



City College Norwich Accountability Agreement

2025/26





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Andrew Barnes
Chair of the Corporation

The Governing Body has been active in supporting the college in the first full year of delivering against our Strategic Plan for 2024-2028.

It has been important to see key developments such as the publication of the college’s People Strategy and the Climate Action Plan, both developed with staff involvement from across the college and outlining our key priorities for the years to come.

There is much to celebrate, from the stories of individual student and apprentice success to the delivery of new facilities for the next generation of our students and the recognition secured from multiple Ofsted visits. Whilst the financial environment remains challenging, I know the college will continue to be “changing Norfolk through learning” and contribute strongly to the provision of the region’s future skills needs.



Jerry White
Principal and CEO

The college has continued to push forward this year and is ambitious for its future.

There are significant challenges within the FE sector which impact on the college and which we must respond to. These include inadequate levels of core funding, placing pressures on investment in our people, our students and apprentice and our facilities. We continue to do everything we can to support national lobbying for our sector whilst we develop strong and productive local partnerships with our key stakeholders and employers.

Looking ahead, there is much more to do to transform the college and continue to demonstrate our commitment to the communities we serve. You will see some of those challenges and opportunities reflected in this Accountability Agreement.

Purpose

The 2024/25 academic year has been the first full year of operating the college’s Strategic Plan for 2024 - 2028.

Within this plan, we have committed to our vision statement for the college: **Changing Norfolk through learning.**

The college’s mission statement continues to be: **Challenging your mind, inspiring your success, securing your future.**

Our Strategic Plan structures our work in developing the college around five strategic themes that are shaping our priorities, our response to challenges and our identification of opportunities. The five strategic themes are presented in Figure 1 (to the right).

