



# Strategic Plan

Our journey to outstanding 2026

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# Introduction from the Principal and Chair



On behalf of myself and our Chair, I am delighted to introduce our ambitious and updated strategic plan, a roadmap that will propel us on our path to become an outstanding College. It is our privilege to present this vision for our institution, one that encapsulates our unwavering commitment to educational excellence and the holistic development of our learners.

At Derwentside College, we have always been dedicated to nurturing talent, and providing our learners with the tools they need to thrive in an ever-evolving world. However, we also recognise that the landscape of education is evolving rapidly, and so must we. This strategic plan is our blueprint for not just keeping pace with change but setting the pace for others to follow.

Our journey towards outstanding is driven by a profound belief in the transformative power of education. We aim to create an environment where every learner, regardless of their background or circumstance, has the opportunity to excel academically and vocationally, developing essential life skills and growing as responsible and engaged members of our society.

This strategic plan is the culmination of extensive collaboration and input from our dedicated staff, visionary Board, and invaluable College community. It is rooted in our core values of excellence, enterprise, trust, respect and enjoyment, and it outlines clear and actionable steps that will guide us over the coming years.

In the pages that follow, you will discover the strategic priorities and objectives that will shape our future. These priorities encompass Governance, Quality, Curriculum, People, Community and Resources. They reflect our commitment to continuous improvement and our aspiration to reach new heights in our ambition to become an outstanding College.

As we embark on this journey together, I want to express my profound gratitude to all of you who make Derwentside College a vibrant and engaging place to learn and work. Your dedication, expertise and passion are the driving force behind our pursuit of excellence. Together, in the years to come, we will chart a course that will make us not just outstanding, but a beacon of excellence in the sector.

On behalf of myself, the Chair and our Board, I thank you for your unwavering support, and I look forward to continuing to work with you all to achieve our shared vision for the future.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Chris Todd'.

**Chris Todd**

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Vicky McDermott'.

**Vicky McDermott**  
Chair of the Board

# Mission

To provide high quality education and training that shapes the future and transforms lives

**Our mission statement describes our core purpose and focus as a Further Education College.**

# Vision

To be an outstanding college that is highly valued by our learners and partners

**Our vision provides a clear view of what we intend to achieve, contextualising our long-term aspirations and providing staff, learners and stakeholders with a clear and engaging view of our future.**



# Values & Behaviours

The College Values are the key to our culture and we strive to live by them each and every day. They serve as a compass to help guide us on our path to success, as well as a bridge to the future, supporting the achievement of our Mission and Vision over time.

## Trust

- We take responsibility for our own work and actions, holding ourselves to account;
- We follow through on our commitments, making sure we deliver what we say we will;
- We are trusted to do our jobs well and we are given freedom and flexibility to achieve this in our own way.

## Respect

- We treat everyone with respect and support each other;
- We value diversity and difference;
- We accept people for who they are.

## Excellence

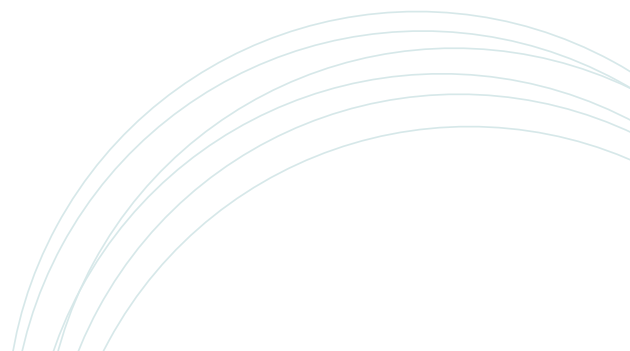
- We have the highest expectations for our learners;
- We strive to achieve excellence in all that we do;
- We take the lead on improving our services and get things done;
- We learn from our mistakes in an environment free from blame, where learning and reflection is encouraged.

## Enjoyment

- We approach our work with enthusiasm and we are optimistic about the future;
- We enjoy our work and the relationships we have with each other;
- We are welcoming and friendly, and enjoy having fun with colleagues, learners and all those we come into contact with.

## Enterprise

- We think differently and are not afraid to innovate and try new things;
- We accept that problems can occur, but we are solutions focussed, taking the lead and actively challenging the status quo;
- We adapt well to change and embrace new opportunities.



# Strategic Priorities

## Governance

To develop a high performing Board that provides ambitious and empowering leadership across the College.

## Quality

To become an outstanding College across all areas of our provision.

