



SUFFOLK NEW COLLEGE

STRATEGIC PLAN

2020 -2025

October 2020



Suffolk
New
College



Foreword

It is with great pleasure I write the foreword to the latest edition of Suffolk New College's strategic plan.

There can be little doubt that 2020 is one of the most extraordinary years any of us can remember. Had it not been for the pandemic, we would probably have been concentrating on the impact of Brexit and the ramifications of what may follow after midnight on December 31st.

Despite all of this, especially the uncertainty and disruption caused by the pandemic, the College continues to flourish. Thanks to the tenacity and creativity of staff, the resilience and determination of learners and the general atmosphere of goodwill across the College, our strap line continues to be wholly appropriate: 'Exceptional Student Experience'.

Although it may be tempting to look back and congratulate ourselves on how we survived in 2020, this strategic plan is all about moving forward. Status quo is never an option. Any organisation hoping for that is probably going quickly backwards. Suffolk New College, in common with our partners in the business and commercial world, is moving steadily forwards to an even brighter future.

The College is now based on four sites: Ipswich Campus, Suffolk Rural at Otley, Suffolk New College 'On the Coast' at Leiston and Halesworth. This plan includes developments at all four. The Tech Campus in Ipswich will be built on the corner of Rope Walk and Dove Street during 2020-21. New courses are being written and validated. Learners will move in to start their studies in September 2021. At Suffolk Rural, the College is wholly committed to the long-term development of sustainable land-based curriculum in Suffolk and surrounding counties. Suffolk New College 'On the Coast' is working effectively with local businesses and the wider community to create a growing offer to meet the needs and aspirations of learners of all ages as well as employers.

As I write this, I'm tempted to speculate in what capacity you are reading it – if, indeed, you still are! As an employer I hope you are a College partner. As a parent or family member I hope are able to share our aspirations with potential learners. If you plan to join us as a learner, welcome – what an excellent choice you have made! If you are a member of the wider community near one of the College campuses, I hope you recognise our aim to be a community College providing facilities for community use and organising events and activities that enhance the lives and wellbeing of those around us.

Roger Fern
Chair of Suffolk New College Corporation

Introduction

Welcome to the Strategic Plan for Suffolk New College which has been developed in consultation with stakeholders, staff and customers. The Plan builds on the articulated labour market information of the area that it serves, and responds to the economic and social needs of its communities.

Suffolk New College has a major and iconic physical presence in the town of Ipswich. Our location has been designated recently as being within the 'Innovation Quarter', as part of the 'Vision for Ipswich'. Ipswich is the largest and the county town of Suffolk. The town has a lower wage economy than average and contains areas of high deprivation and poor educational achievement recently being recognised as an Opportunity Area, aimed at improving social mobility. Suffolk New College is committed to playing an active and vital role in the area's skills transformation that is required to fuel a more productive and high-value economy. In January 2020, SNC added the Otley campus for land-based industries (through merger). It has been rebranded as Suffolk Rural.

Greater Ipswich is an area of growth and is predicted to continue to increase its population and economy. The College has many opportunities to support this growth and the key areas for development are articulated in our Strategic Plan. We have a clear sense of direction, and our plan, under its five strategic focus areas, sets out how we will fulfil the Strategic Aims of the College.

The Plan sets the direction of travel for five years and covers a period of exciting developments for 2020 - 2025, with more detailed actions being shown for the next two years, to 2022.

Our Strategic Plan for the past four years has been implemented successfully with new investments being made and new courses being developed. As a result we have:

- Supported a more highly skilled workforce, benefitting the local economy
- An increase in the take up of Science, Technology, English and Maths (STEM) skills and higher level skills in the locality
- Increased the numbers of employers and partners working with and in the College
- Increased Apprenticeships and improved routes to Higher Education
- Celebrated the successes of staff and students who are proud of their association with Suffolk New College
- Invested in facilities and innovation
- Increased the employability skills of our younger students, and of adults who are re-entering the jobs market

Suffolk New College commits to treating everyone with dignity and respect. We wish the ethos of the College to reflect a community that upholds British Values which is free from discrimination, valuing all members of our College community equally and fairly.

