

STRATEGIC PLAN 2022 to 2027

Background and Context:

Hertford Regional College is a medium-sized, general further education college with two campuses located in Broxbourne and Ware. Rated as “Good” by Ofsted in the most recent inspection in November 2021, the College provides a wide range of post-16 professional and technical education and training to meet the needs of local employers in key sectors, including study programmes for 16- to 19-year-old learners, adult education programmes, apprenticeships, discrete provision for learners with high needs, higher education and commercial programmes. The large majority of the College’s learners live in Broxbourne, East Herts, London Borough of Enfield, Epping Forest, and Harlow.

‘Leaders work effectively with local employers to design a curriculum which equips learners and apprentices with the skills and knowledge required by the local and regional employment market. As a result, learners, and apprentices progress to successful and rewarding careers in their chosen sectors.’

Ofsted - November 2021

The College owns a profitable subsidiary company, CK Assessment and Training Ltd, which provides study programmes and apprenticeships in plumbing and gas engineering as well as professional gas training courses. The board of CK Assessment and Training Ltd has its own ambitious vision for developing the company further over the next five years to become a regional education and training hub for renewable and sustainable energy businesses, as well as meeting their ongoing traditional energy and utilities training needs, serving the long term business requirements of sector employers in Hertfordshire, Essex and North London out of fit for purpose training premises.

The College also owns another subsidiary company, the Herts Resourcing Group (HRG), which was set up in 2016 to respond to sector specific resourcing needs. Since its establishment, HRG has developed to not only work to meet the College’s specific needs but also those of other FE colleges in the local area and beyond. The HRG Board are looking at expanding the reach of the business in the next five years to address a range of resourcing requirements as appropriate to the needs of the local, regional, and national skills sector.

The previous strategic plan covered the period 2019 to 2022 and, as such, covered the unprecedented period of disruption caused by the global pandemic. That said, the vast majority of the objectives contained within the plan were achieved, demonstrating the College’s ability to respond flexibly to circumstances outside of its control, and there were many other highlights during the planning period, that include:

- Ofsted “good” overall rating
- “Good” or “outstanding” financial health each year
- Strong cash reserves

- Cross-College Matrix accreditation
- Embedded curriculum model – Destination Curriculum
- Curriculum offer reflecting local needs and other local provision
- Consistently high student success for young people and adults
- New support and wellbeing services for students
- Strategic position recognised regionally and sub-regionally
- Outstanding partnership working with key local employers in priority sectors
- Outstanding collaborative working with other FE Colleges, including external endorsement
- Strengthening relationships with local secondary schools
- Outstanding teachers recognised in national awards
- Student success in national and regional skills competitions
- External recognition for international project work
- AA Rosette for The Atrium Restaurant
- Approval secured to deliver Level 6 qualifications, eg full BA's, in three areas
- Continued and significant investment in estates and facilities
- Moving to ever more sustainable working practices
- Two key new strategies – (1) People and (2) Teaching, Learning & Assessment
- Continued investment in CPD including EDI, Mental Health, Safeguarding and E Safety
- New staff recognition model and ongoing “one off” rewards
- Innovative ways of working using online and traditional models
- New systems implemented to modernise ways of working

Above all else, over the period of this five year strategic plan and beyond, there will continue to be a need for high quality, destination focussed, vocational, technical and professional education and training that leads to our students gaining employment in key sectors within the communities that the College serves as well as progressing on to further and higher education, including a range of apprenticeship opportunities. This plan builds on the achievements and scaling work undertaken between 2019 and 2022 that has positioned Hertford Regional College for a sustainable and exciting future.

‘Learners and apprentices develop very good practical and academic skills because teachers and trainers continually challenge them to complete work to a very high standard. A significant proportion progress to higher levels of study or into well-paid work.’

Ofsted - November 2021

Mission Statement:

Achieving sustainable economic and social impact through high quality responsive education and training, we are:

- *Partnered by employers;*
- *Defined by our communities;*
- *Enriched by our staff;*
- *Inspired by individual success.*

Ambition and Vision for 2022 to 2027:

The College's ambition over the next five years is to become widely recognised as an **Anchor Institution** and, as a consequence, play a key and distinct role in building successful local economies and communities. The College believes it can directly support community wealth building, a people-centred approach to local economic development, which redirects wealth back into the local economy, and places control and benefits into the hands of local people.

