

Southern Regional College

College Development Plan

2019-20

12 June 2019

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Introduction

A single **Corporate Plan** for the period 2018-21 has been developed for the six regional Further Education Colleges in Northern Ireland and should be read in conjunction with this College Development Plan. This Corporate Plan 2018-2021 represents a collaborative first for the six Northern Ireland Colleges of Further Education. Against a backdrop of political uncertainty and budgetary constraints, this corporate plan sets out the sector's shared purpose, values and vision, and embodies our commitment to working effectively together in providing skills solutions that meet current and emerging economic demand. Each College has developed their own supporting **College Development Plan (CDP)** that sets out how each college plans to deliver tailored, employer-led, locally responsive solutions.

Budgetary Position

The College's development plan is set in the context of continuing fiscal challenges. The Department for the Economy (DfE) wrote to the College on 20th March 2019 confirming the College's indicative budget of £27.16m for 2019-20. **This represented a cut of 5.9% in real terms** and presented the College with significant challenges most notably in being able to maintain the breadth of curriculum delivery.

Colleges met with the Department for the Economy to set out the potential impact on future curriculum offer should Colleges be required to operate within the resource allocated. Following this engagement DfE issued revised set indicative resource budgets to the regional Colleges on 5th June 2019. The College received an increased resource allocation of £28.57m. The development plan and associated targets set out in the accompanying report cards has been developed in line with the increased resource allocation and is based on the assumption that the additional resource will be allocated by the Department in year.

The College welcomes the decisions taken by the Department to allow plans to be progressed without the level of confirmed resource in place. To do otherwise would have been devastating for the College and the wider community.

Over recent years the College has absorbed year on year budget reductions whilst taking steps to protect the curriculum offer. Typically this has resulted in reduced resourcing across areas that fall within the College's control, typically ICT infrastructure, estates maintenance/refurbishment and resources to support teaching and learning. The TRIBAL value for Money report, May 2018 (page 24) highlighted that the College is operating efficiently and on a par with the most efficient colleges in England and Wales. The VFM report was based on the 2016-17 accounts and since then the College has continued to reduce expenditure across a number of key variable cost lines including maintenance, ICT infrastructure and teaching and learning (Appendix 3).

The College has now reached a point where these costs can no longer be reduced and should the College not secure sufficient resources in future years the problems highlighted during discussions with the Department will reappear with the inevitable reduction in curriculum offer across a wide range of areas.

Purpose

The aim of FE is to strengthen the skills profile of Northern Ireland by addressing the skills deficit and so underpinning the creation of a successful economy. Our core purpose is to link individuals to work, assisting them in finding a job, keeping a job and getting a better job. FE also assist businesses to innovate and grow, so increasing competitiveness across the region. FE delivers successfully at all skills levels and has a particular role in providing a bridge to mainstream education for those furthest away from the labour market, creating opportunity for all. The FE sector provides a strong collaborative offering across the region aligned strongly to economic priorities at regional and sub-regional levels. It does this with strong governance, a track record of financial efficiency and a state of the art estates, meeting the needs of the present and future economy.

The further education strategy, '**Further Education Means Success**'¹, launched in January 2016 sets out the core purposes of further education, namely to:

- play a pivotal role in developing a strong and vibrant economy through the development of professional and technical skills, increasingly at higher levels;
- help employers to innovate and grow; and
- support social inclusion by providing those who have low or no qualifications, or who have barriers to learning, with the skills and qualifications needed to find employment and to become economically active.

Article 20 of the Further Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 requires that each college should prepare a College Development Plan (CDP), otherwise referred to as a business plan, for submission to the Department. This document sets out the **development plan** for the Southern Regional College for the period 2018-19 and fulfils that statutory requirement.

A series of **business plans** for key areas and sections within the College sit alongside this document and provide more detailed actions and targets in support of the achievement of the College's strategic aims.

These include:

- Curriculum strategic plan
- Community Engagement
- Business support
- Estates plan
- Human Resources and Development
- Student Services
- Internationalisation
- Quality Improvement
- Information Learning Technologies

Strategic Context

The Programme for Government, the UK and Northern Ireland Industrial Strategies, Further Education Means Success and Local Government Community Plans – all recognise that Northern Ireland's future success is predicated on its ability to access a highly skilled, talented and flexible workforce. The demand and supply of skills

solutions has never been more relevant for Northern Ireland if we are to continue to make progress in meeting our current skills demands and to better prepare for future opportunities.

The launch of the revised Skills Barometer, '**Skills in Demand**'² highlights the importance of skills and talent development as part of a new economic strategy that aims to attract new business to NI as well as helping indigenous business innovate and grow. More specifically the transformational change required in increasing the skills levels of Northern Ireland's workforce and supporting skills development in priority areas is articulated further through the Department's draft Industrial Strategy, 'Economy 2030'.

The drive for higher skills and relevant professional and technical qualifications is further stated through the recently published strategies for apprenticeships, '**Securing Our Success**'⁴ and for youth training '**Generating Our Success**'⁵. The implementation of both strategies has the potential to radically transform the education and training landscape of Northern Ireland by creating a new system of learning that delivers an innovative, flexible and economically relevant curriculum. Our own curriculum developments and priorities will continue to be informed by skills needs identified through the skills barometer, the industrial strategy and the evolution of the new traineeship and apprenticeship system.

It is in the context of these strategic policy developments that the College's Development Plan and associated curriculum strategy '**Delivering a New System of Learning**' has been developed. As a Non Departmental Public Body (NDPB) the strategic aims and objectives set out in this plan are also closely aligned to the Department for the Economy's own Public Service Agreement targets and commitments to the Executive's Programme for Government and Industrial Strategy.

Southern Regional College is at the heart of delivering the vision of a strong knowledge based economy and fully recognises the need to work in partnership with other stakeholders to play its part in contributing to the Programme for Government. We are committed to responding to the changing face of professional and technical education and training through the development of an innovative, flexible and economically relevant curriculum portfolio that serves the needs of citizens and businesses across the region.

The College is also committed to collaborative working with other colleges to maximise opportunities through shared services and sharing of best practice. The College is committed to playing its role in the agreed programme of work being undertaken as part of the wider implementation plan for 'Further Education Means Success'.

One of our key strengths as a college is that our provision is accessible to a wide variety of learners in terms of level, subject area, type of learning irrespective of age and previous academic achievement. We are proud that our learners come from a variety of backgrounds and have a range of learning, work and life experiences and this will continue through the implementation of our new curriculum strategy. The current financial pressures will impact on the work that the College does to provide such opportunities for citizens right across the region that we serve.

Our curriculum will be shaped to support the needs of learners (facilitating the transition from education to work), to support employers (matching the vocational education and training needs of industry) and to support the economy more generally. Our core curriculum offer through Training for Success and mainstream Further Education will potentially be transformed over the lifetime of this plan as the traineeship and apprenticeship strategies are fully implemented.

