

SKILLS FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2027

ATTITUDES



KNOWLEDGE



SKILLS





CONTENTS

- 03 INTRODUCTION FROM OUR GROUP CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
- 04 OUR JOURNEY SO FAR
- 05 THE BEDFORD COLLEGE GROUP TODAY
- 06 OUR PURPOSE, VISION & VALUES
- 07 OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

- 08 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1
- 09 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2
- 10 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP & REPUTATION

- 11 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4
- 12 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5

SUSTAINABILITY

- 13 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 6
- 14 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 7
- 15 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 8
- 16 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 9

INTRODUCTION FROM OUR GROUP CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



One of my first priorities as I joined the Group was to thoroughly review our strategic plan, reaffirming our commitment to being the best and most authoritative post-16 educator in the South East Midlands. Our purpose is to help individuals, communities and society flourish through education, raising aspirations and reducing inequality to create a sustainable future.

This strategic plan sets a clear roadmap for achieving our purpose. We are dedicated to equipping our students with the skills necessary for personal and professional success. By emphasising educational and community leadership, bolstering our reputation, and championing sustainability, we will ensure our students thrive in an ever-changing world.

Our core values – teamwork, improving continuously, student centred, inclusivity, open and caring – are the foundation of our approach to nurturing educational excellence.

Key goals include driving up educational excellence, expanding technical, professional and higher skills programmes, enhancing our services to businesses, and leading in civic engagement. We aim to extend our market leadership, attract and retain exceptional staff, and invest in digital transformation. Furthermore, we are committed to financial strength and advancing towards becoming a net zero organisation.

Together, we will enhance the quality of education, improve outcomes, and enrich all of our students lives, ensuring every one of our 18,000 students achieves their full potential.

A handwritten signature in black ink, enclosed in a circular shape. The signature is stylized and appears to be 'Yiannis Koursis'.

Yiannis Koursis OBE
Group Chief Executive Officer

OUR JOURNEY SO FAR

↓ 1882

Bedford Training College for Teachers was established at the Cauldwell Street campus



↓ 1903

Margaret Stansfeld OBE founded and became Principal of Bedford Physical Training College

Image courtesy of The Bedford Physical Education Old Students' Association (BPEOSA)

↓ 1959

The College at Cauldwell Street was renamed Mander College of Further Education

↓ 1976

Bedford College of Higher Education was created through a merger between Bedford College of Education, Bedford Physical Training College and Mander College

↓ 1992

Bedford College achieved independent status from local authorities following the Further and Higher Education Act 1992

↑ 2018

The Bedford College Group was granted membership of the Chartered Institution for Further Education under its Royal Charter and Kettering Learning Centre opened in the town centre

↑ 2017

Bedford College and Tresham College merged to create The Bedford College Group

↑ 2012

The Bedford Sixth Form opened providing specialist A Level education in Bedford town centre

↑ 2009

Bedford College was rated Outstanding by Ofsted and Shuttleworth College became part of Bedford College

↑ 2000

The Bedford Learning Centre opened in Bedford town centre

↓ 2020

The Bedford College Group was awarded FE College of the Year

↓ 2021

The Corby Learning Centre opened in Corby town centre

↓ 2023

Central Bedfordshire College joined The Bedford College Group to create the seventh largest college group in the country (by income), and the Group's second dedicated Sixth Form opened in Corby



THE BEDFORD COLLEGE GROUP TODAY

CAMPUSES ACROSS THE REGION

BC Bedford College
Cauldwell Street, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK42 9AH

Bedford Learning Centre
88 High Street, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK40 1NN

CBC Central Bedfordshire College, Dunstable Campus
Kingsway, Dunstable, Bedfordshire LU5 4HG

CBC Central Bedfordshire College, Leighton Buzzard Campus
Chartmoor Road, Leighton Buzzard LU7 4TN

Corby Learning Centre
40 George Street, Corby, Northamptonshire NN17 1QD

Kettering Learning Centre
9-10 Newland Street, Kettering, Northamptonshire NN16 8JH

NC&M National College for Motorsport
Unit 2285, Silverstone Technology Park, Towcester, Northamptonshire NN12 8GX