Furthermore, anchor institutions must have a social role, namely a social purpose which enables the institution to develop mutually beneficial and sustainable relationships within the communities it serves and, in so doing, raising the aspirations of and improving the employment and life prospects of local people. The College must be recognised as adding **Social Value** which can be expressed generally as the quantification of the relative importance that people place on the changes they experience in their lives, in this case though interactions with the College specifically. The College believes that, by embedding a mindset where measuring community impact and adding social value are part of our culture, we can maximise both the value of our work and the benefit to those who access our services.

In addition, the College's strategic decision making must take account of a broader definition of value than just financial impacts and imperatives, where the effects on people and the environment are valued and included in how we make decisions, and where our activities can play a part in creating the changes we need for a more equitable society and sustainable planet.

Finally, this requires a change in relationships, both internally and externally, continuing the journey to move from **Transactional to Transformational** in our approach to relationship management whilst continuing to meet the needs of individuals and the wider communities we serve, including students, staff, employer partners, collaborative partners and stakeholders in general.

Strategic Drivers and Underlying Principles:

The following are considered the key strategic drivers and underlying principles for the lifetime of this plan and the College is committed to responding to these as part of its overall strategy.

1 – Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)

The College has an excellent working relationship with local employers and stakeholders and looks forward to the forthcoming meaningful engagement and dialogue with employer representative bodies in respect of the future skills needs of the communities it serves that will, in turn, result in a set of deliverables aligned to the LSIP itself. It will also continue to meet the wider skills needs of the county as identified by the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

2 – Local Plans: Broxbourne and East Herts

The College works closely with the two local authority areas, associated employer partners and stakeholders in which its campuses are located. The new and ambitious local plans will provide further opportunities for the College to shape our curriculum offer, including apprenticeships, to meet local needs in key employment sectors and the needs of the predominantly small and medium enterprise (SME) based local economy. In addition, the College will aim to instil a commitment to lifelong education amongst adults in the communities we serve linked to new local employment opportunities as a result of inward investment.

'Effective and collaborative partnership practices are injecting industrial and work-related learning and support to help students' work readiness. Feedback confirmed how the college is viewed by local employers as an essential component of their talent pipeline. This has resulted in very high progression data in recent years, and with some employers investing in industry standard equipment donations in order to facilitate training on the latest/most current practices.'

Matrix - March 2022

3 - T Levels

The College will commence delivery of the government's flagship "T Level" qualifications in September 2023 and many of our students are already benefiting from the industry placement model that forms an important part of the T Level offer. Transition to these and any other new qualifications will inform much of our curriculum planning over the lifetime of this plan.

4 –Adult Education

The College looks forward to continuing to be a significant provider of adult education and skills to the population of North and East London via the GLA devolved budget. The College will work to deliver the Skills for Londoners Strategy as it continues to develop during the period of this plan. The key focus of the delivery of the ESFA national adult education budget will be to support the upskilling of communities in Hertfordshire and Essex to access new and better jobs. In addition, the College will work towards supporting any future and further devolution plans for adult learning, sub regionally and regionally, throughout this planning period and beyond.

5 – Higher Level Skills

The College is committed to delivering high-quality and affordable local HE provision as part of the University of Hertfordshire Consortium and independently, up to and including Level 6 qualifications, for example, BA Hons. The College welcomes the status and priority being placed on technical and professional education at Levels 4 and 5 and would welcome being included as a full partner in any future Institute of Technology bid to meet the higher-level skills needs of the communities it serves.

6 – Learners with Additional Needs

The College is committed to excellence in this area by providing outstanding education and support appropriate to the needs of individual learners in both specialist and mainstream areas. This focuses on maximising the potential of each individual learner, celebrating their successes, and providing a safe and secure environment for them to develop both educationally and personally.

'Learners with high needs benefit from an ambitious and tailored curriculum which meets their individual needs very effectively. Programmes are designed with a close focus on learners chosen careers.'

Ofsted - November 2021

7 – Sustainability

The College is committed to working towards ever more sustainable working practices aligned to an investment programme that will facilitate this. Decision making, including purchasing, will be informed by this imperative. The College aspires to having a curriculum offer with sustainability at its heart.

8 – Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

The College prides itself on having an inclusive and welcoming environment in which all persons, students, and staff, can thrive and achieve. We look to embrace difference and diversity of identity, experience, and thought, and actively strive for inclusive behaviours across our workforce and student body whilst demanding the same from our partners and stakeholders.

