



Sunderland College

2014/17

STRATEGIC PLAN

STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL / CHIEF EXECUTIVE

For some, vision is simply the ability to see - to see what is already there. For Governors and the senior management team at Sunderland College, vision is seeing what is not there, and picturing what can be; imagining the future and knowing what we are capable of becoming. Sunderland College team can, with the right vision and leadership, face the future with, a renewed sense of purpose, confidence and strive for excellence.

Our Strategic Plan plays to our strengths, exploits opportunities, takes account of the environment, and addresses our weaknesses to ensure that we become the best we can be; recognising the vast expertise of our staff. We will become a united team, with a common sense of purpose, a strong work ethic with a focus on achievement, brought together by one set of shared values. We are one team, and we want everyone to play their role in shaping the future of the College.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anne Isherwood". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

Anne Isherwood,
Principal / Chief Executive



OUR VISION FOR A DYNAMIC AND HIGH PERFORMING COLLEGE

The 2014-17 Strategic Plan summarises the vision and strategic ambitions for Sunderland College for the next three years.

It captures how we will continue to improve the experiences we provide for our stakeholders and partners, how we plan to be more responsive and engage more effectively with our target audiences. We aspire to being an outstanding and first choice provider with learners and employers, for all aspects of education and training within Sunderland, the North East and beyond. The Strategic Plan marks the start of an exciting journey - one that we want the whole team at the College to be a part of - one team, with one shared vision, striving for excellence.





MISSION STATEMENT

STRATEGIC AMBITIONS

Our vision and mission will be achieved through the pursuance of five strategic ambitions which will direct all of our activity over the next three years - the life of the plan:

- Transform the organisational culture through the promotion of high standards in customer service and encourage innovative and entrepreneurial approaches across all of our activities
- Be responsive to local and national priorities and opportunities and make a notable contribution to social regeneration and economic growth and development
- Strengthen the College's position within a range of market sectors and reposition it so that it becomes a dominant player within the North East region and has a critical mass within overseas markets
- Provide an outstanding experience for our learners enabling them to progress to employment or a higher level of study
- Manage the College's estate and resources, maintaining strong financial health, independent longevity and promote environmental sustainability

PRINCIPLES*

There are core principles that we will embed within the organisation - principles that will be clearly communicated and embraced by all members of the College team:

- 'Place shaper' - Sunderland College is an organisation with the community at its heart, making a positive difference to the city and the region
- Positive and proactive - Sunderland College as a contributor to change - active, agile and able to affect change on a national and regional scale
- Innovator - embracing new technologies and techniques - being at the cutting edge
- Outcome focused - an organisation that positively changes people's lives
- Inclusive - a college that treats everyone with respect, and feels able to challenge judgements and behaviours where appropriate
- Ethical - a transparent organisation that operates fairly and sensitively

* Subject to consultation with staff.

WE AIM TO DEVELOP AND
POSITIVELY SHAPE LIVES,
COMMUNITIES AND THE
ECONOMY THROUGH
TEACHING, LEARNING AND
DEVELOPMENT OF SKILLS.

THE COLLEGE IN A NATIONAL CONTEXT

Further Education (FE) has faced significant changes over the last few years and there are more changes to come. Sunderland College is well placed to meet the challenges ahead. However we need the right strategic approach - we need to focus on preparing for and responding to the challenges that we face; doing things differently - innovatively; diversifying income streams and seeking new business opportunities, all this while continuing to improve the quality of teaching, learning and services to stakeholders. Our strategy is highly influenced by national policy and recognises the importance of adapting quickly to the changes and opportunities that arise. We will engage with consultations so that we can inform and influence national policy for the benefit of our sector and our economy.

GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

Under 'New Challenges New Chances', colleges were given the freedom and flexibilities to vary instruments and articles of governance and to decide on more innovative ways to govern their organisations. Many have already taken these opportunities by, for example, establishing multi academy trusts, federations and confederations.



NATIONAL POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

The Minister for Skills in the current coalition Government summarised national policy changes within a mnemonic 'TASQ':

T TRAINEESHIPS - TRAINING FOR WORK

Programmes of up to six months which will help young people develop their employability skills and prepare them for work and progression to an apprenticeship. Promoting adult employability programmes will continue to be a key priority.

A APPRENTICESHIPS - TRAINING IN WORK

Growth in apprenticeships remains a strong focus. All apprenticeship frameworks will be revised in consultation with employment sectors. These frameworks will have significant external summative assessment, all apprentices should be employed and their apprenticeship programme should last for a minimum of 12 months.

