



PLUMPTON
COLLEGE

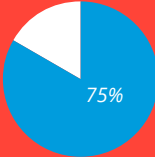
ACCOUNTABILITY AGREEMENT

2025/26

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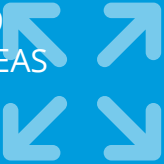
PLUMPTON COLLEGE IS 1 OF 12 INDEPENDENT LAND-BASED COLLEGES NATIONALLY
FOUNDED IN 1926



75 % OF CURRICULUM IS SPECIALISED LAND BASED

CURRICULUM SPANS 19 DIFFERENT SUBJECT AREAS

RESPONDING TO MEET THE NEEDS OF A DIVERSE LABOUR MARKET



1,350 16-18 YEAR OLDS ON LEVEL 1- 3 PROGRAMMES

STUDENTS COME FROM ACROSS THE SOUTH EAST, MAINLY FROM EAST AND WEST SUSSEX



1926
PLUMPTON COLLEGE

FULL TIME STUDY

CURRICULUM OFFERED ACROSS SEVERAL STUDY TYPES

PROVIDING TRAINING AND EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDIVIDUALS FROM A RANGE OF BACKGROUNDS

- 14-16 VOCATIONAL PROGRAMMES
- FULL-TIME 16-18 STUDY (LEVELS 1-3)
- APPRENTICESHIPS
- UNIVERSITY COURSES
- LEISURE & ADULT COURSES

COLLEGE'S FASTEST GROWING PROVISION TYPE

500 APPRENTICES EMPLOYED ACROSS THE UK



APPRENTICESHIPS

OFFERING HIGHER EDUCATION FOR OVER 30 YEARS

WITH OVER 250 STUDENTS
ON FOUNDATION
BACHELORS &
MASTER'S PROGRAMMES

STUDENTS FROM LONDON
AND SOUTH EAST



The Queen's
Anniversary
Prizes

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING FOR EMPLOYERS IN THE LAND-BASED SECTOR

MOBILE TRAINING AT EMPLOYER
PREMISES AND LANDOWNER
LOCATIONS AS WELL AS
ESTABLISHING TWO OUT-
CENTRES IN HASTINGS & RYE



LandPro
TRAINING

ADULT EDUCATION AND TRAINING DELIVERED AT ONE GARDEN BRIGHTON

HORTICULTURE CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE



ONE
GARDEN
BRIGHTON

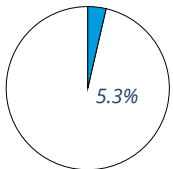
PARTNERSHIP WITH EDUCATION FUTURES TRUST

A CHARITY AIMED AT ENGAGING AND SUPPORTING
MARGINALISED GROUPS - THE PARTNERSHIP
WILL INTRODUCE A GREEN, ENVIRONMENTAL
AND LAND-BASED CURRICULUM DELIVERED BY
PLUMPTON AT THE FIRS, HASTINGS

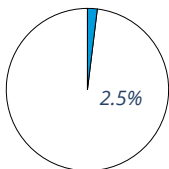


EAST SUSSEX HAS A REAL DIVERSITY OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILES

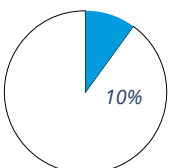
INCLUDING RURAL, URBAN AND SEASIDE COMMUNITIES



NEET RATE FOR 16-17 YEAR
OLDS HIGHER THAN THE
NATIONAL AVERAGE, AN
INCREASING NEGATIVE
PICTURE POST-COVID

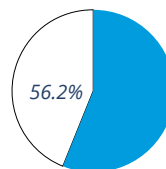


UNDER 25 YEAR OLDS WITH
SEND AND/OR DISABILITY IS
HIGHER THAN THE NATIONAL
AVERAGE COMPARED TO 1.8%

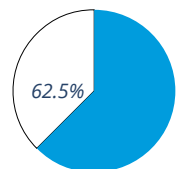


COASTAL TOWNS BETWEEN
NEWHAVEN AND HASTINGS
ARE CLASSIFIED AS BEING IN
THE TOP 10% OF DEPRIVED
PLACES IN THE UK

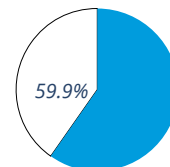
ADULTS ACROSS THE AREA HAVE TYPICALLY
FEW HIGHER-LEVEL QUALIFICATIONS, HAVING
A LEVEL 3 OR ABOVE



ADULTS IN DEPRIVED
COASTAL TOWNS



REGIONALLY



NATIONALLY

OUR
STRATEGIC PLAN
2022-2027

The College has changed much in the past five years, attracting close to 50% more students across the diverse range of study types, levels and subjects, as well as nearing completion of its £30m investment programme as part of our site masterplan.

