



# OUR STRATEGIC VISION

2024-2027

## **A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE GOVERNING BOARD**

It is my pleasure to introduce Wigan & Leigh College's strategic plan, which sets out the college's vision for the period 2024-27.

Our review of our strategic purpose and priorities has been done by reflecting on past achievements, the changes that have taken place in the national, regional, sub-regional and local economy over recent years and the crucial role that the college continues to play in developing the skills of local people to match the skills needed by employers both locally and nationally.

We continue to invest in our estate and our people, providing access to exceptional facilities for learning, alongside high quality teaching, and enable all learners to develop skills for life and to progress into higher education and / or higher paid employment.

This plan sets out ambitions for the next three years. It has been developed with staff, students, employers and other key stakeholders, including all the Governors of the college, who have contributed to and led its development throughout.

On behalf of the Governing Board, I am delighted to endorse the three strategic priorities of Quality, Place and Productivity and Investment for the Future.

The priority actions identified in the plan that underpin these priorities will be monitored by the Governing Board over the next three-years to ensure that we achieve our ambitions for learners, including future learners and the wider communities of Wigan and Leigh.

### **Andrea Ferguson**

Chair of the Governing Board



## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Wigan & Leigh College is a strong anchor institution within Wigan Borough. We're accountable for meeting the needs of our community locally and increasingly see our reputation and influence having regional impact. This 3-year strategic plan extends our work on the education and skills agenda, maximising our positive contribution to long-term economic planning and using strong partnerships navigate any changes the next three years will surely bring.

During the life cycle of our previous strategic plan we had notable achievements in further improving the quality of our provision, developed a curriculum in response to learner and employer need and made substantial investment in our workforce and resources.

Our strategic ambitions of Quality, Place & Productivity and Investment for the Future remain largely the same. But our response to ever changing needs, and a shifting external landscape, require us to evolve.

This next strategic chapter comes at a time of political change, with a general election due and the Greater Manchester Trailblazer Devolution Deal in its early stages. Combined with curriculum reform, the increased profile and redefined role of technical education and a focus on place with the new Local Skills Improvement Plans, the role of our college has never been more relevant.

What has not changed is our commitment to work collaboratively, to provide an aspirational and relevant education and skills offer bringing the opportunity of social mobility and economic prosperity to our community. Throughout the duration of this plan we'll engage with our stakeholders and review progress to ensure we're meeting our ambitious agenda.

**Anna Dawe**  
Principal & CEO



# OUR

# VALUES

## 1.

**We are learner centred** - our learners and their lifelong learning experience, well-being and safety are always our first priority.

## 2.

**We are ambitious and courageous** – our creative and innovative approach focuses on the needs of our community and supports our learners to achieve excellence.

## 3.

**We are partners in the success of our organisation** - through open and honest communication we challenge each other and support individual and collective development. We achieve success together.

## 4.

**We are collaborative** - we work with all our partners to positively contribute to local, regional and national economic development.

## 5.

**We are inclusive** - we recognise and value equality, celebrating diversity in our community.

## 6.

**We are sustainable** - we are working towards a cleaner and greener environment as an anchor institution in our community.

# OUR VISION

As a centre of technical educational excellence, we are committed to raising learning aspirations and helping our community thrive socially and economically.



# OUR PLACE

Wigan & Leigh College is in Wigan, a town and metropolitan borough in the northwest of Greater Manchester, bordering Merseyside, Lancashire and Cheshire. As a border college we serve a wide and varied community and combine local and regional focus.

The impact of de-industrialisation has created socio-economic challenges for the Wigan Borough including:

- High employment in areas that provide low paid work
- Low levels of productivity, below the average in the UK and that in Greater Manchester
- Below national average educational attainment at Level 4 and above
- Low levels of social mobility

Our role as a provider of skills and technical education is pivotal in responding to these challenges. With an increased policy focus on the importance of skills, we play an important part in shaping a local economy for the future, defined by increased productivity and inclusivity. Delivering the strategic priorities set out in Wigan's Employment & Skills Strategy will be a key part in fulfilling this ambition. Along with local partners we're actively engaged in delivering the vision and strategic imperatives within the framework and developing a co-ordinated and collaborative approach for skills across the borough.

