



# Strategic Plan

2020 – 2025

## **Introduction/Foreword**

It's a pleasure to introduce this strategic plan, the first in my role as Chief Executive and Principal at York College.

This plan builds on the excellent work and outcomes the College has achieved over many years of effective governance, leadership and management.

In setting out our objectives, we've retained our core mission and vision. We have though worked with colleagues across the College to consolidate our core values into a framework which we will use to guide what and how we do things at York College.

So in this plan; our students, staff and the communities we serve can expect to see an ongoing commitment to excellence, clarity as we root our focus in the City, and investments which support us to be the best we can be.

In setting out our most important priorities, we have sought to identify the things which matter most to us and those which will give our students the best possible opportunities for the future. These are:

- Excellence in all that we do
- Deliver the best possible student experience
- Attract, develop and retain a talented workforce
- Invest in priorities which maximise students' success
- Ensure long-term financial sustainability
- Nurture partnerships

In reading the context section for this strategic plan, it's obvious that our reach is vast, across a diverse range of students with a rich range of backgrounds. This richness of diversity and full set of progression ambitions remain at the heart of our plan; balancing academic excellence alongside a strong commitment to inclusion.

Our underlying assumption in creating learning opportunities is that the learning opportunity in and of itself, whilst of course of value, isn't the end. The learning opportunity facilitates progress and progression. We believe this to be true for every single student we work with.

This plan reflects the voices of governors, leaders, staff, students and a range of stakeholders, and together we will deliver it in the best interests of our College.

Lee Probert

**Chief Executive and Principal**

## **Vision, mission and values (to be diagrammatically expressed)**

**V:** Where everyone matters and a successful future begins

**M:** to provide a life enhancing educational experience, through inspirational teaching, working in partnership and helping individuals to be the best they can

**Values: Success – Ambition – Respect - Care**

## **Context**

York College is an outstanding general further education college based in the historic City of York. The College educates and trains some 6,500 students and employs almost 700 staff, in a range of academic and professional service roles.

Almost 4000 young people study at the College with around half living in the City of York and half travelling in from across Yorkshire. Working in partnership with a range of local authorities and schools, we support young people with a range of complex learning disabilities and difficulties to access education in a mainstream setting. These students benefit from bespoke courses which develop their independence and improve their chances of securing employment in the future.

We work with young people at all levels, including those for whom the statutory education setting has not sparked their thirst for learning. These young people see clear progression routes at York College, often studying vocational courses where there is a clear line of sight to employment and engaging positively in society.

Students choosing A Level study at York College achieve some of the best outcomes in the country. In 2018/19 100% of students passed their qualifications and more than half achieved high grades. For vocational courses at level three more than 70% of students achieved triple distinction grades.

There are almost 1000 apprentices at York College working in roles in small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and in large national, multi-national and international companies. These students transcend the ages studying courses at a range of levels in a range of disciplines.

University Centre students number almost 300 and study a range of practice-led courses in partnership with regional universities and professional awarding bodies. These students benefit from working with high quality academic staff who are also industry professionals and since the autumn of 2019 now enjoy a dedicated University Centre.

Our adult students make up the balance of our student population. Adults study at all levels and reflect the diversity of the City and surrounding areas. They are undertaking courses which enhance their literacy and numeracy skills, facilitate access to an undergraduate course at a university, as well as those adults who are studying professional and vocational courses to access and progress in the workplace.