The rationale for growth in college student numbers and footprint has undoubtedly been the significant national skills gaps which exist in the land-based sector. This has been well documented for several years yet these industries are currently going through further seismic changes. Informed by new legislation, yet driven by a multitude of global factors, including climate change and food security (only exacerbated by recent events such as the pandemic and Brexit) these industries require new approaches, practices and mindsets.

Education, training and skills development have a more predominant role to play in this than ever before and the College is very well placed to play a pivotal role in the changes required amongst the industries we serve.

Our Strategic Plan sets out our priorities in doing so and our new ambitious vision for the future, with collaborative partnerships at the heart. During our Ofsted inspection in March the College underwent a thorough scrutiny of our strategic priorities and our response to the skills gaps and needs of our sectors. The College received the highest grade for this new aspect of inspection and we were recognised for making a ‘Strong’ contribution to skills.

Scan QR to view Local skills improvement plans (LSIPs) and local skills improvement fund (LSIF):





Scan QR to view Strategic Plan 2022-27:



2.1 STRATEGIC PLAN HEADLINES
2.1.1 OUR VISION
To be the leader of land and environmental education and training in the South East, renowned for our cutting-edge practice.
2.1.2 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:
A) OUR PURPOSE
To inspire and equip our students with the skills, knowledge and attributes which meet the future needs of industry.
B) OUR PEOPLE
Our Culture
To be a diverse and vibrant community in which staff and students embody our values, have a strong sense of belonging and flourish.
Our Partners
To have a nurturing and collaborative relationship with our local community and employers which enhances both the experience of our students and the professional development of the workplace.
Plumpton College’s engagement with local regional and national partners is crucial for the College to fulfil its role as an educational hub. By aligning its offerings with local workforce demands, fostering partnerships with employers, and contributing to the community’s economic growth, the College not only benefits its learners but also plays a vital role in the sustainable development of the local area.
Our Staff
To attract, develop and retain a highly skilled, ambitious team of staff empowered to deliver our core purpose.
C) OUR PLACE
To play a transformational role in the environmental sustainability of land-based industries, showcasing best practice and integrating the highest standards of sustainability into our curriculum.

A person wearing a black glove is holding a small, patterned lizard. The lizard has a dark body with yellow and orange spots. In the background, there is a large terrarium with a white bird and some green plants.

OUR KEY STAKEHOLDERS



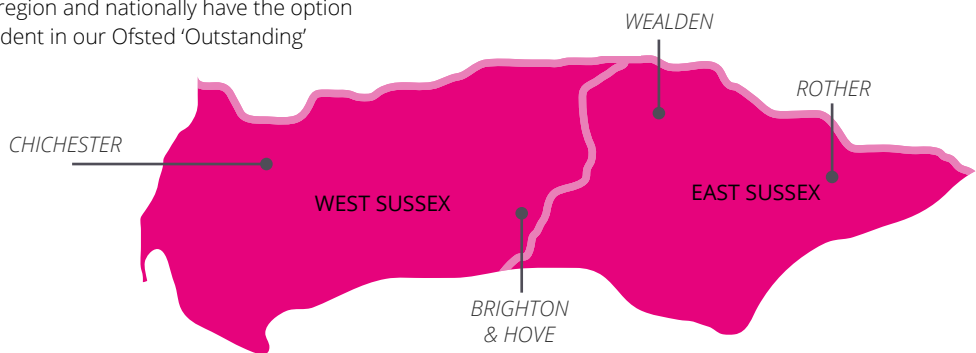
College Leaders and Managers play a prominent role as members of numerous local and regional skills forums such as The Local Skills Improvement Plan and Skills East Sussex.

Such involvement enables an excellent understanding of the skill needs in Sussex and beyond, as well as developing key relationships with new stakeholders, gaining their professional judgements on new entrants to their workforce and what additional support we can provide.