“I have a sense of freedom & flexibility. I can be an individual, authentic and creative.”

“I think the College has an open-minded culture. I feel comfortable being honest about who I am.”

“I have experienced no discrimination at all in respect of my sexual orientation or ethnicity.”

“I feel safe – our individual feelings are valued, and it is a very caring environment.”

“I believe the College has a more mature atmosphere than I experienced at school and we are all very well supported. We are treated like adults, not like children.”

Student Focus Groups – March 2022

9 – Collaboration

The College seeks to work with like-minded partners, inside and outside of the skills sector, who can demonstrate a shared vision and operating ethos and value the “win/win” approach that partnership working can bring. Collaborative working to meet the needs of key employment sectors in the communities we serve will continue to be prioritised as will supporting collaborative partnerships in the skills sector locally, regionally, and nationally.

10 – Strategic Investment

The College will continue to prioritise investment in capital and other projects that support the enhancement of facilities for learners and/or provide commercial opportunities for the College above other considerations whilst being mindful of its stated commitments to sustainability and equity, diversity and inclusion and the principles of being an anchor institution.

11 – Society

The College seeks to constantly remind ourselves of our societal responsibilities, particularly with our younger learners to ensure that, when they progress from the College, they are equipped with the skills to play an active role in both their local economy and community. This will extend to staff in the form of a programme to support community volunteering

‘Learners studying full-time qualifications develop their character, resilience, and independence very well. Additional activities they undertake as part of their wider curriculum include working closely with their local charitable trusts to help raise funds. Learners undertake activities such as working with online retailers to market and create sustainably focused fashion displays with clothes donated by fellow learners. This helps learners to take personal responsibility for improving the lives of others while becoming aware of those less fortunate in society.’

Ofsted - November 2021

12 – Enterprise and Entrepreneurship

The College will apply the principles of enterprise and entrepreneurship across our curriculum and programme offer, reflecting the need to create a mindset in our learners of all ages that is both solutions focussed and reflective of 21st Century business needs. We will support those students who want to become job creators in their local communities and, by so doing, will generate community wealth and job opportunities for others, including future students of HRC, and attract inward investment for the betterment of all.

13 – Strong Governance

The College is committed to having a diverse group of active, committed, and knowledgeable governors who will shape the future strategic direction of the College, can both support and challenge accountable officers, act as advocates for the College externally and embody the College's values and behaviours. The work of the governing body will be reviewed regularly and independently during the lifetime of this plan.

'Governors provide effective support and challenge to leaders and managers. They have good oversight of the strengths and areas of development, ensuring that leaders prioritise and focus appropriately. As a result, governors are confident that the quality improvements that leaders prioritise will enhance the learning experience and help learners achieve their educational and employment ambitions.'

Ofsted - November 2021

14 – Staff Retention and Recognition

The College will continue to recruit and employ people across the College, irrespective of role, that will make an immediate difference and a positive contribution to the College's ambition, vision, and mission and, as a consequence, the delivery of this plan. This will be supported by ongoing investment in CPD opportunities to develop both within the College and externally, thus supporting career progression. Traditional reward and recognition will be complimented by innovative and new models.

15 – Mental Health and Wellbeing

The College is committed to supporting students and staff with their mental health and wellbeing by providing appropriate tools and support as well as promoting an open culture that will lead to positive mental health and wellbeing outcomes. We aspire to equip our staff and students with the knowledge, resources, tools and confidence, to understand and look after both our own mental health and wellbeing and the mental health and wellbeing of those we work with, teach and study alongside.

16 – College Group

The College is committed to supporting the ongoing and future development of its two wholly owned subsidiary companies, namely CK Assessment and Training Ltd and Herts Resourcing Group, receiving reports and business/investment plans for consideration at Governing Body and Committee Meetings. In addition, the College is committed to expanding the College Group if an opportunity presents that is consistent with the Ambition and Vision 2022 to 2027 expressed in this plan and the Mission Statement.

Strategic Objectives: 2022 – 2027

Hertford Regional College's overall strategic objectives for the five-year period are grouped under six key themes, thus building on the four themes adopted by the College in the previous strategic plan. Progress will be reported regularly at Governing Body and Committee Meetings against an agreed accountability matrix. These objectives will be operationalised and supported by delivery plans and specific targets in line with team objectives and individuals' performance reviews as well as established local accountability measures.

