

Education  
Partnership  
NorthEast

# Strategic Plan

2019-25



**H S N**

Hartlepool  
SixthForm

Sunderland  
College

Northumberland  
College

Student



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# Foreword

The College's Strategic Plan 2019-2025 is our blueprint for success. It establishes a framework to shape our direction within an environment that is rapidly changing, financially challenging and increasingly competitive.

Its content and focus have been developed following a period of extensive consultation, and reflects the importance we place upon culture and collaboration. As we pursue our agenda of excellence, we will endeavour to nurture our culture and values.

We recognise that national reform, policy and expectation for increasing performance will continue to impact and shape what we do. Complacency is not an option and in responding to continuous change, we must become more flexible and innovative. Our new Strategic Plan sets out our bold new vision and ambitious goals.

We are determined to remain a progressive organisation, to embrace change and to seek new opportunities to position the College as a leading organisation, nationally, regionally and locally.

This plan has been shaped by contributions from government bodies, our community partners, employers, staff, students, governors and others. Its implementation is the responsibility of everyone in the College and through action, individually and collectively, we will advance Sunderland College in the realisation of our exciting vision.

We are building our future on our heritage of strengths. Our values, vision and strategic goals powerfully express a fundamental belief that the College shape better communities, inspire the next generation of students and foster a better world.

We look forward to working with our colleagues to achieve this Strategic Plan and to ensure the College continues to build on its successful past, for a sustainable and bright future.



Ellen Thinnesen  
Chief Executive



Rob Lawson  
Chair of Governors



# Achievements over the period of the College's last Strategic Plan



We achieved an **OFSTED Good Inspection** and were recognised for a higher proportion of our students achieving their qualifications than those at similar providers.

Our degree level provision meets all UK expectations through QAA and was awarded **Silver in the Teaching Excellence Framework**.

Our achievement rates across all provision is **consistently above** national averages.



Through investment and merger we have strengthened our assets to **£90 million**, and invested in a £30 million City Centre Professional and Technical Skills Campus, £5 million Sports Academy and an £11 million Creative Arts Academy.



We contributed significantly to our **Corporate Social Responsibility** across the City and our wider communities.



We successfully piloted the **Gatsby Good Career Benchmarks** and are now an advocate embedding them across the North East region, and nationally, on behalf of the North East LEP and the Gatsby Foundation.

Sunderland College is the **highest ranking college** in the North East for satisfaction and progression.

» **94.4%**

of our further education students had a positive destination, and 95% of our apprentices sustained employment.

We work with 48 Levy paying employers, established eight new strategic employer partnerships and won the prestigious **Association of Colleges (AoC) Beacon Award for Engagement with Employers** in 2017.



**ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES**  
BEACON AWARDS



# Our Professional Values & Behaviours

We aspire to be the best in all we do and to enable our employees and students to reach their full potential. We know a culture of strong values means strong results for all of our stakeholders. This is why our professional values are fundamental to our pursuit for excellence and why they must underpin all of our activities.

Our Professional Values and Behaviours provide a valuable framework for use by people at every level of our organisation. They help us to evaluate our decisions and be confident in the choices we make.



## Authentic

We are who we say we are, we do what we say we will do.



## Respectful

We value the opinion of others and the contribution they make.



## Innovative

We work hard to create a dynamic, forward-looking culture.



## Ambitious

We are determined to achieve our vision and goals.

# Our Strategic Vision

**Excellence  
at the heart  
of everything  
we do**

To realise our vision we will excel in our pursuit of excellence to enable us to grow our student population and the College's performance by uniting our people and culture and strengthening our reputation locally, regionally and nationally.

Purposefully bold and challenging, we aspire to be:



In the **top 10**  
Colleges nationally  
for student  
achievement

In the **top 25**  
Colleges nationally  
for financial health

Our passion is our strength, we have demonstrated this continuously and this is why we will pursue our vision with enthusiasm and determination.



# How we are going to get there –

## Our Strategic Goals



Our Strategic Goals are formulated to help us achieve our Vision. They do not operate in isolation from one another and neither are they prioritised in order of importance. Each is an integrated and vital process to our agenda for excellence and future success.



# Goal 1

## Shape and evolve a careers-focused curriculum

We will continue to ensure curriculum pathways that meet the current and future demands of the region's labour market.



### We will:

- Partner with employers to co-design and co-deliver a career-focused curriculum within academic, technical and professional pathways.
- Strengthen our specialisms in growing areas of our regional economy, investing in digital industries, advanced manufacturing and engineering, construction, health and life sciences, and finance, professional, and business services.
- Innovate and support the development of the creative industries through cross-disciplinary working with colleagues from across the College and externally.
- Enhance SEND provision ensuring access to a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Continue to provide a dynamic and inclusive broad education and training curriculum.
- Grow our apprenticeship and higher education offer producing job-ready apprentices and graduates with the skills needed to progress into and through the labour market.
- Positively influence the English, maths and digital skills of our communities.
- Develop an innovative curriculum that focuses on training the economically inactive and upskilling the 50+ workforce to address labour market changes.