S STANDARDS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Ofsted and Quality Assurance Agency have recently revised their inspection and review frameworks.

The Department for Education and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills are both consulting on new accountability criteria, which will bring about changes to league tables. The Education and Training Foundation will be established imminently, its purpose, to raise standards within the skills sector.

Q QUALIFICATION REFORM

All vocational and academic qualifications will be reformed and will require endorsement from universities and or employers. New GCSE and A Level specifications are being developed and will be introduced from 2015. Many of the current vocational qualifications will no longer be funded or included in league tables. Technical Level qualifications will be introduced from 2014 filling the technician gap for specific occupational areas. These will be complimented by the introduction of the Technical Baccalaureate which is a combination of Technical Level, level 3 maths and an extended project. New applied General Qualifications will also be introduced covering broad vocational areas.

Colleges who meet specific criteria can now enrol young people from age 14 to study a vocational curriculum, this along with other structural opportunities has led to the introduction of Career Colleges, which will be under the auspices of FE colleges. Colleges continue to be encouraged to sponsor multi-academy trusts and other academy arrangements.

Reductions in public sector funding will continue to be a feature throughout the life of this plan. There is likely to be a further expansion of adult loans and there is an expectation that employers will make greater contributions to workforce and skills development. The Skills Incentive Pilot, which will run from August 2014, is likely to drive changes in adult provision and incentivise those providers that align their offer to the economic needs of the region. The North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP) region is one of three pilot areas and this is the first signal that skills funding may, in future, be routed through local enterprise partnerships (LEPs). A decision has already been taken to route skills capital funding through LEPs from 2015.

All of these changes will impact upon college strategy and will require us to make adjustments to structures, processes and other areas of our operation.



THE COLLEGE IN A LOCAL AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

Sunderland College is one of the largest providers of education in the North East, has a turnover in excess of £40million and employs around 700 people. Currently there are five campuses across the city offering a wide range of academic and vocational provision for school leavers and adults. The College also offers a range of higher education qualifications, some in partnership with the Universities of Sunderland and Teesside. Programmes for international students are delivered both in-country and on campus.

Sunderland is located at the heart of the North East and is a well-connected city with an impressive history. The region continues to feel the impact of the decline and loss of traditional sources of employment such as, steel-making, coal mining and ship building. This has left a legacy of low aspirations, poverty, poor levels of health and although improving, low levels of educational achievement. There are, however, a number of emerging employment sectors in the city and beyond, including advanced manufacturing and engineering; automotive; sustainable construction; digital technologies & media; health & well-being and professional & business services. Locally and regionally, there is a demand from the business community for more skilled people to meet the need of these emerging industries. Many are also looking for ways of ensuring that they protect their businesses by addressing future skills gaps that will be created by an ageing workforce.



SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

The College has enjoyed a strong relationship with local partner schools, with the headteachers of these schools being Associate Principals of the College. Representatives of school governing bodies have, historically, had a place on the College governing body. This has ensured that Sunderland College is intrinsically linked to the city's secondary education providers. Given new freedoms and flexibilities, however, some schools are now exploring new models of governance, such as academies and multi-academy trusts, and a few are expanding provision to include a sixth form offer. This, alongside a reducing 16-18 demographic (a reduction of 9.5% between 2014-17) would mean that Sunderland College, in order to mitigate the reduction, would need to grow its share of the local market and expand its catchment area.

ATTAINMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE

In 2012-13 the percentage of pupils in Sunderland who achieved 5+ A*-C GCSE grades or equivalent (including Maths and English) was 60% against a North East average of 58.8%, and a National average of 58.6%.

The numbers of 'A Level' students in the NELEP area who attained two or more pass grades has followed the national pattern, decreasing from 95% in 2007-08 to 88.8% in 2011-12. The College, however, has seen an increase in its A-Level pass which rose to 99.7% in 2013.

ADULT ATTAINMENT

Although improving, the proportion of adults without a qualification remains high at 11.3% against the national average of 8.5%.

The proportion of adults qualified to Level 2 in Sunderland is 68.5% compared to the national average of 76.2% and the North East average of 72.8%. The proportion of adults qualified to Level 3 in Sunderland is 46.5% compared to the national average of 56.9% and a North East average of 50.9%. There are just 23.5% of adults in Sunderland qualified to level 4 or above, compared with 36.6% nationally. Nationally the figure has improved by over 11% points in the last ten years. However, Sunderland has only improved by 7.5% points over the same period.

