



ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT 2022/23

1) BACKGROUND

Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College (HLNSC) is a high performing further education college located across the Marches at six distinctive campuses in Hereford, Holme Lacy, Ludlow, Oswestry, Walford and Shrewsbury.

Originally established in 1949 as Herefordshire College of Technology, and operating from a single campus in the City of Hereford, the College has in recent years grown through a series of mergers. In each case, through effective and efficient management, the College has continued to support a broad range of local, high-quality education and skills training opportunities.

Herefordshire College

Herefordshire College is a large centre delivering vocational qualifications in the city of Hereford. It is the only general further education facility in the county and offers a broad range of programmes for young people and adults from a wide geographical area, including the neighbouring counties of Worcestershire, Gloucestershire, Shropshire and Powys. The campus also serves as the College's main administrative centre.

Holme Lacy College

Following the disaggregation of the Pershore group of colleges, Holme Lacy College was incorporated into the College structure in 2007. Holme Lacy College and its associated ca.300hectare farm, Pound Farm, is the country's only fully organic further education facility and continues to deliver a broad portfolio of land-based courses. It is one of only three centres in the UK approved to train apprentice farriers and is home to the National School of Blacksmithing.

Ludlow Sixth Form College

Ludlow Sixth Form College delivers a blend of A Levels and classroom-based vocational courses. It merged with Herefordshire College of Technology in 2013 to become Herefordshire and Ludlow College.

County Training

Formally Shropshire County Council's training division, the contract for County Training's provision was novated to Herefordshire and Ludlow College in 2016. County Training delivers a range of apprenticeships and adult and community learning

programmes. Based at the Gateway Centre in Shrewsbury, County Training plays an important role in the local community.

North Shropshire College

North Shropshire College, itself a result of a previous merger, was incorporated into the College in 2018. It comprises of two distinct campuses:

- Walford College is a predominately dairy-based ca.300hectare farm and agricultural campus offering a range of land-based courses alongside provision in motor vehicles and SEND. It also plays host to a small campus run by the Derwen College, a Shropshire-based specialist provider for adults with learning difficulties.
- NSC Oswestry Campus – A town-based facility which is home to a range of vocational general further education courses.

2. VISION AND MISSION

The College's vision is:

To support students, communities and businesses to fully realise their potential by delivering high quality academic, technical, professional and community learning. We take pride in our legacy: successful students who are skilled, knowledgeable, enterprising, professional and resilient.

The College's mission is:

To realise potential and support success.

3. KEY FACTS

In 2021-2022, the College:

- Trained ca. 2,400 full-time and 6,000 part-time students. The majority of full-time students, ca.2,100, are aged 16 to 18.
- Trained ca.700 apprentices.
- Worked with more than 600 individual employers and companies.
- Delivered university-level programmes through the Hereford University Centre, a joint initiative with the University of Worcester, the College's principal university partner.
- Supported the majority of students to progress into further/higher education or employment on completion of their studies.

- Is one of the largest employers in the region, employing a talented and well-qualified staff base of ca.600, some 400 FTE.
- Was inspected in October 2022 as a newly merged organisation (without grade). Inspectors judged the provision to be 'Good' overall.

4. LOCAL CONTEXT

Geography

Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College is located in Herefordshire and Shropshire, situated at the western edge of the West Midlands region, in the heart of the Welsh Marches. The area is predominantly rural and of exceptional natural beauty: fertile unspoilt farmland, the Wye and Severn valleys, Malvern and Shropshire Hills, and the Black Mountains.

Herefordshire and Shropshire are sparsely populated, some of the least populated areas of England. Of the 193,600 residents of Herefordshire, over half live in rural locations. The principal population centres are the cathedral city of Hereford (60,800), and the market towns of Leominster (12,000), Ross-on-Wye (11,200) and Ledbury (10,000).

Shropshire (excluding Telford and Wrekin) has a much larger population of 325,400; 75,000 live in the county town of Shrewsbury and over half reside in rural areas. The largest market towns are Oswestry (17,000), Bridgnorth (12,000), Market Drayton (12,000) and Ludlow (10,000).