Challenges

Themes

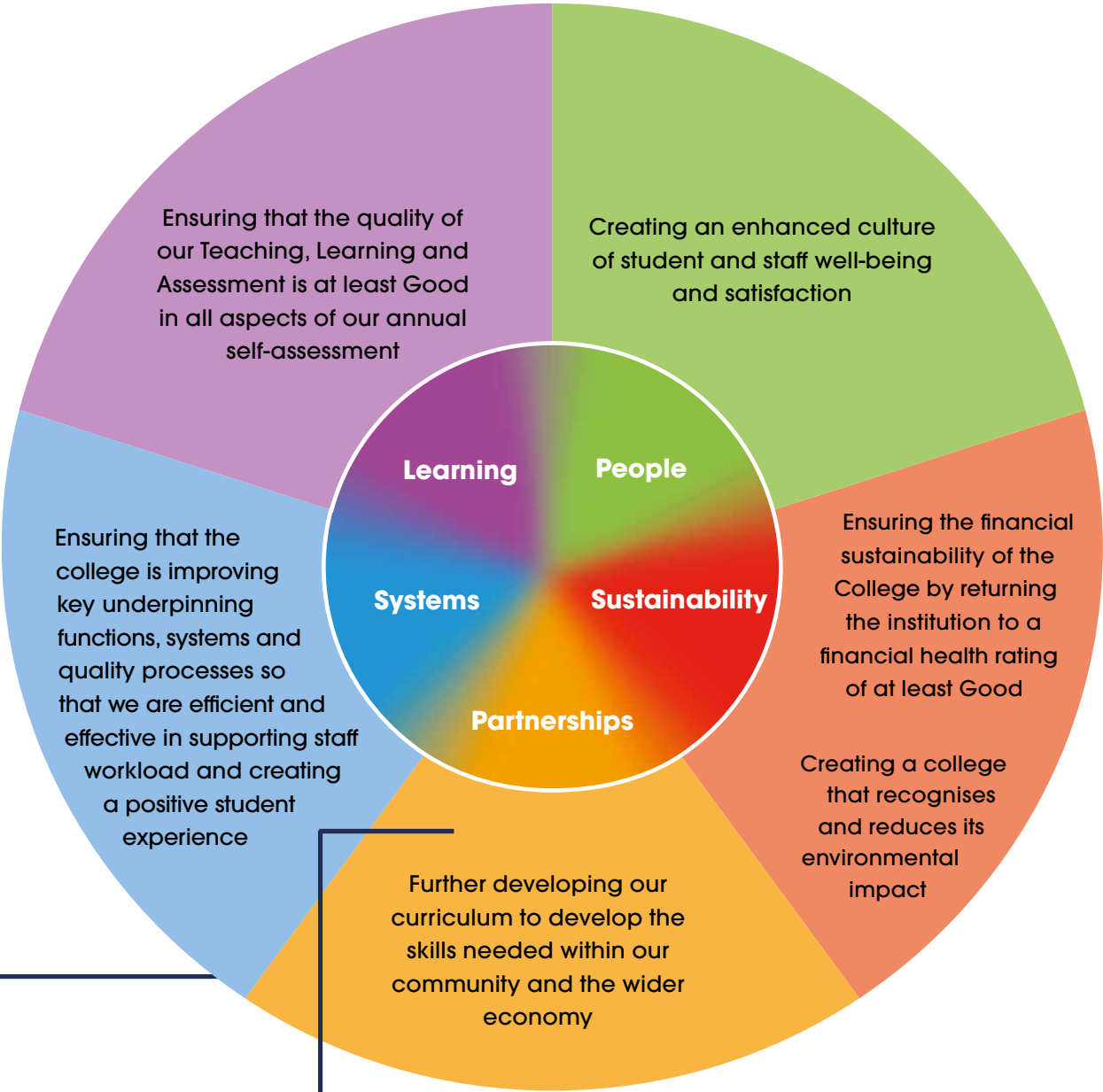


Figure 1 Five strategic themes



Locations

For the 2025/26 academic year the college continues to operate from three main campuses with a further two key delivery sites. Figure 2 indicates the location of the campuses and delivery sites.

In the past year we have invested across our campuses in new and enhanced facilities. These include the opening of the Construction Skills Hub at the Norwich campus