Through our rich history and as an anchor institution within Wigan, we're committed to nurturing social cohesion and connecting communities, while promoting positive physical and mental health. We work to engage those facing the largest barriers in learning and personal development. Helping shape and drive 'build back better' is a central theme to our strategic direction.

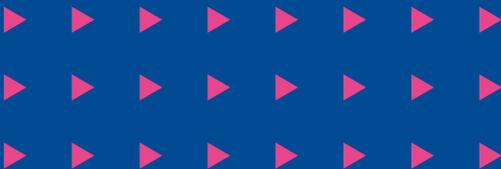
# OUR

# PARTNERS

Collaboration and partnership is central to everything we do. We're committed to building and extending relationships to ensure the success of our strategic vision.

We continue to operate within devolution with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) with control over aspects of funding, but more importantly being placed to influence and shape the skills landscape within GM. There is a real opportunity to develop a co-ordinated approach to skills and training. We're ready, alongside our partner GM Colleges, to work with GMCA to further define the devolved skills system and realise the benefits. Working with other further education colleges is a key component in developing skills solutions across GM. We have many successful partnership projects including T Level delivery, careers education, mental health support and the digitalisation of teaching and learning. We have now entered a new phase of collaborative work around the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) and the Further Education Innovation Programme.

The Greater Manchester Institute of Technology (GMiOT) opened its doors in September 2023, and Wigan & Leigh College is the lead FE partner. The partnership involves a number of education partners; Ada, the national college for digital skills, Bury College, Tameside College and the University of Salford as well as our employer partners; GCHQ, Laing O'Rourke, Siemens and TalkTalk. The GMiOT is leading the way in the provision of high-quality, higher level technical education and training, with specialisms in construction, engineering, computing, creative media, business and health science sectors.



Within Wigan, we'll continue our close partnership with Wigan Council, partner schools and sixth form colleges. We're invested in the Wigan Education Strategy and champion the role of technical education in offering opportunity and raising aspiration and achievement.

The Skills for Jobs white paper provided us with the opportunity to play a bigger role in supporting local businesses and working collaboratively with industry. We'll continue to actively engage in partnerships that focus on developing place-based solutions such as The Wigan Skills Partnership. This collaboration with Wigan Council, Edge Hill University, Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust aims to improve opportunities for Wigan residents, outlined in our civic agreement, by boosting education, health and economic prospects.

We'll develop targeted collaborative curriculum solutions over the lifetime of this strategic plan, combining the strength of our partner institutions and delivering unique opportunities to Wigan residents.





# OUR PEOPLE

Our college community is at the heart of the quality of service we provide, the learner experience and our student achievements. Investment in our workforce development and wellbeing is our priority.

Building on our well-established staff engagement approach we aim to increase the influence of all colleagues on the direction of the college. We'll increase investment in the development of our workforce, with a specific focus on digital and leadership initiatives. We'll continue to meet and adopt external frameworks such as the Ofsted Education and Staff Wellbeing Charter and the GM Good Employment Charter but navigate our own path driven through engagement and aligned with our positive culture.

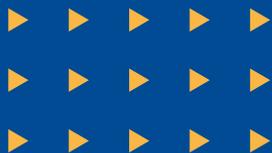
Our learners will co-create refreshed and renewed models of engagement, giving them more influence around how they're taught and supported and increasing their leadership roles in the direction of the College. We'll promote learner influence and ownership on agendas such as equality, the environment, community wealth building and social justice, underpinning our culture of raised aspiration.

Perceptions of further education and technical education are changing and we'll continue to use our voice at a national level to champion the needs of the further education learners and workforce.

There is a need for change in our national approach to skills, lifelong learning and the role that further education plays. We've challenged ourselves in the development of our strategic ambitions and will continue to do this over the next three years and beyond.

