

The Foundation Code of Governance sets out the requirement for the governing body to engage with its communities:

The governing body is accountable to its learners, to the wider community it serves, and to other stakeholders. It should have close regard to the voice of its learners. It should agree and maintain a public value statement that describes how the College seeks to add value to the social, economic and physical well-being of the community it serves. It should take steps to ensure that information on the activities of the College is made widely available and to forge effective relationships with stakeholders.

You may also wish to refer to the materials contained in the Governance Library topic *New Accountabilities*

Foundation Code of Governance and the Sharp Report

The Sharp report on *Colleges in their communities* was published after the publication of the Foundation Code. The following statement from the AoC provides guidance to College Boards about how they might include community engagement within their use of the Code:

A.1 The governing body should ensure that the College engages regularly, proactively and effectively with the various communities that it serves, in order to identify and prioritise those communities' needs for education and training and to discuss how they can best be met.

A.1.1 'Communities' comprise all those organisations, individuals and groups of individuals that the governing body intends should benefit from the services offered by the College. They will normally include employers (small and medium enterprises as well as larger businesses) and their representative bodies, including local enterprise partnerships; local and city region authorities; voluntary and charitable organisations; and past, present and future learners (and if possible, their families).

A.1.2 'Education and training' comprise all forms of learning and the development of skills, including entrepreneurial skills.

A.1.3 The governing body will, over time, seek to develop strategic partnerships with employers and community bodies, including local public service providers, in which the partners could become co-designers of some college services and programmes.

A.2 The governing body will, so far as the charitable status of the College allows, seek to encourage the communities that it serves and members of those communities to access the College's infrastructure, resources, and expertise, provided that this is not at the expense of the College's educational mission.

A.3 The governing body should publish on the College website at least annually an account of the College's engagement with the principal communities that it serves, and the progress made towards meeting their needs.

A.3.1 The governing body's public value statement should make clear how the College aims to meet the education and training needs of the communities that it serves.

A.3.2 The governing body should ensure that arrangements are in place to assess the extent to which the communities served by the College, and individuals within those communities, are satisfied with the services provided.

A.3.3 Each College should discuss with representatives of the communities that it serves the coverage and timing of its public value reporting, and should offer its stakeholders opportunities to discuss reports more fully.

Community Engagement checklist for Governors

- How far is your College recognised as a local strategic contributor?
- What evidence indicates this?
- What more can you do to ensure recognition of the college's contribution to your local communities?
- What geographic and interest communities does your College serve?
- Have you recently reviewed your mission, values and educational character in the light of the new localism agenda?
- How do you know that your college curriculum and provision meet the needs of the communities you serve?
- Are there any parts of your provision that is co-designed with partners such as employers?
- Have you recently reviewed your current strategic and operational partnership activities?
- What do they cost and what benefits to the College and local communities do they bring? 3

What are your current relationships and partnerships with schools, including academies, free schools, studio schools and University Technical Colleges (UTC)? Does your College recognise a role for its senior leadership and Governors in 'locality management'? Have you got the right people with appropriate time to develop key strategic partner relationships?

Are you and other Colleges in your area/sub region working effectively together to represent the FE sector? Do you need to change this for future strategic involvement in Local Enterprise Partnerships and other 'place shaping' strategies?