Viv Gillespie
Principal

Suffolk New College Offer

Suffolk New College was formed originally as the Civic College, opened by the Queen in 1961, changing to Suffolk College, then Suffolk New College in 2007. It was fundamental in the creation of UCS (University Campus Suffolk), actively supporting the development from its inception to its status as University of Suffolk. It delivers programmes in Ipswich, at Suffolk Rural in Otley, in Halesworth and Leiston via SNC 'On the Coast'.

We offer a wide range of courses and services to young people, apprentices, adults and businesses and work with a range of employers and local organisations. The College is a major employer, with approximately 650 staff members. Our students progress to further study, higher education, apprenticeships, employment or volunteering.

The College is the preferred choice for approximately 6,000 people each year. Suffolk New College offers a curriculum that enables students and apprentices to:

- Discover and develop their talents
- Achieve success
- Be inspired and be ready for the opportunities and next steps in further study, higher education, employment or career advancement, or in contributing to society

Our curriculum is designed to provide challenge and support so that all students and apprentices can achieve success. We review our curriculum annually to meet the needs of students, employers and the wider community. This means providing opportunities to develop as independent and resilient learners, and as responsible citizens.

The areas of study at Suffolk New College align to the region's key sectors and industrial priorities and contribute towards the skilled workforce of the future. In recent years, investments have been made with employer input in science and technology areas, to provide excellent facilities aligned to employer needs. Of course, many of our students are preparing to enter a global job market, and as such, our offer goes beyond just meeting local employer requirements.

Developing 'work ready' skills is a fundamental aim of our study programmes and students will develop key employability skills as part of their courses, through realistic work environments and projects, as well as through work experience or industrial placements. This is in addition to the practical skills and knowledge acquisition that is directly related to their vocational programmes. Employers and college Ambassadors (recruited from local organisations) to advise on the skills and knowledge that they want to see in their new employees.

Our programmes contain transferable skills such as communication, IT and customer service- important elements that help students to remain employable in the flexible job market of today.

The offer for adults is designed to promote the skills needed to access employment, HE or develop their career paths. This includes a range of English programmes for speakers of other languages.

We review and introduce new courses according to local need and government priorities. For example, we are a 2020 provider for T-Levels and have been approved to roll-out all available lines from 2021. We have grown our apprenticeship offer in the last few years and engaged many new organisations in apprenticeship provision. Our higher education provision is being expanded, working with the University of Suffolk to put on new and niche HE programmes. This partnership enables local access, raising aspiration particularly in Ipswich, an area that has been recognised by the government as an 'Opportunity Area', to help promote social mobility. To help us achieve this part of our mission, we work with a small number of local partners such as Inspire Suffolk.

As a significant employer Suffolk New College has a major positive economic impact on the local economy. In recent years, it has been estimated that a multiplier of 1.4 can be used to demonstrate the immediate impact of the College and our students leaving College and becoming economically active. With an annual turnover of over £26 million, this means an annual contribution of £35 million to the local economy.

Policy Drivers and the Environment

There are considerable challenges in the further education sector, given the current tight economic environment. Suffolk New College aims to be at the forefront of adaptation to change and responsive to challenge.

We recognise and anticipate via timely planning, where the College needs to change and develop in order to meet the Government's and stakeholders' agendas and to implement policy.

At the time of writing the Plan, we are responding to the following policy thrusts:

- Review of Further Education through the Area Review, leading to potential mergers between Colleges and the future FE White Paper expected – Autumn 2020.
- Potential devolution and increasing localism.
- Continuing pressure on the budget, resulting from the local demographic dip and lack of access to routes of funding such as European Social Funds (ESF).
- Reviews of technical education and post-18 education, changing the curriculum.
- Sweeping changes in the Apprenticeship and 'employer' levy system.
- Increasing emphasis on the importance of further education in developing the local/regional skills agenda and the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (NALEP) priority sectors.
- The need for more technical skills in STEM related sectors, such as described in the emerging local Industrial Strategy.
- Aspiration to provide more higher level skills.
- Increasing emphasis on safeguarding our younger students and vulnerable adults and on the promotion of British Values, tolerance and anti-extremism.

