

The Kendal Ambition

Kendal College Strategic Plan
2022 – 2025



Kendal College
creating bright futures

Introduction:

Welcome to the strategic plan for Kendal College. This is an exciting time for Kendal College in that our Ambition Strategic Plan sets out our aims for the next three years to meet our mission and vision for those we serve; our students, our employers, and our wider communities.

Having consulted widely, this plan sets out the college's priorities for the next three years. It includes details of how we will work towards these priorities, and how we will assess our progress using key performance indicators, where relevant, and annual self-assessment reports.

The college is a further education college, with three sites in the town of Kendal in South Lakeland, Cumbria, namely the Milnthorpe Road campus, the Arts and Media Campus as well as the Westmorland Campus which will house students from September 2022 as the colleges third town centre site.

Recognising its role as one of four general further education colleges in Cumbria and with a wide catchment area, the college offers a broad curriculum from foundation level to higher education, to meet the needs of employers and the local community.

In the national context the college is 'medium' size with approximately 1,500 students aged 16-19, 2,000 adults and just under 1,000 apprentices.

The college employs circa 300 teaching and support staff in a variety of full and part-time roles.



Kendal College as a strategic partner:

Kendal College is an active participant in supporting the economy of Cumbria and South Lakeland and work alongside key stakeholders including South Lakeland District Council, the Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership, Cumbria Chamber of Commerce and Cumbria County Council amongst others. In working with these organisations, the college is a key strategic partner, delivering against Cumbria wide skills plans including the local industrial strategy as well as the local skills improvement plan as a contributory factor to the supply of skills.

The college works closely with the other Cumbrian Colleges and has membership of the Cumbria LEP skills and employment panels and the LEP board via the FE4 group of colleges and chairs the Cumbria Careers Hub representing all young people to support the achievement of the Gatsby Benchmarks.

More locally the college are represented on the Kendal Futures board, the South Lakes Federation as well as various other groups such as Cumbria Tourism. Outside of the region the college are involved in initiatives such as the Morecambe Bay Eden Project working with Lancashire Colleges such as Lancaster and Morecambe College.

In January 2021, Department of Education (DfE) published its White Paper “Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth”, which set out several reforms aimed at putting employers more firmly at the heart of the skills system. The outcome of the White Paper enabled the college to be an active participant in the subsequent Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIP), which set out the College’s strategic direction as well as our curriculum and operational plans from 2021-22 onwards. The white paper and the LSIP also forms a large part in the development of this strategic plan and its implementation up until the year 2025, supporting the college to deliver skills and curriculum which have demonstrable positives to the economy of Cumbria through our intent, implementation, and impact.

Strategic Context:

Cumbria is a rural county, with pockets of significant, entrenched deprivation and multigenerational unemployment alongside areas of high pay/high employment rates. The supply of workforce and skills are not always geographically located where demand is highest.

Despite a large geographic area (6,800 sq. kms, 2nd largest county) Cumbria has the lowest population density and economic output density per hectare of any LEP area. The resident population is almost 500,000 with a working age population of 294,500. 53% of the population lives in a rural community.

Our 23,530 PAYE/VAT registered businesses include 55 large employers (0.2%) with the balance SMEs and primarily micro-businesses (89.8%). Just over half are classified as companies, with the rest primarily partnerships and self-employed sole traders. 64% are rural, including 60% of manufacturing businesses.

The county is coterminous with six district authorities sitting within the county's boundary. Local government reorganisation, currently underway, will not impact on the overall boundary, with the existing local authorities becoming two single tier authorities within that boundary by March 2023.

Cumbria is the most self-contained area in terms of travel-to-work flows with the 2011 Census showing that 96% of Cumbria's residents worked in the county and 94% of all jobs in Cumbria were filled by Cumbrian residents.

There are four general Further Education (FE) colleges (in Carlisle, Kendal, Workington, and Barrow), several independent training providers and a university delivering skills at a level relevant to the LSIP, plus specialist provision. There is well established cooperative working between the FE colleges, universities and independent providers operating in the county.

