



St Helens College

St Helens College Strategic Plan Executive Summary

Consultation Draft

2016 - 2019



St Helens College

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1. Foreword

This plan sets out the strategic direction of the College and its contribution to the further development of the local and wider community.

The College is a major provider of education and training at all levels from basic English and maths to full honours degrees, with nearly 8,000 students, 483 employees and nearly 600 employer links, the College plays a major role in the local community within St Helens and the surrounding area, the wider Liverpool City Region and the further education (FE) sector.

The College educates a wide variety of students preparing them for employment or further study. It comprises a range of students from the age of 14 through to adults, with students studying in a wide variety of FE and Higher Education (HE) disciplines, allowing them to both meet and raise their own aspirations as well as fulfilling the needs of employers. The FE Sector is currently going through a government-led review process that will ensure FE institutions have the size, scale and expertise to be financially resilient and sustainable entities. This is likely to result in there being fewer FE Colleges. The process is being conducted through Area Reviews based in each LEP area. The College is fully engaged with the Liverpool City Region area review and the need for Colleges to be of sufficient size to be viable in changing circumstances. It has been a longstanding priority of the College to grow back up to a turnover level of £35m and alongside the Area Review process the College has been looking for some time for a merger partner.

At the time of writing and after public consultation, the College is proposing to merge with Knowsley Community College in September 2017.

This plan is written with a proposed merger in view but with the College currently existing as a standalone entity. The plan is subject to annual review and may change as the merger process progresses or, in response to other external factors. The purpose of the plan is to illustrate how the College will continue to raise expectations of students and employers, operating in an outstanding way within classrooms, workshops, college operations and within the community.

The FE landscape in which the College operates is changing rapidly and the plan will also show how the College will adapt to and take advantage of new challenges. At the centre of the College's strategic approach are five pivotal concepts:

- impartial, student-centred Information, Advice and Guidance;
- inspiring teaching, learning and assessment;
- excellent customer service;
- a culture of high expectations;
- accountability for students' progress and success.

These concepts are the building blocks for the successes of each student, each course and therefore the College's overall success in achieving its mission, which is to deliver **"excellent education and skills for work and life."**

Delivering outstanding student results consistently is the College's most significant strategic aim and will enable the College to be outstanding. Outstanding performance is key to the College serving its community well, enabling the provision of the best possible education and experience for its students, but also acting as a beacon attracting students, employers and staff capable of operating in a consistently outstanding manner. A Higher Education inspection in 2012 resulted in excellent outcomes and the OFSTED inspection in February 2014 confirmed that the College performs consistently well in all aspects of its FE provision.

To build on these achievements the College has embraced a culture of continuous improvement meaning that both quality and resources have improved. Examples of these improvements include:

- A "marginal gains" approach which has contributed to operational excellence in many areas and 41% of all teaching observations in 15/16 being outstanding.
- A swivl cam tool for academic staff to analyse their classroom performance.
- A new library at each campus providing university standard study environments for our students
- The completion of the STEM Centre refurbishment culminating in it being relaunched as "The STEM Centre", underlining the importance of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths in the future direction of the College.



During 2016/17 the College will focus on further improvement that enables the College to reach outstanding status. Particular attention will be placed on the following key areas:

- STEM - ensuring that the College continues to be recognised for its technical expertise and training. Maths - Raising aspirations and results in maths
- Apprenticeships - creating partnerships with large regional and national employers to grow the College apprenticeship provision.
- Logistics - In partnership with Knowsley Community College the College will launch and grow the Northern Logistics Academy following significant investment by both Colleges and the LEP in state of the art training facilities.



The College will continue to work closely with employers, businesses and their associations, schools, community groups, other FE and HE providers and universities. These partnerships include:

- close collaboration with 3 Universities - Chester, UCLan and Liverpool John Moores providing validation for HE courses locally through University Centre St Helens;
- sponsorship of The Sutton Academy;
- working with O2 following the successful St Helens Digital Communities project;
- continued close links with St Helens Council;
- working in partnership with other FE providers;
- collaboration with the 157 Group in order to place the College in position to win and participate in national training contracts.

