



Local Needs Duty & Annual Accountability Agreement 2024-25

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1 Introduction and Background

The Government set out its vision to transform further education in the Skills for Jobs White Paper (2021) and, as part of the reforms, colleges and other in-scope providers are required to submit an annual accountability agreement focusing on what and how they intend to deliver in support of local, regional and national needs. This accountability agreement sets out a number of outcome targets focussed on curriculum changes and adaptations to provision planned for the coming year. These plans and targets articulate how Buckinghamshire College Group will contribute to sector priorities outlined in Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) and to national skills priorities.

2 Buckinghamshire College Group Mission and Values

2.1 Our Mission

TRANSFORMING FUTURES THROUGH LEARNING

2.2 Our Vision

We will deliver excellence in employer focused technical, vocational and professional education, improving life chances for individuals and supporting communities throughout Buckinghamshire and beyond to realise their career ambitions.

3 Buckinghamshire College Group Strategic Values and Goals

Buckinghamshire College Group (BCG) was formed in 2017 as a result of a merger between Aylesbury College and Amersham and Wycombe College and has recently refreshed its strategic plan to take the College to 2028. BCG provides high quality technical, vocational and professional education enabling young people, apprentices and adults to achieve their career and life goals. We play a key part in Buckinghamshire's Place Based Leadership approach to driving economic growth and prosperity for all across the county.



Our strategic values drive what and how we do things and have been developed in collaboration with staff, students and stakeholders:

- AMBITION - We are highly ambitious and support everyone to achieve more than they ever thought possible
- INNOVATION - We are continuously improving and embrace the power to think differently about how we learn and work
- INTEGRITY - We operate with honesty and fairness and deliver on our promises
- RESPECT - We value diversity and the opinions and contributions of others, acting with kindness and respect for all

Our Strategic Plan 2023-28 sets out five clear strategic goals:

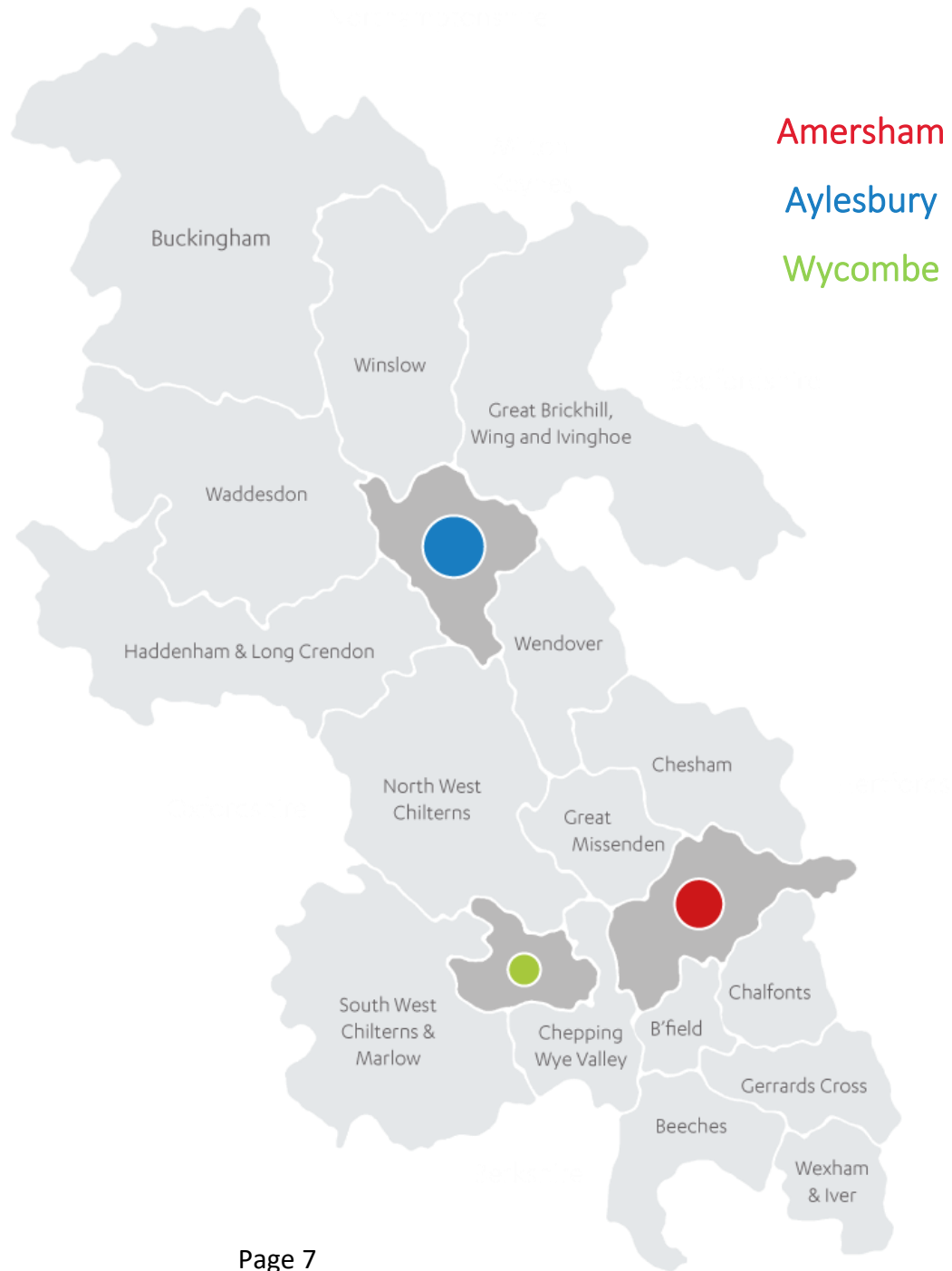
- Create exceptional learning experiences for all our students - We will place learning at the heart of what we do and maintain an unwavering focus on developing exceptional and inclusive learning experiences for our students, ensuring the very best outcomes for all.
- Develop and deliver a future proofed, careers-focused curriculum - We will closely align our curriculum with the region's current and future skills needs, ensuring that our students progress positively in life and their future careers.
- Empower and support our people to thrive and achieve personal and professional goals - We will build an inclusive culture to attract, retain and develop high performing staff who feel empowered and supported to innovate, question and build positive career paths.
- Strengthen our financial resilience supporting investment for a sustainable future - We will build our financial resilience to enable investment in our estate and resources, reducing carbon emissions and ensuring that stakeholders benefit from excellent learning environments both now and into the future.
- Grow our impact in the local and regional economy and enhance our reputation - We will operate at the heart of the Region's skills community developing strong employer and community partnerships and a reputation for excellence.

4 Buckinghamshire College Group in Context

Buckinghamshire College Group operates from three main campuses in Aylesbury, Flackwell Heath (Wycombe) and Amersham and has exciting plans to transition from Flackwell Heath and Amersham to a brand-new purpose-built campus right in the heart of High Wycombe in 2026. BCG works closely in partnership with key stakeholders to ensure that we continue to meet the economic, skills and social needs of the Buckinghamshire community.

In 2020, former Buckinghamshire district councils and county council came together to form a single Unitary Authority, Buckinghamshire Council. Buckinghamshire is well connected to the existing road and rail network, including the M40, London underground and national rail services which run north to south. High Speed Rail 2 (HS2) is under construction through the county, from London to Birmingham. East West Rail (EWR) is under construction to connect Oxford to Milton Keynes and Bedford. HS2 and EWR cross at Calvert in the north of the county.

Buckinghamshire has a fast-growing population with a 0.6% annual change (between 2019-2020) according to the 2021 ONS report and a total population of 534,720. The south is densely populated, whilst the north is more sparse, however, there has been a particularly large population change in Aylesbury Vale which has seen a 10.4% rise since 2011, the highest rate of growth of any local authority in Great Britain. 16-18 year old population is predicted to peak in 2027 representing one of the highest demographic increases nationally.



4.1 Social Needs

Buckinghamshire is an affluent county, however this overall picture masks significant variations in outcomes across the county, with some areas experiencing substantial hardship. Across multiple indices of deprivation and inequality¹, the wards experiencing the poorest outcomes within High Wycombe and Aylesbury areas are served by the College. 22% of Bucks residents are identified as ‘urban adversity and financially stretched’ according to Acorn² household segmentation data and there is a life expectancy³ difference of 8 years for a woman and 6 years for a man depending on where residents live in Buckinghamshire. The Council has launched a local approach to levelling up through its flagship Opportunity Bucks programme which is supported by the College. Taking a partnership approach, the programme aims to tackle local priorities to make a difference to the lives and lifestyles of people living in areas of Aylesbury, Chesham and High Wycombe.