Cumbria's GVA and workforce are spread across a range of industries. The county has significant strengths and activity in manufacturing (25% of GVA), including nuclear, advanced manufacturing and food & drink, with Sellafield Ltd and BAE Systems our two largest business employers. Agriculture/land-based businesses and the visitor economy are also key. Over 16% of our workforce is in manufacturing, 17% in wholesale and retail, and 11% in accommodation and food services. The county's expertise in the nuclear sector also provides an important source of employment in Cumbria, alongside traditional industries such as agriculture, forestry, and fishing.

Cumbria has significant issues in developing and retaining higher level skills. The proportion of the working age population with Level 4 qualifications, whilst improving, continues to be below the national average and one of the lowest rates in England. The proportion of young people in apprenticeships is above average (11%). The 2020 Cumbria Business Survey cites 20% of private sector businesses identifying skills gaps.

Cumbria's working age population fell by 6% (20,000) over the last 10 years and this is projected to continue over the next 10 years (-15,000).

Productivity per hour is 17% below the national average (only in part due to industrial structure). The county has few fast-growing firms (relatively and absolutely). Skills shortages are impacting negatively on productivity and growth.

Physical and digital infrastructure remains a challenge, impacting on travel to learn as well as on accessing online options.

Post-Brexit Cumbria has lost much of its European workforce (vital to the visitor economy, important in food & drink etc) exacerbated by workers leaving the visitor economy during Covid. Many have not returned and there has also been a knock-on effect, with staff attracted from care (for example) into the visitor economy.

Our strategic plan is also drawn from sectors that are outlined within the LSIP and are important to the Cumbrian economy, in terms of business population, number of employees and GVA.

These sectors are:

- Visitor Economy – representing accommodation providers, visitor attractions, food and drink providers, culture and heritage venues and the retail sector.
- Land-Based Economy – broken down into three separate segments for the purposes of this work; farming enterprises, forestry/woodland, and nature recovery, each of which is inextricably linked at landscape scale.
- Social Care – encompassing residential care, nursing care, domiciliary care, and other ancillary services.
- Manufacturing – by far the most diverse sector, this covers an extremely wide range of activities, the large bulk of employers (90%) being in the micro to small size range.

There are also a small number of medium/large and a small number of highly significant manufacturers, each of which employ a large workforce and make a significant contribution to the economy of Cumbria.

- Energy – based primarily in West Cumbria, this sector covers nuclear, wind power and other renewable technologies, as well as ancillary services, which cross over into manufacturing and other services.
- Built Economy – covering all construction types including major housebuilding, general and commercial construction, and fabrication as well as services such as groundworks, utility services, and professional services.

The strategic context and underpinning rationale of Kendal College strategic planning is based its knowledge of Cumbria and on a set of chosen sectors outlined above that encompass a range of industries, geographies, size, demographics, and business activity.

These sub-sectors of the Cumbrian economy allow Kendal College to focus its curriculum and offer on an extensive range of employer/employment types, occupations, levels of educational achievement and cross cutting skills that are transferrable across sectors.

Building on our Strengths and Opportunities:

This plan seeks to build on those strengths and to identify and realise the opportunities which lie ahead.

Strengths

- Dedicated and skilled staff.
- Extensive technical curriculum well aligned to regional skills needs (links to LSIP and CLEP priorities)
- Significant apprenticeship provision (over 20% of college income)
- Strong links with employers
- Significant and inclusive provision for young people and adults
- Excellent relationships with key stakeholders and partners in the town and region (member of Kendal Futures)
- Some outstanding technical facilities and resources. (Capital programme)
- Inherently talented young and adult students.
- Good liquidity and improving financial health (outstanding financial health DFE)
- A long and established place in the community of Kendal and the wider region.
- Skilled, and well lead Board of governors (governor skills audit)
- SFA financial rating – Outstanding (March 2022)
- Ofsted – Good (July 2017)
- Reputation – welcoming and effective (stakeholder feedback)
- Community partnership and provision
- Well served transport links, location and campus (travel to work and learn patterns)