## Curriculum

To deliver a highly effective curriculum that meets local and national skills needs.

## People

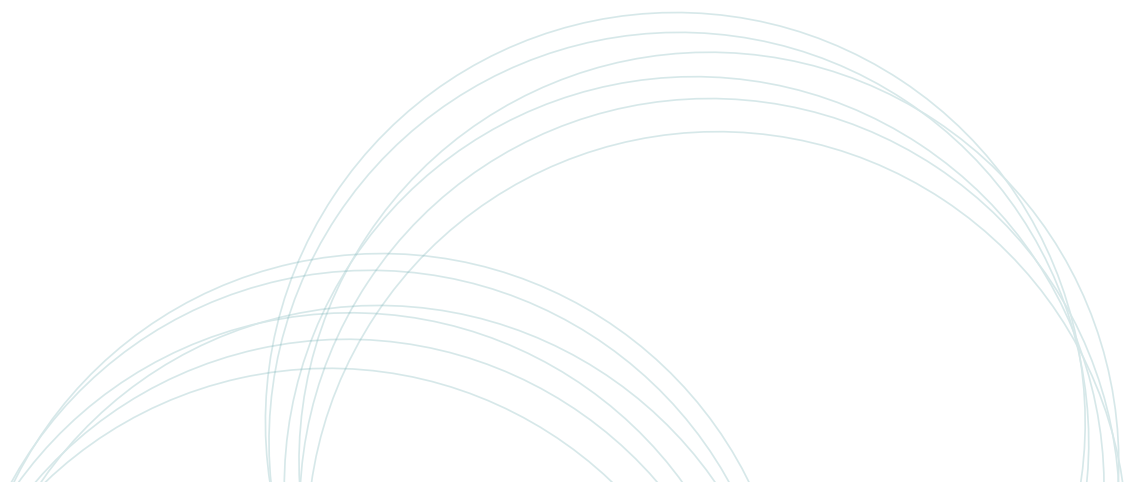
To be a College where people want to work and where learners want to study.

## Community

To become a College that is rooted in the local community as an integral part of the education landscape.

## Resources

To use our resources efficiently and effectively to the benefit of our staff, learners and stakeholders.



# Strategic Objectives

# and

# Measuring Performance



# Strategic Objectives

Strategic Priorities	Strategic Objectives	KPI Ref
<b>Governance</b>	A1 - Refresh our Board membership, bringing in new talent to address skills gaps and enhance performance	All KPIs
	A2 - Implement the Governance Improvement Plan to drive the College forward to outstanding governance	All KPIs
<b>Quality</b>	B1 - Raise the bar in the quality of teaching and learning, encouraging staff to innovate and to enhance their pedagogy to the highest possible standard	1, 6, 7, 10-15
	B2 - Implement innovative educational technologies and resources to enhance the learning experience	1, 7, 9, 10-15
	B3 - Improve student outcomes by focussing on the learner journey and the quality of the learner experience	1, 7, 9, 10-15
	B4 - Foster a supportive and inclusive learning environment that promotes student engagement, wellbeing and achievement	1, 7, 9, 10-15
<b>Curriculum</b>	C1 - Alongside our partner organisations in the North-East region, respond to the opportunities and challenges posed by the North-East Local Skills Improvement Plan, developing a collaborative bid to the LSIF	1, 3-5
	C2 - Develop and roll out a suite of T-Level Programmes, encouraging more learners to study at level 3	5
	C3 - Deliver growth in our education programmes for young people, reducing the number of NEETs in the local area and capitalising on our excellent relationships with local schools. In particular, focussing on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital and Technology</li> <li>• Engineering and Manufacturing</li> <li>• Construction</li> <li>• Health and Social Care</li> </ul>	5
	C4 - Grow our apprenticeships provision, focusing the curriculum offer on high volume, high impact provision, aligned to local and national skills priorities.	3
	C5 - Deliver our adult education funding targets against all contracts.	4