This enables us as a training provider to tailor our provision to the sectors and jobs markets for local and regional employers and where applicable, Learners from across the region and nationally have the option to become a resident in our Ofsted 'Outstanding' accommodation.

THE LSIP AREA

The LSIP area includes the region stretching from Chichester and Brighton & Hove through to Rother.



3.1 LANDEX

The College are members of this land-based education sector membership body which provides valuable insight and labour market intelligence relating to national skills needs, as well as a vital lobbying and influencing role within both the DfE and across relevant governmental departments such as Defra. Plumpton's Principal is the current Chair of Landex.

The College's own membership of Landex provides an opportunity for staff to engage in critical industry led CPD. An annual Peer Review challenges our Curriculum Intent and Implementation; it stress tests the impact curriculum design is having on the learners' outcomes and their personal development. Senior Leaders are involved in the return visits to other member training providers enabling a rich knowledge transfer from across the Land-Based College Community.

3.2 FE SUSSEX

Plumpton leaders work closely with our Local Further Education Provider counterparts. As the only land-based provision in the area, there is minimal crossover in the Curriculum offer, but where this occurs in the minority of cases, there is clear differentiated provision enabling learners in the local area to make informed decisions about course choices.

The collaborative nature of this working with all other providers in the county is best reflected in our being successful as a trailblazer for the Government's Strategic Development Fund (SDF) and, in conjunction with Sussex Chamber of Commerce, the Local Skills Improvement Plan.



3.3 SUSSEX CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND THE LOCAL SKILLS IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Plumpton has been involved in the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) since its inception. The College's engagement with the LSIP holds immense significance for the organisation, its learners and the broader community. By actively participating in this plan, Plumpton can contribute to the development and enhancement of local skills, fostering a thriving and sustainable community.

Engaging with the LSIP allows Plumpton College to align its educational offerings with the evolving needs of the local workforce. By understanding the skills gaps and demands of the area, the College can tailor its curriculum and training programmes to equip students with the relevant competencies required by local employers. This alignment enhances learners' employability skills and ensures they are prepared for meaningful careers within their community.

Plumpton College was honoured to receive the Workforce Developer Award, presented by the Sussex Chamber of Commerce. This recognition reflects the College's continued commitment to staff skills development and training excellence. It also demonstrates the success of a collaborative approach between education and industry partners.

3.4 EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

The College are group members and regular contributors to Skills East Sussex. Plumpton represents the Land, Agriculture and Environmental priority sector. Our membership in Skills East Sussex is a critical part of our curriculum development and ability influence key stakeholders about the importance of our sector and opportunities available to upskill the community; it allows the College to collaborate, stay informed, enhance employability, have a voice, and access resources that contribute to the development of a skilled workforce and the success of its learners in the local and regional context. The College also works closely with Hastings Borough Council on the new Greener Towns Project and Brighton and Hove City Council.

In May 2025, in conjunction with ESCC, Plumpton have been successful in tendering for designing and developing a new suite of Skills Bootcamps, this new government backed initiative will enable Plumpton to further meet the needs of the East Sussex communities and businesses to train and upskill individuals and employer workforces.

3.5 UNIVERSITY OF GREENWICH

In 2023 Plumpton officially announced a new partnership with the University of Greenwich. This exciting new chapter of Higher Education at Plumpton now includes two new undergraduate FdSc Programmes in Sustainable Land Management and Sustainable Horticulture Management. In addition, the College has launched a further two new degree programmes, Rural Land & Business Management and Sustainable Agriculture; unique to the UK, the full honours degree programmes are condensed into 'accelerated degrees', meaning learners can graduate in just two years, significantly reducing study costs, and fast-tracking graduates to industry to fill the must needed skills gaps.

These new programmes join Plumpton's existing HE provision in Wine Business, Wine Production, Viticulture & Oenology, Veterinary Nursing & Physiotherapy, Animal Behaviour and Equine Science.



A fluffy, light brown dog is swimming in a pool of water. The dog's head is above the surface, and its fur is wet and matted. The water is a clear, light blue color with some ripples. The background is a bright, overexposed area, possibly a pool deck or a bright sky.