Opportunities

- Further develop our technical provision so it fully aligns with employers' current and future skills needs. (as outlined within the CLEP skills panels and the LSIP)
- Grow our apprenticeship and higher apprenticeship numbers, particularly in priority Sectors (as outlined within the LSIP)
- Improve progression to, and participation in, our advanced, higher skills and degree level programmes.
- Help more adults to progress directly into employment.
- Through foundation learning programmes, positively re-engage with the most vulnerable young people in Cumbria including NEET and alternative provision.
- Play a meaningful role in the ambition and progress to net zero carbon.
- Improve pay, conditions, and morale for our staff (staff satisfaction survey)
- Attract investment to further develop our estate.
- Consolidate on our improving financial health.
- Re-establish pride, better motivation, and communication in the college.
- T levels allowing curriculum rationalisation and or specialisation
- Further collaboration with FE4 and other Colleges (joint bids and projects)
- Work with Cumbria County Council and the new authorities' areas to develop college offer.

Overcoming our weaknesses and threats:

Successfully defending itself against weaknesses and threats is likely to be challenging for Kendal College. This plan seeks through its strategic focus and subsequent actions to develop effective methods in overcoming weaknesses and threats.

Weaknesses

- Improving maths and English achievement rates to the national rate (currently GCSE English 9 – 4 = 28% and maths 9 – 4 = 15%)
- Improving learning and teaching – particularly for L1 and L2 students
- Improve consistency and compliance with processes and agreed practices (quality review process)
- Improving business processes to enhance the user interface with the College and operational efficiency (business review process)
- Increasing efficiency to fund improvements and new developments and projects to cope with funding pressures.
- Further develop digital access (IT strategy)

Threats

- Economic indicators including rising inflation, interest rates and recession, and impact on regional performance and education supply/demand
- Cyber security and disruption
- Reduced government spending and funding levels from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) particularly around adult learning
- Competitive actions of existing Kendal based school sixth forms (SLF forum)
- Competitive actions of local further education colleges FE and HE Providers
- Ongoing review and withdrawal of technical qualifications and funding (curriculum plan)
- Devolution and new authority reorganisation taking place in Cumbria from March 2023.
- Costs of curriculum reform – T levels and Apprenticeships
- Loosing focus on core purpose due to myriad of reforms, changes, and financial challenges. (SLT and college capacity)
- Reducing HE market and higher HE costs for colleges.

Next Steps:

Using the SWOT analysis to understand where the college is now will be an impactful way to determine where the college will want to go next, developing a strategic plan to get there.

As part of the strategic planning process the college will create an action plan, which will assist the college in articulating and reaching its goals.

The outcome of the SWOT analysis will now be used to identify prioritised opportunities, allowing this strategic plan to support the college in turning them into strengths, using these insights to develop strategies for the college over the next three years.

Market intelligence and key positioning:

To understand our position within the county and our key customer markets, the College uses demographics data from a variety of sources including Office for National Statistics, (ONS) Cumbria LEP, Chamber of Commerce and South Lakes District Council, including reference to the county wide local industrial strategy and the local skills improvement plan as well as the more local Kendal town centre strategy and the Kendal Futures plan.

This intelligence informs the college as to the geographical areas and customer markets that are showing decline or potential growth as well as emerging sectors such as health, hospitality, science, technology, engineering, and maths (STEM). This knowledge is used to support the development of our Kendal ambition via this strategic plan and our actions over the coming years.

Aside from analysis of data to inform our markets and positioning, our Strategic Plan was developed with the involvement of key stakeholders (including staff and students) to focus specifically on our actions to reach out to the key markets. Employers, the Chamber of Commerce, Cumbria LEP, Cumbria County Council and South Lakes District Council were also consulted to ensure that the College was focused on sectors and local priorities that had the biggest impact.

Our Key Markets:

Kendal College and the strategic aims within this document are aimed at all our current student markets as indicated below, unless directly specified within the detailed narrative.