SC Shuttleworth College
Old Warden Park, Biggleswade, Bedfordshire SG18 9DX

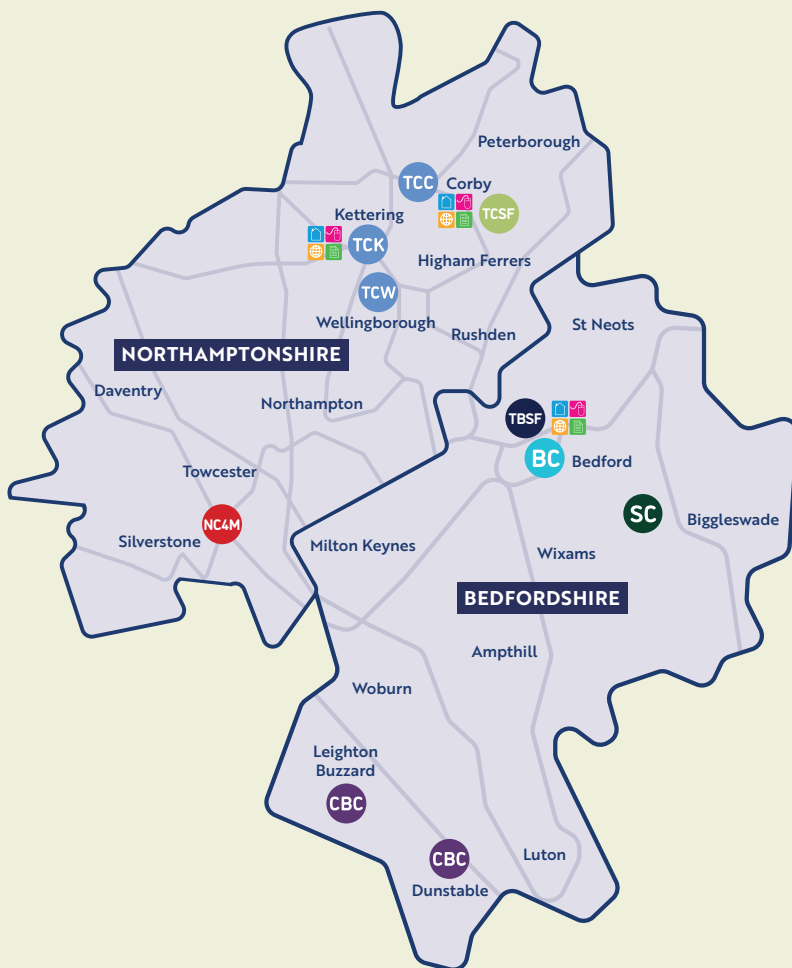
TBSF The Bedford Sixth Form
Bromham Road, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK40 2BS

TCSF The Corby Sixth Form
Elizabeth Street, Corby, Northamptonshire NN17 1FN

TCC Tresham College, Corby Campus
Oakley Road, Corby, Northamptonshire NN17 1NE

TCK Tresham College, Kettering Campus
Windmill Avenue, Kettering, Northamptonshire NN15 6ER

TCW Tresham College, Wellingborough Campus
Church Street, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire NN8 4PD



OUR PURPOSE, VISION & VALUES



OUR PURPOSE

To help individuals, communities and society flourish through education by raising aspirations and reducing inequality to create a sustainable future.

OUR VISION

To be the best and most authoritative post-16 educator in the south east midlands.

OUR VALUES

VALUING TEAMWORK

We are one team who by working together can achieve great things, respecting the opinion and valuing the contribution each of us makes.

IMPROVING CONTINUOUSLY

We challenge ourselves to always do better by trying new things, sharing knowledge, reflecting on practice and learning from others.

STUDENT CENTRED

At our heart is always doing what is best for our students. We consider students in all of our decision making to create positive outcomes and memorable experiences for every student.

INCLUSIVE

We celebrate differences and diversity, recognising that we can learn from each other.

OPEN AND CARING

We care about the wellbeing of our staff, our students, our community and wider society, creating an environment built on trust where we listen, engage with and support each other.

NURTURING EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

We promote educational excellence by delivering programmes that challenge our students to achieve their ambitions.

UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The United Nations 17 sustainable development goals are a set of related goals designed to address some of the world's most urgent challenges facing humanity and the natural world.



We are committed to playing our part in tackling these goals to create a more equitable, prosperous and sustainable world for everyone through education and awareness, community engagement activities, adopting sustainable practices on campus, our partnership working and championing sustainable development through actions in our strategic plan.