COMPETITOR ANALYSIS

Sunderland College is now in an increasingly competitive market place. Recent analysis has identified that further work is needed to increase our profile outside of the College's immediate catchment area.

11.3%

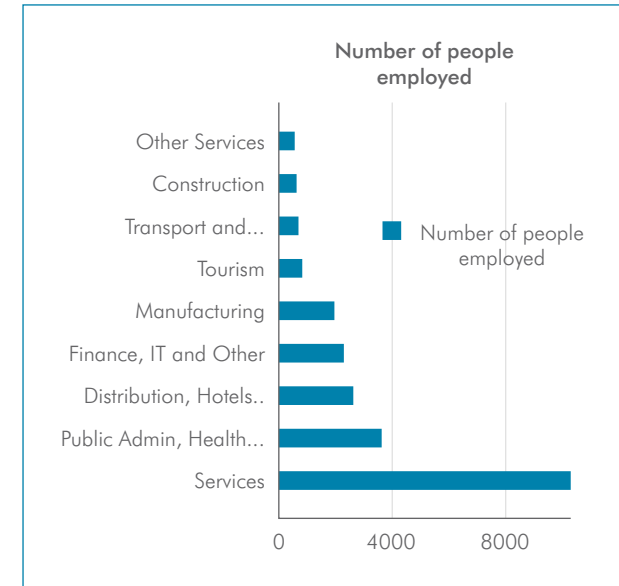
OF ADULTS IN SUNDERLAND DO NOT HAVE ANY QUALIFICATIONS

LABOUR MARKET

Sunderland, in common with many UK cities, is facing a number of economic challenges. While unemployment is falling, this figure is still above the national average and currently there are 10,000 people who are economically inactive. Sunderland is in the top 10% of the most deprived local authorities in England. 50% of the Colleges 16 to 19 year olds claim a college bursary. Recent reports show that the city has the second highest youth unemployment figures in the country with 9.45% of under 25s claiming Job Seekers Allowance - compared to 6% nationally. There are currently five Job Seekers Allowance claimants per job vacancy and it is believed that up to 42 people are competing for every job in Sunderland.

The employer profile for the city is shown in Table 1 here:

Table 1: Sunderland employment profile



In 2011 the NELEP was established with a mission “to provide more and better jobs” and in 2012 commissioned the North East Independent Economic Review led by Lord Adonis. The report was published in April 2013 and made a wide range of recommendations, some of which are very specific to the skills agenda and will have implications for providers and the further education sector:

- Raising the standards of schools and improving the information advice and guidance provided to young people
- Double the number of youth apprenticeships over the next four years, from 6,500 to 13,000 with an initial emphasis on doubling youth advanced apprenticeships from 2,000 to 4,000 in engineering and other skills linked to key growth sectors
- Introducing a co-commissioning model, a new quality benchmark for providers and a payment by results component to incentivise training providers
- Increasing employer take up of apprenticeships - with a target of an additional 500 employers providing apprenticeship places within three years
- Increasing the number of young people going on to higher education - with a target of increasing the North East participation rate by 1% point each year until the region meets the national average

These, with the other recommendations, will form the basis for the NELEP Economic Strategic Plan, which is due to be published in 2014. The NELEP from 2014 will have traction over the European Structural and Investment Fund. These funds, in addition to supporting European priorities, will be aligned to addressing the recommendations of the Independent Economic Review.





CITY DEAL AND ECONOMIC MASTERPLAN

Sunderland Economic Masterplan has been developed with four specific aims:

AIM 1

A new kind of university city

AIM 2

A national hub of the low carbon economy

AIM 3

A prosperous and well-connected waterfront city

AIM 4

An inclusive city economy - for all ages

Sunderland City Council, in collaboration with South Tyneside Council (now part of a combined authority LA7), has been successful in the second wave of City Deals. Both the City Deal and the Masterplan have been designed to drive economic growth, attract inward investment and foster an export-led recovery.

STRATEGIC AMBITIONS

Our strategic ambitions, which follow, have been developed to reflect LEP priorities, local government priorities and support local and regional economic growth.

STRATEGIC AMBITION ONE

Providing high standards of customer care for all of our stakeholders, particularly our students and employers, is critical if we are to be seen as a successful leading edge provider. We will address this by looking critically at our systems, processes and service standards. We will prioritise customer care training for all of our staff, both teaching and business support. We recognise that we are operating in a climate where we need to do more for less, and yet all of our stakeholders, in particular our learners, have an increasingly high expectation of the service we provide. We therefore need to create an environment where staff feel sufficiently empowered and supported to take decisions and feel they can be creative and innovative in their approach to problem-solving. At the same time, we need to maintain appropriate levels of accountability. This distributed leadership model will help us to take the organisation to the next level - a braver, more proactive college.

