

The Trafford College Group

## **Annual Accountability Statement**

2023/24





## TCG PURPOSE

**The Trafford College Group Strategic Plan (2021-24) sets out our purpose, vision, mission, strategic priorities and strategic enablers. The current Strategic Plan, and the changes reflected since the previous plan, is set against the Group's context of "two mergers in three years and the impact of a global pandemic".**

The Group ensures that a comprehensive and inclusive curriculum offer is in place providing students with good progression opportunities into further study and / or employment and aligned to local, regional and national skills needs. This reflects our position in responding to the needs of the two local authority areas that we reside in, Stockport and Trafford, whilst also being part of the wider Greater Manchester city region.

Our offer is in line with our mission to provide the highest quality of education and training to all our students and employers through our "dual mandate" of an inclusive and career focused curriculum, contributing to our vision of supporting community cohesion and driving local and regional productivity; and ultimately, "unlocking the potential and fostering the success" of the students, employers and communities that we serve.

The Group's approach to providing an inclusive and career focused curriculum as part of our strategic intent means that a broad and balanced curriculum offer is provided across all levels (Entry Level – Level 6) and across academic, foundation, professional, technical and vocational learning. The Group works with young people, apprentices, learners with SEND, adults returning to learning and part-time learners in employment.

The Group's focus on "inclusion" alongside "careers" aims to tackle the long-standing inequalities of opportunity prevalent in GM, which have been brought "into sharper focus by the uneven impact of the COVID-19 pandemic" according to the GM Employment & Skills Advisory Panel (ESAP). As part of this, the Group has been actively involved in working with partners to address local and regional labour shortages that have been exacerbated due to COVID and BREXIT.





## CONTEXT

The Trafford College Group (TCG) as it stands today has been 15 years in the making. In 2007, North Trafford and South Trafford College merged into one college for the borough, Trafford College, with a £29m turnover. In 2018, Stockport College merged with Trafford College to form the Trafford College Group. Then, in May 2021, Cheadle and Marple Sixth Form College joined the Trafford College Group to create a £45m institution serving the educational needs of young people, adults and businesses extensively across the boroughs of Stockport and Trafford. TCG operates across five main campus sites, with two satellite centres at Manchester Airport and the Trafford Centre. In addition, the Group has subcontracted partnership arrangements with Carrington Riding Centre, Debut Dance Academy, Flixton Girls School and Stockport County FC.

The local authority areas of Stockport and Trafford are the most prosperous of the Greater Manchester city region, yet within them they contain some stark inequalities between different local wards. Areas such as Partington and Old Trafford in Trafford, and Brinnington and Edgeley in Stockport have stark challenges around economic wellbeing compared to the likes of Bowden and Bramhall. Given the nature of the selective education system that still operates in Trafford, and the highly competitive landscape in Stockport; many students who enrol with TCG are from more disadvantaged backgrounds and have in some cases not benefited from their previous educational experiences as much as they should. In addition, many students who have achieved well at key stage 4 join TCG as their first-choice provider, rather than electing to enrol at a local school sixth form or another college. This context drives our mandate of being a truly inclusive college.



**TCG provides a broad curriculum offer, meeting the needs of many student groups across the local area and wider sub-region. This offer includes academic, adult education, apprenticeships, commercial programmes, higher education, and vocational / technical courses. Student numbers consist of over 5500 young people, over 4000 adults, around 1500 apprentices and around 500 higher education students.**



The Group provides further education and skills training across Stockport and Trafford, as well as to many residents in the wider Greater Manchester city region and the Northwest of England. Education and training courses are offered in nearly all subject areas and planning is aligned to skills needs as identified in local and city region strategies. This also aligns to the core ambitions outlined in the GM Local Skills Report & Labour Market Action Plan with a focus on ensuring:

- “Young people leave education and training ready to succeed in the labour market, with a balance of academic, technical and ‘life ready’ skills”.
- “Adults can acquire the skills, mindset and support they need to fulfil their career potential and adapt to changing employment needs throughout their lives, from entering employment for the first time through to highly skilled careers and retraining”.
- “Employers have access to a system that is flexible, resilient and adaptable, and which meets their needs in the rapidly changing 21st century world of work driving a sustainable economic future for GM in which companies compete on the basis of high productivity, good quality work, and excellent employment practice”.