In recent years the College through its '**Business Support and Innovation Unit**' has delivered successful approaches to supporting foreign direct investment, through the Assured Skills Programme and the development of knowledge transfer and innovation programmes for indigenous SMEs and micro-businesses through the Skills Focus and Innovateus programmes. We will continue to work alongside organisations such as Invest NI, Intertrade Ireland, local Councils and Chambers of Commerce and Trade to create end to end skills and development solutions that will help improve the competitiveness of the local economy. The services provided by the '**Business Support and Innovation Unit**' are particularly important to Northern Ireland at this time, given the impact of the global recession on the public and private sectors, the potential introduction of lower corporation

tax and the emerging implications of BREXIT. This plan sets out our approach to strengthen business engagement, to further develop the range of supports services and to promote interventions to local employers thus improving business productivity, growth and competitiveness.

The Higher Education strategy, '**Graduating to Success**'⁵, sets out a commitment to improve rural access to Higher Education by providing wider geographical access to courses, in partnership with the Higher Education and Further Education sectors. Over the lifetime of this plan, depending on funding, the College aims to test and trial a number of initiatives aimed at increasing participation in Higher Education within the region particularly for those already in employment. The College also wishes to use the investment in new campus buildings to establish 'higher education' centres through which an increasing range of higher level professional and technical qualifications will be offered in response to the needs of local citizens and the business community. In this regard the College is establishing a wider partnership arrangement with the Open University and Dundalk Institute of Technology.

Social inclusion also remains high on our agenda. One of the keys to effective social inclusion is in promoting job related education and skills development and in creating meaningful and lasting employment. We will continue to work in partnership with statutory and voluntary organisations including the local councils to plan and develop effective solutions to further improve social inclusion across designated areas where there is economic inactivity and under achievement. However, the continued engagement and support provided to 70+ community organisations is very much under question if additional resources are not forthcoming. During the 2018-19 year the College signed Memorandum of Understandings with community organisations to further cement our long term partnership working.

In summary, despite the on-going fiscal challenges the college will make every effort continue to play a central role in addressing the skills and lifelong learning needs of those living and working in the region, as well as contributing to social inclusion and economic development.

1 <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/further-education-means-success>

2 <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/ni-skills-barometer>

3 <http://www.delni.gov.uk/success-through-skills-transforming-futures>

4 <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/securing-our-success-northern-ireland-strategy-apprenticeships>

5 <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/generating-our-success-northern-ireland-strategy-youth-training>

6 <http://www.delni.gov.uk/graduating-to-success-he-strategy-for-ni.pdf>

7 <http://www.delni.gov.uk/access-to-success.pdf>

Vision and Mission

The long term vision of the Colleges is based on our desire to provide relevant and meaningful vocational learning opportunities delivered through quality and innovative teaching, which is informed by effective quality improvement planning. The vision of the College can thus be summarised as follows:

Further Education in Northern Ireland will provide world-class skills and support to business that transforms lives.

This vision complements the strategic aim for the sector as laid down in “Further Education Means Success” and is further amplified through the College Mission Statement, which articulates what this will mean to individual learners:

Further Education Colleges positively change people’s lives by providing high quality, accessible and relevant skills, education and training which tackles disadvantage and drives economic growth.

Core Values

A series of underpinning **core values** have been defined which will help **define the culture** of the College and be used as the final arbiter in our internal processes and external relationships, as well as the interaction between staff and learners.

Our Core Values are:

1. Putting learners first

We believe that:

- teaching and learning is our first priority;
- it is important to recognise the success of our learners and staff;
- all staff are here to serve the needs of our learners;
- we strive to remove all barriers to learner success; and
- information, advice and guidance provided to learners should be impartial, accessible and informative.

2. Collaboration: Working together to achieve more

We believe that:

- we can achieve more through co-operation and partnership with others;
- staff and learners have an important role to play in the future development of the College;
- it is important to foster a culture that values innovation, professionalism, and accountability;
- it is important to develop effective working relationships within our teams;
- every individual is valued and respected; and
- effective communication is important.

3. Striving for excellence

We believe that:

- we should strive for excellence in all that we do;
- all staff should be focused on improving the quality of learning and the wider learner experience;
- staff should have access to high quality and relevant development opportunities to assist them in carrying out their role in the College;
- all staff should have the opportunity to contribute to college improvement; and
- it is important to recognise and celebrate excellence.

Strategic Aims and Objectives

The College's strategic aims for the period 2019-20 are set out as follows together with a series of unpinning objectives. The extent to which the college can commit to delivering these aims and objectives will very much be informed by the final budget allocated.

Aims

1. *Provision of a Relevant and Meaningful Curriculum Portfolio*

To place the College at the heart of lifelong learning within the region in order to strengthen economic and workforce development, to enhance social cohesion and to advance individuals' skills and learning

Underpinning objectives:

- 1.1 To provide a relevant and meaningful curriculum portfolio.
- 1.2 To widen the educational participation of those most marginalised in society.
- 1.3 To support our local schools in the delivery of the entitlement framework through the provision of professional and technical courses at key stage 4 and post GCSE.
- 1.4 To provide accurate and reliable management information in support of operational and strategic decision making.
- 1.5 To provide a stable ILT infrastructure and service that meets the needs of learners and delivers business critical systems.
- 1.6 To increase the flexibility and accessibility of our curriculum offer at all levels.

2. *Excellent Learning Experiences for All*

To provide an excellent experience for all current and prospective learners supported through high quality and effective learner support services.

Underpinning objectives:

- 2.1 To provide quality education and training experiences for learners and stakeholders.
- 2.2 To provide a range of quality services that supports the needs of learners and business customers.
- 2.3 To increase student and trainee retention and success rates.
- 2.4 To effectively promote the college and increase brand recognition.

3. *Flexible Business Solutions that Improve Competitiveness and Productivity*

To support local and regional economic development through the provision of flexible business services and training solutions aimed at improving the competitiveness and productivity of new and existing businesses.

Underpinning objectives:

- 3.1 To contribute to economic development through the provision of responsive business support services and skills training.

4. Committed People and Organisation

To be a high performing College through the recruitment, development and deployment of a highly skilled and well-motivated staff.

Underpinning objectives:

- 4.1 To maintain and promote an environment that will foster equality, respect for diversity and difference and employee wellbeing.
- 4.2 To commit to the continued professional development of staff to ensure their skills and qualifications support the delivery of a high quality curriculum and support service.
- 4.3 To maintain an appropriate organisation structure.
- 4.4 To further improve the effectiveness of self-evaluation processes within the college.

5. Effective Governance and Financial Management

To provide effective corporate Governance and ensure that the College operates within a robust system of internal financial management and control.

Underpinning objectives:

- 5.1 To maximise funding and income generation opportunity and to ensure the efficient and effective deployment of resources.
- 5.2 To ensure that an effective system of risk management, governance and financial control operates at all levels within the College.
- 5.3 To ensure continued compliance with policies, procedures and statutory requirements.

6. Modern Fit for Purpose College Estate

To provide a modern fit for purpose college estate for the southern region.

Underpinning objectives:

- 6.1 To progress towards the provision of a modern fit for purpose estate.
- 6.2 To assess the continued viability of provision in the Killeel Campus.

7. International Links

To promote an outward and forward looking College through the development of international links supporting staff, students and knowledge exchange.