# CAMPUS

# DEVELOPMENT



We have made considerable investment in our college estate over the past few years, creating the best technical teaching facilities in our region.

We have created new industry standard facilities that mean our students experience an environment where they can realise their ambitions.

This has included significant refurbishment of current facilities to enhance the student learning experience.

## Recent Investment

### **Future Energy Zone, Pagefield Campus**

Retrofit specialist facilities - A pioneering model for energy efficiency and sustainability.

### **Centre for Performing Arts, Parsons Walk Campus**

A hub for performance and digital technologies featuring multimedia suites, green screen and a performance theatre.

### **Learning Resource Centres**

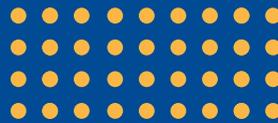
Designed to enhance and support students studies providing access to physical and digital education resources.

### **Engineering facilities, Pagefield Campus**

Significant investment in specialist facilities including a hydraulic and pneumatic lab, fluids engineering lab, electronic testing lab, robotics labs, industrial control lab, food manufacturing facilities, AML lab and Smart Manufacturing lab.

### **Centre for Advanced Technical Studies**

Home to our Centre of Excellence in Health & Social Care, the College's latest Digital Academy, and T Level and higher education courses in engineering.



# NEW

# DEVELOPMENTS



## Parsons Walk Campus

Full redevelopment completed by 2027.



## Centre of Excellence in Health & Social Care at Leigh Adult Learning Centre

Offering the courses for what the health and social care job market wants now and in the future – responding to the shortages and workforce agenda in this sector.

## Animal Management T Level facilities at Leigh Campus

Industry-standard equipment used to develop skills needed in the sector.



## Automotive Engineering and Future Energy Lab

Offering EV car charging and maintenance as well as emerging hydrogen technologies.



# OUR COLLEGE

We have a  
**TURNOVER  
OF £39M,**  
our financial health  
rating is **Outstanding**

We spend  
**£3.5M A  
YEAR**  
with local businesses  
– 31% of our overall spend

We are the  
**3RD  
LARGEST  
EMPLOYER**  
in the Wigan borough

We employ over  
**600**  
members of staff

Our staff turnover is  
**10%  
BELOW**  
the sector average

**97%**  
of staff say they are proud  
to be a member of staff at  
Wigan & Leigh College

We work with over  
**1500 LOCAL  
EMPLOYERS**  
providing education  
and training

We have  
**INVESTED  
£9.1M**  
in the estate & our  
facilities since 2021

# OUR STUDENTS

We have over  
**9800 STUDENTS**  
every year

We educate  
**3900**  
16-18 year olds,  
**4000**  
adults,  
**1800**  
apprentices,  
**450**  
HE students

**69%**  
learners come  
from Wigan  
**11%**  
learners come from GM  
**20%**  
learners come from  
other regions  
across the wider  
North-West

# ACCREDITATIONS AND AWARDS



Ofsted Strong  
for meeting the  
skills need



The National  
**Skills Academy**



## FOOD & DRINK

The only provider in Greater Manchester accredited by the National Skills Academy in Food & Drink Manufacturing



# CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

## CREATIVE & PERFORMING ARTS

We're the largest provider of creative and performing arts courses in the borough. At our Parsons Walk Campus our students reach professional standard and hone the skills employers want through expert tutors and employer and industry links.

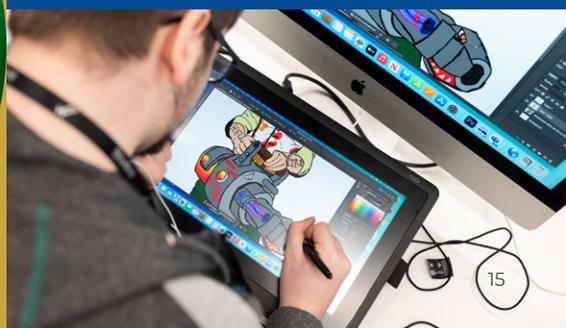
We're continually investing, including a new Centre for Performing Arts, so our students can achieve ambitious work. We help students focus on skills development, work experience and they benefit from live employer briefs, masterclasses, productions and performances, showcases and competitions.