4.2 Education Profile

47.5% of Bucks residents have a degree or equivalent qualification or higher compared to 43.5% nationally and 66% of pupils achieve grades 9-5 in GCSE English and Maths compared to 52% nationally⁴. However, 27% of the residents over the age of 16 in a number of deprived county

¹ MHCLG Indices of Deprivation 2019

² CACI Acorn geodemographic segmentation data (2022)

³ ONS Life expectancy at birth (2019)

⁴ Department for Education (2016/17 to 2020/21 for Buckinghamshire)

wards have no qualifications at all compared to 17% across Buckinghamshire. 31% of 16-18 students enrolled at the College come to us with neither GCSE English nor Maths at grade 4 or above compared to 26% studying at FE colleges nationally⁵.

4.3 Post-16 Education and Training Providers

Buckinghamshire operates a mixed education economy with selective Grammar schools, upper schools, school sixth forms, UTC and the further education college. There is an Adult Education Service operating across Bucks, and several private training providers as well as a number of schools providing for students with learning difficulties and disabilities. The local universities offer higher level vocational degrees and degree apprenticeships with a particular focus on offering careers related courses.

⁵ RCU MIDES Data 2022-23

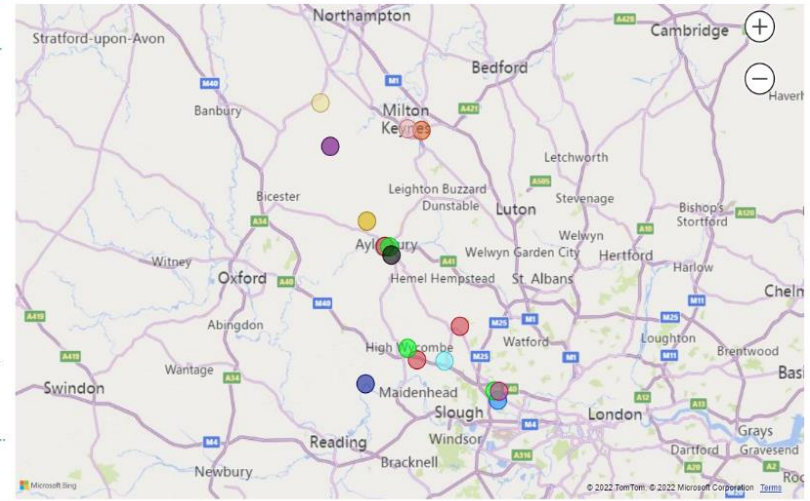
5 Buckinghamshire Business and Economic Profile

Official data⁶ suggests that Buckinghamshire's economy is slightly more productive than the national (UK) average, although it has lost ground in recent years. In 2010, Buckinghamshire was ranked 4th highest of the 38 LEP areas in terms of productivity but by 2020 had slipped to 9th position. When the housing element is stripped out, Buckinghamshire has below national average levels of productivity, and sits mid-table of all LEP areas. Buckinghamshire's economy supports a predominance of small businesses with levels of self-employment second highest of all 38 LEP areas, particularly within the County's creative and construction sectors. The county boasts world-class economic assets and strong growth potential in the areas of film and TV, high-performance engineering, space and medtech with one of the least 'self-contained' labour markets in England (high levels of commuting into London and to other nearby large towns and cities).



- Brunel University
- Buckinghamshire University Technical College (U...
- Bucks College Group (Amersham Campus)
- Bucks College Group (Aylesbury Campus)
- Bucks College Group (High Wycombe Campus)
- Bucks Construction Academy
- Bucks New University (Aylesbury Campus)
- Bucks New University (High Wycombe Campus)
- Bucks New University (Uxbridge Campus)
- Henley Business School (Greenlands Campus)
- National Film and TV School
- Open University
- Silverstone University Technical College (UTC)
- South Central Institute of Technology (Milton Ke...
- The University of Buckingham
- University of Bedfordshire (Aylesbury Campus)
- West London Institute of Technology (Uxbridge c...