Underpinning objectives:

- 7.1 To increase the College's international engagement.

College Overview

Regional Catchment Area

Southern Regional College curriculum offer aims to serve the needs of the wider community across Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council and the South Down and South Armagh regions of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.

When viewed across the Parliamentary Constituencies of Newry and Armagh, Upper Bann and South Down this represents a total population of over 355,000¹ with approximately 167,000 of the working age population (between ages 16-64) in employment. (we can check the % population 16 years and over). The unemployment rate in Newry, Mourne and Down is above the NI average (6.1%) at 6.3% with Armagh, Banbridge Craigavon unemployment rate at 5.1%.

Over the ten year period mid-2006 to mid-2016 all Parliamentary Constituencies experienced population growth above the Northern Ireland average ranging from 8.5% increase in South Down to 14.1 per cent in Upper Bann where growth was more than twice the Northern Ireland average (6.8 per cent) over the same period. This increase is particularly noticeable in the number of young people between the age of 0-15.

The region served by the College has some of the most deprived super output areas (SOAs) across Northern Ireland. The College plays a very significant role in meeting the needs of many young people and adults living in areas of deprivation (Refer to Report Card 3 –Social Inclusion). People living in areas falling within quintiles 1 and 2 account for 40% of the total college enrolment. Of the top 100 most deprived SOAs 15 sit within the region served by SRC, these are listed as follows:

Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon	Newry, Mourne and Down
Woodville 1	Crossmaglen
Drumgask 2	Drumgullion 1
Court 1	Creggan
Callan Bridge	Daisy Hill 2
Annagh 2	Ballybot
Drumgor 2	Silverbridge
Drumnamoe 1	Forkhill 2
Church	

Table 1

Labour Market Supply Gap

The original Skills Barometer report for Northern Ireland was published in November 2015. The recent updated report reflects the latest economic conditions including the EU referendum. While recognising that there is a significant level of uncertainty on the future economic position within NI, it is clear that if NI is to achieve its economic ambitions, a higher level of economic growth and job creation will be required. The projected level of job creation and in turn the demand for skills based on the projected growth scenario is anticipated in the following sectors:

- Professional, scientific and technical services;
- Information and communication
- Administration and support services
- Health
- Manufacturing

The future demand for skills is particularly relevant to Colleges across Northern Ireland. The annual average Labour Market Supply Gap across all Levels within the education system is set out in Figure 1 and highlights a number of important points for the College:

- **Graduate level skills continues to be in high demand** – approximately 30% of demand from the education system is at graduate level entry;
- **Low demand for low skills** – only 11% of opportunities arising from education will be for those at Level 2 or below;
- **Decreasing demand for low skills** – the proportion of job opportunities arising from those with low skills is trending down strongly. Therefore achieving higher level qualifications is becoming increasingly important to obtaining employment.

The demand for skills in NI will outstrip supply but the nature of the skills gap varies across levels. Most notably for the College the largest supply gap is likely to emerge in the mid tier skills (NVQ Level 3 and Level 4-5) across most subject areas.

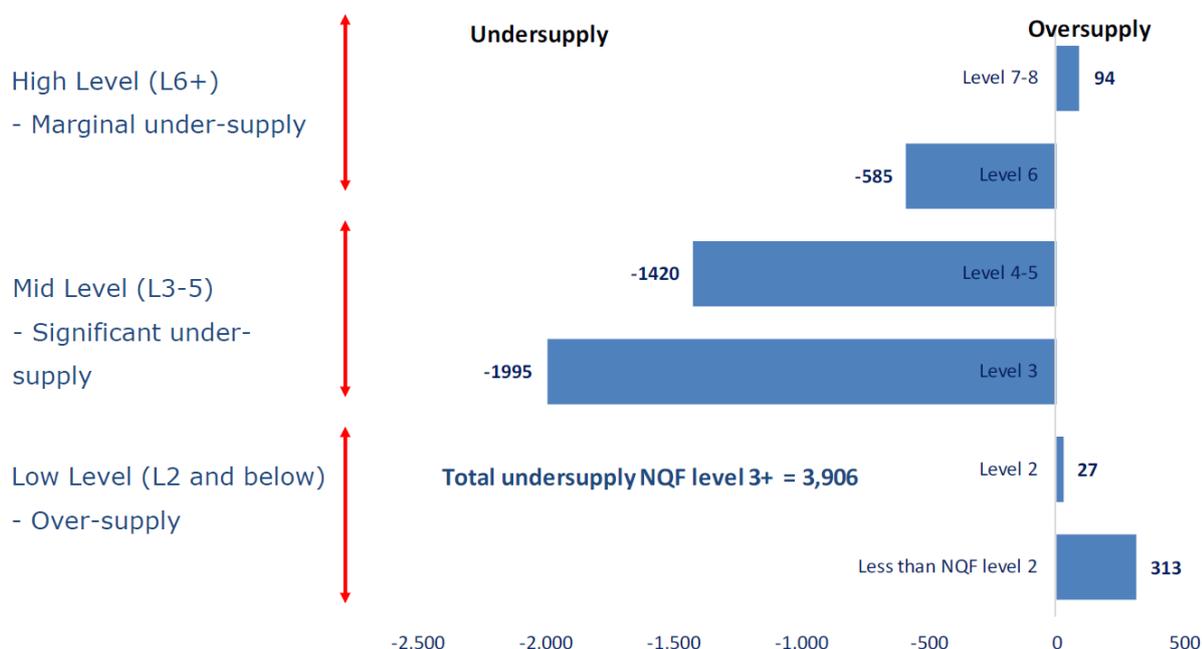


Figure 1

Source: NI Skills Barometer

The College recognises the need to respond to the changing qualifications' profile by enabling those at lower levels to move upwards, particularly to encourage those with no qualifications to enter the ladder, and to accelerate those with Level 3 qualifications to Level 4, which will dominate future employment in Northern Ireland. The problem of the reduced demand for the "middle level" will require a mixed strategy that promotes progression, alongside more limited achievement, otherwise many of those with Level 3 qualifications may find themselves underemployed.

At a time of increasing financial pressures the College will make every effort to prioritise resources to support the delivery of relevant higher level skills in the region.

Our customers

We aim to deliver provision that is broad, relevant and able to meet the needs of a wide variety of learners within the community that we serve. We are proud of our long history of providing curricular choice and opportunities for all. While our primary goal is in the provision of a curriculum offer to school leavers, we also recognise the importance of our role in upskilling and reskilling the existing workforce and to address the needs of those who face significant barriers to education and training. If we are to meet the future demands of employers we must therefore ensure that we remain focused on the needs of those in employment as well as those not yet in the labour market.

As the primary provider of professional and technical education and training in the region our target audience falls within the following groups:

- school leavers;
- young people not in education, training or employment;
- those who face significant barriers to education and training;
- those in school undertaking relevant vocational courses as part of the entitlement framework;
- new employees - entering the labour force for the first time;
- employees in the workforce who wish to up-skill;
- employees undertaking new job roles; and
- those currently excluded from the labour force.