In addition, the Group’s curriculum offer aligns to ‘frontier’ sectors outlined in the Greater Manchester Local Industrial Strategy including health, manufacturing, digital, creative and media; as well as providing a range of provision linked to key local and regional employment sectors including construction, childcare & education, hospitality and professional services.



## APPROACH TO DEVELOPING THE ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

### Engagement with Civic Partners

**The Group works collaboratively with the local authorities of Stockport and Trafford to ensure that the offer and curriculum plans are clearly aligned to the local area's skills needs and economic ambitions.**

The Group is a key partner and shaper of the new Stockport Economic Plan (linked to the One Stockport Borough Plan) and is regarded by the local authority as one of the main drivers for skills across the Borough. In addition, the Group is a member of the Stockport Economic Alliance. TCG is involved with the Stockport One Workforce group specifically addressing immediate labour market skills and recruitment needs. In addition, the Group has just formed a partnership with Stockport Council and 'Stockport Health and Care Academy' to develop and provide training and recruitment to non-clinical positions across primary and secondary care.

The Group continues to be a key partner for Trafford's economic development through our involvement within the Trafford Employment, Enterprise and Skills (TEES) group, and during the recent pandemic took the lead for the Trafford Partnership on education recovery plans for children and young people of all ages across the Borough in the context of COVID-19.





The Group works closely with Trafford Council on several key borough priorities including Green Economy, Digital Inclusion and Poverty Action. In addition, the College Group and the Council works in collaboration around careers advice and guidance – particularly for young people at key stage 4; and around provision for SEND – including the new development of a Supported Internship delivered through the Council.

The Group has established close links with civic leaders across Stockport and Trafford, including Members of Parliament and Local Councillors. These relationships have supported the Group's approach to responding to local skills needs, as well as enabling elected representatives' understanding of the Group's contribution to the local community and economy – driving better collaboration and opening doors to new opportunities. For

example, these relationships have resulted in the development of the highly successful Community Partnership model; as well as enabling the active engagement of students across the Group in relevant local initiatives, scrutiny committees and projects to support local needs.

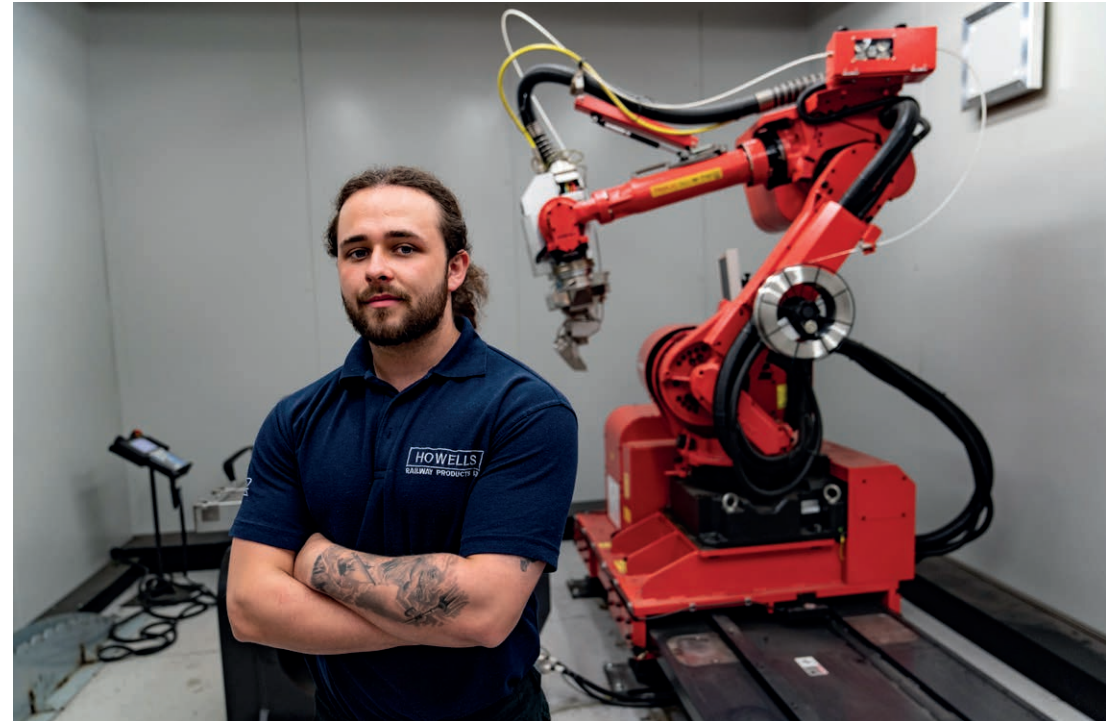
At a city region level, TCG works collaboratively with the other eight GFE Colleges (known as the Greater Manchester Colleges - GMC) around the relationship with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA). A GMC Principal representative attends the GM Employment and Skills Advisory Panel (ESAP) on behalf of the nine colleges. TCG, and the wider GMC are now working closely with the Mayor of GM and GMCA to support the implementation of the new trailblazer Devolution Deal and the ambition to create a "technical education city region".