Both counties have an older age demographic than average, partly because many young people leave the area to study at university and do not return. The vast majority of residents are of white ethnic origin; the only significant minority being white residents of non-British or Irish origin (3.9% in Herefordshire, 2.0% in Shropshire).

Economy

Herefordshire's economic output is low compared to the regional and national economy; wages are well below national average, but unemployment is also significantly lower than average. Of the county's 11,900 enterprises, the vast majority, 86.8%, are micro-enterprises employing nine or fewer people; 11.2% small (10 to 49 employees); 1.3% medium-sized (50 to 249 employees); and only 0.3% large (250+ employees). The industries that contribute the most to the local economy are: manufacturing (19%), distribution, transport and communication (17%), real estate activities (17%) and public administration, education, health and other services (15%). These four sectors make up over two thirds of all economic output.

A sector of particular interest in Herefordshire is agriculture, forestry and fishing, which accounts for a much higher proportion of gross value added (GVA) than for England as a whole: 8% compared to only 1%.

Of the 73,000 employees in the county, nearly half work in the wholesale and retail trade (13,000), manufacturing (11,000) and human health and social work activities (11,000). Other key employment sectors, accounting for 23% of the total workforce, are accommodation and food services, business administration and support services and education.

Shropshire is remarkably similar to its southern neighbour: relatively low economic output, below average wages, and low unemployment rates. The County has 15,900 enterprises, 90.4% of which are micro-enterprises, 8.1% small, 1.3% medium-sized, and just 0.3% large. In terms of contribution to GVA, the county's principal sectors are public administration, education, health and other services (21.8%), distribution, transport, accommodation and food (20.3%), real estate (14.7%) and manufacturing (10.5%), accounting for over two-thirds of all economic output. There are 120,000 employees in Shropshire, over half of whom work in the following sectors: human health and social work activities (19,000), wholesale and retail trade (21,000), manufacturing (11,000) and education (11,000). Other important sectors of the economy, employing a further 18% of the workforce, are construction, professional, scientific and technical, accommodation and food services, administration and arts, entertainment and recreation.

In recent years, the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) has played an important part in driving economic growth in Herefordshire, Shropshire, and Telford and Wrekin, seeking to create the conditions for economic vitality and sustainable employment across the LEP area, which is home to 700,400 people and 32,230 businesses.

The LEP's core economic sectors are advanced manufacturing, business and professional services and food and drink. Emerging sectors which have high future economic and productivity growth potential comprise innovative health and social care, environmental technology, cyber security and resilience, and agri-tech. The preceding economic sectors are underpinned by the following enabling sectors: visitor economy, retail, logistics, construction, health and social care, education and voluntary, community and social enterprise.

Education

Children, young people and adults are provided with generally good primary and secondary education in Herefordshire and Shropshire. Most of the schools are judged by Ofsted to be good or outstanding, many are academies, and there is much innovative and excellent practice. There are sixteen secondary schools in Herefordshire of which three have sixth forms plus four specialist schools. In Shropshire there are twenty secondary schools, six of which offer post-16 provision, and two specialist schools. The area's most diverse College is Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College. There are five other further education colleges across the two counties: Hereford College of Arts; Hereford Sixth Form College (now an academy); the Royal National College for the Blind; Derwen College and the Shrewsbury Colleges Group.

5. DEVELOPING CURRICULUM – A STRATEGIC APPROACH

The College's five-year strategic plan, consulted on and approved in 2021, makes clear our responsibility to provide the broadest possible range of educational services in the rural communities we serve. This is particularly important given the sparsely populated demographic, paucity of alternative provision and challenges of local transport. Governors, leaders and managers are committed to ensuring that the business and employer community are central to our planning.

The Strategic Plan includes a number of key commitments. Strategic Commitment 4 states:

We will ensure that the provision fully supports the needs of our students and local economies.

This commitment is divided into four main areas of work. They are:

We will ensure that students have access to the training they need locally by continuing to offer a broad range of vocational and academic training opportunities in each of the areas we serve.

Access to services and transport are key issues for those living in rural areas, including the Marches. Prudent financial management ensures that we maintain a wide range of provision across a number of geographically dispersed centres.