About SRC

<p><i>Established</i> August 2007</p>	<p><i>Offer over</i> 380 Courses <i>From Entry Level to Level 7</i></p>	<p><i>Largest College in NI outside of Belfast</i> 6 Campus <i>Locations</i></p>
<p>916 <i>Staff</i></p>	<p><i>Provide Hardship to over 460 students to the value of</i> £377,246</p>	<p><i>Work with over</i> 1,000 <i>Local businesses to provide a range of services</i></p>
<p><i>Work with over</i> 90 <i>Community & Voluntary Groups</i></p>	<p><i>One of the largest providers of skills training in Northern Ireland with</i> 1,067 <i>TFS & AppNI Students</i> <i>and a contract value of £4 million +</i></p>	<p><i>Hold the Investors in People Silver and Health & Wellbeing Awards</i></p>



Figure 2

Delivery Plans 2019-20

The following sections provides a summary of the key areas of activity planned in 2019-20. Further detail on actions and targets is provides in the accompanying Report Cards.

Future Skills Needs

Between 2012 and 2015 the proportion of the working age population with level 4 and above qualifications has increased from 27.4% to 29.6% while the proportion with no qualifications decreased from 18.4% to 16.3%. While moving in the right direction, the Northern Ireland skills profile remains behind many OECD and European Union countries, particularly in terms of the high proportions here with low or no qualifications. Improving the skills and employability of those who face the greatest barriers to accessing the labour market will remain a priority so that all can share in the benefits of growth.

While recognising that there is a significant level of uncertainty on the future economic position within NI, it is clear from the NI Skills Barometer that if NI is to achieve its economic ambitions, a higher level of economic growth and job creation will be required. The projected level of job creation and in turn the demand for skills at a sub-regional level is anticipated in the following sectors:

- Professional, scientific and technical services;
- Information and communication
- Administration and support services
- Health
- Manufacturing

The future demand for skills is particularly relevant to the Southern Regional College and our future developments will be aligned to these priority areas. In addition the largest supply gap is likely to emerge in the mid-tier skills (NVQ Level 3 and Level 4-5) across most subject areas. The College's curriculum plan for 2019-20 is reflective of the need to respond to supply gaps at Level 3 and above. (Refer to Report Card 1 – Qualifications).

The College has been recognised as a STEM Assured College through the STEM Foundation. It is in this context that a new STEM strategy will be developed and implemented over the course of the new academic year. This strategy is based on the work undertaken to date to strengthen existing provision, and, to identify demand and assess the suitability, scalability and sustainability of any new provision. This strategy aims to better align the College's STEM capability with local and national economic needs and drive regional growth. This STEM strategy will also form the basis of the College's STEM Manifesto to enable effective stakeholder communication and engagement.

(Refer to Report Card 1 – Qualifications)

City Deal

The College is playing a prominent role in trying to inform and shape a co-ordinated education, skills and employability solution as part of the Belfast Region City Deal. The Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) received agreement last November from the Treasury to proceed. The College has been partnering with three other FE Colleges (BMC, NRC and SERC) and six Local Authorities to shape the Employability and Skills Framework that underpins the Belfast City Region Deal. This plan has been informed by the Skills Barometer sub-regional element in conjunction with Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.

The Colleges have played an essential role in the development of the Programme and it is likely that the opportunities for College involvement are likely to increase significantly over the 10 year programme. The second phase of the project up to March 2020, will concentrate on agreeing Outline Business Cases for over 20 major projects and ensuring that skills plans are embedded across all of these projects. The 4 Colleges have agreed to commit to the appointment of a skills manager to place Colleges at the centre of the development of these skills plans and in developing a new understanding of the role and function of skills in Northern Ireland.

Professional and Technical

The College's curriculum portfolio covers a wide number of vocational areas offering progression pathways from entry level through to level 5 and above, Figure 4. We recognise that the vocational or professional and technical qualifications landscape is both complex and often confusing. Over the next three years we anticipate an even closer alignment of vocational/professional and technical pathways with similar qualifications being chosen for apprenticeships and further education thus increasing the opportunity for transferability and progression for the learner by providing flexible sideways movement as well as longitudinal progression for learners.

Skills Training

The College is committed to working with the Department for the Economy, in conjunction with the other regional colleges, to inform the design and delivery of the new system of learning for traineeships and apprenticeships from September 2020. The qualifications reform programme and the out workings of the traineeship and apprenticeship strategies will take time to generate a wider understanding and acceptance of a simplified vocational progression pathway in Northern Ireland.

The College's portfolio of professional and technical courses at level 2 will be altered in line with the introduction of the new traineeship awards from September 2020. In addition, the new system of apprenticeships will lead to an increased focus on the provision of relevant higher skills for local employers.

(Refer to Report Card 1 – Qualifications)

Higher Education (including higher level apprenticeships)

The College welcomes the ambitious and challenging vision for Higher Education in Northern Ireland as set out in the Higher Education Strategy, 'Graduating to Success'. Our current and future higher education curriculum has been informed by a number of external influencers including local council employability and economic development plans and priority higher level skills identified through the DfE skills barometer. The development of new higher education courses both mainstream and degree based apprenticeships is aligned to the sub-regional needs set out through the Skills Barometer. The College will continue to strengthen its partnerships with higher education providers including the Open University and Dundalk Institute of Technology to increase flexibility and widen our offering to meet local and regional needs both now and in the future.

Over the last 3 years the College has piloted a number of new apprenticeships at Level 5 in Accountancy, Digital Marketing, Advanced Engineering and Chemical and Industrial Life Sciences. The College will continue to work through the relevant sector partnerships to introduce new higher apprenticeships in response to regional need.

The College's Business Support and Innovation Unit will lead and co-ordinate our engagement with relevant stakeholders in bringing forward new apprenticeship developments.

(Refer to Report Card 1 – Qualifications)

Inclusive Curriculum - Improving Social Cohesion

The College remains committed to widening participation of those who face significant barriers to education and training including those economically inactive, those with learning difficulties and disabilities, those from under-represented groups in society and those not in employment, education or training (NEETs). The College's Curriculum Strategy aims to provide a relevant and fit for purpose curriculum offer to meet the needs of these learners.

We remain committed to delivering tailored programmes for young people with social and behavioural problems who have had a poor educational experience to date and for whom progression to full time education and training is not yet appropriate. However, the financial position will mean that the College will be forced to withdraw from delivery of the Prince's Trust TEAM programme.

The CONNECT programme introduced in September 2018 in Portadown and Newry will continue. This ESF funded Level 1 programme is targeted at those young people not in education, training or employment. The College will continue to partner with other agencies including Clanrye Training Services and Step By Step to support a coherent regional offer thus maximising the use of public resources.

The College will continue to ear mark Additional Support Funding (ASF) to support students with learning difficulties and disabilities. Despite the challenging financial position and the level of ASF funding the College will make every effort to ensure that the needs of every student are met thus enabling them to fully participate in their chosen course.