Our specialist teaching staff underpin our ambitious approach with expertise in new media, gaming, arts, performance, fashion, and textiles.





# The HeART of Creativity



# CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

## ENGINEERING & CONSTRUCTION



We're a leading provider in the NW in the delivery of high quality, higher-level Engineering and Construction training and are the lead FE college within the Greater Manchester Institute of Technology (GMiOT). Our highly developed, specialist curriculum offer includes full-time study programmes, apprenticeships, including higher and degree level and a wide range of HE programmes. We offer all engineering disciplines in manufacturing, mechanical, civil and electrical with developed specialisms in power and food manufacturing.

The Centre of Excellence offers our students and employers some of the best technical teaching facilities in the region. These include our Additive Manufacturing Lab, Future Energy Zone, Robotics Lab and Thermo Dynamics facilities providing a comprehensive foundation in the principles and practices of intelligent engineering; including mechatronics, robotics, automation and autonomous vehicles, as well as the development and evolution of hybrid technologies.

We have links with the top employers in the North-West including Sellafield Ltd, Nuvia, KraftHeinz, Electricity North West, Scottish Power along with many SMEs.

We are creating future innovators through sector leading technical study plus exceptional industry placements, skills competitions, work experience and sector specific trips.





# Building Minds, Engineering Futures



# CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

## HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE

The Centre of Excellence in Health & Social Care is based at the Centre for Advanced Technical Skills, and offers training for future health and care workers to meet the skills gaps within the borough. We offer the courses for what the health and social care job market wants now and in the future – responding to the shortages and workforce agenda in this sector.

We have some of the best healthcare teaching facilities in the region including an immersive teaching environment (CAVE), Assisted Technologies and Manual Handling Suite, Clinical Skills Wards, Anatomage table, and wellbeing rooms at Leigh Adult Learning Centre.

We're about more than giving students great skills, we pride ourselves in nurturing the whole person, so they're truly prepared for what a career in health and social care means – whether that's through specialist nursing pathways, competitions, masterclasses by industry professionals or work placement opportunities.





**Make Health  
your Future**

# CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

## SPORT

The Centre of Excellence in Sport is dedicated to providing exceptional training programmes for aspiring sporting minds. Located within Leigh Sports Village at Leigh Campus, we've got world-class facilities taking our students to the next level.

We've got links with the people and places our students want to connect to, whether that's stakeholders in the local community, elite athletes or top-level universities. Our teachers are award-winning skilled industry experts, happy to share their knowledge and contacts.

We help our students get qualifications and experience to stand out, from Sports Leaders Accreditation and working with professional clubs to overseas trips and competitions. We have successful academies for football and rugby, leading employer links and TASS.





# A Winning Future



# QUALITY

**Quality:** providing an exceptional learning experience enabling all learners to fulfil their potential through:

- Inspirational and innovative teaching, learning and training, that removes barriers to learning and raises aspiration and attainment
- An inclusive curriculum committed to personal development, wellbeing and resilience, that provides excellence in knowledge and skills acquisition and work readiness
- Highly personalised, proactive careers guidance inspiring learners to take advantage of opportunities, make informed choices and secure positive and sustained outcomes for their future



# STRATEGIC PRIORITY ACTIONS



Through our Teaching and Learning Academy develop and support a learning community that prioritises dual professionalism and applies research based pedagogy to enable our teachers to be innovative and experimental. Using action learning sets focus on excellence in the delivery of technical skills and personal development.

Provide a holistic pastoral curriculum surrounding students with individual care and support, placing equal emphasis on the development of transferable employability skills and behaviours and focusing on mental wellbeing, resilience and enterprise.

Co-design with employers our programme, pastoral and careers curriculum, equipping learners for transition into the world of work and promoting the development of core competencies for the workplace.