A range of course levels are available to ensure students are able to progress locally. Entry Level, Level 1 and Level 2 courses typically provide access for students who have not yet achieved their key stage 4 thresholds. Level 3 provision is available for those who require a higher level of technical proficiency and/or aspire to higher education. Levels 4&5 are available in some subject areas providing local higher education opportunities.

Timetables are constructed to minimise travel requirements and fully utilise students' time at College. Three full-day attendance patterns also support those who want, or need, to work. This is particularly beneficial for those students who work in industries allied to their main programme of study.

A broad range of apprenticeships are offered across the Marches. The College continues to support apprenticeship delivery in more expensive, capital-intensive areas of work. In some cases, apprentices would not otherwise be able to access this training locally. Additionally, flexible apprenticeship delivery patterns ensure that each sector is able to access training that suits their business needs.

We provide comprehensive support for students with identified learning and/or physical needs. This includes on-programme learning support and a number of courses specifically designed to educate and progress those with higher levels of need.

We offer land-based provision from two separate campuses, Walford College in the north of Shropshire and Holme Lacy College in Herefordshire. Whilst Walford College's farm is predominantly dairy, mirroring the local agricultural economy, Holme Lacy trains students on a mixed arable and livestock farm estate. Additionally, Holme Lacy College's farm, Pound Farm, is the only fully organic further education facility in the UK.

We support specialist niche training that is of national and international importance. Holme Lacy College hosts the National School of Blacksmithing; the largest forging facility in Europe and a national centre of excellence. Holme Lacy College is also one of only three accredited centres in the United Kingdom to deliver training for farriers. HLNSC has developed and maintains provision in forestry, arboriculture and furniture making.

We will develop a curriculum strategy that aligns with the needs of employers in each of the communities we serve.

Examples include:

We determine curriculum intent with employer input, both directly and by using EMSI data to ensure the knowledge, skills and behaviours we teach align with employer need. We deliver both hard and soft skills to ensure students can progress successfully towards employment. Additionally, we encourage employers to directly influence the curriculum by developing opportunities for them to comment and discuss their needs with curriculum delivery teams.

The College delivers apprenticeship provision that is responsive to the needs of individuals and their employers. The use of industry expert assessors to undertake workplace visits ensures that the training is bespoke and contextualised. Additional training is agreed and delivered where a need is identified.

College managers pay close attention to local skills planning, including the work of the LEP's Skills Advisory Panel, Local Skills Improvement Plan and local authorities' economic forums to plan future curriculum developments. The College actively engages with employer representative groups. These include, Hereford and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce, Shropshire Chamber of Commerce, Herefordshire Business Board, Shropshire Economic Forum, Herefordshire Skills Board, the Federation of Small Businesses and the National Farmers Union.

HLNSC is responsive to the needs of employers and offers a range of training to meet workplace requirements. The offer, flexible depending on need, includes examples such as; higher-level engineering, welding, forging, agricultural competency qualifications such as chainsaw operator, crop spraying, tractor driving, off-road vehicles or telehandler operator, leadership and management and CIPD. Additionally, the College delivers training for industry accreditation, including; 18th Regulations for Electricians; accreditation for heating and gas engineers; MOT and Air-conditioning for motor mechanics; AAT Accountancy and CIPD for personnel professionals.

Curriculum teams engage with key strategic employers and employer representative groups to discuss training needs and develop provision. For example, by working

closely with the Farriery Registration Council and the Worshipful Company of Farriers we ensure that training is industry specific and of a very high standard. The National School of Blacksmithing, based at Holme Lacy College, works with leading industry organisations such as the British Artists Blacksmithing Association to ensure that this unique facility delivers the training needed to the highest standard. Engagement with organisations such as LIC and the NFU ensure that the College's agricultural provision is an exemplar, both for students and for the local agricultural industry.

We will work in partnership with other providers to ensure that our offer aligns with theirs to meet the needs of students and employers.

Examples include:

There are four further education colleges in the City of Hereford. Each College makes a unique and complimentary contribution to Herefordshire's post-16 landscape ensuring that the full range of opportunities are available to young people and adults. Regular meetings ensure that we understand our educational role and helps us plan curriculum that is complementary. We enjoy a strong relationship with Herefordshire's new university, NMITE, to discuss potential areas of collaboration and mutual support.