(Refer to Report Card 3 – Social Inclusion)

Community Engagement

The College's Community Engagement Strategy aims to provide 'second chance' opportunities to those who might not otherwise participate in education and training or who are trapped in the spiral of economic inactivity and social exclusion. The strategy is based on three main themes;

- **First Steps**; provision offered in the community that aims to encourage continued participation and progression to programmes of study offered through the College's main campuses.
- **Community Development**; specific provision and programmes that supports community development.
- **Economic inclusion**; this area of work aims to bring about social change by addressing economic inactivity. Programmes are linked closely to job creation and moving individual from a culture of benefit dependency to sustained employment.

The College's Community Engagement Strategy places an increased focus on areas of deprivation and social disadvantage (Table 1) and in particular, on the five Neighbourhood Renewal Areas within the southern region. The College remains committed to bringing education and training into the community through a diverse portfolio of courses from entry level to level 2. However, the budgetary position will force the College to scale back on our commitments with community groups.

The College continues to be a leading player in the delivery of the regional neighbourhood renewal strategy and has been instrumental in the development of targeted projects to tackle the perennial challenges of lack of participation and achievement in education and employment of those living within the five neighbourhood renewal areas in Armagh, Brownlow, Lurgan, Newry and Portadown. The College will continue to work with NRP Boards to secure funding to support a range of innovative projects aimed at those economically inactive and most marginalised.

(Refer to Report Card 3 – Social Inclusion)

Essential Skills

Literacy, numeracy and ICT deficits among the adult population across the Southern Region remain a significant barrier for many seeking to enter the labour market as well as those who are in employment. Typically 40% of young people who join the College as full-time learners do not hold a Level 2 qualification in literacy and/or numeracy (GCSE Maths or English) and ICT, while 20% of the adult population continue to exhibit low levels of literacy and numeracy skills. The College is committed to addressing these fundamental skills deficits as an integral part of our mission to promote employability and enterprise, and to contribute to economic development through skills training.

(Refer to Report Card 1 – Qualifications)

School Engagement

The College supports the Entitlement Framework policy commitments of the Department of Education to provide all young people with access to a broad and balanced curriculum at KS4 and post 16 including access to professional and technical qualifications. The College's Schools' Partnership Strategy is designed to place the College at the heart of 14-19 educational provision within the southern region. This has been achieved by developing strategic partnerships with all key stakeholders and by playing a leading role in curriculum development set against the background of the programme for government, the development of relevant skills and the Department for Education's 'Every School a Good School'.

The College remains committed to playing its role in enabling schools to achieve their targets of having at least one-third of their course provision at Key Stage 4 and Post-GCSE in vocational/applied subjects. However, the College remains concerned that the current 'purchaser-provider' model combined with the absence of long term planning within area learning communities will impact on our longer term commitments.

The College welcomes the commitment of DE and DfE to progress a wider programme of work examining all aspects of 14-19 provision across schools and colleges. The College will play its part alongside other regional Colleges in supporting this programme of work.

(Refer to Report Card 1 – Qualifications)

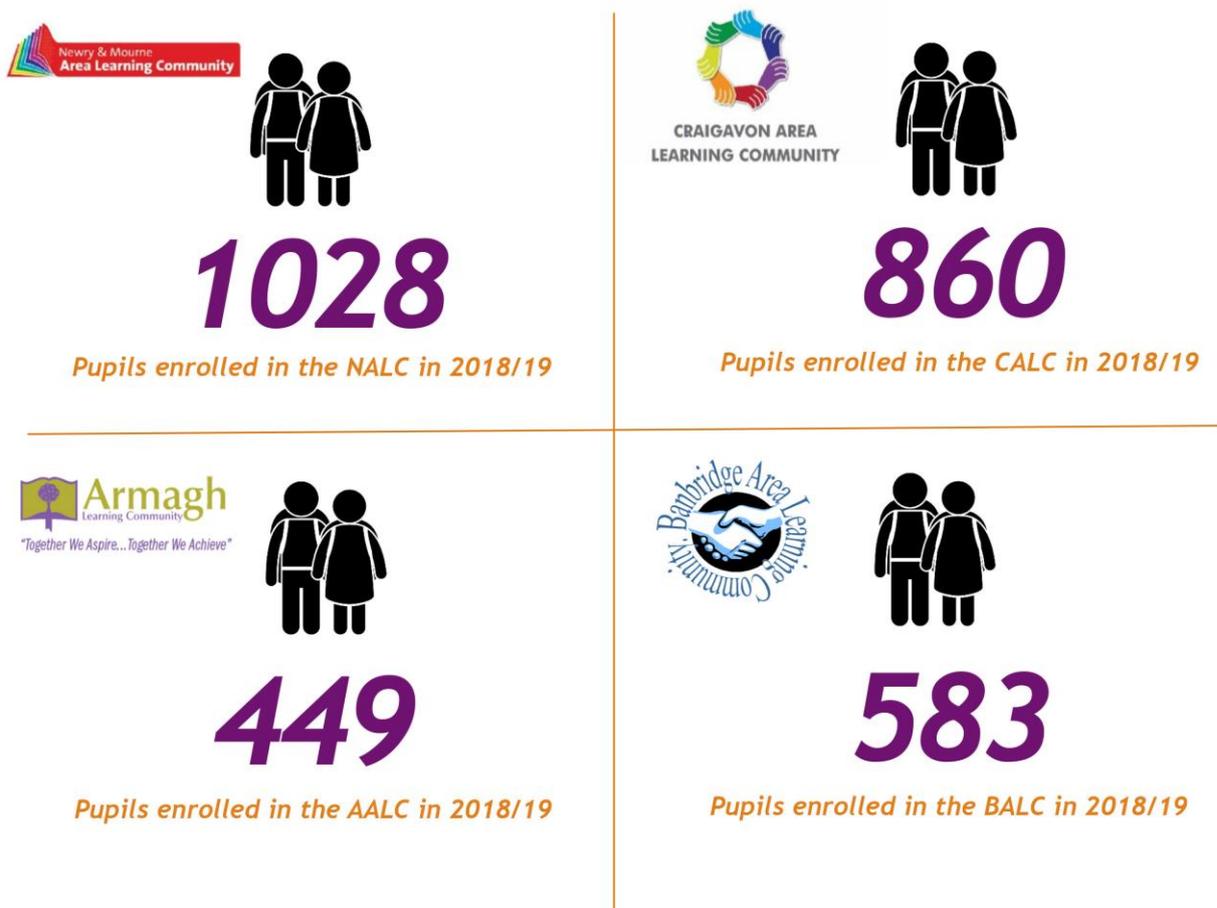
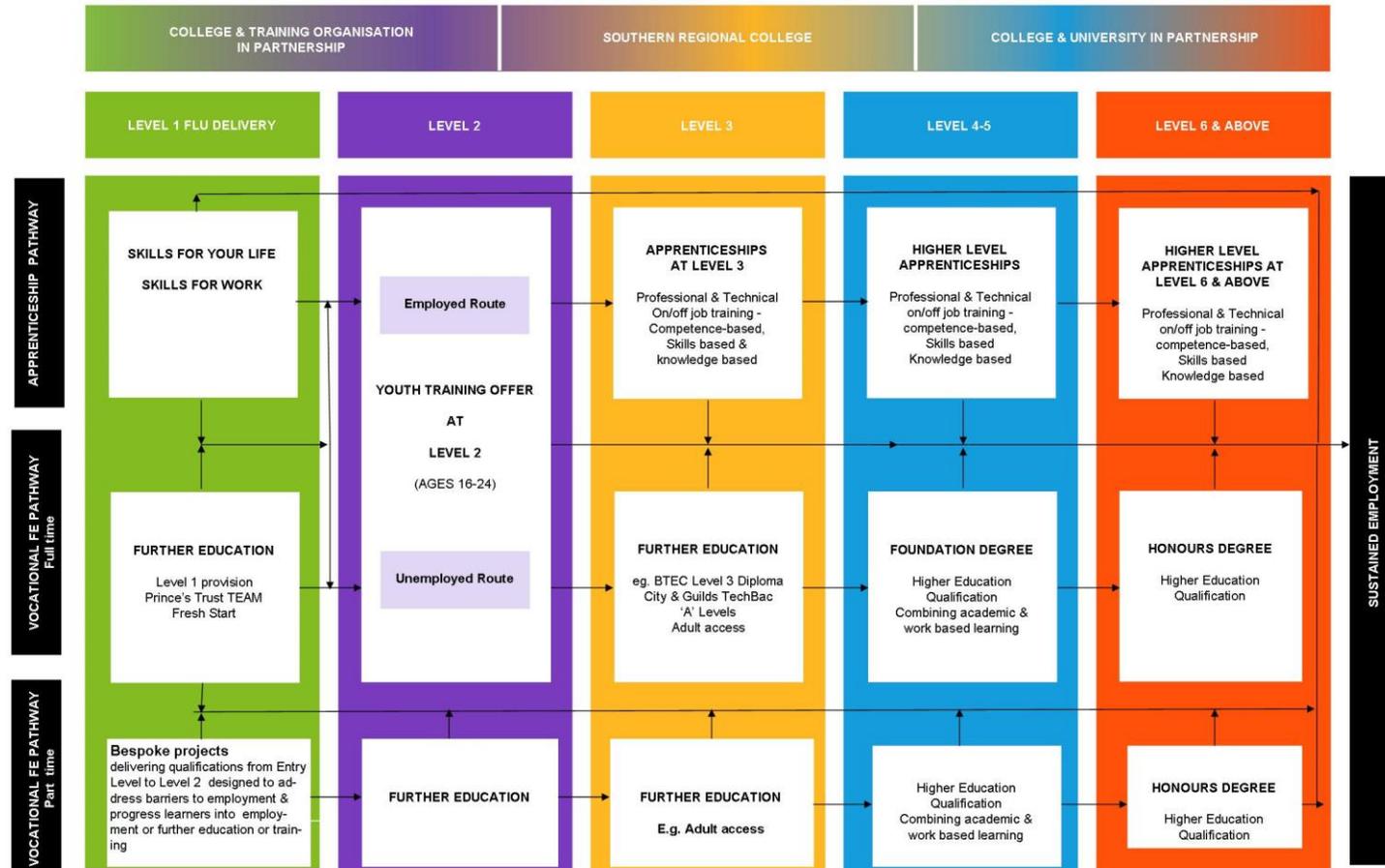