- 14- 16-year-olds
- 16–18-year-olds
- Adult provision
- Apprenticeships
- Business and commercial development
- Higher Education and professional studies

KENDAL COLLEGE VISION, MISSION, AND VALUES

Kendal Mission:

The mission of Kendal College is:

Unlocking Potential - Transforming Lives - Creating Bright Futures

Kendal Vision:

The vision of Kendal Colleges is:

Kendal College will provide outstanding education and training opportunities that are responsive to the needs of our students and our community. All Kendal College actions will help develop our students to deliver positive economic and sustainable environmental change both now and in the future.

Our mission and vision influence the college's approach and sets the tone for the ways in which we work and the culture in which we operate. Our mission and vision are further supported by our core college values.

Kendal Values:

Our values are what we believe are important in the way we work as an organisation and for those we serve.

The college values embrace the spirit of the college and are based on the collective views of staff, students and governors and inform how we do things.

1. EXCELLENCE & AMBITION

- We will pursue continual improvement. encouraging creativity, enterprise, entrepreneurship, and the use of technology to make Kendal College a leader in training and skills, taking every opportunity to grow and develop.

2. RESPECT & HONESTY

- We want Kendal College to be recognised for its honest and honourable behaviours, whilst promoting trust and being respectful to all. Displayed by everyone and characterised by impartiality, objectivity, and recognising the contribution of others

3. DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

- We want to be a respectful, tolerant, and inclusive college acting with integrity and developing a shared responsibility for each other's wellbeing.

4. LOYALTY & COMMITMENT

- We will work with our stakeholders, staff and learners in supporting personal responsibility and accountability developing long term relationships and mutual partnerships.

5. A POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT

- We recognise the values Kendal College brings to society, and we are committed to the protection of the environment and the development of the communities in which we operate.

Together our mission, vision and values help develop a culture characterised by dedication, commitment and motivation enabled through clear and effective communication.

Strategic Focus and Priorities:

Throughout the course of the strategic plan, Kendal college will exist and work to develop, support and deliver against the following five key strands which will form the backbone of the strategic focus for the next three years:

1. OUR QUALITY

- Consistently deliver a high-quality learning experience and environment, where we innovate, develop, and improve our curriculum offer.

2. OUR REPUTATION

- Further develop and grow our partnerships and engagement, helping to secure a reputation as the best education and training for our community.

3. OUR ENVIRONMENT

- Develop the business to ensure we are bound by the highest level of ethical values and behaviours which develops the colleges environment practices and awareness.

4. OUR FUTURE SUSTAINABILITY

- Develop the business to ensure we are resilient, future proof and financially sustainable.

5. OUR PEOPLE

- Continually develop and invest in our people and teams. Supporting learners and staff to be active partners in our work.

These five core strategic priorities are now detailed further as to actions and outcomes of success on the following pages. The success measures will be assessed through the colleges quality processes, with reports through to SLT and to Corporation at set times throughout the year.

Strategic Focus One: OUR QUALITY

Main aims:

Consistently deliver a high-quality learning experience and environment, where we innovate, develop, and improve our curriculum offer.

Main drivers:

- Maintain positive outcomes in OFSTED, QAA and other external markers of quality.
- Develop further and grow our provision in identified areas such as HE and A levels
- Increasingly grow our employer engagement work including apprenticeships
- Actively bringing about change in the landscape of post 16 qualifications including the introduction of T levels.
- Continue to engage with our students as an asset to the College.

We will achieve this by:

Further developing the quality of our offer, ensuring a reputation for high standards; ensuring classrooms/workshops meets the needs of curriculum and are of industry standard.

Indicators of success:

- Successful external inspection outcomes.
- External feedback is excellent with the maintenance of quality marks and awards
- Measures of qualification success are above national rates, improving each year.
- Teaching, learning, and assessment is consistently excellent, adds value and supports high outcomes and progress for all students
- Self-assessment and quality improvement plans bring about positive change.
- All learning spaces are fit for purpose and have access to the best possible learning technologies which are used innovatively in teaching, learning and assessment
- Increasing year on year % of students achieving high grades in maths and English
- Achievement gaps between student groups are insignificant
- High staff, student, employer, and other customer satisfaction levels.

Strategic Priority Two: OUR REPUTATION

Main aims:

Further develop and grow our partnerships and engagement, helping to secure a reputation as the best education and training provider for our community.