Our Environment

Suffolk New College is a medium sized general further education College serving the Greater Ipswich area. Positioned as it is towards the south of the county, it attracts students and businesses from the surrounding rural and coastal areas, including North Essex. The merger of the land-based college for Suffolk at Otley, now branded as Suffolk Rural enlarges our mission and geographical reach.

The Ipswich urban area is growing fast and has a net inflow of 7,700 employees into the town. Whilst the majority of companies are small and medium enterprises, it has key industries with BT's Adastral facility (ICT research), and other significant employers including Willis, AXA, RBS, Ransomes/Jacobsen. In addition to the five major priority areas identified for support by NALEP – Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering, Horticulture and Food Production, ICT, Energy, Life Science and Bio Tech, our catchment area contains sectors identified as important to the economy in Financial Services, Tourism, Cultural and Digital Industries, Ports and Logistics, and Construction. In addition, the public sector is one of the four largest sectors in Ipswich. The recent NALEP Industrial Strategy includes a focus on three of the above sectors:- Energy, Digital and Agri-Food.

Whilst generally, the employment rate is high in Suffolk, there are pockets of greater unemployment and NEETs (those young people not in employment, education or training) in Ipswich. Productivity performance within Suffolk is relatively low due to the lower share of high-value added activities in the area. However, 2020 will see a tightening of the jobs market resulting from the COVID-19 outbreak.

Pre-COVID economic forecasts show that employment is predicted to grow and there is a need for higher level (Level 4 and above) skills.

There had been a short-term decline in the number of 16-18 year olds in the area, but this started to reverse in 2019/2020. This presents a potential challenge in terms of meeting employer labour requirements or demand for younger apprentices. There are, however, considerable plans for housing growth, especially in North and West Ipswich.

Whilst improving across Suffolk the proportion of school leavers achieving 5 GCSE's (including English and Maths) is lower than the national average in the Ipswich area. This means that a large proportion of students coming to College require English and Maths GCSE, which they take alongside their vocational qualifications, as part of their 'Study Programme'. Ipswich has been recognised by the Government as an 'Opportunity Area'. This is an area where projects are planned to increase the social mobility of our young people. Suffolk New College is involved in a number of initiatives as part of the 'Opportunity Area' designation. The 16-18 market is supplied by a range of schools with sixth forms as well as by the vocational offer of the College. There is some duplication of offer in schools.

Greater Ipswich is an ethnically diverse community in which the proportion of black and minority ethnic people is approximately 17% overall.

LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION

Conclusions from national, regional and local labour market information.

Suffolk New College will:

- Develop STEM subjects and a STEM strategy for the College, in light of demands for jobs for the future, and national government and local LEP priorities. Plan provision for the three NALEP Industrial Strategy sectors – Agri-Food, Energy and Digital.
- Plan provision, in partnership to meet large scale infrastructure projects: for example, the Sizewell C Nuclear Power project on the Suffolk Coast. Suffolk New College will be the nearest FE provider to the proposed location.
- Develop Apprenticeships and Higher Apprenticeships, and HE level programmes in response to labour market information.
- Investigate the feasibility of new provision to meet local area needs, such as in specialist ICT (linked to BT, Martlesham) requirements, Construction Services and Engineering.

- Continue to develop Suffolk New College's vocational provision and employability skills offer as a unique proposition for the young people of Greater Ipswich and the Suffolk/North Essex catchment area. Be prepared for 16-18 demography to increase again after 2019, and for large housing developments to take place.
- Respond proactively to national and local initiatives to support the economy to recover from the negative impact of COVID-19.
- Work in partnership, where relevant, to develop new provision.
- Promote career routes and opportunities to young people, using national and local information, to raise awareness of opportunities and to help to raise aspirations.
- Continue to develop and lead in other sectors important to the NALEP and Ipswich Economic Strategy, in: Tourism/Hospitality and Culture and Creative Industries.