HOW WE ARE MEETING LOCAL, REGIONAL & NATIONAL NEEDS



4.1 SECTOR SPECIFIC EMPLOYERS

Directors and Curriculum Managers have developed overarching Intent Statements to evidence the journey curriculum planning has undertaken, which external stakeholders have been consulted, alongside local market intelligence sources, to support the development of study programmes and funded adult provision.

Assistant Curriculum Managers and Programme Managers are empowered to select and implement robust qualifications to support the skills development and identify additional qualifications, including Certificates of Competency and work-related Personal Development Programmes, to enable Plumpton learners to be highly competitive in the job market and/or ready for higher technical study.

Plumpton meets, as a minimum, with key stakeholders once a year. All areas undergo a Curriculum Advisory Panel or Strategic Industry Liaison Board.

Priority areas have been informed through Strategic Industry Liaison Boards, targeting employers who need workforce development, tackling issues of skills shortages, raising awareness of career opportunities and developing the employment skills that stakeholders believe hold the most value for progression in the industry.

Other areas of the College hold Curriculum Advisory Panels, these meetings bring together the relevant stakeholders to inform curriculum developments, identify workforce skills shortages and provide employers with an opportunity to shape an extra-curricular programme to develop competencies required by industry.

The College's Business Services department has been established to support business prosperity for employer partners by providing immediate, medium or long-term training and talent attraction solutions. The department is split into three distinct areas, Apprenticeships, Recruitment Support and Land Pro Training. Each area providing specialist advice, guidance and training based on the specific needs of each employer. By continually engaging with employers and employment support services e.g., Department of Work and Pensions, the department can provide support to curriculum areas to ensure that the College offer meets current and future training and staffing needs.

The College's Careers team, along with School Liaison colleagues, engage local education providers to inform them of the national skills shortage in Land-based subjects. Curriculum Managers present to school colleagues about the career opportunities and curriculum offer to change the perception of Land-based education as manual and non-academic.



4.2 ROYAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Plumpton College is proud to be the sole provider of Horticulture training nationally for The Royal Horticultural Society (RHS).

Plumpton ensures that the work underpinning this significant development is achieved through a close partnership and aligning high quality teaching and learning meeting the needs of the RHS.

Learners benefit from a bespoke timetable of activity including enrichment opportunities, a diverse delivery from industry and teaching professionals.

Plumpton also delivers the nationally recognised and world leading RHS accredited qualifications from One Garden in Brighton and has been recognised for facilities and delivery as a Grade 1 Education Provider.

4.3 NATIONAL TRUST

Plumpton is also the provider of training for the National Trust Horticulture Apprentices in the South of England. Plumpton is working closely with Pershore College, who deliver to the North of England, sharing resources, training strategies and CPD opportunities. Moreover, The National Trust have also chosen Plumpton as delivery provider for the new Organic Market Garden Apprenticeship.

4.4 WINEGB

The College works collaboratively with this membership organisation which represents over 65% of the UK's vineyards and wine producers. Our Director of Wine at Plumpton is Chair of WineGB and our Principal chairs its national Training and Education Group, which has commissioned national reports into skills needs within the sector over the next ten years. As a result, the Training and Education Group, which comprises employers from across the country, has worked closely with the College to develop a national viticulture apprenticeship programme, utilising an existing government approved standard.

Despite the change in government in 2024 and the removal of funds through DEFRA, Plumpton College continues to develop the national competency framework (NCF); The NCF has been designed to produce an outline framework for the future funding and delivery of the skills and education to meet the anticipated expansion demands of the English and Welsh wine industry. Plumpton & WineGB continue to meet with ministers under the new government.

The College has reviewed with industry and industry representative organisations the resources required for this scaling up, both for new entrants through full time education and skills courses and the continuing professional development of current workers and those making career changes.

In terms of contributing to skills and education for the wine industry, Plumpton College continues to fulfil its responsibility as the UK Centre for Wine Education and Training, with its highly regarded and renowned undergraduate and postgraduate degree offer covering Viticulture, Oenology and International Wine Business reaching over one hundred students per year.