Main drivers:

- Growing and extending our network of external clients and stakeholders
- Maintaining the confidence of external stakeholders.
- Increasing the amount of repeat business to the college
- Furthering our brand recognition for excellence and quality

We will achieve this by:

Further developing college stakeholder relationships and the way in which we work with and conduct that work with internal and external stakeholders. The college will conduct its business with the highest standards of care, respect and efficiency.

Indicators of success:

- A culture of excellence and respect is evident for each campus
- The college curriculum is supported by key business partners and employers aligned to local and regional skills needs
- All students are engaged in meaningful work placement and work-related learning positively portraying Kendal College values.
- Progression rates and positive destinations grow in line with annual key performance indicators
- Enterprise, project-based learning, competitions, and skills demonstrations are embedded across all areas of the curriculum
- Seamless student journey is in place effectively supporting students, staff, and managers
- High levels of satisfaction with college commercial services.

Strategic Priority Three: OUR ENVIRONMENT

Main aims:

Develop the college business to ensure we are bound by the highest level of ethical values and behaviours which develops the colleges environment practices and awareness.

Main drivers:

- Promoting change in behaviours in respect of protecting our environment.
- Supporting the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report on climate change and the UK government's target of net zero carbon emissions by 2050.
- Further develop a culture of sustainability and environmental credentials at Kendal College.

We will achieve this by:

Kendal College recognises it has a responsibility towards being sustainable and protecting the environment. The college has various policies and systems to provide the framework for all our work, whether it be in relation to energy saving, waste and recycling or sustainable transport and to help ensure that we operate in an environmentally sustainable way.

Indicators of success:

- College reserves provide opportunities to re-invest in learning and resources which supports our future environment
- Development and implementation of future Estates strategy and capital bids include reference to green technologies and carbon reduction.
- Capital and estates plans are considerate and focus on environment and sustainability including contributions to work towards net zero
- Environmental committee established and making impact, with an action plan in place to support climate change
- The campuses are a safe and welcoming place to work, study and visit
- High satisfaction of stakeholders with the campuses, facilities, and resources
- Actions to address environmental and climate change are in place and supported by college actions.
- Curriculum planning and delivery content supports the environment.
- CPD in place for staff and students to address environmental issues including carbon literacy.

Strategic Priority Four: OUR FUTURE SUSTAINABILITY

Main aims:

Develop the college business to ensure we are resilient, future proof and financially sustainable.

Main drivers:

- Grow college income and future proof finances
- Maintain and develop college resources and infrastructure
- Further develop the college culture as a forward-thinking business
- Enrich our internal experience and offer through improved digital and IT capability

We will achieve this by:

Further developing college curriculum, diversifying its income streams, creating better efficiencies and utilisation of resource leading to increased contribution. The college will achieve strong healthy finances that enable investment and growth in learning for a sustainable future.

Indicators of success:

- Core income and number of students meet or exceed the funding allocation
- Achieve greater income diversification and less reliance on central funding
- External funding bids actively sought and are successful in supporting growth and strategic aims
- Higher levels programmes are in place across a greater percentage of our provision
- Continued growth in apprenticeships each year
- Customer Relationship Management system (CRMs) in place and used effectively to support increased employer engagement and growth
- Wide range of accessible career change and retraining options in place supporting the governments skills agenda
- High employer and stakeholder satisfaction
- A full cost and commercial offer for short qualifications, leisure learning, and use of college facilities is in place
- Evaluation of the Marketing and Sales Strategy demonstrates positive impact on achievement of annual growth targets

Strategic Priority Five: OUR PEOPLE

Main aims:

Continually develop and invest in our people and teams, where we support our learners and staff to be active partners in the college's work.

Main drivers:

- Improve and maintain our stakeholder satisfaction and engagement
- Retain and develop staff
- Enriching the culture of Kendal College for all its dependants
- Continue to engage our staff as an asset to the College.

We will achieve this by:

Further developing and recognising the asset base of the college staff, investing in their growth and development.