SUFFOLK NEW COLLEGE

2020 – 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN: OVERVIEW

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS

RAISING STANDARDS & ASPIRATIONS

- Continue to drive up standards and expectations for the achievement of learners, delivering an 'exceptional student experience'
- Become more innovative building on our advances in blended and on-line learning in delivery of teaching, learning and assessment
- Raise social mobility, giving young people from The Opportunity Area of Ipswich the skills they need to succeed
- Deliver our Higher Education Strategy and ethos in partnership with the University of Suffolk
- Celebrate the success of our past, current and future students
- Continue to introduce new Curriculum e.g. T-Levels and Traineeships

LINKING WITH EMPLOYERS & PROMOTING EMPLOYABILITY

- Ensure the College is at the heart of its business community in order to train the current and future workforce
- Continue to enhance the employability of students via our ePass scheme, work placements, and industry-related projects
- Implement our Employer Engagement Strategy and its four strands of Ambassadors Scheme, Industry Partners, Industrial Advisory Groups and Alumni across all of our campuses.
- Increase the range of short courses and on-line learning to meet local industry needs.

RESPONDING TO LOCAL & REGIONAL PRIORITIES

- Develop provision to meet LEP local industrial strategy priorities in STEM subjects – Agri-Tech, Digital and Clean Energy
- Work with partners to support national infrastructure projects within Engineering, Construction and Nuclear industries
- Develop and broaden the range of Study Programmes to align with the new Technical Routes
- Increase our offer of the new Apprenticeship Standards and engage new employers
- Ensure that the offer at Suffolk Rural meets the needs of rural industries, Agri-Food/Tech Sectors currently and for the future
- Join partners in a bid for an area wide Institute of Technology

SEEKING INVOLVEMENT WITH STAFF, LEARNERS & THE COLLEGE'S COMMUNITY

- Support all staff to engage with Suffolk New College's values of a high performing culture through continuing professional development and at induction, through Licence to Teach and Licence to Manage
- Provide a diverse, safe, inclusive and welcoming environment and promote health and well-being, adapt to change in response to global pandemics
- Work in partnership to increase opportunities for training and education, contributing to economic and social prosperity
- Continue to develop our Safeguarding and PREVENT Strategy to ensure promotion of a safe environment and prevention of extremism
- Expand the range of programmes for Community and Leisure Learning across our campuses

GROWTH & SUSTAINABILITY

- Maintain our strong financial base through further diversification of income streams
- Ensure that our estate and facilities are in excellent condition and are adapted to the needs of new developments
- Develop further Suffolk New College 'On the Coast' in Leiston and at Halesworth
- Review our business support services and teaching methodologies in order to achieve 'best practice' and efficiencies
- Implement our Sustainability Policy in order to reduce the negative impact on our environment, incorporating Suffolk Rural activity
- Continue to develop the business plan for Suffolk Rural increasing student numbers and improving assets

Strategic Aims

The staff, students and Corporation members of Suffolk New College are committed to our renewed Strategic Aims. The Strategic Aims are implemented throughout our ethos, culture, activities and partnerships, and through the implementation of the College's Strategic Plan.

- 1 To provide high quality learning and teaching and gain recognition as an excellent and innovative provider.
- 2 To promote, and respond to the student voice whilst raising aspirations to gain high level qualifications.
- 3 To promote health and well-being and to provide a safe and supportive environment for students and staff.
- 4 To promote and embed inclusion, equality and diversity and to combat disadvantage.
- 5 To work closely and actively with employers so that the student experience is enhanced.
- 6 To secure and celebrate positive destinations or further academic progression for all students.
- 7 To respond positively to stakeholder priorities, targets and initiatives.
- 8 To play an active major role in the community, economically, socially and culturally.
- 9 To be a great place to work and learn.
- 10 To achieve our aims within budget and to seek to gain greater diversification of income.
- 11 To demonstrate excellent leadership and business acumen at all levels.

Strategic Focus Areas

1. Raising Standards and Aspirations

By 2025, Suffolk New College courses will be recognised for innovative approaches to Teaching, Learning and Assessment, creating experiences for students that engage and inspire. We will support our students to become well prepared and responsible for their chosen 'next step' into employment, apprenticeships, further study, higher education or volunteering.

We will continue to adopt new approaches to teaching, learning and assessment, embracing best practice and leading in innovation. Suffolk New College will celebrate the success of staff and our future, current and past students.