### Responsible for reporting on progress:

Principal, Northumberland College and Interim Deputy Principal, Sunderland College & Hartlepool Sixth Form



# Goal 2

## Create outstanding learning opportunities for our students

We will maintain an unwavering and relentless focus on developing our students through outstanding teaching, learning, support and assessment.



### We will:

- Ensure the interests, aspirations and needs of our students are at the centre of all that we do.
- Develop inspiring, safe, accessible and supportive learning and physical environments across all College campuses.
- Develop and embed innovative approaches to teaching, learning and assessment including investing in technologies.
- Promote a culture of high expectations, underpinned by quality and that enables all students, regardless of background, to achieve and make progress.
- Ensure our students can identify routes into work, supported through experience and exposure to the world of work and inspiration.
- Provide the best student experience possible through outstanding approaches to personal development, the development of employability skills and citizenship.

### Responsible for reporting on progress:

Principal & Chief Executive with the Vice Principal Student Services and Registry



# Goal 3

## Unite our culture and empower our people

We will build our culture and develop high performing people, empowered to lead, innovate and take ownership.



### We will:

- Fully integrate and utilise our HR systems.
- Ensure we have a diverse and inclusive workforce.
- Enhance our people engagement in order to further develop the fulfilment and performance of our workforce.
- Develop, design and deliver programmes to support and enhance the skills of our staff and to support current and the next generation of leaders and managers.
- Enable leaders and managers to proactively assess and manage staff wellbeing and safety within their teams and across the whole college.
- Use workforce planning to attract and retain the best people, and plan for succession.

### Responsible for reporting on progress:

Group Director of People & Organisation Development supported by Associate Principal for Resources & Legal Services

# Goal 4

## Strengthen our financial resilience and invest in our resources

We will build our financial resilience and strengthen our resources to ensure all stakeholders benefit from outstanding learning environments.



### We will:

- Grow income and student numbers across school leavers, apprenticeships, higher education and adult provision.
- Further invest in our estate to ensure it remains a high-quality, safe, accessible learning environment, and providing state of the art facilities.
- Innovate and invest in our digital infrastructure to continue developing excellent learning technologies and information systems.
- Continue to diversify our income sources.
- Innovate and optimize our management information systems to improve and strengthen access to information ensuring services meet the needs of the business.
- Minimise our environmental footprint and promote sustainable working practices.

**Responsible for reporting on progress:**  
Chief Operating Officer supported by the Associated Principal for Resource & Legal Services

# Goal 5

## Engage locally, regionally and nationally, and build our reputation

We will be an engaged and influential sector leader with a strong reputation and growing partnerships.



### We will:

- › Collaborate on innovative employer-led projects and a wide range of social responsibility activities in order to continually enhance the student experience.
- › Nurture strong mutually beneficial partnerships with industry and community organisations.
- › We will extend our influence by collaborating with strategic partners to support and sustain mutually beneficial activities.
- › Raise the profile of our expertise and our specialist areas.
- › Celebrate the positive impact we have had on our communities.
- › Contribute positively to social, cultural and economic regeneration.

### Responsible for reporting on progress:

Vice Principal, Partnerships and Commercial  
with the Group Director Marketing & Engagement



# College Strategic Plans



# Progress, monitoring & reporting

**Underpinning the College-level Strategic Plan are five complementary organisational plans. Each provides further detail on how we will implement the Strategic Plan.**

**To avoid strategic ambiguity, we believe in clearly identifying and communicating our organisational plans to our people and stakeholders. Knowing these also ensures we can align our resources, invest for the future and achieve our strategic goals.**

Our five strategic plans are:

- > Curriculum Plan
- > Learning Opportunities Plan
- > People Plan
- > Finance & Resources Plan
- > Partnerships Plan

**We have appointed a strategic lead for each strategic goal whilst recognising that each and every one of our people is accountable for the achievement of the Strategic Plan.**

- > Make best use of external benchmarking against peers and sector norms as well as performance measures.
- > Develop Strategic Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to monitor and track our performance towards achieving our strategic goals.
- > Benchmark our performance externally against competitor organisations and national data sets and standards.
- > Ensure our strategic goals are contextualised into departmental and curriculum and planning documents, and whole College Self-Assessment for Further and Higher Education.
- > Produce a new Strategic Operating Report approved by Governors and shared annually with internal and external stakeholders.
- > Maintain currency of our Strategic Plan supported by a strategic review in 2020/21.



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