and significant refurbishment of the Sports Centre and sports teaching facilities at Easton College.

Figure 2 City College Norwich campuses and sites

Learner numbers

In the current academic year (2024/25), the college has provided learning for around 9,755 students and apprentices. Figure 3 provides a breakdown by the three main campuses and Norfolk House (including IAAN).

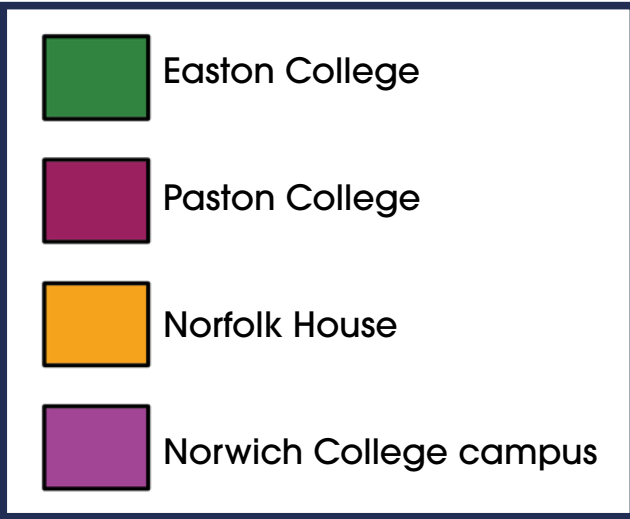
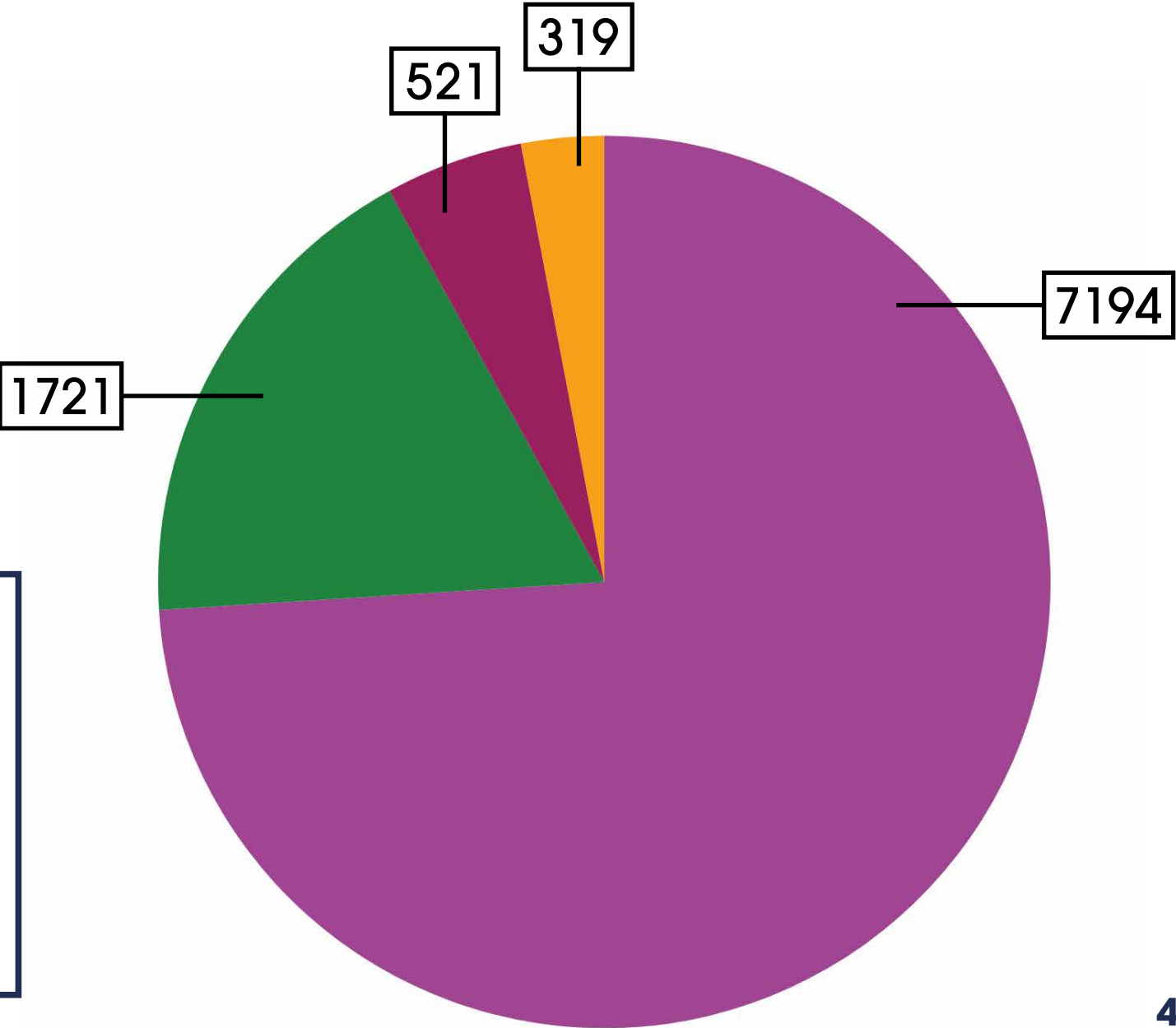