The College's six key themes plus individual associated overarching objectives for the lifespan of this plan are:

Students	"Preparing today's students to take advantage of tomorrow's opportunities."
Society	"Creating positive community impact by adding social value."
Product	"Meeting the skills needs of employers and ambitions of our students."
People	"Collaborating to deliver excellence."
Finance	"Achieving sustainability through investment."
Quality	"Moving towards demonstrable and sustainable excellence."

Students:

Preparing today's students to take advantage of tomorrow's opportunities

- To support the mental health and wellbeing needs of our students, equipping them with resilience and appropriate strategies to ensure they can achieve at the College and progress to their intended destination
- To always ensure that systems and procedures for safeguarding are robust and such arrangements are implemented effectively ensuring that excellence in this area is maintained

- To ensure that the College remains an inclusive, welcoming, and safe environment for all persons who wish to learn and train here
- To recognise the diversity of talent, including neurodiversity, in every student cohort and proactively support them to achieve
- To meet the learning and additional support needs of persons with disabilities to ensure a dignified and successful learner journey for all
- To provide all students with authentic, unique, and innovative learning experiences that will foster the development of 21st Century skills and prepare them to access excellent current and future local employment opportunities
- To ensure that our students can access and experience the world of work, on both a formal and informal basis throughout their time at the College, to support good decision making as regards employment opportunities that is based on actual experience
- To develop our students' essential skills, including but not limited to English, Maths and Digital Skills, recognising the ongoing value of these to employers
- To develop a deeper awareness and understanding of the transferable skills that our students develop informally at College, at home, in work or in the community in order to enhance future employment opportunities
- To provide opportunities for enhanced skills development through collaborative activities, across curriculum/programme areas and campuses, recognising the value that project based co-creative activities can bring in terms of wider skills development
- To encourage and support students who want to become job creators with the benefit of creating community wealth and further local employment opportunities
- To continue to invest in systems and resources to support students, recognising the long-term impact of the global pandemic in respect of their personal development
- To embed trauma informed practice as an operating ethos for supporting the diverse needs of our current and future student cohort
- To promote student success actively and visibly in an innovative and appropriate manner recognising the wide range of stakeholders we serve in our local communities
- To continue to listen to students, take on board their feedback and encourage them to play an active role in delivering the current and future ambitions of the College
- To continue to identify and support the development and progression of talented individuals from our learner cohort to job roles within the College Group

Society:

Creating positive community impact by adding social value

- To develop measures for quantifying social value in respect of the College's impact on the communities we serve

- To increase local adult aspiration and participation in learning, specifically from areas in the community with lower levels of prior attainment
- To develop measures for quantifying the College's impact on community wealth building in the communities we serve
- To act as an exemplar for sustainable business practice and use this to inform our relationships with the communities we serve
- To adopt a place-based approach with other local anchor institutions from different sectors to support community cohesion and growth
- To collaborate with likeminded organisations, in both formal and informal partnerships, to co-create responsive solutions to meet community needs
- To provide an agile and responsive service to our community partners to support sustainable community growth and community wealth generation
- To expand existing stakeholder groups to maximise the benefit of sustaining relationships with alumni and other former members of the College community
- To explore the potential of a student led social enterprise
- To maximise both pro bono and commercial letting opportunities to the benefit of community groups and partners
- To create an annual community volunteering programme for staff in the College

Product:

Meeting the skills needs of employers and ambitions of our students

- To continue to deliver the College's destination curriculum model, including the associated underpinning ethos and strategy, meeting the needs of current and future learners whilst adding social value
- To enhance the core curriculum and pastoral support model ensuring that sustainability, equity, diversity, and inclusion are central to its purpose
- To introduce T Level pathways, year on year as appropriate, in response to the curriculum reform agenda
- To increase and widen participation from across the curriculum in local, regional, and national skills competitions
- To ensure that college programmes are recognised by the LEP, employer representative organisations, employers including SMEs, key stakeholders and community partners as to the value they bring in terms of progression to further study, an apprenticeship, HE or employment and to remove provision that no longer meets this criteria
- To co-create programmes with employers to better meet their specific needs and ambitions leading to economic growth
- To seek formal sector and employer validation and/or endorsement of programmes linked to existing key sectors and new opportunities
- To respond to inward investment opportunities by aligning with and understanding the skills needs of future employer partners and the global employment market