We will work with staff to ensure they have the skills to help them make the right decisions, and where they need development, we will coach and support them to ensure they learn and grow. We will become an organisation that is built upon a culture of learning - both staff and students will develop and grow with us.

Specifically we will:

- Develop an enterprising, entrepreneurial and innovative organisational culture
- Improve internal communication and utilise technology to streamline our approaches
- Audit our customer services and implement a fresh approach
- Align workforce development priorities to our strategic ambitions

Tracking progress on our journey will be measured by the following targets:

- Introduce a staff forum by 2014
- Expand Matrix Accreditation by 2014
- Align the workforce development plan to the strategic ambitions by 2014
- Achieve Customer First accreditation by 2015
- Achieve Investors in People Gold by 2016

TRANSFORM THE ORGANISATIONAL
CULTURE THROUGH THE
PROMOTION OF HIGH STANDARDS
IN EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL
CUSTOMER SERVICE AND
ENCOURAGE INNOVATIVE AND
ENTREPRENEURIAL APPROACHES
ACROSS ALL OF OUR ACTIVITIES.

STRATEGIC AMBITION TWO

Our region has many challenges to overcome and it is critical that the FE sector in general and Sunderland College in particular positions itself to play a pivotal role in boosting skill levels; raising the aspirations of young people and improving the overall qualification profile of the community. This will hopefully improve skills and employment prospects, reduce welfare dependency and improve social mobility. An area which has a highly skilled labour force is more likely to attract inward investment and see business growth and investment. We will better align our curriculum offer with identifiable key growth sectors where there are skills gaps. We will be proactive in engaging with employers so that they have greater involvement in curriculum development, design, delivery and assessment. We will also engage employers in providing information, advice and guidance for young people and adults and support, particularly micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), in the engagement of apprentices. We will continue to work collaboratively with our local partner schools so that we maximise opportunities for young people.

Specifically we will:

- Implement a new employer facing strategy with assured growth in Traineeships and Apprenticeships
- Refresh our working arrangements with local partner schools and expand vocational opportunities for young people at age 14
- Review our curriculum in line with local priorities and national policy changes
- Provide more diverse provision for those not engaged in education employment or training
- Further develop our Higher Education (HE) partnerships and provision to include Higher Level Skills

Tracking progress on our journey will be measured by the following targets:

- Increase our Traineeship and Apprenticeship provision by 40% over the life of the plan
- Achieve the targets set out within the employer facing strategy over the life of the plan
- Ensure that the annual curriculum plan reflects the NELEP and other local priorities
- Implement the revised Sixth Form proposals by 2015
- Increase by 15% the numbers of HE and level 4 learners over the life of the plan
- Increase the number of learners on non-traditional programmes by 15% over the life of the plan

BE RESPONSIVE TO LOCAL AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES AND MAKE A NOTABLE CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIAL REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT WITHIN OUR REGION.

STRATEGIC AMBITION THREE

Raising our profile with local and regional stakeholders is critical if we are to secure business growth and develop attractive, relevant propositions for our target audiences. To establish the desired level of awareness and positive perceptions of the College among local and regional stakeholders, we will develop a range of strategies to improve the competitiveness of Sunderland College across all of our market sectors. We will re-launch our international business strategy and build on the successful relationships that have been established in China and South East Asia.

Specifically we will:

- Develop a local and regional marketing strategy
- Refresh the College and sixth form brands
- Develop an international strategy
- Raise the College's profile with local networks

Tracking progress on our journey will be measured by the following targets:

- Maintain market share, as a minimum, in an increasingly competitive market over the life of the plan
- Increase the number of learners from outside our immediate catchment area by 10% over the life of the plan
- Launch and introduce a refreshed corporate identity by 2015
- Contract with at least five new regional partners per annum and two new international partners per annum

STRENGTHEN THE COLLEGE'S
POSITION WITHIN A RANGE
OF MARKET SECTORS AND
REPOSITION IT SO THAT IT
BECOMES A DOMINANT PLAYER
WITHIN THE NORTH EAST REGION
AND HAS A CRITICAL MASS
WITHIN OVERSEAS MARKETS.