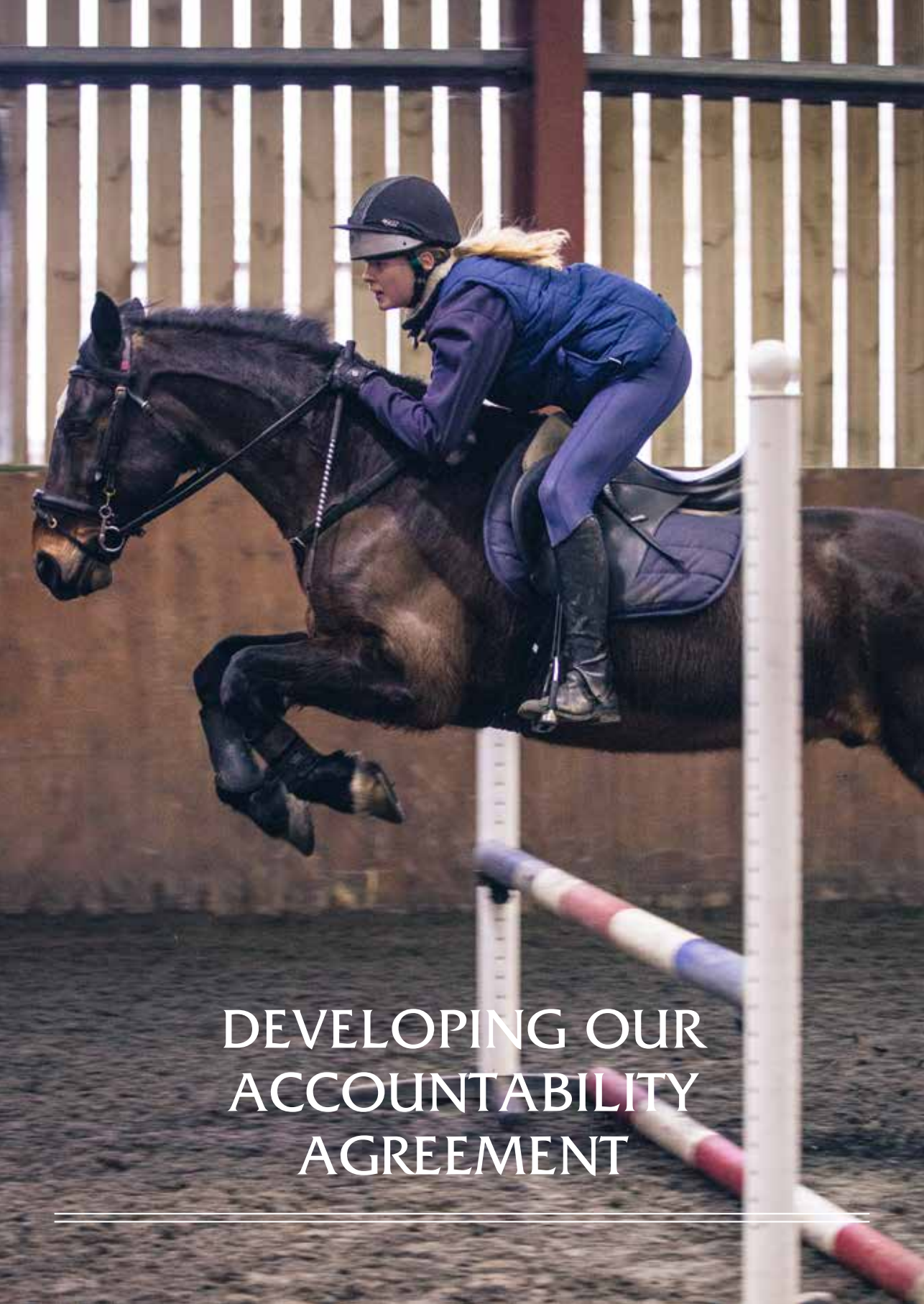
Rather than continuing to develop short courses or online/in person training programmes on an ad-hoc basis, the College has set out a clear strategy endorsed by WineGB such that the right long-term strategic solution for the sector was to develop a National Competency Framework. This will be phase one in seeking to professionalise and further develop the UK wine sector.

4.5 NFU AND CLA

The College works very closely with these two member organisations, which between them cover over 90% of UK farmers and landowners. Collaborating on thought leadership and knowledge exchange events for the industry at a regional level, curriculum leads have also worked with NFU members in Sussex to tailor level 3 college provision specifically to their skills and knowledge requirements.