- To identify gaps in the existing market and introduce new provision, including apprenticeships, thus further meeting the skills needs of local employers, especially SMEs, and the local community
- To further expand College delivered apprenticeships, including in partnership, by introducing new standards and/or higher levels of apprenticeships that meet identified employer needs in skills shortage areas and maximise levy opportunities
- To further develop the offer for high needs learners leading to increased progression opportunities to sustainable community employment
- To further expand the range of higher education programmes, including at Level 6, to support the development of higher-level skills in the communities we serve and meet the skills needs of local employers
- To increase the number of programmes for adults and the community by utilising innovative and flexible approaches, including partnership models, to both engagement and actual delivery whether onsite, in the community, blended or fully online

People:

Collaborating to deliver excellence

- To deliver the aims and objectives of the College's People Strategy
- To ensure the College's organisational culture matches the strategic direction and ambitions of the Governing Body as stated in this plan
- To embrace difference and diversity of identity, experience, and thought, and actively strive for inclusive behaviours across our staff cohort
- To embed best practice to ensure that the College remains an inclusive, welcoming, and safe environment for all persons who wish to work here
- To empower managers to lead on and address mental health and wellbeing issues for their teams and any individual that reports to them
- To facilitate further collaborative and cross team working to deliver the College's vision for excellence and, where possible, to the benefit of students' employability skills
- To develop dual professional staff who can embed current occupational expertise and experience to complement outstanding teaching and learning practice
- To commit to ongoing investment in CPD and opportunities for individuals to develop within the College and externally
- To further develop innovative and affordable reward and remuneration models that inspire excellence in the performance of teams and individuals and support staff recruitment and retention
- To continue to recruit and develop governors who can play an active role in shaping the future strategic direction of the College, can both support and challenge accountable officers, act as advocates for the College externally, embody the College's values and behaviours and recognise, respect and enforce the boundaries between governance and management

- To foster a professional peer-to-peer learning culture amongst teaching and learning support staff to support the overall continuous improvement needed in delivering a consistently excellent learning experience for all students
- To empower the diversity of talent across the organisation as a whole, especially the skillsets of individuals and teams that go beyond their specific work areas, to the best advantage of colleagues and students
- To review the staff developed values and behaviours over the lifetime of this plan to ensure continued fit with the College's strategic direction, ambition and vision, and operating ethos
- To facilitate sustainable working practices that embody identified best practice

Finance:

Achieving sustainability through investment and profit

- To deliver the financial objectives outlined in the financial plan and, in so doing, maintain "good" or better financial health for the duration of this plan
- To ensure that the College operates within its bank covenants
- To invest in the College's future in a manner that promotes sustainability and associated values
- To implement a refreshed property and estates strategy, including both asset disposal, partnership activities and sustainability, in line with agreed strategic drivers and the underlying principles of being an anchor institution
- To seek investment to further develop the estates and resources of the College Group in line with agreed strategic drivers and underlying principles, adopting a place-based approach
- To further develop access to industry standard facilities through capital investment, sponsorship, and employer endorsement
- To look for and invest in mutually beneficial projects that lead to business growth and enhanced funding opportunities
- To adopt social value principles via sustainable procurement and purchasing, when appropriate, in line with the ambitions of an anchor institution
- To progress commercial opportunities, maximising the benefits for the collective or individual parts of the College Group, in line with agreed strategic drivers and underlying principles
- To further develop CK Assessment and Training and Herts Resourcing Group to the benefit of the College Group as a whole
- To maximise project opportunities, such as via the British Council, both through partnership/consortia/joint venture and sole institution bidding
- To increase community based and College based adult education delivery throughout the duration of the plan
- To achieve learner number targets generally being mindful of demographics, the expectations and requirements of stakeholders and the local delivery map
- To continue to prioritise and maximise progression opportunities between levels, to apprenticeships and HE subject to these being the most appropriate destination for the learner

- To further streamline financial systems to support the implementation of a fit for purpose business model for the College Group that meets the needs of stakeholders and internal customers