Location of Post-16 Education & Training Establishments in Buckinghamshire



⁶ Subregional productivity: labour productivity indices by economic enterprise region - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)

Following the recent integration of the LEP functions into Buckinghamshire Council, the College, through its active representation on the Growth Board, Skills Strategy Board and underpinning task and advisory groups, is well placed to contribute to the future skill agenda and economic development of the County.

The Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) has identified the following key sectors as priority areas for future skills development:

- Construction
- Film and Television
- Health and Social Care
- Digital
- Engineering

The LSIP also identified key cross cutting themes highlighted as areas for development across all priority sectors:

- Work readiness including digital literacy - For a lot of employers, work readiness ranked higher than technical skills and key to their business performance and growth. The majority of employers gave the view that it is the basic attitudes to work that is often missing.
- Green skills – net zero - The need for the workforce to have a greater awareness of net-zero and their own contribution to this has been reported across all the priority sectors. However, this demand is more acute in the construction and engineering sectors.

6 Key Stakeholders Consulted

The College has worked closely with Buckinghamshire Business First as the Employer Representative Body to help shape the LSIP work. We have built on already strong links with key priority sector employers, Buckinghamshire County Council and other providers and have worked in partnership with the following main stakeholders in the development of this agreement:



7 Local Needs Duty

The governing body assesses how Buckinghamshire College Group meets local, regional and national skills needs on a regular basis to inform long-term strategic planning and operational scrutiny of the near-term actions to better meet local needs.

Key practices of scrutiny include the annual curriculum planning cycle, which ensures alignment to priority sectors and labour market demand and the five-year strategic plan which takes an outward-looking approach to position the college at the forefront of changing skills needs. This year's accountability statement focuses on addressing priority curriculum needs in renewable technologies, healthcare professions and media production.

Together these mechanisms of review enable regular scrutiny of how the college serves its communities by filling skills gaps, avoiding duplication, and collaborating with partners like Buckinghamshire New University on aligned HE curriculum and clear progression pathways. Alongside curriculum development, capital investment of £2.5m has been allocated to improve technology infrastructure, learning facilities and resources ensuring that the college is better equipped to meet local and national priority skills needs.

In addition to meeting economic needs, key priorities include the development of wider employability skills, identified in the Local Skills Improvement Plan as 'Work Readiness' skills and raising aspirations. The establishment of Employer Boards for every curriculum area will ensure the college maintains a strong connection with industry so that our offer remains agile, responsive and future focused.

The Corporation remains outward-focused, proactively responding to evolving regional, national, and global skills environments. This dynamic approach empowers Buckinghamshire College Group to take the lead in technical education, thereby enhancing productivity and fostering inclusive growth within Buckinghamshire.

8 Buckinghamshire College Group's plans to meet local (LP) and national skills (NP) needs

Skills Priority Area	NP	LP	Identified Need	Buckinghamshire College Group Priorities and Objectives for 2024/25
Construction Skills Sector	✓	✓	Requirement for increased provider capacity to meet demand for qualified construction trades professionals at level 2/3. Gaps in provision related to civil engineering and renewables apprenticeships and training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce Site Management Safety Training Scheme (SMSTS) qualification to support site management skills development with minimum of 20 enrolments by July 2025. • Launch the Buckinghamshire Green Energy Skills Training Centre at Aylesbury campus and with 50 enrolments before July 2025 on the short courses: Heat Pump Systems, Solar Photovoltaic Systems, Solar Thermal Systems, Awareness of Environmental Technologies and Rainwater Harvesting & Greywater Recycling Systems. • Upskill 10 qualified plumbers or electricians in low carbon heating technologies through a pilot Skills Bootcamp by June 2025. • Upskill 15 construction casual labourers in fundamental bricklaying skills through a Skills Bootcamp with five learners progressing to an accelerated Bricklaying apprenticeship. • Train a minimum of 30 unemployed adults in the skills and CSCS qualification needed to gain employment in the construction sector. • Evaluate demand and feasibility for the introduction of the Low Carbon Heating Technician apprenticeship from September 2025. • Develop capacity and resources to introduce T Level, and T Level Foundation Year (TLFY) courses in Civil Engineering (with a confirmed pathway for Year 2) from September 2025 at Aylesbury campus. • Research Modern Methods of Construction and related skills demand to identify course and learning space adaptations for 2025/26 curriculum offer. • Include Level 1 construction shield (MH awareness, manual handling and emergency first aid) into L1 construction study programmes. L2 study programmes to include Award in Health and Safety and CSCS course to enable learners to apply for the CSCS Card.