Where everyone matters and a successful future begins

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To deliver high quality education and training expecting excellence in all that we do             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All students benefit from a well-developed course which facilitates their progress</li> <li>Students' progression is individually planned, resulting in students achieving their progression goals</li> <li>York College students make strong progress in relation to their individual starting points</li> <li>Students benefit from specialist and contextualised development of their digital, literacy and numeracy skills</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Success</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To facilitate the best possible student experience, developing students inside and outside the classroom             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students have access to a personal development programme which is linked to their course and individual ambitions</li> <li>Facilities for students reflect the diverse needs of students and industry</li> <li>Students have a say in the governance, leadership and management of the College</li> <li>The development of students as resilient citizens is planned for and facilitated</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To develop, retain and invest in a talented staff team             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our colleagues are supported to work in a positive and inclusive culture where their contribution is recognised fairly</li> <li>The development of our colleagues reflects a learning culture where individual and organisational needs are met</li> <li>Employees are well supported to develop themselves and fulfil their ambitions</li> <li>Colleagues are supported to flourish where changes impact on their roles</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Ambition</p> <p>Respect</p> <p>Care</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To invest in resources maximising students' success and enabling innovation             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investment in people reflects the diverse needs of students and our responsibility to education as well as to keeping students safe</li> <li>Investment in infrastructure supports students to succeed</li> <li>Curriculum resources are up to date and keep pace with the changing demands of industry and higher-level study</li> <li>Our investments seek to reduce our impact on the planet.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To ensure long-term financial sustainability<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In delivering this plan, we operate cash positively each year</li><li>• Our cash balances do not fall below two months of expenditure</li><li>• By Improving profitability, we secure greater capacity for investment</li><li>• The College's financial health is never less than good</li></ul></li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To nurture partnerships which benefit students, staff, the City of York and wider region<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We will plan collaboratively with schools and colleges to contribute to the best possible offer for communities in the region</li><li>• In partnership with a Higher Education Institution we widen the College's University Centre offer and progression to Level 4 learning</li><li>• We will partner with employers and universities to ensure students benefit from well planned and delivered courses</li><li>• We will explore growth opportunities and be open the possibilities devolution may offer</li><li>• We will play a full Civic Leadership role supporting partners to deliver their objectives relating to health, wealth and wellbeing</li></ul></li></ul>
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- **To deliver high quality and relevant education and training expecting excellence in all that we do**
- All students benefit from a well-developed course which facilitates their progress as well as building their confidence and wider life skills
  - Teaching and professional services staff plan courses with intent and students' progression aspirations in mind
  - Learning experiences are tailored to give students appropriate exposure to activities linked to life-long learning and their future plans; for example work placement, university visits, industry speakers and other enhancement
  - Students' targets are clear and developed in collaboration so students know to succeed
- Students' progression is individually planned, resulting in students achieving their progression goals
  - High quality information, advice and guidance ensures that students are on the right course for their intended progression aim
  - On programme support ensures course choices are reviewed to support the retention of students
  - Courses are informed and evaluated in partnership with employers and universities ensuring that the content is contemporary
  - A programme of progression activities enables students to prepare for their next step
- York College students make strong progress in relation to their individual starting points
  - Students' individual starting points are assessed effectively
  - Students' development plans are informed by initial assessment outcomes
  - Students' progress toward agreed targets are monitored and discussed
- Students benefit from specialist and contextualised development of their digital, literacy and numeracy skills
  - All students are supported to engage with English and maths courses, resulting in all students making positive progress
  - In adult GCSE and functional skills outcomes exceed national benchmarks
  - Teachers consistently develop students' literacy and numeracy skills in all subject areas supporting their employability

- **To facilitate the best possible student experience, developing students inside and outside the classroom**
- Students have access to a personal development programme which is linked to their course and individual ambitions
  - The tutorial programme is tailored to students' ages and levels of learning
  - Group and individual tutorials are delivered by a dedicated team of skilled, trained and appropriately qualified staff
  - Students receive timely individual support when they need it – through College staff or appropriate referral to external organisations
- Facilities for students reflect the diverse needs of students and industry
  - Students benefit from well-equipped learning and social spaces and both physical and electronic resources
  - The College environment is designed to enable students to learn and socialise in appropriately differentiated environments
  - Industry partnerships result in co-designed high-quality learning facilities
- Students have a say in the governance, leadership and management of the College
  - An active Students' Union effectively represents students in key decision-making processes
  - The Board and Leadership Team have clear mechanisms for engaging frequently with students to listen to and respond to their feedback
  - The evaluation of the quality of curriculum and professional service areas includes an opportunity for students to contribute
- The development of students as resilient citizens is planned for and facilitated
  - The College invests in services and programmes which enable students to develop their resilience and manage their wellbeing
  - Community engagement opportunities permeate the College with students making an active contribution to projects and initiatives, including in enterprise and social responsibility
  - Student development programmes and policies enable students to understand their rights and responsibilities as citizens
  - Students develop the skills and attitudes to become lifelong independent learners