4.6 ROYAL COLLEGE OF VETERINARY SURGEONS

As the leading provider of Veterinary Nursing education and training in the south of England, the College works closely with its professional body to accredit apprenticeship and foundation degree programmes and to inform a programme of extensive training and development for clinical coaches based in veterinary practices. This training is again shaped to meet local need and ensures that apprentices are effectively supported in their workplace delivery to consistently meet the national professional standard.



DEVELOPING OUR ACCOUNTABILITY AGREEMENT

College Leaders and Managers play a prominent role as members of numerous local and regional skills forums such as The LSIP and Skills East Sussex. Such involvement enables an excellent understanding of the skill needs in Sussex, as well as developing key relationships with new stakeholders, gaining their professional judgements on new entrants to their workforce, and what additional support we can provide - this enables us as a training provider, with a focus to tailor our provision to the sectors and jobs markets for local and regional employers.

Plumpton has been involved in the LSIP since its inception; engagement with the LSIP holds immense significance for the organisation, its learners, and the broader community. By actively participating, Plumpton contributes to the development and enhancement of local skills, fostering a thriving and sustainable community.

Engaging with the LSIP allows Plumpton to align its educational offerings with the evolving needs of the local workforce. By understanding the skills gaps and demands of the area, the College has tailored its curriculum and training programmes to equip students with the relevant competencies required by local employers. This alignment enhances learners' employability skills and ensures they are prepared for meaningful careers within their community.

The College continues to proactively feed into the LSIP working committees. Plumpton is also a member of the Southeast IoT, delivering courses in Veterinary Nursing, Horticulture, and Viticulture and Oenology. Pilot work with the County Council is identifying ways to improve transition for SEN students from schools' settings to college.

The LSIP for Sussex clearly identifies the importance of bite-sized training packages for these specialist sectors that support the labour shortages and skills gaps in production horticulture and food security, exacerbated by Brexit and Covid-19. Plumpton have developed a suite of targeted courses under the Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF) in Horticulture, Forestry & Arboriculture and Agriculture/Land & Environment.

The College are group members and regular contributors to Skills East Sussex. Plumpton represents the Land, Agriculture, and Environmental priority sector. Our membership in Skills East Sussex is a critical part of our curriculum development and ability to influence key stakeholders about the importance of our sector and opportunities available to upskill the community; it allows the College to collaborate, stay informed, enhance employability, have a voice, and access resources that contribute to the development of a skilled workforce and the success of its learners in the local and regional context.

College Governors are directly involved in our skills development, and their skillsets utilised to develop relationships with stakeholders and to challenge the work of leaders and managers when selecting priority sectors. As such, they have a strong awareness of local and regional skills needs. All Governors are trained on how the College engages and interacts with external stakeholders; there is a sub-group of 'Link-Governors' aligned to curriculum areas, providing support and challenge and there is a nominated 'Link Governor for Skills' working with the College's Skill Nominee.

5.1 CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND LOCAL SKILLS PRIORITIES

In our 24/25 Accountability Agreement, we set out a series of targets to achieve over the time period. As a result, we have provided an outcome paper to supplement this document.



2025/2026 ACTION PLAN



The specific KPIs associated with the above action plan are centrally recorded, tracked and monitored through the College's Operation Development Plan (ODP)

