

2021-2024



WEST NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COLLEGE  
**COMMUNITY  
ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY**  
Building Social Mobility For All





## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the community engagement strategy is to ensure that the college is placed at the centre of its local communities' regeneration and prosperity. It will achieve this through working in partnership with others to build the confidence of all members of our community. Our mission, vision and values provide a clear route map for our ambitions for the future and our strategic plan sets out the quantifiable ways in which we will achieve this.

Through specific actions within this strategy, the college will ensure that it becomes an **anchor institution** within the communities of North Nottinghamshire, acting as a **force for raising aspiration through social inclusion and social mobility**.

## DEFINING THE SCOPE OF THIS STRATEGY

In many respects the college's reach, certainly in terms of the work that it does with employers, is across a regional footprint. For the purpose of this strategy we define 'community' as the districts immediately served by the college: Mansfield, Ashfield, and parts of Newark and Sherwood and North-East Derbyshire.





However, despite some of the well-rehearsed and well-understood challenges there are significant opportunities. Between the communities of Mansfield and Ashfield there will be a circa £80m investment through the Towns Fund which will see projects come to fruition with a focus on the improvement to quality of life and a significant investment in skills and employment. With projects of regional significance gaining funding through these routes, Mansfield and Ashfield can carve out a future which sees it become a national centre of excellence for automated processes, with the high paid, highly-skilled jobs to match.

The communities are home to some world-leading businesses and high-quality public sector organisations that together can create the opportunities for healthier and more prosperous communities. This strategy sets out the part that the college will play in that journey.

## CONTEXT

The context for the immediate local communities served by the college can appear somewhat bleak. As ex-coal mining communities, Mansfield and Ashfield present significant challenges in terms of social deprivation, skill levels and social mobility. Nationally, Mansfield is one of the lowest areas for social mobility and an area likely to lose the highest number of low-level jobs as a result of automation. The percentage of the population educated to level four and above lags regional and national averages by some margin. In some areas, healthy community indices are amongst the worst in the country.







## OUR MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

**MISSION:** To provide skills to enable students, employer partners and our community to thrive.

**VISION:** We will become a force for raising aspirations across our communities, where high-performing staff encourage students to stretch the boundaries of their potential and, in partnership with employers, develop the workforce of the future.

### VALUES:

**R**espect

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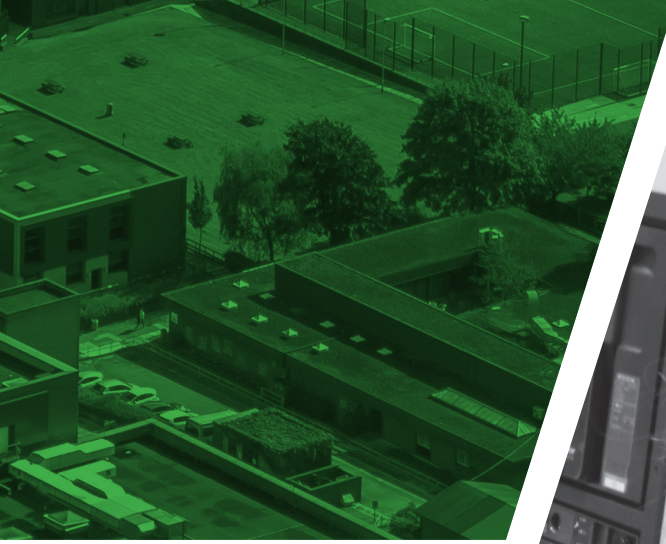
**C**ollaboration

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# STRATEGIC AIMS

The college's strategic aims as they relate to this strategy are set out on this page. The curriculum strategy and employer engagement strategy will provide much more detail into how our curriculum design and delivery will encourage inclusion and how we will work proactively and collaboratively with employers to ensure the local community has high-quality jobs and a skilled workforce able to take on the challenges and opportunities for the future.

## AIM 1: **LEARNERS**

We will encourage and inspire our learners to aim high in life and at work and equip them to achieve these ambitions.

From a community engagement perspective, in order to achieve this aim:

- We need clear communication about the opportunities available to our learners so more of them stay within their local community upon graduation.
- We need to work with our network of schools to ensure that all our young people and the teachers working with them have high aspirations for their future.
- We need to ensure the appropriate stepping stones from community-based provision into vocational or skills-based learning, each supported by carefully designed transition plans.
- We need an engaging and varied adult offer that encourages lifelong learning.
- We need to encourage our 16-18 study programme students to give something back to their communities through volunteering and social action projects.
- We need to support and enable our successful students from disadvantaged backgrounds to become role models and sources of inspiration to those who might look up to them.
- We need to work in partnership with others to reach the most disenfranchised sections of our community.
- We need to work with our network of schools on family learning projects.