### **To develop, retain and invest in a talented staff team**

- Our colleagues are supported to work in a positive and inclusive culture where their contribution is recognised fairly
  - Strategies for pay are determined at the earliest possibility and reflect the centrality of colleagues' contributions to the College's success
  - Develop a reward and recognition strategy which is valued by employees
  - Workloads are actively managed to reduce unnecessary and bureaucratic practices which are not designed to positively impact on students' success
  - Specialist skills are valued and reward is used to attract talented people to join our team
  - A technology strategy is developed that supports effective and flexible ways of working
- The development of our colleagues reflects a learning culture where individual and organisational needs are met
  - Creativity is encouraged and failure provides opportunities to learn
  - The development of pedagogical practice is a teacher led strategy and communities of practice are facilitated
  - Professional Services teams are respected and the development of their practice is valued
  - A staff well-being strategy is nurtured ensuring the College is recognised as a compassionate, caring and supportive employer
- Employees are well supported to develop themselves and fulfil their ambitions
  - A talent development strategy is established and available to colleagues
  - Internal progression is celebrated and a programme of mentoring enables colleagues to succeed on promotion
  - The employee development process identifies our talented colleagues and their progression aspirations
  - Develop a personal accountability culture where employees take more ownership of their own development and contributions to College activities
- Colleagues are supported to flourish where changes impact on their roles
  - Change is well-led and managed and executed in a manner which is consistent with the College's values
  - An active employee voice informs changes and developments; informing the Board and Leadership Team's decisions
  - Colleagues are supported to learn and understand the impact of national changes on their work



### **To invest in resources maximising students' success and enabling innovation**

- Investment in people reflects the diverse needs of students and our responsibility to education as well as to keeping students safe
  - Staff costs are prioritised for investment but do not exceed 67% of turnover
  - Roles are designed to reflect the specialisms required across teaching, pastoral, professional services, leadership and management roles
  - CPD investments are prioritised enabling access to the best possible development for colleagues
- Investment in infrastructure supports students to succeed
  - Relevant technology is available for all students linked to their course
  - Use of technology is planned as a central component of curriculum delivery
  - Students benefit from the availability of courses designed with blended learning components, developing both digital literacy and independent learning skills
- Curriculum resources are up to date and keep pace with the changing demands of industry and higher-level study
  - The budget design and delivery process is closely aligned to the needs of course and curriculum development processes
  - Industry voices are reflected in key investment decisions
  - Practical programmes benefit from investments in simulated and virtual reality technologies to aid students' learning experiences
- Our investments seek to reduce our impact on the planet.
  - Capital development programmes require delivery partners to minimise the carbon impact of developments
  - Service design and delivery minimises the use of single use plastics and maximises genuinely recyclable materials
  - The College's service providers are procured based on minimising our environmental impact alongside securing best value for our expenditure

**To ensure long-term financial sustainability**

- In delivering this plan, we operate cash positively each year
- Our cash balances do not fall below two months of expenditure
- By Improving profitability we secure greater capacity for investment
- The College's financial health is never less than good

### **The College will nurture partnerships which benefit students, staff, the City and region**

- We will plan collaboratively with schools and colleges to contribute to the best possible offer for communities in the region
  - Through supporting the City in the development of a Post 16 Strategy
  - Through contributing to the work of the Higher York Board maximising the benefit of planning for the delivery of higher-level skills in the region
  - Through engaging employers in the College's curriculum planning process, triangulating LMI with employer voices
  - Through working collaboratively with other FE partners to raise the profile
- In partnership with a Higher Education Institution we widen the College's University Centre offer and progression to Level 4 learning
  - Through working with a key University partner
- We will partner with employers and universities to ensure students benefit from well planned and delivered courses
  - Employers and universities will play a role in the co-design and co-delivery of curriculum
  - Strategic decision making will reflect the needs of employers and universities in the City and beyond
  - Employers' satisfaction with our work will reflect the flexible way in which we meet their needs
- We will explore growth opportunities
  - Through working with partners to seek and secure external funding for educational initiatives, which would not be available to the College acting alone
  - Through actively seeking merger and acquisition opportunities
  - Through being open to the possibilities devolution may offer
- We will play a full Civic Leadership role supporting partners to deliver their objectives relating to health, wealth and wellbeing
  - Through influencing and contributing to education, social and economic policy developments at a local/regional level
  - Through supporting the Local Authority in managing High Needs and NEET provision
  - Through identifying charitable causes for our college community to support