## Engagement with Employers and Employer Representative Bodies

The Group has developed an ambitious Employer Responsive Strategy to meet the local and regional skills for now and the future. The strategy is focused on being responsive to the needs of employers across the range of the Group's provision and based around driving "transformational" as opposed to just "transactional" relationships. This is articulated through our Strategic Priority 3: "driving business recovery, renewal and productivity through transformational relationships with employers".

The Group works with a significant number of employers from a wide range of sectors. The Group has strong working relationships with key local and regional employer representative bodies including the GM Chamber of Commerce, Stockport Chamber of Commerce, Sale & Altrincham Chamber of Commerce, Stockport Economic Alliance and Marketing Stockport. These relationships have supported a better understanding of and responsiveness to local and regional skills priorities. The Group continues to develop ambitious and collaborative approaches to meeting the specific challenges of a sector; for example, the One Stockport Health Care Academy development that is taking place with Stockport Council and the NHS.



The Group has established "Employer Advisory Boards" (EABs) across a range of sectors to support our vision of an employer-informed curriculum and to enable more effective development, planning and delivery to meet organisational needs. This approach of working closely with employers across a sector specific model supports the Group to better understand the immediate (tactical) skills needs of employers, whilst also exploring with them (strategic) future skills requirements that can inform curriculum planning and delivery. For example, our Construction T level delivery was designed in response to employer need leading to successful placements and job offers upon successful completion. The Group has also created an Engineering "pre apprenticeship academy" offering students work experience whilst on current studies leading to progression onto a full apprenticeship. This model has been developed through employer feedback, with Howells Railway Products Ltd and Essity being two examples of employers who have successfully recruited apprentices through this route.





## Curriculum Planning and Engagement with the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)

The Group's business planning cycle strives to meet current and emerging employer demand and skills needs utilising Greater Manchester LEP priorities to determine curriculum development requirements. As part of an annual review and modification of the curriculum offer, the Group uses various LMI sources, including Vector, data analysis conducted by GMCA and local authorities and employers to identify growth sectors and skills gaps. Following the recent two mergers, this has involved a comprehensive curriculum mapping exercise to review the Group's offer, with a particular although not exclusive focus on Stockport, and to ensure coherence and alignment to local and regional skills needs – an activity that will continue in partnership with the local authority and other post 16 education providers within the borough.

The Group is working closely with the Employer Representative Body (ERB) for the Greater Manchester LSIP to understand local and regional skills needs. The ERB is the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce (GMCC). Throughout the development of the LSIP, the Chamber has engaged continuously with Greater Manchester Colleges and our Governing Bodies. In addition, both Stockport and Trafford Councils have engaged with our Governing Body around the identification of local skills needs.