Figure 3

Figure 4 Progression Pathways to Sustained Employment

Curriculum Strategy Diagram



Continuous Professional Development

Our staff are key to driving the College forward and are instrumental in providing a first class system for all learners. It is through their dedication and service that our students continue to thrive and achieve. This is no more evident that through our success in skills competitions at a national and world stage. The College remains committed to supporting staff involved in skills competitions at national and regional level.

Our drive is for continuous improvement in all that we do and our ambition to make a positive economic and social impact on our communities remains as strong as ever despite the fiscal challenges that lie ahead. As part of this wider plan we will continue to invest in upskilling our own lecturing teams to ensure that we are able to respond to changing curriculum and skills needs. Priority will also be given to upskilling lecturing staff in order to respond to the challenges of embedding new skills and technology and ensuring that our curriculum remains relevant particularly at Level 3 and above. This strategy will also be deployed in areas where the college continues to find difficulty in employing full time lecturers.

(Refer to Report Card 1 – Qualifications)

Estates Plans

The College embarked on a estates strategy back in 2009 that aimed ensure that the environment for learning for all students was appropriate and fit for purpose. A key priority for the College, addressed in Estates Strategy, was to to deliver new campus buildings in Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon. Supported by the Department for the Economy (DfE) the College is making significant progress in working towards this end goal.

Following approval of funding from DfE the College is currently progressing the construction of new campus buildings in Armagh and Banbridge with both campuses due to be completed during the 2019-20. The College is now in a position to finalise its preparations for decanting to the new builds in advance of the start of the 2020-21 academic year.

The College obtained planning permission for its new campus in Craigavon and will progress the appointment of a contractor during the new year. This flagship project will be scheduled for completion in 2020.

The College also plans to re-submit an outline business case for the consolidation and redevelopment of our campuses in Newry City.

Provision of Flexible Business Solutions

Over recent years the College's Business Support and Innovation Unit has increased the range of support services to businesses beyond the delivery of courses and training programmes. The College's Business Engagement strategy encompasses a variety of activities to include Innovation, technology and knowledge transfer services in tandem with the traditional skills development and training portfolio on offer.

The Unit will continue to use a range of earmarked funding initiatives including the DfE InnovateUs and Skills Focus programmes, Knowledge Transfer Partnerships, FUSION, Invest NI Innovation Vouchers and ConnectED.

The Business Support and Innovation Unit provides direct support to companies of all sizes thus helping them to innovate, compete and grow through the provision of a unique mix of technical and business know-how, skills development and research and development services. These aims are summarised as follows:

- To help companies innovate, compete and grow through the provision of a unique mix of technical and business know-how, research and development services;
- To support industry-focused curriculum enhancement and innovation in key vocational areas;
- To increase employer-college engagement to underpin, develop and strengthen innovative and flexible approaches to meeting current and future skills needs;

- To enhance the skills and job prospects of students through a range of company to college initiatives;
- To build a reputation for excellence in vocational and technical learning, knowledge & technology transfer, innovation and enterprise.

(Refer to Report Card 2 – Business)

#betterbusiness

Business Support & Innovation

Business Support enrolments: Number of employees trained in southern region by SRC:



These courses are set up bespoke for employers and are in direct response to employer demand. Courses include:

- Leadership and Management (L2 to L5)
- Electrical courses (L2 and L3)
- Digital Collaboration in Construction - BIM (L2 to L4)
- Food Safety (L2/3)
- Customer Service (L2)
- Book keeping (L2)
- Health & Social Care (L2 to L5)
- A range of Health and Safety Courses
- NEBOSH L3
- Heritage Skills – Stonemasonry (L3)
- Social Media for Business (L2/3)
- Performing Manufacturing Operations (L2)
- Laboratory Techniques (L3)
- Business Administration (L3)
- Microsoft Office Suite
- Video Production
- Laser and light Treatment (L4)
- Welding
- Social Media Master Classes

Business Support & Innovation Centre

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SRC

Business Support
& Innovation

Figure 5

Companies Engaged with SRC's Business Support



Figure 6

Curriculum HUB

The Department for the Economy in conjunction with the further education sector has introduced a number of college based HUBs that will act as central leads across priority occupational areas. HUBs will be recognised for their leading work with business and industry and for their capacity to provide expert assistance to support client companies in specific industry sectors/areas of specialism.