Figure 3 Learner numbers by location 2024/25





Context and place

City College Norwich is a key anchor institution within Norfolk and in some provision areas, the region. The three campuses combined (City College Norwich, Easton College and Paston College) have served the county with educational provision for a combined total of 629 years (City College Norwich was founded in 1891, Easton College was founded in 1951 and Paston College was founded in 1604). The geography of Norfolk as a large rural county with its capital city of Norwich broadly centrally placed, means that the college is the only Further Education college serving the Greater Norwich urban areas and the large rural area of central Norfolk from the North Norfolk coast to the Thetford forest in the south.

The recruitment area for the college is predominantly from Norfolk and North Suffolk. For some key specialist programmes such as those in land-based curriculum areas at Easton College and our Aviation Engineering degree at the International Aviation Academy Norwich (IAAN) regional and occasional national recruitment is seen. Given the rural context of the county, long and sometimes difficult public transport journeys are common for students and apprentices attending the college.

Within Norfolk, the college is:

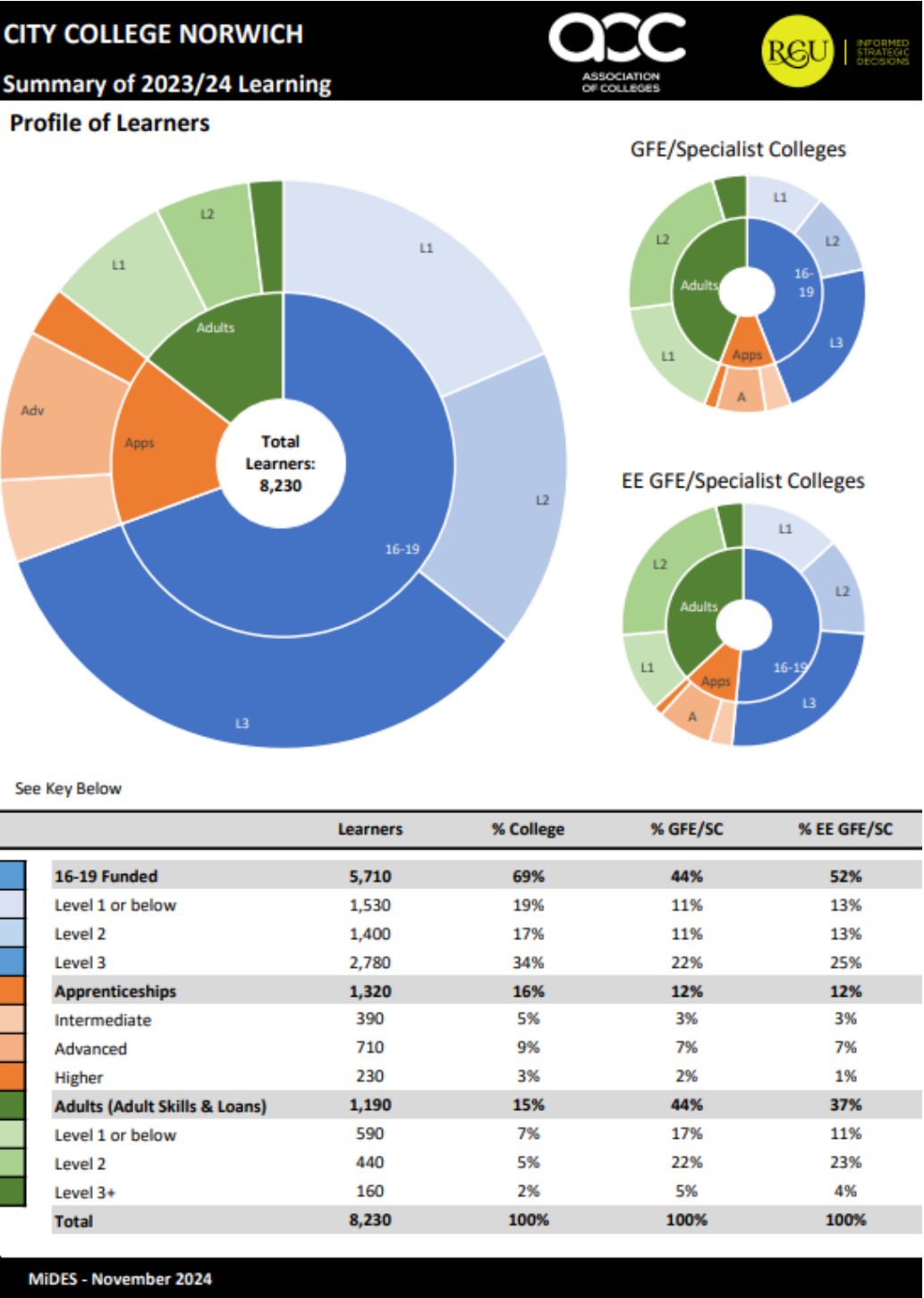
- The largest educational provider to young people aged 16-18 in five of the seven district council areas (Breckland, Broadland, North Norfolk, Norwich and South Norfolk).
- The largest apprenticeship provider to Norfolk apprentices and employers
- The second largest provider of adult learning
- The third largest provider of Higher Education

Figure 4 presents the college’s profiles of learners from the 2023/24 academic year (excluding HE students). Compared to regional (denoted EE GFE/SC) and national averages (Denoted GFE/SC), the college has a higher proportion of 16-18 students within its student body and a smaller proportion of adult students. Looking solely at 16-18 provision, we have a larger cohort studying at L1 and below and a smaller cohort at L3 than is the average, reflecting strengths in provision for SEND and other programmes for disadvantaged groups such as Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC). The mergers with Paston Sixth Form College in 2017 and the Easton campus of Easton and Otley College in 2020 have predominantly brought 16-18 provision into the college, contributing to a profile of learners different to sector and regional norms. In addition, the region continues to see underlying demographic growth in the 16-19 cohort for the next five years.

Within Higher Education, the college plays a key role in widening participation to HE in a region where Level 4+ skills are seen as a key priority. We know that our HE students:

- Are older than average; 41% classified as mature compared to sector average of 29%
- Come from areas where HE is not a normal destination in greater proportions than is the norm; 49% come from these areas where HE is not a normal destination (using POLAR4 Quintiles 1 and 2 i.e. the bottom two quintiles of likelihood to progress to HE), compared to a sector average of 29%

Figure 4 - City College Norwich profile of learners (compared to other General Further Education (GFE) colleges nationally and regionally (EE = East of England)) for 2023/24 year.



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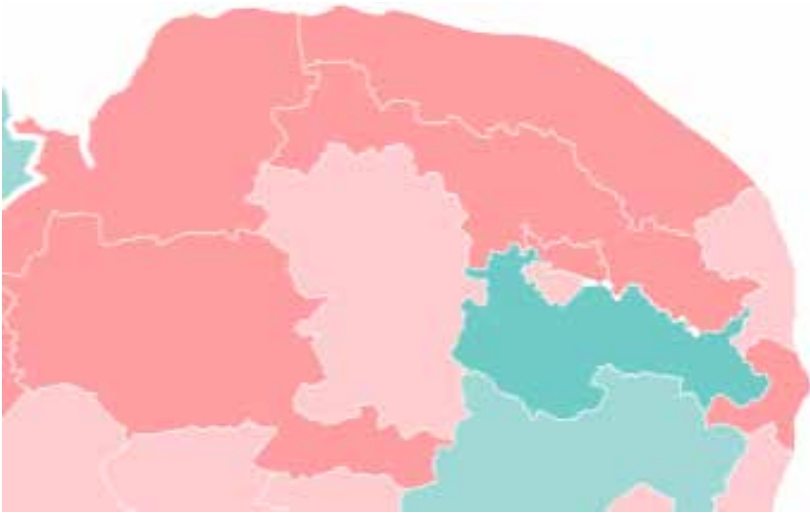
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- have higher prevalence of disabilities and difficulties than the sector average (34% report a Learning Difficulty or Disability compared to a sector average rate of 18%)

The college works closely with its sole validating university, UEA, and the other Norfolk based university, Norwich University of the Arts, to contribute to our combined civic roles in supporting higher-level skills in our region.