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Bedford College Group has three strategic pillars which drive us to serve our purpose and achieve our vision. Under each pillar are key strategic objectives and targets. Our key strategic objectives are set out on the following pages.

OUR VISION

To be the best and most authoritative post-16 educator in the South East Midlands

OUR PURPOSE

To help individuals, communities and society flourish through education by raising aspirations and reducing inequality to create a sustainable future

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Achieve consistent standards of educational excellence by making quality of education our top priority

Expand Technical and Professional Education and Higher Skills programmes

Provide a better, more comprehensive service to employers

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP & REPUTATION

Be recognised as a leader in further education and a major source of civic leadership within our communities

Extend our market leadership, size and scale in the areas we serve

SUSTAINABILITY

Attract, retain and develop high performing staff

Maintain financial strength and continuous capital investment

Invest in digital transformation to support the plan

Make strong progress towards becoming a net zero organisation and a leader in sustainability practices

DEPARTMENTAL PLANS

OUR PEOPLE

OUR VALUES

- Valuing teamwork
- Improving continuously
- Student centred
- Inclusive
- Open and caring
- Nurturing educational excellence



OBJECTIVE 1

To achieve consistent standards of education excellence by making quality of education our top priority



WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS BY:

- Maintaining a comprehensive full-time offer across all sector subject areas
- Maintaining a strong higher skills, adult education and apprenticeship offer across our communities in areas where there is a clear need
- Ensuring all programmes prepare students for their next steps and career ambitions, maintaining a strong focus on student achievement, retention and progression
- Developing exciting enrichment, sustainability and community leadership programmes for our younger students to improve the student experience, including developing cultural and social capital
- Ensuring all curriculum areas are engaged in skills competitions and as many students take part as possible
- Developing and implementing a framework which supports students to make educational gains
- Introducing a whole group approach in the use of 'Philosophical Enquiry', enabling students to develop much improved critical thinking, ethical reflection and enhanced communication skills
- Improving participation in education by protected characteristics and ensuring there is equity in student achievement and the student experience
- Increasing our focus towards equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) to support all students to thrive and become global citizens
- Prioritising the recruitment of teaching staff so that we have the staffing levels to deliver a high quality educational experience
- Investing in teaching, learning and assessment, along with digital technologies, to provide the very best experience to our students.

OUR TARGETS:

- Student achievement rates in the top 10% nationally, with no gaps in achievement when comparing the Group average to EDI characteristics
- 100% of students attend their classes
- At least 96% of students complete their course (retention)
- At least 100% of Level 1 full-time students progress to Level 2, 50% to Level 3 and 10% to higher skills qualifications
- Self-assessed overall provision graded Good
- At least 93% of full-time students leave the Group with a positive destination.



OBJECTIVE 2

To expand technical and professional education and higher skills programmes

WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS BY:

- Developing a wide range of T Level provision at our campuses and investing in the new curriculum
- Leveraging the move to new higher technical qualifications (HTQs) by developing a relevant and accessible curriculum offer to meet community needs
- Developing a strong Higher Apprenticeship offer that meets the needs of our business communities
- Actively participating in the government's Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF) programme to deliver against the skills priorities in the South East Midlands
- Developing higher level professional programmes to support workforce and individual development
- Continuing to develop The Corby Sixth Form as a new specialist A Level centre for North Northamptonshire
- Taking a responsive approach to the government's post-16 education reforms to support people into higher skilled jobs
- Partnering with high quality industry specialists to provide relevant industry placements and work experience
- Working effectively with partners to develop a range of high-quality higher education programmes and pathways to provide a broader portfolio to our communities.

OUR TARGETS:

- At least 50% of Level 3 students study T Levels
- At least 450 students study HTQs
- At least 300 students study Higher Apprenticeships
- Number of students at The Corby Sixth Form exceeds 500.