Strategic Priorities	Strategic Objectives	KPI Ref
<b>People</b>	D1 - Make Derwentside College a great place to work, where all staff and students are well-aligned with our values and culture	6, 9
	D2 - Become a student-centred College, where learners are always placed first and where the quality of our customer service is first class	9, 10-15
	D3 - Develop a performance culture where only the best staff are recruited and retained	6
	D4 - Deliver a range of purposeful professional development activities that supports staff in the enhancement of their knowledge and skills	6, 10
<b>Community</b>	E1 - Strengthen partnerships with secondary schools, universities, and other education providers to create seamless educational pathways for students	1, 11-13
	E2 - Engage with employers, students, parents and other stakeholders to foster a sense of community, support fundraising initiatives, and enhance the College's reputation	1, 6, 10-15
	E3 - Collaborate with local communities, employers, and community organisations to address regional skills gaps and promote community development	1
<b>Resources</b>	F1 - Digital Transformation and Technological Innovation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embrace digital transformation to enhance teaching, learning, and administrative processes.</li> <li>• Invest in advanced technology infrastructure and resources to support online and blended learning.</li> <li>• Promote digital literacy skills among students and staff, enabling them to thrive in a technology-driven society.</li> </ul>	1, 10-15
	F2 - Environment, Sustainability and Facilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and promote environmental sustainability practices throughout the College.</li> <li>• Provide a safe and healthy work environment for all employees, learners' and visitors.</li> </ul>	1, 6, 9
	F3 - Financial Resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the College's financial sustainability through effective budgeting, resource allocation, and revenue generation strategies.</li> <li>• Optimise resource utilisation and cost efficiency while maintaining the quality of education and services.</li> </ul>	3

# Measuring Performance

## Overall Performance

KPI Category		KPI Ref	KPI Description	Target 2023-24	Aspirational Target
Ofsted Grade		1	Overall effectiveness grade	Good	Outstanding
			Leadership and management grade	Good	Outstanding
			Contribution to meeting local skills needs grade	Strong	Strong
Financial Performance		2	Financial Health Grade (ESFA)	Good	Good
			EBITDA Surplus as a percentage of income	>3%	>6%
			Cash balance as a percentage of income	20%	20%
			Staff to income percentage	70%	68%
Business Volume and Growth	Apprenticeships	3	Funding generated from new starts £	£1,904k	£2,200k
	Adult Education	4	DfE contract funding generated £	£1,534k	£1,534k
			Tees Valley contract funding generated £	£381k	£450 k
			North of Tyne contract funding generated £	£111k	£200k
	Education Programmes for Young People	5	Funding generated £	£1,994k	£2,200k
			Learner numbers - all levels	400	450
			Learner numbers - level 3	75	110
Staff Performance, Cultural Alignment and Satisfaction		6	Percentage of staff who are performing at the required standard	95%	100%
			Percentage of staff members who are aligned with the College's values	95%	100%
			Percentage staff satisfaction - annual staff survey	90%	95%
Quality Improvement Plan Progress		7	Percentage of QIP actions complete	100%	100%
Employer Satisfaction		8	Percentage employer satisfaction - annual employer survey	90%	95%
			Apprenticeship Employer satisfaction rating - Find apprenticeship training website	Excellent	Excellent
Learner Satisfaction		9	Percentage learner satisfaction - annual learner survey	90%	95%
			Learner satisfaction rating - <a href="https://www.gov.uk">Gov.uk</a>	Good	Excellent

## Quality of Education

KPI Category		KPI Ref	KPI Description	Target 2023-24	Aspirational Target
Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment		10	Percentage of formal learning visits carried out meeting the standard	97%	100%
Apprenticeships		11	Apprenticeships Achievement Rate - Overall %	60%	67%
			Apprenticeships Achievement Rate - Timely %	45%	60%
			Percentage number of withdrawals	15% to 30%	10% to 25%
			Apprentice Destination - Percentage number of apprentices reaching a positive destination %	90%	93%
Education Programmes for Young People (16 to 18)		12	Achievement rate %	87%	91%
			Percentage number of withdrawals against the overall number of enrolments	<15%	<10%
			Percentage of learners reaching a positive destination	80%	85%
			Percentage attendance	90%	92%
Adult Education		13	Achievement rate %	86%	90%
			Adult Learner Destinations Percentage of learners reaching a positive destination %	65%	70%
			Attendance - Learner attendance percentage	90%	92%
English and Maths	16 to 18	14	GCSE Maths % @ grade 4 and above	20%	25%
			GCSE English % @ grade 4 and above	26%	31%
			Functional Skills Maths achievement rate %	85%	88%
			Functional Skills English achievement rate %	85%	88%
	19+	15	GCSE Maths % @ grade 4 and above	20%	25%
			GCSE English % @ grade 4 and above	26%	31%
			Functional Skills Maths achievement rate %	87%	90%
			Functional Skills English achievement rate %	87%	90%