Norfolk is a complex county to serve, with wards of high levels of economic prosperity and educational attainment situated next door to wards within the 10% most deprived in the country. The rurality of the county can mask rural deprivation, and the pleasant environment of Norwich (often cited as one of the top 10 places to live in the UK) masks a lack of social mobility in some communities which led it to be identified as one of the six key Opportunity Areas for additional governmental investment (and more recently to be named as an Education Investment Area). However, neither of these DfE funded initiatives have focussed support on post-16 provision in the area. The recently published Sutton Trust Opportunity Index reinforced this complexity and noted that young people within three of the parliamentary constituencies we serve have low levels of opportunity (Norwich North, Broadland and Fakenham and North Norfolk (see Figure 5 below).

The nature of the county also presents challenges in the key area of staff recruitment. With only three geographically dispersed FE colleges in the region and limited inward migration, attracting and securing the highly skilled dual professional teachers and other specialist staff required by the college is very challenging and



Source: [Office for National Statistics \(England & Wales boundaries\)](#)

Very low Low Just below average Just above average High Very high

Figure 5 - Sutton Trust Opportunity Index

has become a key strategic risk. In key curriculum areas such as Construction, Engineering and Digital, staff recruitment challenges are impacting on the college’s ability to respond to local skills needs and applicant demand.

Demographically, we are serving a growing and increasingly ethnically diverse city and a rural county which by contrast has areas such as North Norfolk with an increasingly aging population, very low birth rates and limited ethnic and cultural diversity. These contrasts can be seen in the emerging 2021 census data. Whilst Norwich has 14.9% of its population aged over 65, North Norfolk has over a third (33.5%); Norwich has 17.6% of its population born outside of the UK and North Norfolk just 4.6%.

The college has strong relationships with key local government and economic development stakeholders. At the time of writing (June 2025), Norfolk is progressing towards a devolution deal with Suffolk that could commence with Mayoral elections in May 2026. This devolution deal is delayed and changed from that being discussed at this time last year, as national politics has changed the scale and scope of the intended devolved areas. The forthcoming year of 2025/26 will therefore be a transition years to new Adult Skills funding arrangements and the college continues to work well with key stakeholders such as Norfolk County Council, the DfE and other colleges. There are also proposals for Local Government Reorganisation in Norfolk and Suffolk, which could provide further complexities to current relationships and arrangements. Those functions currently performed by Norfolk County Council Children’s Services departments such as young people’s safeguarding and social care functions, a county transport strategy for young people and the funding of High Needs students are areas of particular risk which the college continues to focus its attention on.

The size of the college’s catchment area also provides for considerable political engagement with Members of Parliament. The college is the main post-16 education and skills provider in the constituencies of six MPs and following the General Election in July 2024 there has been considerable change in individual representatives. We have established strong working relationships with a number of our new MPs as well as hosting the Minister for Skills in March 2025 and the Education Select Committee in June 2025.

The Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) have been constituted on a Norfolk and Suffolk basis. With the new geographical reach of the Strategic Authority (devolved area) also being Norfolk and Suffolk this may allow better mapping across of the LSIP than was originally thought possible. There has been strong collaborative work undertaken by the colleges in Norfolk and Suffolk to work together on the Learning and Skills Improvement fund (LSIF) projects. The strong work with the other Norfolk and Suffolk colleges that is created by the New Anglia College’s Group does provide mechanisms for sharing of current issues and good levels of coherency of engagement in economic development work from the FE sector across the two counties.

The college has played a very active role in the creation of the Norfolk Local Growth Plan including contributing to workshops on implementation. This plan will need to be developed into a Norfolk and Suffolk plan to meet the needs of the Strategic Authority (devolved area) over the coming months and the college is well positioned to work alongside our sister colleges in ensuring skills is well respected in the final Norfolk and Suffolk plan.