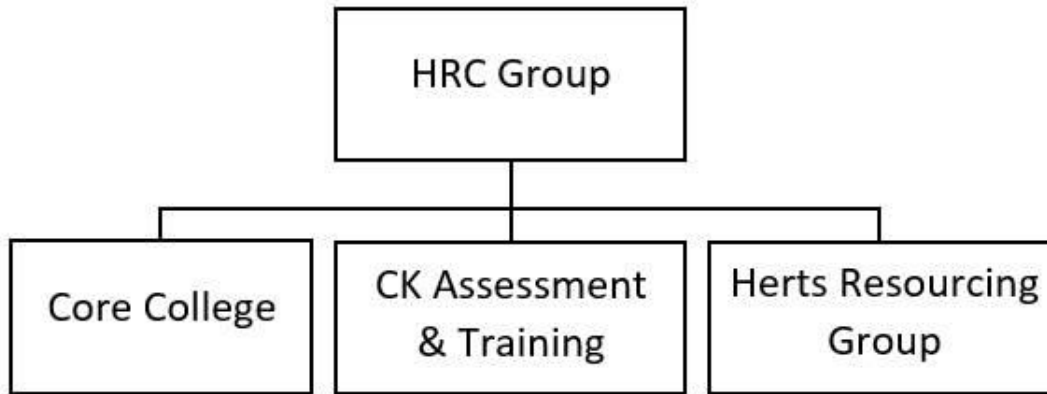
Quality:

Moving towards demonstrable and sustainable excellence

- To maintain an overall Ofsted rating of at least “Good” at the College’s next inspection with outstanding features
- To ensure excellent performance and delivery, consistent with the College’s ambition and vision, by empowering team and individual accountability that is focussed on developing the whole College vision of excellence
- To recognise high quality performance of both teams and individuals and celebrate and share their best practice internally
- To ensure the target setting process is dynamic and responsive leading to further improvements in valued added performance for our learners
- To work and collaborate with like-minded partners in the education and skills sector to continue to improve and accelerate progress to consistent and sustainable excellence
- To share the College’s best practice with other institutions, both in the UK and overseas, recognising the value that high quality education brings to communities and society worldwide
- To ensure that the quality assurance and regulatory requirements of the Office for Students are fully met across all Higher Education provision
- To continue to improve College attendance year on year, specifically against agreed targets for English and Maths
- To retain cross College Matrix accreditation