Regular meetings with schools and membership of bodies such as the Herefordshire Association of Secondary Heads ensures that we remain cognisant of their needs and are best placed to support them to achieve their Gatsby benchmarks. The College works alongside secondary school partners across the region to support their students' understanding of post-16 opportunities. Annual events such as Meet your Futures provides school pupils with an opportunity to engage with vocational education before committing to post-16 study.

The College ensures that it remains aligned with other post-16 providers through membership of a number of regional provider partnership networks. These include; SWAOC (Shropshire Wrekin Association of Colleges), MEP (Marches Education Partnership), Herefordshire and Worcestershire Principals Group, MSPN (Marches Skills Provider Network), and Landex (Land Based Colleges Aspiring to Excellence). Additionally, senior managers meet regularly with colleagues from other local colleges to better understand their offer and share ideas. These include our neighbours in Worcestershire and Powys.

The College, along with the Shrewsbury Colleges Group and Telford College is a founder member of the Marches Education Partnership. This partnership promotes a collaborative approach to meeting employer needs. This recently resulted in the successful delivery of two substantial employer-focused projects funded through the DfE's Strategic Development Fund.

The College works with specialist providers to develop provision to meet specific needs. We recently partnered with the Derwen College, Oswestry, to deliver a project designed to provide meaningful work experience opportunities for students with complex needs and those studying Health Care.

Where appropriate, the College partners with other providers to deliver courses required by local employers and to support national needs. Examples include:

- HWGTA (Herefordshire and Worcestershire Group Training Association) to deliver HNCs in Engineering to their higher-level apprentices
- Hereford College of Arts to deliver the country's only BA(Hons) in Blacksmithing
- Warwickshire College Group, Myerscough College and the Farriery Registration Council to deliver the apprenticeship standard in Farriery.
- HLNSC is one of only two associate colleges of the University of Worcester. This relationship facilitates delivery of higher education programmes in Hereford.

We will work alongside other stakeholders to improve the socioeconomic landscape by up-skilling the community and increasing productivity.

Examples include:

Membership of local business boards, Chambers of Commerce and other representative groups ensures that the College remains closely linked to local businesses.

The College works closely with the Marches LEP which has supported a number of capital developments, most recently including an award of £1.2m to develop the Low Carbon Technology Training Centre at Holme Lacy College.

The College is fully engaged with Herefordshire and Shropshire local authorities. Engagement with Herefordshire Sustainable Growth Strategy Board resulted in the College's involvement with the development of Herefordshire's 2050 Economic Plan and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Membership of Shropshire's Economic Forum facilitates discussions about how skills can positively contribute to their economic growth plans. As part of this, we are currently working with both Herefordshire and Shropshire to deliver courses through the Government's UKSPF Multiply fund.

CONTRIBUTION TO SKILLS NEEDS – EXTERNAL VIEW

During their inspection in October 2022, Ofsted reviewed the College's contribution to local, regional and national skills needs and reported the following:

“Leaders and managers have worked well since the merger to ensure that learners and apprentices benefit from a broad and rich curriculum that closely reflects the skills needs of local, regional and national economies.

Leaders work well with a range of stakeholders. College leaders are well placed and have significant involvement with local enterprise partnerships and local authorities.

Leaders work diligently with local NHS trusts. They have co-designed programmes to support NHS staff to develop their English skills through the use of a mobile teaching facility. Leaders contribute positively to research across the region which helps inform local skills improvement plans.

Leaders have developed positive relationships with other providers of education and training in the areas in which they work. They link well with other local colleges to plan provision to ensure that it responds to the skills needs across the geographical areas where they work. Leaders have developed useful partnerships with a range of universities. They make sure the curriculum prepares learners well for moving into higher education.

Leaders work well with employers across the sector areas in which they offer provision. They understand clearly the changing skills needs in areas such as agriculture, energy and care. For example, leaders have worked with the Microgeneration Certification Scheme to secure significant funding for, and to develop, the Herefordshire Low Carbon Technology Centre. This facility is in direct response to a significant identified skills need from local businesses linked to low carbon and renewable energy technologies.