In the next two years Suffolk New College will:

- Continue to become more innovative and entrepreneurial in Teaching, Learning and Assessment, building on our advances in Blended and on-line learning.
- Continue to drive up standards and expectations for the achievement of learners, delivering an exceptional student experience.
- Raise social mobility, giving young people from The Opportunity Area of Ipswich the skills they need to succeed.
- Raise aspirations and achievement of young people through stretch and challenge and access to HE opportunities.
- Further Develop the ePASS scheme for employability.
- Roll out Digi Hub and Teaching Innovation Centre initiatives at Suffolk Rural.
- Enhance our careers information helping students to plan their careers effectively and identify the skills they need to perform well in their chosen step.
- Continue to roll-out of new curriculum such as the new T-Levels and Traineeships.
- Create further Sports Academies in a number of disciplines.
- Deliver further our Higher Education (HE) Strategy, creating an HE in Further Education (FE) ethos and develop further Higher Level HE qualifications and HE Apprenticeships in partnership with the University of Suffolk.
- Celebrate the success of our past, current and future students.

2. Linking with Employers and Promoting Employability

By 2022, Suffolk New College will have developed strong links and partnerships with businesses and organisations in the Greater Ipswich area, and beyond for certain specialisms. Our Employer Engagement Strategy will offer many different options that employers can take to promote opportunities and careers for young people and apprenticeships, and enhance work-related learning and the real working environment as part of the Suffolk New College student experience. We will increase the number of employers who become partners in developing new areas of training and study.

In the next two years Suffolk New College will:

- Continue to position the college in the heart of its business community.
- Implement our Employer Engagement Strategy and its four strands of Ambassadors Scheme, Industry Partners, Industrial Advisory Groups and Alumni across the newly acquired Suffolk Rural campus.
- Continue to enhance the employability of students via our ePASS scheme, work experience and industry placements engaging new employers. Create virtual work experience and employer – set projects to enhance employability skills of students.
- Increase and promote the range of short courses and blended learning to meet local industry needs, reviewing our curriculum regularly in order to train the current and future workforce.
- Develop our Apprenticeship service for employers, providing a one-stop-shop for access to apprenticeships across the merged college and it's locations.

3. Responding to Local and Regional Priorities

By 2025, Suffolk New College will have responded positively to the aspirations and priorities of stakeholders, including the New Anglia LEP, and regional and local industry. It will increase its STEM-related offer for local companies developing a STEM Strategy for the College. Study Programmes for 16-19 year olds will be broadened, to ensure that programmes relevant to the local employment are developed to include T-Levels. Apprenticeships will be a key area of growth and Suffolk New College will continue to widen the range and levels available. Suffolk New College will design and deliver training to support the needs of planned infrastructure projects, such as the Sizewell C Nuclear Project.

In the next two years Suffolk New College will:

- Identify further areas of provision to develop to meet LEP priorities industrial strategy and local skills priorities in STEM subjects e.g. Science, Engineering, ICT, Construction, Digital Industries, and Agri-Food/Tech.
- Develop further the recent investments made in Fabrication and Welding, Engineering and Gas Assessment to deliver relevant training for industry.
- Develop specific new provision in Construction, Engineering, and Digital Industries, and Energy to support infrastructure projects such as Sizewell C.
- Develop and broaden the range of Study Programmes to include the new Technical Routes from 2020, including Transition Programmes and Traineeships.
- Develop new Apprenticeship standards and systems and engage new employers. Act as an End Point Assessment partner in the Eastern Consortium. Maximise use of new CRM system to support employers' engagement.
- Ensure that the rural industries are supported via Suffolk Rural providing the training for the future workforce in the Agri-Tech/Food Sectors.
- Increase the short course offer across all campuses and develop a Leisure Learning offer at Suffolk Rural.
- Examine funding opportunities to support development of Sustainable Construction Centre, Spirit Yacht Academy, and Food Centre at Suffolk Rural.
- Join partners in bid for LEP area-wide Institute of Technology.
- Respond pro-actively to initiatives and support the economy to recover from the negative impact of COVID-19.