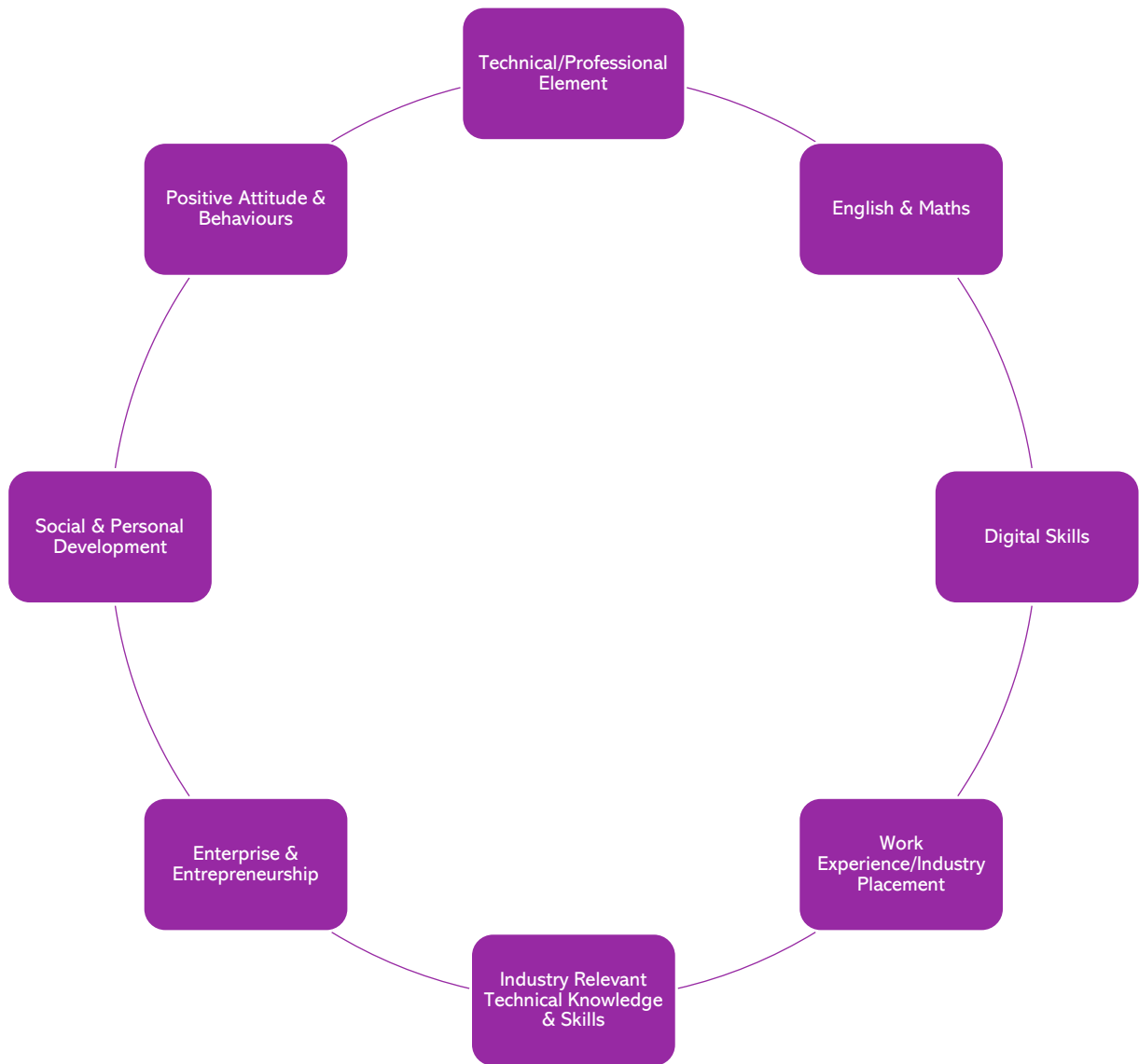
Appendix A

Hertford Regional College Group Structure:



Appendix B

Destination Curriculum Model:



Appendix C

Behaviours and Values:

Developed by staff collectively:

Trust – <i>We gain the trust and confidence of our colleagues and customers</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. We do what we say we will do, on time and to the standards required2. We provide honest feedback to learners, managers, colleagues and other customers about achievements and improvements needed3. We ensure our communications are clear, professional, and relevant to the recipient4. We adhere to policies and procedures5. We ask for help when need, feel empowered to admit mistakes and we put things right
Enterprise – <i>We are enterprising in the way we think commercially and respond to our customers</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. We respond to customers in a timely manner with solutions, using their feedback to bring about improvements2. We contribute unique selling points to market our products and services3. We seek out opportunities, suggest new ideas and use external resources to enhance learning opportunities4. We adapt to employer requests and develop community links, contributing to the creation of employability opportunities for our learners5. We contribute to the development of new curriculum ideas for greater diversity of offering
Ambition – <i>We are ambitious, setting realistic yet challenging goals to bring out the best in ourselves and our learners</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. We agree performance targets that contribute to team and college goals2. We set personal goals and strive to achieve3. We stretch and encourage learners and colleagues to achieve their ambitions4. We identify opportunities to innovate, work smarter and achieve more5. We measure our performance against agreed targets and take action accordingly
Motivation – <i>We show our motivation by acting with energy, enthusiasm, and a personal drive to succeed</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. We demonstrate positive, passionate, professional behaviour when engaging with others2. We show determination in solving problems, resolving queries, and seeking innovative solutions3. We work together, share resources and encourage others4. We celebrate success and recognise achievement at every level5. We develop ourselves and others, so that we can be confident in our abilities and maximise opportunities

Heart – *We recognise that learners, customers, and colleagues are the heartbeat of our organisation*

1. We demonstrate that learners are our priority and their future success is our focus
2. We embrace diversity, equality of access and strive to meet individual needs
3. We are approachable and we consult with others as part of our decision making.
4. We consider the impact of the actions we take on learners, customers, colleagues, and the wider community
5. We use industry expertise and experience to enhance learning

Respect – *We show respect for ourselves and others by valuing diversity, treating others with courtesy, and working collaboratively*

1. We are professional, act with integrity in all situations and would feel empowered to challenge others who do not show respect
2. We communicate in an appropriate and timely manner
3. We are role models for the BRAVO behaviours
4. We encourage a diverse range of people to share their views; we listen and take action
5. We are on time and prepared for classes, meetings, and appointments

Commitment – *we are committed to the college and furthering its position within the communities it serves*

1. We invest our time in tasks that bring about success
2. We work with others to achieve a common goal
3. We understand and positively promote our services to customers
4. We demonstrate tenacity and resilience in our job role
5. We are positive ambassadors for the college and its reputation, even when not at work