The Southern Regional College has been selected as the NI HUB for Life and Industrial Sciences and we aim to work with the other regional colleges in development and implementation of an agreed work plan to further develop science based curriculum including new traineeships and apprenticeships.

(Refer to Report Card 2 – Business)

Quality Management Systems

At the heart of our core values is the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of college operations. The College's Quality and Pedagogy Unit (QIU) exists to further improve teaching and learning and to drive improvements in every aspect of college work. The key areas of responsibilities of the unit are to:

- Develop and support an effective system of course management;
- Provide pedagogic support and innovation aimed at improving teaching and learning;

- Embed an effective system of self evaluation and quality improvement planning including the new ETI Inspection and Self–Evaluation framework (ISEF);
- Support all external inspections and review processes conducted by DfE, ETI and QAA;
- Monitor and evaluate college performance continually and systematically in order to improve the quality of our provision and the levels of achievement across all courses.

Self-evaluation and continuous improvement is well embedded across all curricular and functional areas and is key to the development planning process. The College has reviewed its quality improvement planning processes in light of the publication of the new Inspection and Self Evaluation Framework (ISEF), January 2017. This process informed the structure of the Whole College Quality Improvement Plan and assurance statement for the College's Further Education and Work Based Learning curriculum.

The College's Governing Body play a key strategic role in the governance and management of the organisation, and provide a challenge function to ensure change management strategies including curriculum leadership and planning are implemented to meet the needs of students, staff and a range of external stakeholders. They review key performance indicators relating to enrolment, achievement, retention and progression to ensure continuous improvement of the FE/WBL curriculum offer.

The College has a systematic and well embedded curriculum planning process in place, with associated milestones and timelines to enable effective resourcing, staffing and marketing to deliver a broad, balanced curriculum that promotes economic development and social inclusion. Curriculum planning is robustly reviewed and challenged by the Senior Management Team (SMT), taking account of key stakeholders such as employers and the wider community. This review process contributes to planning for new curriculum.

The unit has a direct role in supporting external inspections and review processes conducted by the Department for the Economy, the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) and the Quality Assurance Agency. The Education and Training Inspectorate carried out an inspection of work based learning provision in Nov 2018. A number of areas were adjudged to have 'important areas of improvement or 'significant areas of improvement. In response to the ETI findings the College has developed a comprehensive recovery plan as part of the whole college self evaluation and quality improvement planning process. This recovery plan is currently being implemented and will be completed in full during the 2019-20 academic year.

BREXIT Preparedness

As part of the Department for the Economy's (DfE) preparation for the UK's exit from the EU, the Department has commissioned research which aims to help NI Colleges assist local organisations in a post BREXIT environment.

The Southern Regional College is an active participant on this project and is leading on one of three work streams to:

- Research and identify industry sectors where there will be an immediate need to address skills shortages post EU exit; and
- Report on the potential skills requirements/shortages at a regional level across NI in the case of an EU exit.

The College has also developed its own plans in preparation for the UK's exit from the EU. These plans have been submitted to the Department for the Economy and will continue to be reviewed in light of changing circumstances.

Value for Money Review of Further Education

The Department for the Economy appointed TRIBAL to undertake a value for money (VfM) review of Further Education Colleges in Northern Ireland in February 2018 with fieldwork conducted between Feb to May 2018.

The purpose of the review was to benchmark the 2016-17 performance of the services and functions provided in all regional Colleges in NI in comparison to FE colleges in other regions of the UK in terms of economy, Efficiency and effectiveness.

The VfM study used two metrics, financial performance and student success rates to derive a measure for Value for Money and the findings for the Southern Regional College are summarised as follows:

- SRC was one of only 3 colleges to have performed better than the NI average in terms of financial performance.
- SRC was one of only 3 colleges to have performed better than the NI average in terms of student success rates.
- SRC was the only College in NI that performed better than the NI average on both success and financial metrics.
- SRC is the closest NI College to the benchmark comparator colleges in England and Wales (EWFE) and the EWFE higher quality comparison.

During the forthcoming academic year the College will support the Department in progressing a wider action to further improve efficiency and effectiveness.

Performance Measures and Outcomes (Report Cards)

A series of performance accountability report cards have been developed that set out what we plan to do over the next year in support of our dual mandate.

These report cards are:

1. Qualifications
2. Employers
3. Social Inclusion – Addressing Economic Inactivity and Barriers to Education

These report cards will be used in year to monitor and report against our stated targets and outcomes.

These outcomes have been mapped to the key performance indicators as set out in the draft Programme for Government.

Each report card uses a baseline position based on historical information to inform projected activity and outcomes for the forthcoming year. In addition, the baseline information is used to inform key issues and activities that will be progressed in 2019-20.

Actions to be progressed 2019-20

AIM REF	OBJECTIVE:	MEASURE:	TARGET:	ACTIONS:
1,2,3	<p>1.1 To provide a relevant and meaningful curriculum portfolio</p> <p>1.2 To widen the educational participation of those most marginalised in society</p> <p>3.1 To contribute to economic development through the provision of responsive business support services and skills training</p>	<p>Enrolments</p> <p>Qualification achievement</p> <p>Support interventions for companies</p>	Refer to report cards	<p>Planned activity</p> <p>To deliver agreed targets and outcomes as set out in CDP reporting template and report cards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualifications • Business Support • Social Inclusion
2	2.3 To increase student and trainee retention and success rates	Recovery plan completed in full	Completed in full June 2020	<p>Quality Improvement</p> <p>The ETI inspection of Work Based Learning provision in Nov 2018 highlighted a number of areas of weaknesses that will be progressed through delivery of a comprehensive recovery plan. The College will progress the delivery of its recovery plan in advance of a follow up ETI inspection</p>
2	2.1 To provide quality education and training experiences for learners and stakeholders	No. participants at NI Skills and UK Skills Competitions	10 students selected for UK Skills - Nov 2019	<p>Skills Competitions</p> <p>Further develop and embed skills competitions as part of our 'enterprising student' initiative</p> <p>Support staff involved in regional and national UK Skills competitions;</p>
2		No. projects and participant students	<p>Two cross curricular projects developed and agreed in advance of Sep 2019</p> <p>PBL timetabling in place in Newry across all full time FE courses</p>	<p>Project Based Learning</p> <p>Pilot a number of cross curricular projects as part of the PBL initiative</p> <p>Pilot new timetabling and support arrangements in PBL in advance of moving to new builds in Armagh and Banbridge in 2020</p>