**The Group works closely with the Stockport Economic Alliance and the Trafford Enterprise, Education and Skills (TEES) Group to understand local need and ensure that this is reflected in our strategic priorities and objectives.**

Local Authority sector priorities in **Trafford** consist of:

- Financial, Professional and Business Services
- Creative, Digital and Technology
- Life Sciences
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Logistics

The LSIP has identified future sector investment priorities for Trafford to also consist of:

- Construction
- Green Opportunities

Local Authority sector priorities in **Stockport** consist of:

- Construction
- Financial, Professional and Business Services
- Digital
- Human health and social work

The LSIP has identified future sector investment priorities for Stockport to also consist of:

- Logistics
- Education
- Green Opportunities
- Manufacturing

The Trafford College Group is already providing, or in the process of developing, education and training opportunities linked to all current LA priorities and future investment areas.

At a Greater Manchester level, the Mayor has identified the following seven sector priority areas:

- Manufacturing and Engineering
- Financial and Professional
- Digital and Technology
- Creative, Culture and Sport
- Construction and Green Economy
- Education and Early Years
- Health and Social Care





## Meeting the Needs of GM Growth Locations

The Group is already a key contributor to meeting skills needs and driving employment and productivity within two of the six Greater Manchester “Growth Locations” identified within the wider GM Strategy.

The first of these locations is the Airport and Southern Growth Corridor – with a focus on Manchester Airport and Stockport Town Centre. TCG delivers the Airport Academy within Terminal 1 of Manchester Airport, providing pre-employment training for a range of roles including security functions, airside, retail and hospitality. This provision has been arguably more important than ever over the past 12 months due to significant staff and skills shortages as a result of COVID-19. The Group has also provided HR training and support to staff at Manchester Airport Group (MAG) to support with the return of employees from furlough – which has included training staff in disciplinary and grievance procedures. The Group has recently started a partnership approach to the delivery of skills and training linked to warehousing and logistics in this area; as well as developing new Aviation Apprenticeships to support the current and future needs of Manchester Airport Group.

In addition, TCG is a significant contributor to the Stockport town centre regeneration project. The Group has been able to invest extensively in accommodation, facilities and resources at Stockport College (located within the vicinity of the town centre) to more effectively meet local skills needs around construction, creative and digital, education, engineering & manufacturing, health, professional services and science.



The Group has also been supporting specific regeneration projects, such as the heritage construction work taking place in the Underbanks district; and creative industries developments within the town centre. The Group is in discussion about future projects such as co-location within the town centre Merseyway development to support adult education and employability; as well as supporting proposed developments around an integrated care facility on the former St Thomas's hospital site.

In terms of the second growth location, Western Gateway, the Group provides the Skills Shop within the Trafford Centre, one of the main employers within the borough, delivering pre-employment training to meet retail and hospitality skills and employment needs. In addition, the Group's Stretford Campus is developing capacity and capability to support the low carbon agenda and in particular the development of a low carbon energy innovation park at Trafford Park.





## CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND LOCAL PRIORITIES

**The Trafford College Group has developed a set of clear objectives to ensure continued and improved contribution to national, regional and local priorities. These objectives are aligned to our current Strategic Plan, national skills priorities, GMCA priorities and the outcomes of the LSIP for our local areas.**

Each objective has a reference to the current TCG Strategic Priorities (SPs) as outlined in our Strategic Plan 2021-24.

The objectives for 2023/24 are outlined below and fall within the following overarching themes:

- Continuing to respond effectively to the government reform agenda around technical education – not least the development of the new T level and Higher Technical qualifications.
- Continuing to develop our wider offer for young people to address the issues around “soft skills” raised by employers in the LSIP and ensure they are well prepared for the world of work.
- Further developing a more responsive offer to support adult entry into work / progression within work – including maximising GMCA AEB flexibilities and broadening the opportunities for adults to access training at Level 3.
- Improving the quality and offer of our Apprenticeship provision to better meet the needs of employers and our economy.
- Continuing to develop our approach to transformational relationships with employers to better understand and respond to their specific skills needs.

- Contributing to the development of a clear and effective post-16 plan in the Stockport area given the context of two mergers within a three-year period to ensure an offer is in place to better respond to the borough’s needs.
- Utilising new funding opportunities such as the Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF) and the Further Education Innovation Fund (FEIF) to support capital and staffing development to respond more effectively to local, regional and national skills needs.

In addition, the Group has reflected National Skills Priorities within our curriculum planning process. The growth projections against these priorities from the 2022/23 baseline is included after the Accountability Statement Objectives 2023/24. The Group recognises that it is not appropriate for us to offer provision in all areas, but to ensure that we work as part of a wider local education and skills system that collectively meets skills needs.



## ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT OBJECTIVES 2023/24

TCG Strategic Priority Objective	Action(s) 2023/24	Target / Impact Measure 2023/24
Further develop our technical offer at levels 3 and above in line with government ambitions for T Levels and Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) to ensure that students are well equipped to meet the requirements of the labour market. (SP1)	<p>Following publication of the LSIP, review the curriculum plan for technical education routes – incl. T Levels and HTQs – to ensure alignment with identified local and regional skills priorities.</p> <p>With support from Stockport and Trafford Local Authorities, undertake a range of targeted activities with schools and employers to raise the awareness, profile and understanding of technical education routes – including the development of the new “M-Bacc”.</p>	<p>Revised curriculum plan in place informed by the LSIP and agreed with LA areas.</p> <p>T Level and HTQ student numbers recruited to curriculum plan targets.</p>
Continue to develop our wider offer for young people to addresses the issues around “soft skills” raised by employers in the LSIP and ensure they are well prepared for the world of work. (SP1)	<p>Accelerate our Careers Programme and “work readiness” offer to all young people across the Group to ensure awareness and development of the skills needed by employers.</p> <p>Develop a “digital entitlement” for all young people to enable them to develop the basic digital skills required in the workplace, alongside specialist digital skills as required by their chosen sector.</p> <p>Pilot an approach to support the development of resilience and positive thinking behaviours for young people through the Pacific Institute approach.</p> <p>Develop a pilot approach to embed Education for Sustainable Development within the Curriculum.</p>	<p>100% of young people undertake the mandatory requirement of work-related activity.</p> <p>Digital Entitlement fully established and delivered to at least 20% of young people across the Group.</p> <p>Programme principles fully embedded within tutorial programme. At least 200 young people undertake full programme.</p> <p>At least 200 young people complete the Carbon Literacy programme.</p>



TCG Strategic Priority Objective	Action(s) 2023/24	Target / Impact Measure 2023/24
<p>Continue to develop an adult offer to support retraining and upskilling, improve personal wellbeing and contribute to a strong and resilient local and regional economy. (SP1)</p>	<p>Respond to local skills and employment needs through the development of new Sector Work Academy Programmes (SWAPs) as required.</p> <p>Develop a clear offer for adults at Level 3 that responds to local skills needs as identified within the LSIP.</p> <p>Continue to grow the employability partnership model around Digital, Construction and Logistics to meet training and skills demands in these sectors.</p> <p>Develop an offer as a project strand in the LSIF to support the recruitment of Learning Support / Teaching Assistant staff and Teaching Staff within STEM areas.</p>	<p>SWAPs established according to local need and AEB student numbers in line with target.</p> <p>Adult Level 3 plan established in alignment with local skills priorities and student numbers in line with target.</p> <p>Digital, Construction and Logistics learner numbers in line with curriculum plan targets.</p> <p>Project outcomes within LSIF achieved.</p>
<p>Increase the recruitment of high-quality apprenticeships across the Group as a key driver to supporting the skills needs of local and regional employers. (SP3)</p>	<p>Following publication of the LSIP, review the curriculum plan for apprenticeship provision to ensure alignment with identified local skills priorities – including further growth of opportunities at Level 3 and above.</p> <p>Further drive the approach to quality improvement across the apprenticeship provision.</p> <p>Implement delivery of the new Aviation apprenticeships as part our strategic partnership to meet the skills needs of Manchester Airport Group. (MAG)</p>	<p>Apprenticeship learner numbers in line with curriculum plan targets.</p> <p>Apprenticeship quality measures in line with targets – incl. compliance with accountability framework indicators.</p> <p>At least 20 new Aviation Apprenticeship starts with MAG.</p>