4. Seeking Involvement with Staff, Learners and the College's Community

By 2025, Suffolk New College will have demonstrated further our inclusive and consultative ethos and commitment to our community of students, staff, stakeholders, business and the wider community. We will provide a great and supportive working environment, valuing the contributions that all colleagues and stakeholders make. We will ensure that Suffolk New College plays a major role in improving economic and social prosperity and mobility providing a contribution to the achievement of the Ipswich Vision.

In the next two years Suffolk New College will:

- Support all staff to engage with Suffolk New College's values of a high performing culture through continuing professional development and at induction, through Licence to Teach and Licence to Manage.
- Develop staff engagement strategies to explore issues of strategic importance to Suffolk New College with representation from across all areas of the College's operations including Suffolk Rural.
- Continue to build on our use of technology communications and opportunities for engagement with staff and community.
- Provide a diverse, safe, inclusive and welcoming environment and promote health and well-being via 'Suffolk New You'.
- Strengthen community relationships through our interaction on a number of community and stakeholder groups, working with partners to increase access to opportunity.
- Continue to develop our Safeguarding and PREVENT Strategy to ensure promotion of a safe environment, the prevention of extremism, and promotion of British Values, and positive Black experience.
- Maintain our excellent record in Health and Safety, and adapt to changing circumstances related to global pandemics.
- Expand a range of programmes for Community Learning, Leisure Learning and for use of facilities.
- Enhance facilities, provision and work environments to best meet needs of expanding numbers of students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).
- Celebrate staff achievement and commitment.

5. Growth and Sustainability

By 2025, Suffolk New College will have diversified its streams of income further to ensure that we build on our current strong financial base. We will seek innovative ways to become increasingly efficient through the review of services and the smarter use of technology. As part of our corporate responsibility, Suffolk New College will seek further ways of enhancing sustainability and reducing our carbon footprint on the world.

In the next two years Suffolk New College will:

- Maintain a sound financial base and meet our business plan for the merged college to ensure the long-term viability of Suffolk New College, mitigating any negative impact of COVID-19 wherever possible.
- Review our business support services and teaching methodologies in order to achieve 'best practice' and efficiencies, using technology to support smart working.
- Continue and expand Suffolk New College 'On the Coast' in Leiston and in Halesworth.
- Update the Business Plan for Suffolk Rural for commercial/education and visitor attraction opportunities.
- Implement our Sustainability Policy and annual action plan in order to reduce the negative impact on our environment, incorporating Suffolk Rural activity.
- Ensure that our estate and facilities are in excellent condition and are adapted to the needs of new developments and employer demand. Complete Tech Campus build on-time for 21/22 opening.
- Seek alternative sources of funding and income generating opportunities, and commercial areas services in order to increase diversified income.
- Ensure promotion and messages about Further Education for adults, to maximise understanding of the benefits of routes and of education and training.

Action Plans

There are detailed strategies and actions at Directorate level for the implementation of the overarching Plan. There is also a quality improvement plan that sets out the areas for development to ensure a high quality experience for learners. The sub-plans are monitored by the Senior Management Team and Executive, and the overarching Strategic Plan by the Corporation of Suffolk New College. The Plan will be renewed and 'rolled over' on an annual basis to create a two year rolling action plan within a five year overarching strategy.

Progress against the Plan will be monitored against agreed outcomes and measures, as well as against the targets for the College – our Key Performance Indicators.

The Sub-Action Plans:

Executive	-	Strategic Actions
Directorate	-	Engineering, Construction and Building Technology
Directorate	-	Apprenticeships and Business Development
Directorate	-	Creative Arts, Science and Digital Industries
Directorate	-	English and Maths
Directorate	-	Health, Enterprise and Care
Directorate	-	Land-based Industries
Directorate	-	Quality and Teaching Development
Directorate	-	Services Industries
Directorate	-	Student Services
Vice Principal	-	Facilities
Vice Principal	-	Finance
Vice Principal	-	Funding & Performance
Vice Principal	-	Human Resources
Vice Principal	-	IT Services
Vice Principal	-	Marketing
Vice Principal	-	Sports Centre
Vice Principal	-	Sustainability