Indicators of success:

- Rewards packages are comparable and competitive and attract professional, self-disciplined, and skilled staff
- Welfare and staff recognition processes are in place and support staff wellbeing
- Talent and Succession planning supports personal growth, development, and progression opportunities
- High staff morale and satisfaction levels
- Reducing trends in staff sickness and turnover in line with annual KPIs
- All staff are engaged in continuous professional development and industry up-skilling that supports growth in their role and in their personal development.

Governance – Setting the standard and raising the bar:

Governors are required to hold strategic responsibilities for the development and improvement of the college and ensure a clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction.

Kendal College governors have held an important role in contributing to the strategic direction and the governors have been active in the setting of the colleges strategic planning and strategy formulation, and hold senior leaders to account against performance of the approved strategy and annual KPIs.

College governors are responsible for influencing the strategic direction and vision of the college and for supporting the Principal and college staff in achieving that vision.

College governors have also contributed to the strategic direction of many policies, and in checking and approving policies at Corporation once they've been written, again holding the senior leadership team to account for how policies have been implemented, and whether they've been successful.

Throughout the course of this strategy governors will monitor its performance through the following mechanisms:

- Principal and Chair one-to-one meetings
- Corporation meetings
- Self assessment validations
- Audit and risk meetings
- Annual performance monitoring of senior post holders
- Strategic vision and planing day
- KPI reports
- Termly stratetgic updates (January, April and July)
- Quality reviews
- Internal audit process.

High level risks to the delivery of this plan are:

A number of risks which may affect the assumptions made and/or potentially hinder the college in achieving the outcomes detailed in this strategic plan have been identified as those below.

Mitigation into such eventualities will be on-going and monitored through our risk register process.

1. Failure to meet learner number targets or to take advantage of a growing 16-18-year-old demographic.
2. Potential changes throughout the course of this plan where a decline in public funding could negatively impact on our ability to deliver against our aspirations.
3. Any failure in our ability to maximise our collaborative working practices with existing and future partnerships could have an impact on many of the actions contained within this strategy.
4. Government not supporting previously held ambitions and changes in Government policy in relation to the nature of the education and skills we offer could impact on the future impact, role of the college in the areas we serve.
5. Uncertainty and change in the apprenticeship delivery and funding model could reduce the participation by both employers and learners.
6. Failure to maintain a strong liquidity position will restrict the cash available to invest in planned new capital programmes, information technology and the recruitment of suitably qualified staff.
7. Economic uncertainties including rising interest rates, inflation, and global events

Monitoring these risks:

The risks outlined above will be monitored by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) where mitigation and controls will be put in place as part of the risk register on a termly basis, and reported through to our Audit and risk committee, and our Board of governors through set Corporation meetings.

Supporting Strategies and documents:

Curriculum Strategy and curriculum planning process

Quality strategy and quality calendar

Financial plan and reports

Capital plan

Estates strategy

Marketing strategy

Environmental sustainability strategy

Strategic Plan 2022-2025 – The Kendal Ambition

MISSION	Unlocking Potential - Transforming Lives - Creating Bright Futures				
VISION	Kendal College will provide outstanding education and training opportunities that are responsive to the needs of our students and our community. All Kendal College actions will help develop our students to deliver positive economic and sustainable environmental change both now and in the future.				
VALUES	EXCELLENCE & AMBITION	RESPECT & HONESTY	DIVERSITY & INCLUSION	LOYALTY & COMMITMENT	A POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT
STRATEGIC FOCUS AND PRIORITIES					
OUR QUALITY	OUR REPUTATION	OUR ENVIRONMENT	OUR FUTURE SUSTAINABILITY	OUR PEOPLE	
MAIN AIMS					
Consistently deliver a high-quality learning experience and environment, where we innovate, develop, and improve our curriculum offer	Further develop and grow our partnerships and engagement, helping to secure a reputation as the best education and training for our community.	Develop the business to ensure we are bound by the highest level of ethical values and behaviours which develops the colleges environment practices and awareness.	Develop the business to ensure we are resilient, future proof and financially sustainable.	Continually develop and invest in our people and teams. Supporting learners and staff to be active partners in our work.	