4	4.2 To commit to the continued professional development of staff to ensure their skills and qualifications support the delivery of a high quality curriculum and support service	Participants Impact on curriculum development Impact on effectiveness of leadership and management	Plan delivered in full by July 2020	<p>Employee Development Deliver the College's Employee Development Plan including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for new lecturers – Post graduate Diploma • Upskilling of staff in priority areas including • Cyber security, Fabrication and welding, Mechatronics • Launch of leadership and management programme for middle managers • OCN L5 in Digital Technologies for Learning <p>The College will continue its work in embedding the Investor in People standard.</p>
4	4.3 To maintain an appropriate organisation structure	Faculty structures fully embedded	New structures and alignment of staff in pace by Sep 2019	<p>Curriculum restructuring To complete the curriculum restructuring plan in advance of the new academic year</p>
2	2.4 To effectively promote the college and increase brand recognition	<p>No. of students</p> <p>No. of students</p> <p>No. of students</p> <p>No. of company endorsements across courses</p> <p>Event</p>	<p>% of L2 students progressing to further study at L3 increased by 2%</p> <p>% of L3 SRC students progressing HE increased by 2%</p> <p>% of external L3 students progressing HE increased by 15%</p> <p>% SPP students progressing to SRC increased by 2%</p> <p>Industry endorsement measures agreed and included in all publications by Jan 2020</p> <p>Launch event</p>	<p>Marketing and promotion</p> <p>To increase the number of young people progressing from level 2 to level 3 and above – (focus on internal L2 provision)</p> <p>To increase the number of SRC students progressing from level 3 to HE</p> <p>To increase the number of external students undertaking FT HE courses at SRC</p> <p>To increase the number of SPP students progressing to SRC FE/WBL</p> <p>To better promote the College's apprenticeship and full time FE offer through a programme of industry endorsements and wider communications steps in line with sector communications strategy</p> <p>To launch the STEM manifesto at a regional level following recognition as an IKE STEM Centre.</p>

		Plan presented to Education committee	Computing curriculum plan developed by Dec 2019	Review of Computing curriculum aimed at addressing decline in FT FE and HE enrolments – review will lead to development of action plan
1	1.1 To provide a relevant and meaningful curriculum portfolio	Appointment made Regional plan for Newry, Mourne Down	Appointment of skills manager by Dec 2019 Plan to be developed in conjunction with NMDC	City Deal To Work with Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and other college partners to develop a regional skills plan as part of the Belfast Region City Deal.
		Meeting attendance Support for promotion event	Attendance at Skills Forum meeting Big Apprenticeship event	Skills Development Continue our work with Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Council's Skills Forum to improve the linkage between local business and industry and education institutions.
		Plan accepted	Plan approved by DfE July 2019 Plan delivered in full by June 2020	Life and Health Science HUB Deliver the action plan for the life and industrial science Curriculum HUB.
		No. of Traineeship programmes	Traineeships introduced by Sep 2020	Traineeship Development Support the development of the new system of traineeships in conjunction with the regional colleges.
		No. of agreements Plan	Articulation agreements agreed (TBC)	Higher Education Partnerships North East Alliance for Further and Higher Education - Progress discussions with Dundalk Institute of Technology to develop new articulation agreements for existing Foundation degree courses.

			Outline plan agreed with OU and Trust by Dec 2019	Progress the development of Nursing related qualifications with the Open University and Southern Health Trust.
		No. apprentices enrolled	Apprentices enrolled -min of 12 in each	Higher Apprenticeships The College will introduce new higher level apprenticeships in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital construction; • Digital marketing, advertising and communication
		Pilot programmes No. of TFS trainees supported	Pilot proposals agreed and submitted to DfE Nov 2019 Learning support processed agreed by June 2019 leading to increased numbers supported under TFS/AppsNI contracts	Social inclusion - Entry and Level 1 Offering Further develop our partnership work with Clanrye Training Services to pilot new Level 1 programmes from Sep 2020. Development of strategic partnership with Clanrye Group in the provision of learning support to TFS trainees and Apprentices.
		Meetings Plans	Three Sector partnership meetings Agreed action plans delivered by June 2020	Sector Partnerships The College will continue to lead and support the work of a number of sector partnerships in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accounting and Financial Services; and • Life and Industrial Science.
		Apprentices	No. of apprentices enrolled – min of 12 in each	Apprenticeships The College will introduce new apprenticeship provision in; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gas/Plumbing L3 (Jan 2020)

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Financial services L3 (Sept 2019)
6	6.1 To progress towards the provision of a modern fit for purpose estates	<p>Possession of new build</p> <p>Appointment</p> <p>Business case</p>	<p>Move to new builds by June 2020</p> <p>Contractor appointed by Dec 2019</p> <p>Business case submitted to DfE by July 2019</p>	<p>Estates Plans</p> <p>Successfully decant to new builds in Armagh and Banbridge in advance of new academic year</p> <p>Appoint contractor for new build in Craigavon</p> <p>Re-submit outline business case for phase 2 of our estates strategy – acquisition of Newry Sports Centre and consolidation of Newry Campuses</p>
	6.2 To assess the continued viability of provision in the Kilkeel Campus	No. of enrolments in semester 1 resulting from consultation exercise	<p>Portfolio agreed by June 2019</p> <p>Marketing literature promoting Kilkeel offering agreed by June 2019</p> <p>Review findings to be presented to Gov Body by Dec 2019</p>	<p>To agree portfolio of courses to be promoted out of the Kilkeel Campus following community consultation process</p> <p>Review uptake and report to Governing Body</p>
3	3.1 To contribute to economic development through the provision of responsive business support services and skills training	Meeting participation	Business support team representation on all council skills fora and chamber events	<p>Business Support</p> <p>Continue to engage and network with local and regional employers and industry support providers – through increased engagement and participation on business fora including local Chambers of Commerce and Trade, NI Chamber of Commerce and Trade, local council skills for a CBI and IOD.</p>
		Cluster Events	A minimum of 5 cluster events to be delivered by 30 April 2020	Establish employer cluster events within each Faculty to support the promotion of higher apprenticeships and core FE delivery – highlighting career opportunities through both pathways
		Cluster Events	2 events held by 31 March 2020	Host 2 Big Apprenticeship events in Portadown and Newry

		Workshops	10 themed business support workshops/seminars by 30 June 2020	Promote and deliver industry upskilling programmes that align to subject areas that are currently under-supplied (as per Skills Barometer findings).
		Workshops	Meetings secured with x 5 additional large employers by 30 June 2020	Promote services and delivery with a minimum of 5 identified large employers in the region

Annex 2 Projected Enrolments

		Target	Actual	
			@ 15 Mar 2019	
Further Education		2018-19	2018-19	Target 2019-20
Level 0/1	FT	120	127	120
	PT	5,142	4,712	4,900
	Total	5,262	4,839	5,020
Level 2	FT	644	600	625
	PT	6,672	6,296	6,400
	Total	7,316	6,896	7,025
Level 3	FT	2,170	2,024	1,924
	PT	2,513	2,558	2,520
	Total	4,683	4,582	4,444
Total	FT	2,934	2,751	2,669
	PT	14,327	13,566	13,820
	Total	17,261	16,317	16,489
Essential Skills				
>=16 and <20		1,865	1,841	1,850
Age 20 and over		868	877	870
Total		2,733	2,718	2,720