TCG Strategic Priority Objective	Action(s) 2023/24	Target / Impact Measure 2023/24
Establish a clear employer responsive offer linked to local and regional skills priority areas and across the range of TCG provision beyond apprenticeships, including Adult Skills, Higher Skills, Work Placements, and bespoke Commercial Programmes. (SP3)	<p>Build upon the outcomes of the SDF project to develop a clear offer in support of the low carbon agenda through the provision of Green Skills and partnership working with the new Cheadle Eco Park and Trafford Park Low Carbon Centre.</p> <p>Support the development of the new “Skills Hub” concept in the Merseyway district to provide co-located advice, guidance and training to Stockport’s employers.</p> <p>Create a Stockport “Business and Professional School” with an offer that meets the business needs of employers, including training and support around leadership and management capability – with possibility of more central location to businesses.</p>	<p>Green Skills Academy established at Stockport College and Trafford College. (Stretford)</p> <p>College presence established in central area providing skills support.</p> <p>Business and Professional School established at Stockport College – with learner numbers in line with target.</p>
Continue to drive our strategy to develop transformational, as opposed to just transactional, relationships with employers including the development of Employer Advisory Boards (EABs) in every key sector of delivery. (SP3)	<p>Further develop the EAB approach to ensure coverage across all Local Authority priority areas – and establish a mechanism to measure impact.</p> <p>Establish a strategic key account holder relationship with the 10 largest companies in both Stockport and Trafford to better respond to local skills needs.</p>	<p>EABs fully established and operational in all identified sector areas.</p> <p>Initial meeting and next steps established with all identified employers.</p>
Establish the next phase of the “Unlocking Potential, Fostering Success at Stockport College” project to enable the continued reputational turnaround of Stockport College. (SP4)	Commence consultation on the future offer at Stockport College including the rationalisation of provision between Stockport College and Cheadle College – aligned with the borough wide development of a new Stockport Post-16 Education and Skills Plan.	Consultation concluded and phase 1 of any outcomes commenced. Clearer offer and identities established for Stockport and Cheadle in relation to meeting local needs. Stockport Post-16 Skills Plan in place.



TCG Strategic Priority Objective	Action(s) 2023/24	Target / Impact Measure 2023/24
Identify appropriate funding bids (capital and revenue) to support implementation of accountability statement objectives.	<p>Utilise the Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF) to invest in immersive technology to support delivery of Construction, Digital, Health and Engineering.</p> <p>Develop an approach to Staff CPD for immersive technologies across the identified priority areas above.</p> <p>Utilise the new FE Innovation Fund (FEIF) to support LSIP implementation of the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Creative Digital Media for Stockport businesses</li><li>• Advanced Manufacturing for Trafford businesses</li><li>• Digital technology updating for businesses across Stockport and Trafford through Centre for Digital Innovation project with MMU.</li></ul> <p>Ensure any other capital development (e.g. OfS, HE Injection Fund, T Level Capital) is fully aligned to accountability statement objectives.</p>	<p>LSIF funding in place and capital projects delivered for identified areas.</p> <p>All staff in each of the four LSIF priority areas complete CPD in immersive technologies.</p> <p>Project funding in place and at least three businesses to benefit in each strand.</p> <p>Capital projects delivered in line with estates strategy aims and accountability statement objectives.</p>



## CORPORATION STATEMENT

**At a quorate meeting of the Board of the Corporation held at 5.30pm on Wednesday 19th July 2023 it was unanimously resolved that the Group's Accountability Statement 2023/2024, as presented by the Principal and Chief Executive Officer, be approved and submitted to the relevant authorities.**

### Supporting Documentation

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1149695/DfE\\_accountability\\_agreement\\_guidance\\_April\\_2023\\_FINAL.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1149695/DfE_accountability_agreement_guidance_April_2023_FINAL.pdf)

[https://trafford.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2022/08/TCG\\_strategic\\_plan\\_july\\_2022.pdf](https://trafford.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2022/08/TCG_strategic_plan_july_2022.pdf)

<https://aboutgreatermanchester.com/the-greater-manchester-strategy-2021-2031/>

<https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/2132/gm-local-industrial-strategy-web.pdf>

<https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/5802/gm-esap-local-skills-report-update-march-2022-final.pdf>

<https://www.onestockport.co.uk/the-stockport-borough-plan/>

<https://www.onestockport.co.uk/economic-plan/>

<https://www.trafford.gov.uk/planning/strategic-planning/docs/Draft-Local-Plan-Traffords-Economy.pdf>