TARGET/ THEME	ACTIONS/ INTENDED IMPACT	STRATEGIC PLAN REF.
DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHER-LEVEL EDUCATION PROGRAMMES: Higher level skillsets are required by businesses for the future workforces with consulting, land management, technological and management skills being top of the priorities to ensure that the sectors can continue to function and keep pace with the changing landscape of their sectors.	EPYP (INC. 14+) - Provide a wider range of options to study - Develop a more ambitious curriculum from an earlier age - Develop applied learning through a project-based curriculum - Raise academic aspirations across all levels - Investigation & development of an environmental A-Level provision to attract learners from a more diverse background - Aligning 14+ provision with a Level 2 GCSE curriculum APPRENTICESHIPS - Higher level apprenticeship expansion at Level 4 & 5 - Develop more progression routes for apprentices and businesses - Leverage our position and reputation as national contract holders to promote our offer to a wider national context ADULT EDUCATION - Research, preparation & development for the following government strategies: - Invest35 - Lifelong Learning Entitlement - Growth & Skills Levy - Provide subsidised and customised programmes of study that meets the local and regional skills needs - Introduce micro-credentials and short courses targeting specific industry needs (e.g., precision agriculture, food security). - Blended and immersive learning options to make further training more accessible HIGHER EDUCATION - Programme Development and informed curriculum planning in key areas including: - L4 Agriculture mapped to apprenticeship standard. - Higher research degrees for Zoology, Viticulture, Oenology - Key stakeholder mapping exercise to inform learner engagement with work placements/experience on course at higher level	OUR PURPOSE OUR PLACE OUR CULTURE
SKILLS BOOTCAMPS To build further relationships with our key stakeholders, employers and the skills marketing through the delivery of Skills Bootcamps	- Provide businesses with funded higher level and accessible upskilling for their employees aligning to their organisational needs DEVELOPMENT, ROLL-OUT & DELIVERY OF SKILLS BOOTCAMPS FOR THE FOLLOWING SECTORS: - Construction Horticulture - Amenity Horticulture - Production Horticulture - Forestry & Arboriculture - Canine & Hydrotherapy - Butchery	OUR PURPOSE OUR PARTNERS OUR CULTURE

TARGET	ACTIONS/ INTENDED IMPACT	STRATEGIC PLAN REF.
IMMERSIVE LEARNING To further position ourselves as the leading education and training provider for Land and environment Skills & Education	VIRTUAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT DEVELOPMENT - Blended and immersive learning options - Extend our reach to a national audience with a market leading VLE - With a longer term aim to help develop international workforces PREPARE AND BE READY FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF THE LIFELONG LEARNING ENTITLEMENT - Provide subsidised and customised programmes of study that meets the local and regional skills needs - Introduce micro-credentials and short courses targeting specific industry needs (e.g., precision agriculture, food security).	OUR CULTURE OUR PLACE OUR PARTNERS
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT Plumpton stakeholder engagement is longstanding and has significant impact on the successful design and implementation of curriculum. We recognise that our key stakeholder groups require different approaches to ongoing engagement. We are committed to continuous review and diversifying our approach to stakeholder engagement to ensure we as a hub of the Land-based sector in the South East can remain current through this activity but equally, providing opportunities for those who give us their time and offer us their expertise.	- A review of our Stakeholder Engagement Strategy – ongoing working group. - Continued close working with East Sussex County Council, Brighton and Hove Council and West Sussex County Council. - Scheduling and Hosting industry Round Table events to engage industry with the educational developments at Plumpton and seeking views and expertise from the respective sectors - Strategic Industry Liaison Board and feedback sessions with employer stakeholders - Curriculum Advisory Panel and feedback sessions with employer stakeholders - Partnerships with community groups to support local organisations to have a greater reach and impact within their networks - Hosting industry specific events and conventions in our Agrifood Building - For our Agrifood Building to act as a knowledge exchange hub for industry	OUR PLACE OUR PARTNERS
INVESTMENT IN PEOPLE Industry Upskilling & recruitment of leading industry practitioners	EXISTING WORKFORCE - Industry Insights - Professional development and upskilling FUTURE WORKFORCE - Continued emphasis on the development of new teachers as 'dual professionals' through a unique teacher training programme for entrants of all levels ATTRACTION OF TEACHING STAFF AND MANAGERS TO THE FE SECTOR - Utilise opportunities to demonstrate the transferrable skills and expertise from industries beyond education - To remain current, aligned to sector change and policy/ initiative updates	OUR PLACE OUR PARTNERS



LOCAL NEEDS DUTY SELF-ASSESSMENT

We are meeting the needs of local learners and preparing them to become successful citizens who contribute to both the local and national economy - either directly after college or once degree and further training has been completed. Our curriculum is planned collaboratively alongside other providers to ensure breadth of opportunity, efficiency of delivery and fulfilment in meeting skills priorities across East Sussex and beyond.

CORPORATION SIGN OFF - JUNE 2025

In response to The Skills Act (2022), the Board of Governors have conducted a review of our approach, determining how well our curriculum meets local skills needs and prepares for those that will emerge in the future, through oversight, challenge, and discussion, with employers and leaders of the college.

The Board has also considered the relevant findings and recommendations from our recent Ofsted report and Self-assessment processes.

IMMERSIVE EDUCATION

FOR A CHANGING WORLD

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