Approach to developing the annual Accountability Agreement

Alongside the development of the Accountability Agreement, the college is continually engaged in a number of key stakeholder discussions, which include:

- Working with our local employer representative body, the Norfolk Chamber of Commerce, to support the implementation of the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) and the subsequent Local Skills Investment Fund (LSIF)
- Supporting the work of key sector groups such as the Agri-Food Industry Council and the New Anglia Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering (NAAME) groups.
- Specific planning work with Norfolk County Council and the other FE and adult and community learning providers in Norfolk to consider the implications of devolution for Adult Learning and economic development priorities.
- Engagement with the extensive consultation work undertaken to develop the Norfolk Local Growth Plan
- Engagement with local authorities with specific reference to the “levelling up agenda” with membership of planning boards for the Towns Deal funding and Shared Prosperity fund.
- Contributing to specific local government strategic developments, such as Norwich City Council’s 2040 vision group.
- Working alongside our key partner HEI, UEA, including formal representation on the Learning and Teaching Committee of UEA and the operation a new Partnership Agreement between the institutions.
- Strong involvement in the work of Norfolk County Council’s

Children’s Services department, including through leading FE representation on the Children and Young People’s Strategic Partnership and through specific groups supporting vulnerable groups such as SEND.

- Individual employer discussions with partner employers who support a range of college activities from T Level industry Placements to HE course developments.
- The creation of employer boards in Construction and Digital Skills
- Strong ongoing discussions with the Agricultural and Land based sectors through the Royal Norfolk Agricultural Association and our role within the Food and Farming Discovery Trust.

Such engagements have allowed the Senior Team to develop targets that are congruent with key priorities for other bodies and which allow for the college to play a meaningful and impactful role in the future of the county that we serve.

Governors have considered carefully how the revised Accountability Agreement for 2025/26 would work in harmony with the Strategic Plan for the college. Governors reviewed the Strategic Targets over a number of months and we will continue to utilise the Strategic Plan “themes” (presented in Figure 1) to align the Strategic Targets to our overall plan for the college (see next section).

This has created a clarity that the Accountability Agreement (and the Strategic Targets it contains) will be aligned to the Strategic Plan and will become an annual statement of the progress we are making and the priorities we have for further development. The Governing Body receives regular reporting of our progress on our Strategic Targets.



Contributions to national, regional and local priorities

Utilising the national skills priorities identified within the Skills England report, Industrial Strategy Priorities and Plan for Change, this section attempts to succinctly identify the college’s current response.

Priority sector	Current City College Norwich contributions	Changes expected in 2025/26
Advanced Manufacturing	31% of 16-18 year old Engineering and Manufacturing students in Norfolk (n=200). Largest provider of Engineering and Manufacturing apprentices in Norfolk (16%; n=180). Active member of New Anglia Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering (NAAME) groups.	16-18 growth Apprenticeship growth HTQ growth
Creative Industries	46% of 16-18 year old Creative Industries students in Norfolk (n=790). Adult Leisure learning opportunities. Strong links to local sector bodies.	16-18 stable
Defence	54% of the 16-18 year old Public Services students in Norfolk (n=190). Strong links to support progression of students into the military. Limited employers in this sector locally.	16-18 stable
Digital and Technologies	37% of 16-18 year old students in Norfolk (n=90). Provider of Digital apprentices in Norfolk (7%; n=30). Adult Digital Skills provision commenced. Strong engagement with local FINTECH sector via Business and Digital curriculums.	16-18 stable Apprenticeship growth HTQ growth
Financial Services	28% of 16-18 year old Financial, Professional and Business Services students in Norfolk (n=140). Adult Accounting and Book-keeping students (n=66 adult). Accountancy apprentices Level 2-4 (n=28). Strong engagement with local FINTECH sector via Business and Digital curriculums.	16-18 stable Adult growth Apprenticeship stable
Life Sciences	320 enrolments on Science A Levels. Good links to Norwich Research Park via Easton and UEA partnership.	16-18 stable
Professional and Business Services	28% of 16-18 year old Financial, Professional and Business Services students in Norfolk (n=140). Professional services apprenticeships such as HR and Business Admin (n=47). Strong Higher (L5) and Degree (L6) Apprenticeship provision in Leadership and Management.	16-18 stable Apprenticeship growth
Construction	58% of 16-18 year old students in Norfolk (n=640). Largest provider of Construction apprentices in Norfolk (30%; n=460). £5m Construction Skills Hub opened in March 2025 (Norwich Campus); Renewables Centre opened Autumn 2024 (Easton College). Excellent employer links to key partners such as Construction East.	16-18 stable Apprenticeship growth HTQ growth
Health	38% of 16-18 year old students in Norfolk (n=320). Second Largest provider of Health apprentices in Norfolk (11%; n=160). Active engagement with NHS trusts locally.	16-18 stable Apprenticeship growth HTQ growth