Promote individual career management skills, challenge stereotypical thinking and raise awareness of employment opportunities at a local, regional and national level through the FAB Futures careers programme and Careers Passport, resulting in increased positive destinations and increased participation rates at level 3 and above.



# PLACE

**Place & Productivity:** as an anchor institution in our community, increase local productivity, innovation and social inclusion by:



- Promoting understanding of the employer led integrated technical skills system within Greater Manchester to partner schools, school leavers, parent/ carers and employers and raising participation rates across all types of technical education.
- Designing an ambitious and specialised curriculum offer in response to Wigan's Economic Strategy, the Local Skills Improvement Plan and the GM Economic Vision focused on frontier skill sectors in manufacturing, health innovation, digital and creative and clean growth.
- Increasing level 4 and above attainment rates within Wigan Borough through the Wigan and Leigh College University Centre, The GM Institute of Technology and collaborative partnerships with higher education institutes.
- Creating a stronger, safer and healthier local community through partnership working with Wigan Council, partner schools, employers, health partners and the voluntary sector so engagement and attainment gaps are eliminated.



# STRATEGIC PRIORITY ACTIONS



Promote and support increased engagement with technical education at Key Stage 4 and raise awareness of local technical education options post-16 and into higher study.

Focus on offering a highly relevant and broader level 4 and above local offer in college specialisms and developing further higher and degree apprenticeships.

Working with partners to deliver targeted programmes for more vulnerable members of the Wigan community including extending the Care Leavers Passport, the Supported Internship programme and the Home Schooled maths and English programmes.

Maintain an innovative curriculum that differentiates between cohorts, targeting participation priorities, health inequalities and employer need. Working closely with JCP, Wigan Council and employers this will include an innovative AEB funded programme making full use of devolution flexibilities, apprenticeship programme initiatives and project funded provision.

Respond to GM frontier sector through strong specialisations in:

- Manufacturing - through the Wigan and Leigh Academy of Manufacturing with a specific focus on food manufacturing and the digitalisation of manufacturing processes.
- Health - through the Civic University Agreement work with partners to further extend the work of the Centre of Excellence in Health & Social Care and establish the Care Academy in Leigh.
- Digital – working with partners through the GM Institute of Technology develop new curriculum to support employers with the development of AI whilst through the Digital Academy continue to extend digital literacy across our community.
- Creative - working in partnership the College will align the work of the Creative & Performing Arts Centre of Excellence to deliver Wigan's Cultural Manifesto and will adopt a community shared asset approach to the new Centre of Performing Arts.
- Green growth – through the Centre of Excellence in Engineering, the GM Institute of Technology and employer partners the college will build further on existing specialisms in commercial electrical and nuclear energy.

# INVESTMENT

**Investment for the Future:**  
invest in the workforce, learning environment and the curriculum of the future by:

- Investing in the development and wellbeing of our workforce, creating a sustainable, highly skilled further education staff community that recognises and prioritises the professionalism of the FE workforce.
- Reshaping the College estate to meet the demands of future work and learning practices, responding to the climate crisis and preparing for the net-zero economy.
- Prioritising the digitalisation of learning and College business operations to promote efficiency and enhance the experience for our students and workforce.
- Create learning environments that inspire and equip students for the seamless transition into the world of work and future skills needs.



# STRATEGIC PRIORITY ACTIONS

Establish the college as an employer of choice for the FE workforce and be sector leading in employee engagement, development, benefit, recognition and reward.

Deliver the Transformation Project significantly reducing the college's carbon footprint.

Develop the estate in response to demographic growth up to 2030 and ensure business resilience and capacity building to meet local and regional needs.

Continue to promote the digitalisation of college systems and teaching and learning facilities:

- Launch a new college web site that promotes digital engagement with stakeholders, students and parents and provides a platform for increased up take in on-line services.
- Develop the CAVE to innovate current teaching practice and utilise as a shared asset with partner schools and employers.
- Increase on-line and digital assessment practices providing more flexibility to students and employers.





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