The College will also continue to be employer facing and will seek long-term partnerships with large private and public sector organisations providing bespoke, high quality training. Employer partners are the NHS, central government agencies, local government, O2 and other telecom companies, Jaguar Landrover, Peel Holdings, BA, United Utilities and other utility companies plus organisations in the Logistics sector such as Wincanton, The Sutton Group and Unipart. In a sector undergoing great change the College continues to be ambitious for its students and the community it serves. Merger, the Area Review process, central government priorities and the as yet unknown impact of Brexit will all provide great challenges and opportunity. The College has invested in staff and resources and, as a result, is ready to continue its mission in **“Delivering excellent education and skills for life and work.”**



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jette Burford". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jette Burford
Principal
April 2017



2. Mission, Statement of Aims and Public Value Statement

St Helens College Mission Statement

“Delivering excellent education and skills for life and work”

The mission statement is underpinned by the Statement of Aims:

1. to power the economic development and welfare of the local community, Liverpool City Region and the Northern Powerhouse by providing the skills employers and individuals need;
2. to build students' confidence and employability skills, including English and maths, through excellent careers advice and work experience resulting in progression to further study or sustainable employment;
3. to ensure successful education, training and personal, social, moral, cultural and spiritual development and welfare for each individual ensuring that they are well prepared for life in Britain today;
4. to achieve very high customer satisfaction from students, parents and stakeholders;
5. to inspire and challenge students, College staff and managers to excel in a supportive culture of high expectations, enterprise and innovation;
6. to provide excellent industry standard resources for students and staff motivating high performance and innovation in the teaching and learning process;
7. to lead in Employer - College partnerships for the benefit of all partners and the local community;
8. to be an inclusive college where fundamental British values are promoted and each individual is respected, valued and safeguarded;
9. to provide an enjoyable, safe, supportive and caring learning environment;
10. to provide outstanding value for money ensuring high quality education and training.

Trust Professionalism Respect Excellence Innovation Care

Public Value Statement (PVS)

The College seeks to add value to the social, economic and physical wellbeing of the communities that we serve by:

1. providing education and training in accordance with the College's mission, statement of aims and values which maximise the life and job prospects of the individuals and meet the needs of the employers and the communities in general;
2. raising aspirations of individuals and the communities by promoting prospects and celebrating success;
3. ensuring a broad curriculum offer with good progression routes from entry level;
4. promoting healthy lifestyles and good citizenship skills to all students and colleagues;
5. being responsive to the changing needs and circumstances;
6. actively listening to and engaging with the stakeholders of the College aiming to provide the best possible service;
7. being a respectful and responsible employer;
8. acting with corporate integrity in partnerships and in general.



3. Corporate Priorities (CP) and Targets 2016 - 2019

CP 1. Prepare the College to reach outstanding status by 2017/18
(merger may lead to a delay in this CP not being achieved until 2018/19)

- increase the amount of outstanding teaching, learning and assessment to an externally moderated observation profile where the observation grades are: 50% outstanding in 2016/17 (and 55% in 2017/18), 95% good or better, 0% inadequate grades;
- maintain and improve further strong consistency in performance with all non-GCSE courses, well above national rate and above 85% qualification achievement rate by August 2017 (unless the national rate for a course is controlled by the awarding body in which case performance should be above the national rate);
- improve the attendance rate to 92% overall, including 92% attendance to English and maths classes;
- improve English and maths Basic Skills overall provision qualification achievement rates to 70% and ensure that all student groups are making “good or better” progress by August 2017; improve overall GCSE English Language and maths A*-C achievement rates to 40% and 40% respectively (16-18) and 52% and 54% respectively (19+);
- improve the apprenticeship overall qualification achievement rate to 80% by August 2017;
- ensure that the A Level Academy provision has qualification achievement rates and value added scores above sector averages by August 2017;
- ensure that the 14-16 Academy provision exceeds national averages in respect of progress measures by August 2017.

CP 2. Build a national reputation for innovation in the use of ILT for teaching, learning and assessment

CP 3. Deliver an effective HR strategy to assist in the achievement of outstanding status and meeting the challenges of the financial climate

Corporate Priorities underpinning a successful business:

CP 4. Deliver the 2016/17 main income targets, including the grants, for which the EFA, SFA and HEFCE have allocated the College

CP 5. Further develop the College’s employer engagement strategy to ensure that the College:

- regularly contracts with “big business” such as apprenticeship contracts for large employers;
- delivers the 2017/18 targets;
- develops a strategy to assist employers with the apprenticeship levy scheme
- develops a strategy to ensure that the College grows apprenticeship numbers by 50% by 2020;

CP 6. Retain good financial health in 2016/17 and beyond by continuing to review the College's cost base including:

- at least 98% staff utilisation;
- class contact hours as a general rule to be no more than 5% above the funded amount;
- class sizes are generally 16 or above in 16/17 and 17 or above in 17/18;
- staff costs reduced to 65% of turnover at the end of 2016/17 and to 60% in 2017/18;
(This CP could be impacted by increased one off costs of merger in 2016/17)

CP 7. Specific curriculum developments to include (see section 6):

- establish, in partnership with Knowsley College, the Northern Logistics Academy;
- continue to develop and implement the planned curriculum portfolio changes including HE, Higher Level Apprentices and Degree Apprenticeships;
- further expand the traineeship programmes for work-motivated students as a precursor for apprenticeships to above 100 traineeships (2016/17);
- all courses give students an employability or university route;
- continue the focus on value added scores;
- prepare for the potential changes of apprenticeship reforms including delivery of the new standards;
- implement the changes to the contents and assessment of GCSEs and A Levels (first teaching in September 2016);
- extend the higher technical and professional provision tailored to meet the employer needs of "the Northern Powerhouse."