OBJECTIVE 3

To provide a better, more comprehensive service to employers

WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS BY:

- Improving the ways in which we engage with businesses, shifting from a transactional approach to building mutually beneficial partnerships
- Focussing on significantly improving the quality of our apprenticeship provision in terms of experience, outcomes, destinations and customer satisfaction
- Working with local and regional businesses to align our services and products to their business needs
- Improving our communication with businesses to ensure they receive a highly efficient and responsive approach through any means they choose to engage with us
- Increasing the reach we have with employers across the region, generating new key business opportunities as well as supporting and maintaining our existing businesses with their needs
- Actively engaging business partners and key stakeholders in the co-creation, design and delivery of our curriculum offer to ensure it meets their precise needs
- Investing in our facilities to create Business Partnership Hubs, bringing employers closer and offering reciprocal opportunities for both employers and students
- Enhancing the experience of our students by bringing industry influences into the classroom and ensuring employers input is at the heart of the learning offer
- Expanding our adult and commercial offerings to align with employer needs, supporting them in investing their levy and training funds in ways that add meaningful value and impact to their business requirements.

OUR TARGETS:

- Apprenticeship achievement to be in the top 10% of providers nationally
- At least 90% of apprentices pass their end point assessment (EPA)
- At least 90% of employers return as repeat business
- Grow the number of employers that actively engage us to at least 2,000
- Achieve at least a strong contribution to meeting local skills needs.



OBJECTIVE 4

To be recognised as a leader in further education and a major source of civic leadership in the communities we serve



WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS BY:

- Developing a reputation as a thought leader and system influencer in the field of further education through the participation in industry networks, partnerships and events to inform, shape and influence direction and policy
- Having a greater focus on our civic role by working with other anchor institutions and key organisations for the collective benefits of our towns and communities
- Proactively engaging with civic, community, education and businesses to contribute to the economic and social development of our communities, including harnessing the connections of our staff, governors and partners to develop new partnerships
- Actively seeking out and participating in collaborative arrangements with other education providers to ensure the mix of provision locally meets the needs of our communities and there is a joined up approach
- Growing provision where there is unmet demand to better meet the needs of our communities
- Supporting our students to become active citizens and community leaders so that they can actively contribute to society
- Establishing an alumni programme to track our students over time to demonstrate the impact they have on our communities and wider society
- Building inclusive boards across the Group's governance structure to enhance decision making
- Focussing the Corporation agenda on educational excellence, curriculum development, inclusion and teaching and learning to reflect the renewed focus on the quality of education.

OUR TARGETS:

- At least 85% of stakeholders agree the Group is a leader in further education
- At least 85% of stakeholders agree the Group provides opportunities for people to have better jobs and lives
- At least 85% of stakeholders agree the Group contributes to making the local area a better place
- At least 90% of students and apprentices recommend the College as a place to study
- At least 90% of external stakeholders and employers recommend the Group to others.



OBJECTIVE 5

To extend our market leadership, size and scale in the areas we serve



WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS BY:

- Growing our further education and higher skills provision in identified priority and growth sectors to meet the needs of our communities in the South East Midlands, such as green skills and digital skills
- Growing our apprenticeship offer in growth and priority sectors across the South East Midlands to meet the current and future needs of businesses
- Raising aspirations in our communities and our students to progress on to higher skills qualifications, ensuring fair access to all regardless of differences
- Integrating a culture of careers not courses across our local communities to ensure adults are equipped for employment at every opportunity to meet specific technical and higher skills demands
- Further developing relationships with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Jobcentre Plus to reduce unemployment for economically active residents
- Revamping our innovative Learning Centre model and looking to expand the number of centres we have in the community
- Ensuring our investment in Wellingborough generates the growth we expected
- Expanding our provision at Leighton Buzzard to meet the needs of the community
- Further developing our provision at the National College for Motorsport to meet demand.

OUR TARGETS:

- FE 16-18 students reach at least 9,000
- Adult students reach at least 8,000
- Apprentices reach at least 2,000
- Higher skills students reach at least 1,000
- Grow non-funded training revenue to at least £0.5 million.



OBJECTIVE 6

To attract, retain and develop high performing staff



WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS BY:

- Establishing a focussed talent acquisition team who will have continuously developing knowledge of the external market and the competitor challenges within that market
- Developing campaign data that will inform the most successful external attraction methods and enable bespoke campaigns for key hard to fill areas
- Improving both the timescales and candidate experience from application to when candidates accept an offer of employment to when they are able to commence employment
- Developing an induction programme which promotes a positive culture that holds the student at the centre of everything we do and ensures positive behaviours that reflect our values
- Developing our managers to be effective leaders, with a particular initial focus on people management skills that both ensure high performance and enable staff to feel supported and valued so they can thrive within their roles
- Ensuring all staff have the essential training to both support our students in quality outcomes and keep them safe during their journey
- Enabling managers to develop their staff in achieving their ambition/potential through a variety of coaching and training, and create clear career pathways across the Group.