Leaders have an effective understanding of the communities in which they work. They work proactively with a range of community groups. Leaders and teachers use this information to help plan the curriculum. In areas such as sports, learners and the wider community benefit from these well-established links. Learners deliver coaching sessions to support disabled young people. This supports learners to develop their knowledge and skills and also contributes positively to the wider communities the college serve.

Leaders have a clear curriculum vision which they successfully realise to provide a broad range of programmes across the large geographical area in which they work. This supports learners and apprentices to access local provision. Leaders are very knowledgeable about the needs and priorities of each of the college campuses. They provide programmes that contribute to the skills needs of the locality. In the north of the region, the curriculum in land-based studies responds directly to the focus on dairy farming. Whereas, in the south of the region, the land-based curriculum is focused much more closely on arable farming. Learners and apprentices who study in these areas develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to work in this sector area.

Leaders and teachers use the information they gain from well-developed relationships with employers and stakeholders across the sector areas in which they work to plan the curriculum carefully. They ensure the curriculum that learners and apprentices' access is up to date and linked well to industry areas. Apprentices in electrical studies develop their knowledge and skills in the use of renewable technologies such as solar power, electric vehicle charging and ground and air source heat pumps."

Source: Ofsted Inspection Report – October 2022

6. CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND LOCAL SKILLS PRIORITIES

ANNUAL PLAN – 2023/2024

Aim	Current Position	Target	Starts	Milestone	Priority		
					LSIP	LA / LEP	National
Develop the facilities and provision in to deliver programmes for low-carbon technologies	First phase of the Low Carbon Technology Training Centre developed and opened during 2022/23 academic year. (SDF Fund) Trained staff in place to deliver programmes in Low Carbon Installer and centre manager appointed. Initial programmes delivered in line with SDF specification.	Complete and fully equip phase 2 of the Low Carbon Technology Training Centre (LEP Energy Fund)	NA	Sept 2024	X	X	X
		Deliver first phase short course programme to industry	24 (FCR) 100 (AEB)	June 2024	X	X	X
		Develop and introduce the apprenticeship standard in Plumbing and Heating (Environmental Pathway)	12	Sept 2004	X	X	X
		Introduce additional modules for existing plumbing and electrotechnical students	131	July 2024	X	X	X
Increase the College's T-Level offer	Currently delivering one T-Level in Building Engineering Services (Electrical) at Herefordshire College (16 students).	Increase the number of students studying T-Level Building Engineering services	16	Sept 2023	X		X
		Introduce T-Level in Early Years Educator	36	Sept 2023			X
		Develop T-Level in Animal Management, Equine and Livestock	93	Sept 2024		X	X
		Develop T-Level in Business Administration	39	Sept 2024	X		X
Review the College's Technical Level 4&5 offer	The College currently delivers the HNC in Engineering (Herefordshire College)	Develop and approve HND/HTQ (L5) Engineering	NA	June 2024	X	X	X
		Develop and approve HTQ Modern Methods of Construction	NA	June 2024	X	X	X
		Develop and approve HTQ Health Care Assistant Practitioner	NA	June 2024	X		X
Develop work place provision in Health Care (Apprenticeships)	The College currently delivers apprenticeships in Health Care in Shropshire only	Deliver apprenticeships in Health Care (Levels 2 – 5 depending on demand) in Herefordshire	10	Dec 2023	X		X
Continue to work through the Marches Education Partnership to deliver programmes in response to LSIP identified priorities	The College has co-delivered two successful SDF pilot programmes in Health and Low Carbon Technologies.	In conjunction with the region's other post-16 providers, develop provision that responds to priorities highlighted by the LSIP (Yet to be approved and published).	TBC	July 2024	X	TBC	X

7. CORPORATION STATEMENT

This accountability statement and plan was reviewed and approved by the Board of Governors on the 25th of April 2023.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A J Leppard'.

Date: 31st May 2023

Chair of the Corporation

8. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Herefordshire 2050 Economic Plan - [Link](#)
- Shropshire Economic Growth Strategy - [Link](#)
- The Marches Local Skills Report - [Link](#)
- LSIP – Interim report (Not available online)
- HLNSC Strategic Plan - [Link](#)