Priority programme types	Current City College Norwich contributions	Advanced Manufacturing	Creative Industries	Defence	Digital and Technologies	Financial Services	Life Sciences	Professional and Business Services	Construction	Health
T Levels	Largest T Level provider in Norfolk. Provision in Creative Industries, Education and Childcare, Engineering and Manufacturing, Digital, Construction, Health, Business and Management, Science. Future growth anticipated in Agriculture. T Level Foundation Year provider. Staff have contributed to ETF and DfE best practice sessions and hosted provider visits here at the college.	✔	✔		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Apprenticeships	Largest apprenticeship provider in Norfolk (n=1330). 230 higher and degree apprentices. The largest sectors include Construction, Health, Engineering and Manufacturing, and Agriculture and Animal Care.	✔			✔	✔		✔	✔	✔
Free Courses for Jobs	Accounting remains most common use of this funding stream. Pause in devolution has led to review of plans for delivery in 25/26.							✔		
Skills Bootcamps	Two bootcamps delivered in Arboriculture/Forestry and Electric Vehicles. Both programmes have been rolled over for further cohorts in coming academic year. Bids being developed for Wave 6 in Construction and Leadership and Management.									
Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs)	HTQs now approved in construction, digital, engineering and manufacturing and health.	✔			✔				✔	✔

The following are the key targets for the college in 2025/26

Strategic Theme	Ref	Strategic Target	Why this is a Strategic Target	Indicative actions	KPI's / SMART targets
Learning	1	Improve the retention of 16-18 year old FE students	- Improving retention ensure mores student benefit from learning. - Proportions of young people in Norfolk who are NEET is increasing. - College retention levels are below sector average on some programme types. - Improving the retention of students increases the funding the college receives.	- Redesign to Personal Development curriculum. - Changes to Academic Tutorial Procedures. - Enhancing "at risk" reporting and actions. - Better placement at enrolment following enhanced course planning.	- Improve retention by 4% overall. - Specific targets will be set for key disadvantaged groups when 24/25 baselines are established in summer 2025.
	2	Improve the retention of 19+ FE students	- Improving retention ensure mores student benefit from learning. - Proportions of young people in Norfolk who are NEET is increasing. - College retention levels are below sector average on some programme types. - Improving the retention of students increases the funding the college receives.	- Redesign to Personal Development curriculum. - Changes to Academic Tutorial Procedures. - Enhancing "at risk" reporting and actions. - Better placement at enrolment following enhanced course planning.	- Improve retention by 4% overall. - Specific targets will be set for key disadvantaged groups when 24/25 baselines are established in summer 2025.
Systems	3	Completion of the Digital Systems review	- Staff feedback suggest enhancing digital systems could support workload pressures. - College invests heavily in multiple systems and must ensure VfM at all times. - Technology such as AI is rapidly evolving and the college must ensure it can keep pace with developments.	- Audit of current systems and integration. - Embedding of the College Digital Board to develop ownership of key groups of systems.	- Over 80% satisfaction with core systems (staff survey). - Reduction in 10% of number of systems utilised.

Strategic Theme	Ref	Strategic Target	Why this is a Strategic Target	Indicative actions	KPI's / SMART targets
Sustainability	4	College transformation programme created and rolled out to incorporate financial recovery	Financial recovery is necessary for the college to invest in students, learning resources and its people.	- Development of college transformation programme to deliver on the strategic plan, including financial recovery. - Communication plan developed to ensure all internal and external stakeholders appreciate the significance of the transformation plan.	- Transformation Plan (TP) developed and communicated / agreed with Governors. 'Good' financial health achieved in 25/26. - I&E budget achieved in 25/26. - Bank covenants complied with in 25/26. - Savings in year 1 of the TP achieved.
	5	Estate strategy review and redevelopment, with key focuses on environmental sustainability and financial recovery	- The college has a large and diverse estate that requires considerable upkeep and provides variable quality of accommodation. - The college estate is a key part of the colleges response to sustainability challenges and we need to consider how to develop a strategic estates response. - The costs of maintaining and improving our estate are considerable and we must ensure we spend our investments effectively.	- Review and redevelop Estates Strategy. - Engage key internal and external stakeholders in options appraisals for college. - Complete Estates condition survey for DfE.	- Total emissions from energy, transport, and waste. - Energy Consumption rates for electricity and heating. - Statutory Compliance Rate: % of buildings compliant with fire, health and safety, etc. - Reactive Maintenance Response Time: Average time to resolve issues.
Partnerships	6	Review and develop a clear co-ordinated approach to the college's business development functions	- We believe our work with employers can be further enhanced to benefit students, apprentices, and staff. - The reputation of the college with employers and other key stakeholders is key to our future success in unlocking investment and ensuring our curriculum remains current and of high quality.	- Complete business development review considering wide range of functions from finding student placements to horizon scanning for new income lines. - Develop clear "strategy" for these varied functions. - Develop systems such as the CRM to support enhanced co-ordination and impact.	- Clear MI being produced from new CRM by end of 25/26. - Stakeholder engagement strategy in place and understood across college. - Curriculum plans in place with targeted curriculum areas.
People	7	To reduce sickness absence through a simple, supportive and robust policy and enhanced well-being support	Current staff sickness levels are high and above sector norms. This has impacts on staff who do not feel well enough to attend work, students and colleagues who do not benefit from their presence and the financial position of the college as we cover absence.	- Rolling out of the People Strategy and associated management training. - Review of Sickness procedure, leading to enhanced understanding of the support and consequences related to sickness absence. - Focused work to reduce the use of Agency staff. - Development of a proactive programme of well-being support.	- Reduced average days sickness per employee. - Reduced long term sickness. - RTW (return to work) and AS (attendance support meeting) completion rates. - Reduced Agency staff costs. - Increased staff engagement score in annual staff survey. - Increased number of staff with no sickness. - Number of staff in informal / formal sickness management processes.
	8	Support the rolling out of the People Strategy through focussed development of the skills of leaders	- We want to build the next phase our people development work on a programme of development for all leaders and managers, to ensure they have the skills they need to lead our college through change. - Good practice in leadership and management is not always well shared across the college, sometimes leading to differences in approaches across our college community.	- Continued roll out of leadership training associated with the key People Strategy pillars. - Explore the development of a coaching and mentoring network and training for all leaders.	- Probation completion rates. - Appraisal completion rates. - Return to work completion rates (and ASM completion rates). - Identified network of qualified coaches and mentors. - Number of development opportunities for leaders (e.g. number of masterclasses run).