OUR TARGETS:

- 85% of vacancies filled first campaign
- 100% of staff checks completed within 3 weeks of accepting an offer
- At least 85% of staff engage with the annual staff survey
- At least 90% of staff recommend working at the Group to others
- Turnover at 15%
- 90% satisfaction rate from our Learning & Teaching Coach workshops.



OBJECTIVE 7

Maintain financial strength and continuous capital investment



WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS BY:

- Maintaining our strong financial and capital investment model
- Developing and implementing an estates strategy which achieves efficiencies that can be directed into the student experience
- Pursuing funding opportunities for both revenue and capital to enable us to deliver our vision
- Taking a more disciplined approach to projects and investments so we adequately resource and assess each one
- Switching quickly and significantly the focus of investment from major refurbishments to smaller-scale refurbishments and investment in the student experience in every curriculum area
- Continuing to improve the condition of our building whilst responding to ever demanding regulatory changes
- Operating a resourcing model that is activity driven but outcome focussed
- Maintaining reserves to ensure resilience and embrace emerging opportunities.

OUR TARGETS:

- Income £98 million
- Surplus £0.7 million
- Annual cash investment into the capital programme £5 million.



OBJECTIVE 8

Invest in digital transformation to support the plan



WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS BY:

- Establishing digital innovation hubs that foster the integration of new technologies into teaching and learning practices
- Optimising digital learning platforms to improve student engagement and educational delivery, including launching Microsoft Educator Academy programme to provide teaching staff with the ability to continually transform their teaching methods to improve student outcomes
- Leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) to enhance learning outcomes, decision-making processes and operational efficiency
- Improving the accessibility and user-friendliness of teaching materials so that every student can engage effectively
- Ensuring that all digital products, including the student virtual learning environment (VLE) and other learning technologies, meet legislation (e.g. WCAG 2.2)
- Achieving the appropriate certification to provide the confidence to deliver a safe and robust digital infrastructure for our students and staff
- Investing in our IT infrastructure to provide robust, scalable and secure solutions which futureproof the organisation and provide a seamless user experience for students and staff.

OUR TARGETS:

- Minimum investment of £1.2 million each year in digital and IT on the capital programme
- At least 80% of staff agree that the innovative use of technology has helped to improve their teaching and the student experience
- At least 80% of students agree that they are more confident with the use of technology
- Achieve Cyber Essentials Plus.



OBJECTIVE 9

Make strong progress towards becoming a net zero organisation and a leader in sustainability practices

WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS BY:

- Embedding vocationally relevant teaching of climate change and sustainability across our full-time, part-time, apprenticeship and higher education courses
- Developing and delivering a suite of T Levels, apprenticeships and adult courses to support the government's green skills agenda and to meet national and regional needs
- Identifying and accessing available funding to support the design and delivery of new provision for green skills and careers, and to make our estate as energy efficient as possible
- Ensuring new buildings are net zero in operation and implementing an energy efficiency and carbon reduction programme for existing buildings which incorporates sustainable building practices and low carbon technologies
- Reducing energy usage and water consumption through efficient use and management and the adoption of renewable energies
- Adopting a waste management policy which focuses first on waste reduction (particularly food, paper and card) and then reuse and recycling approaches
- Providing viable and accessible sustainable travel options for students and staff to reduce carbon emissions, including replacing existing Group vehicles to the electrical equivalent and providing EV charging points
- Providing carbon literacy training to our students and staff to improve their personal understanding of climate change and sustainability to encourage sustainable practices in all aspects of their lives
- Identifying and actively participating in local, regional and national networking group to develop and take forward partnership opportunities to meet green skills needs.

OUR TARGETS:

- Minimum investment of £1 million each year on capital projects that reduce carbon and improve sustainability
- At least 10% of estate is net zero
- Achieve silver for the Alliance for Sustainability Leadership in Education (EAUC) sustainability leadership scorecard
- At least 80% of stakeholders agree that the Group is a leader in sustainability practices.





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