- We need to ensure that students are developing skills for future as well as current jobs.
- We need to encourage our students, particularly 16-18 year olds to become positive community role models.
- We will encourage our learners to build their personal resilience, independence and confidence through high-quality skills development and exceptional pastoral support.

## AIM 2: **EMPLOYEES**

We will equip our staff to enable our learners to reach their full potential.

From a community engagement perspective, in order to achieve this aim:

- We need to focus the recruitment of our employees in the local community; as an anchor institution we will provide the opportunities for entry into the jobs market for some of our most hard-to-reach communities.
- We need to ensure that our local employees receive high-quality and impactful CPD to enable them to progress with us or within other local jobs.
- We need to encourage our employees to represent the college on a range of external community-based forums.
- We need to encourage our employees to give something back to the community through volunteering or engagement with the third sector.



### AIM 3: **EMPLOYERS**

We will work with local employers to provide our learners with the skills they need today and those that will help them thrive in the future.

From a community engagement perspective, in order to achieve this aim:

- We need to connect with our local employers to promote the high-quality jobs that exist so that local people work locally.
- We need to work with the DWP and other agencies to ensure that the most disenfranchised are provided with the skills needed for jobs.
- We need to promote the concept of inclusive employment with our local employers so that all within our community are provided with the opportunity for work.

### AIM 4: **COMMUNITY**

We will be a significant force for raising aspirations throughout the communities we serve.

From a community engagement perspective, in order to achieve this aim:

- We need to be a central partner with our local authorities in ensuring that together we reach the most disadvantaged communities in the most impactful way.
- We need to develop a range of student-based projects that develop a sense of community pride.
- We need to open our doors to community-based organisations to provide a place to meet but also a place to develop skills.
- We need to play a central and active role in the levelling-up and place-shaping agendas.
- We need to play an active role in the community compact.
- We need to work proactively and collaboratively with the third sector on projects such as social prescribing, and confidence-building.
- We need to communicate the value of learning and the success of the college across its community.





## AIM 5: **FINANCES**

We will sustain the financial strength required to deliver high-quality services in response to new challenges.

From a community engagement perspective, in order to achieve this aim:

- We need to leverage central government funding opportunities such as the levelling-up fund and towns fund to have the biggest impact on our local communities.
- We need to maximise the use of public funds so that learning provides real value-for-money for the individual.
- We need to work with partners who have access to funding routes that are not open to us in order to bring maximum benefit to our communities.
- We need to ensure that we can bring match-funding to bear whenever possible in order to strengthen bids.

## AIM 6: **INFRASTRUCTURE**

We will continue to invest in efficient and well-managed facilities, systems and resources to support outstanding learning.

From a community engagement perspective, in order to achieve this aim:

- We need to maximise the potential of technology-enhanced learning to extend our reach.
- We need to be mindful of digital poverty and to work collaboratively with others to ensure that digital poverty does not exclude members of our community.
- We need to ensure that our buildings and our technology is accessible to members of our community in the evening and out of term-time.
- We need to take our learning into accessible venues so that all members of our community can benefit.



# OUR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY – WHAT WE WILL ACHIEVE

## 1 | AN ANCHOR INSTITUTION WITHIN OUR LOCAL COMMUNITIES

We will:

- Play a central role in the place-shaping boards for both Mansfield and Ashfield and ensure that projects utilise public funding for the greatest value.
- As an employer ensure that we are an exemplar of inclusive employment practice; target roles for supported internships, care leavers and long-term unemployed.
- Work with local authority teams, third sector organisations and other stakeholders to provide learning in identified estates where indices of deprivation is the highest.
- Allow our staff to undertake volunteering or hold public office by allowing all of them 24-hours per-year for such roles.
- As well as formal work placement ensure the majority of our 16-18 year-old students undertake some form of social action, fundraising or volunteering hours.
- Actively and proactively celebrate the best our community has to offer.
- Open our doors in the evening and out of term-time to third sector organisations.
- Work in partnership with other organisations to maximise value from the public purse.

## 2 | A FORCE FOR RAISING ASPIRATION THROUGH SOCIAL MOBILITY AND PERSONAL CONFIDENCE

We will:

- Develop a family learning programme that adds real value to upskilling parents.
- Ensure we promote opportunities for learning and work across our local schools network.
- Develop a network of community role models from within our student body.
- Work in partnership with the local authority and DWP to provide the skills needed for jobs to individuals who are hardest-to-reach.
- Provide clear stepping stones pathways from community-based learning into vocational core learning.
- Develop an adult offer that provides opportunity for upskilling and reskilling.
- Work with our employer network to ensure they are gaining the benefits of inclusive employment.





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