Local needs duty

The college undertakes a rigorous annual review of the intent of every curriculum area through our course planning processes. This process reviews current demand, both from individuals, employers and wider economic projections and considers the need for the college to alter any of its course offerings.

Within this process of considering local needs, strong engagement with key local plans and stakeholders is evident. This includes the LSIP, Norfolk Local Growth Plan and sector specific groups who articulate their sectors skills and training needs.

In the current academic year and leading into 2025/26, there have been a number of drivers of curriculum change which include:

- Revised English and maths conditions of funding from the Government mandating additional teaching in these subjects for 16-18 year olds.
- A changing demand locally (and mirrored nationally) for increased amounts of 16-18 provision at lower levels (entry level 3, Level 1, Level 2) and less demand at Level 3. There continues to be strong competition locally for some aspects of the college's Level 3 offer for young people such as A Levels.
- Employer demand for apprenticeships is volatile and impacted by significant government policy announcements related to National Insurance, National Minimum Wages and the apprenticeship funding rules themselves.

- Continued strong demand for construction skills training across all types of provision. The college continues to find meeting this demand demanding due to the challenges in recruiting teaching staff in this sector.
- Reducing demands for Adult Access to HE programmes as the financial costs of HE study continue to be a barrier to some mature students considering Level 4+ study.
- Strong demand for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision and other basic skills type learning from adults who are new to our Norfolk community and for whom English skills are barriers to work and everyday life. There is also strong demand for young people to acquire these skills, many of whom are unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) learners in the care of the local authority.
- New Higher and Degree Apprenticeship development such as the Youth Work Degree Apprenticeships developed with employer partners.



Corporation statement

On behalf of City College Norwich, it is hereby confirmed that the college plan, as set out above, reflects an agreed statement of purpose, aims and objectives as approved by the corporation at their meeting on 2nd July 2024.

The plan will be published on the college's website within three months of the start of the new academic year and can be accessed from the following link:

<https://www.ccn.ac.uk/our-college/city-college-norwich-strategy/>

Andrew Barnes
Chair of the Governing Body
of City College Norwich



Supporting documentation



College information

Annual financial accounts and other Governance related documents can be found here: <https://www.ccn.ac.uk/our-college/city-college-norwich-strategic-plan/>

The college's Ofsted reports can be found as follows:

- FE and Skills: <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50263207>
- FE Residential: <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50267320>
- Teacher Training: <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50221406>
- Nursery: <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50240099>

Relevant supporting information

The Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) for Norfolk and Suffolk pages can be found here: <https://www.norfolkchamber.co.uk/homepage/norfolk-and-suffolk-lsip/>

- The Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) for Norfolk and Suffolk pages can be found here: <https://norfolkchamber.co.uk/homepage/norfolk-and-suffolk-lsip/>
- The Norfolk Local Growth Plan can be found here: [Norfolk's Local Growth Plan - Norfolk Business Board](#)
- Information on the potential Devolution for Norfolk and Suffolk can be found here: [Norfolk devolution and local government reform updates - Norfolk County Council](#)
- Norwich City Council's 2040 City vision can be found here: https://www.norwich.gov.uk/info/20324/norwich_2040_city_vision