STRATEGIC AMBITION FOUR

To achieve this ambition we will provide learners with access to a wide range of services. These will include access to both welfare and learning support. Learners will be actively encouraged to develop independent and autonomous learning techniques, for use both within and outside the classroom, using up to date technology. They will engage in an enriching curriculum which emphasises and supports the development of enterprise and other relevant employability skills. We will further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and will invest in new technologies to support this. All of our curriculum and support areas will embrace the concept of continuous quality improvement which will be monitored through a range of robust quality assurance strategies. These will include self-assessment; internal inspection; curriculum and business reviews and stakeholder surveys.

Specifically we will:

- Review all aspects of student and learning support to improve achievement and progression
- Introduce a job brokerage and destination tracking service
- Further invest in the use of technology to support teaching, learning and assessment and the monitoring of student progress - both in and out of the classroom
- Refresh our quality assurance processes to align with national policy requirements

Tracking progress on our journey will be measured by the following targets:

- Incremental increase per annum to achieve 90% of lessons graded good or outstanding by 2017
- Incremental improvements per annum in value-added for all Level 3 qualifications, and to be at least good by 2017
- Annual increase in success rates to 95% for 16-18 and 90% for 19+ by 2017
- Develop a robust methodology for tracking and monitoring learner progression and destination by 2014
- Review quality systems annually and align to inspectorate and government accountability measures

Use the Magnificent Seven for perfect planning

1. Plan astutely and set challenging tasks - based on accurate assessment of group's prior knowledge, skills and understanding, and individual learner needs
2. Set high expectations for all your learners and develop their confidence, resilience and independence when tackling challenging activities
3. Provide high quality learning resources, including ICT, for use during and between sessions
4. Provide constructive verbal and written feedback on marked work (paying due attention to spelling and grammar in written work)
5. Integrate equality and diversity and inclusiveness into the learning experience and develop learners' personal and social skills and work-readiness
6. Check understanding throughout session and check that all learners are making good progress in session
7. Deploy imaginative/motivational teaching, learning and assessment strategies that engage learner participation and enthusiasm and match individual needs accurately

PROVIDE AN OUTSTANDING
EXPERIENCE FOR OUR LEARNERS
ENABLING THEM TO PROGRESS
TO EMPLOYMENT OR A
HIGHER LEVEL OF STUDY.

STRATEGIC AMBITION FIVE

To achieve this ambition we will continue to invest in the resources necessary to fulfil our mission and achieve our strategic ambitions. This will require us to invest in our staff, our estate and expand the resources necessary to provide leading edge teaching and learning. We will recruit and retain high calibre personnel through rigorous recruitment and selection processes and take a robust yet supportive approach to performance management and succession planning. We will work together to establish a dynamic high performing team that shares a common approach and espouses the agreed organisational values.

We will diversify our income streams and review our cost base on an ongoing basis and build resilience to safeguard against reductions in mainstream revenue funding. We will seek to secure capital grant funding and invest our surpluses and reserves to develop an estate which will provide industry standard facilities that provide an outstanding environment for our students.

This will enable us to replace facilities that have reached the end of their economically useful life. We will make our contribution to environmental sustainability by reducing our carbon footprint and promote environmental responsibility across all our activities.

Specifically we will:

- Develop an engaging human resources strategy that ensures innovative recruitment, development and succession planning
- Implement a transformational estates strategy
- Develop a sustainable environmental strategy
- Continue to manage college finances in line with funding changes

Tracking progress on our journey will be measured by the following targets:

- Achieving the targets set out within the 3 year Financial Strategy
- Achieving the estates and environmental targets set out within the Estates Strategy over the life of the plan
- Achieving the targets set out within the Human Resources Strategy over the life of the plan

MANAGING THE COLLEGE'S ESTATE
AND RESOURCES, MAINTAINING
FINANCIAL HEALTH, INDEPENDENT
LONGEVITY AND PROMOTE
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY.

RESOURCING THE PLAN

To resource the plan, the College has produced a three year financial forecast with a detailed budget for the initial year. The forecast makes assumptions, particularly with regards to income and sustainability of funding streams, over the next three years. Any additional reductions in income, beyond those already included in the forecast, will require a corresponding reduction in expenditure.

MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTATION

Based on the agreed overall targets, we will set milestones that will be the basis of an annual operating plan. Progress against these milestones will be monitored termly by the Senior Management Team (SMT) and progress reported to the Board.

The 2014-17 Strategic Plan will be the basis for team development plans and individual targets.

Development plans will be monitored termly through performance review meetings. Individual staff targets will be agreed and monitored as part of our Performance Management Review process.











ONE COLLEGE
ONE VISION
ONE TEAM

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