CP 8. Continue the excellent Student-College partnership model and excellent customer services

CP 9. Maintain all accommodation, teaching, learning and business resources to a minimum of 'good' standard, including:

- further improve University Centre St Helens;
- introduction of a SMART Lab at the STEM Centre;
- introduce controlled employer and other community use of the College accommodation including business incubation

(This CP will be impacted by merger with a full estate review required)

3. Corporate Priorities (CP) and Targets 2016 - 2019

CP 10. Continue to develop and implement the College's Contracts and Data Analysis Strategy:

- development of new systems to improve efficiency;
- further automate manual processes;
- quality assure processes to achieve 100% compliance and accurate and timely returns underpinning substantial assurance audit reports.

CP 11. Provide an excellent, holistic, effective and efficient student support service for all ages assisting students to successfully complete their studies and enter employment and to include the promotion of Safeguarding, Health and Safety, Equality and Diversity, PREVENT, British Values and social mobility.

CP 12. Further enhance the College's reputation for academic achievement, progression to employment or further study and responsiveness to employer needs through marketing of college achievements and involvement in the Employment and Skills Board, the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and Local Enterprise Partnership.

CP 13. Grow the College's market share locally and regionally rebuilding the College's turnover to above £35M by September 2017, eg. through merger with Knowsley Community College. This is likely to be through merger.

CP 14. Explore the option of either becoming a standalone or integral part of an Institute of Technology (see Section 6). (This CP could be impacted upon by merger/area review).

Longer term Corporate Priority

CP 15. Continue to grow the College achieving an annual turnover of £50m by 2020.

Impact of Merger

The above Corporate Priorities have been written with the view of the College as a standalone provider. Merger will impact on several of the above priorities and it is envisaged that priorities would be re-written for a new merged entity. Where a merger and its process would clearly impact on the delivery of a CP, it has been noted above.

St Helens College



Local Accountability, Partnership Consultation and Strategic Planning Process

The College believes that the local and wider communities are best served through effective and mutually beneficial partnerships.

The College accepts its accountability to the local and wider stakeholders and seeks feedback on its strategic plans and curriculum as well as using data from a range of sources to formulate its final approach.

The Corporate targets are monitored at all meetings of the Resources Committee and the Corporation. The targets are reviewed and updated annually. An Annual Report will be produced giving stakeholders information about the College's performance and prospects as well as the outcomes and actions resulting from the annual review of governance. The cover and timing of the report will be discussed annually at the Stakeholder Breakfast meeting and with the Student Council.

The College uses many different methods to collect and respond to stakeholders' views, examples are listed below:

- open consultation on the College's strategic plan (annually) on website and circulated widely by email to all stakeholders;
- specific consultation with the Student Council (annually and regularly);
- annual Stakeholder Breakfast meeting - invited attendees include the Local Authority, MPs, Councillors, Head Teachers etc.;
- breakfast events for employers (regularly);
- stakeholder meetings with JCP and CareerConnect (at least annually);
- employer links for all significant courses (on-going);
- the Principal is a member of the Employment and Skills Board (LEP) and the Leadership Group for Skills (Provider Forum);
- regular contact with Police and healthcare organisations about curriculum and extracurricular activities;
- regular student consultation and feedback;
- annual parent survey complementing regular parents' evenings;
- regular meetings with the LA in respect of specific groups such as NEETs and care-leavers;

- CareerConnect and LA Care-leavers Team accommodated on College site;
- extensive use of LMI to ensure that the curriculum portfolio meet current and future needs;
- prospective students will be consulted via the website and through surveys of why students did not choose St Helens College;
- regular Partnership meetings with universities;
- extensive use of Labour Market Information to ensure that the curriculum is closely tailored to the job opportunities;
- Economic Impact and Investment Analysis showing the return on the investment of taxpayers' money in the College will be published on the website.

The College is proud to have achieved the Customer Service Excellence Award which assesses the College's characteristics in relations to:

- customer insight;
- the culture of the College;
- information and access;
- delivery;
- timeliness and quality of service.

The College also invites controlled community use of its facilities e.g. use by the Police for briefings, Local Authority events, CareerConnect and the Local Authority staff for Looked After Children are based on site, the Heart of Glass project based alongside the College's Art Department aims to bring art to the local community. Recently the College has commenced a programme of Business Incubation for the benefit of students, employers and the local economy.

Acknowledgements:

The College wishes to thank its partners for feedback on the strategic plan.







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