Objective/ Proposal from the document	Abingdon & Witney College contribution
Oxfordshire Local Skills Improvement Plan (draft)	• Seek opportunities to embed digital skills in all types of curriculum at all levels • Seek opportunities to embed transferable skills (continuous improvement principles, leadership and management skills, and skills for a net zero economy) in curriculum as appropriate • Consider how to access untapped labour market potential through designing inclusive training routes into work (eg older workers or returners, or those with English as a second language) • Collaborate to provide curriculum provision that is flexible and accessible to working learners for upskilling – particularly for career advancement, leadership and management • Work with the ERB to raise awareness of career advancement opportunities in some priority sectors to promote recruitment and retention, and inform careers advice • The ERB should develop Sector-Based Workforce Development Partnerships in Construction & Built Environment, Health & Life science, and Skills for Net Zero in 2023/24 • Work in partnership with the ERB to set out a "rapid response" service to design and deliver local, non-accredited provision to address urgent skills needs in the existing workforce • Create opportunities to upskill the FE Teaching Workforce to ensure new and emerging skills gaps are serviced • Seek opportunities for capital investment in digital infrastructure and kit; continuing investment in renewable technology equipment and facilities; continuing investment in construction and built environment facilities	• College Digital Strategy in place to underpin the delivery of digital skills; digital skills course offering for adults • Net Zero Skills hub under development; Sustainability Strategy includes a clear strand relating to embedding net zero skills to the mainstream curriculum • Oxfordshire Adult Learning brand specifically targets inclusive training routes through Community and Family Learning, ESOL and digital learning • Contribution to the development of the LSIP, and collaboration with other local providers to deliver a four-strand Strategic Development Fund project • Will participate effectively and enthusiastically in future projects with the ERB

As well as working proactively with a number of employers and employer representative bodies, the college works with a wide group of other stakeholders, ensuring that it is able to contribute to the wider needs of the community as well. The following case studies are examples of the partnership approach adopted by the college in order to ensure it meets local needs.

WOLP (West Oxfordshire Learning Partnership) Careers Fair

This year will be the fourth time the college has hosted the WOLP Careers Fair which showcases a wide range of employers from across Oxfordshire, giving young people the opportunity to engage with potential employers and experts already working in those fields. The event is open to pupils from Y10 – Y13, but we also welcome those who are home-schooled or from outside the WOLP area. Typically, the event attracts in excess of 500 families.

Oxfordshire Learning Network (OLN)

Abingdon & Witney College is a lead partner within the Oxfordshire Learning Network, a partnership organisation that was originally set up as a Community Learning Trust to oversee how the Community Learning grant was used by training providers to support adult learning across Oxfordshire.

Over 400 members represent organisations such as local Town and District Councils, Oxfordshire County Council, DWP, community groups, charities, adult and community learning providers and our subcontracted providers.

Supported Internships

Our Supported Internship programme is run in partnership with Oxfordshire Employment Services, part of the local authority, who have been supporting adults with disabilities and learning difficulties into work for several decades. Through their supported employment business, County Print Finishers, and their extensive network of local businesses they support college students with EHCPs to experience work and secure sustainable employment.

4.2 Future contribution to national, regional and local priorities

The college's aims and target outcomes for 2023/24 are as follows:

Aim	Target
1. Develop a net zero skills offer that meets local needs	• Launch the Net Zero Skills Hub • Design and deliver a minimum of 5 different courses, enrolling a minimum of 100 students • Set up an employer education and skills forum for Net Zero
2. Establish a Skills Bootcamp offer	• Design and deliver at least two Skills Bootcamps, enrolling 20 students
3. Further expand our Free Courses for Jobs offer in line with local skills priorities	• Investigate new markets for Free Courses for Jobs, and increase the number of enrolments on this programme to 55
4. Continue to grow numbers of T Level students and courses	• Grow T Levels numbers in 2023/24 to at least 70 • Design and develop two new T Levels for start in September 2024, with a minimum of 24 students enrolled
5. Review adult skills offer in line with skills priorities	• Review adult skills offer in line with the Skills Fund reforms • Develop a revised suite of employability and digital skills courses for adults, ready for launch in September 2024, and suitable to enrol at least 200 adults
6. Work collaboratively with Oxfordshire FE providers in support of the LSIP outcomes	• Build on the success of the Strategic Development Fund (SDF) projects, by enrolling at least 50 adults on renewable technologies courses, and 20 on electric vehicle maintenance • Design and deliver the priorities identified by the LSIF bid, in support of the LSIP, ensuring that project outcomes are achieved as a minimum
7. Re-launch a revised higher education offer	• Complete the review of higher education provision started in May 2023 • Ensure that the outcomes of the review are delivered.

4.3 Review of Accountability Statement

This Statement will be approved annually by the Corporation Board and updated at the end of each academic year.

Progress towards the college's aims and targets outcomes for 2023/24 will be monitored by the Nominations, Remuneration and Governance (NRG) Committee of the Board, alongside the outcomes detailed in the college's Strategic Plan.

4.4 Corporation Statement

This Statement was approved by the Corporation Board of Abingdon & Witney College on 30th May 2023.

The Accountability Statement can be found **here.**