Skills Priority Area	NP	LP	Identified Need	Buckinghamshire College Group Priorities and Objectives for 2024/25
Film and TV Industry		✓	Insufficient numbers of people entering and progressing within the sector with supporting sector skills (production skills, construction, accounting, leadership and management, hair and makeup).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch T Level in Media, Broadcast and Production [Media Technician route] in September 24 with a minimum of 16 learners enrolled. • Secure a keystone employer for the T level in Media, Broadcast and production who will provide a good proportion of the Industry Placements. • Invest £183,000 to provide learning spaces with state-of-the-art broadcast and production equipment at our Amersham Campus future proofing the College's Film and TV Production provision. • Launch the T Level Foundation Year (TLFY) course in Media Production in September 2024 with a minimum of 16 learners enrolled. • Support development of 'Screen Bucks' bringing providers and industry together to develop a county wide approach to the Film and TV sector including talent and skills. • Research and develop links with industry partners such as BFI, Bucks Young Creatives and BNU to set up a summer film school for Years 10 and 11 from summer 2026. • Evaluate demand and feasibility for a Skills Bootcamp to upskill carpenters to set builders exploring a partnership with CMS.
Engineering and manufacturing	✓	✓	Lack of Engineering provision in Buckinghamshire leading to lack of talent pipeline through to key industry sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with Buckinghamshire New University and the LSIP Engineering Sector Group to develop student pipelines for T Level and apprenticeship programmes in mechanical and electrical engineering at levels 2 and 3 for commencement in September 2026.

Skills Priority Area	NP	LP	Identified Need	Buckinghamshire College Group Priorities and Objectives for 2024/25
Health and Social Care	✓	✓	Requirement to support more young people and adults to enter health and care professions including the overseas workforce. Additional skills needed to support increased prevalence of mental health illness. Need to specifically support skills shortages in social care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reintroduce T Level in Supporting the Care of Families and Young People (Social Care) for 24/25 starts with a target of 15 students (Aylesbury) • Introduce the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate blended learning and workplace assessment with a minimum of 16 completing the qualification by July 2025 • Introduce a refreshed Level 1 provision in Health & Social Care, target of 28 enrolments across Aylesbury and High Wycombe. • Introduce refreshed T Level Foundation Year (TLFY) in Health & Science with 33 enrolments, to include a gateway science qualification to better support progression to the Level 3 T Level. • Refreshed Access to HE courses to provide clear career pathways through to Nursing, Paramedic and Allied Health Professions, aligned to Buckinghamshire New University Higher Education courses, with a target of 18 enrolments. • Launch HealthTec simulation suite to support provision of new adult learning provision in social care and provide immersive learning to young people throughout Buckinghamshire, improving work readiness and enabling them to engage with the range of career pathways. • Introduce Dental Nursing Apprenticeships and workplace Diploma qualifications with a minimum of 15 enrolments in by the end of 2024/25. • To continue to support our students and staff introduce mental health first aid and awareness training.
Digital	✓	✓	Skills shortage in a number of occupations including software development and cyber security. Work readiness skills and appropriate aptitude are seen as key.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work collaboratively with Buckinghamshire New University and Buckinghamshire Business First to research demand for Digital Apprenticeships at levels 3 and 4 for example Information Communications Technician and in Data and Software related occupations, providing a progression pathway to BNU's higher education apprenticeships and courses. • Work with a Digital T Level ambassador to develop a 'Placement Toolkit' to provide a framework to encourage and support digital employers to provide digital industry placements.

Skills Priority Area	NP	LP	Identified Need	Buckinghamshire College Group Priorities and Objectives for 2024/25
Cross sectoral - Work Readiness including digital literacy		✓	Employers identified need to improve the level of work readiness amongst Buckinghamshire school, college and university leavers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build on current Employer Advisory Boards throughout the BCG curriculum ensuring that all programmes are co-designed and co-delivered with sector specialist employers. Introduce a CPD week in the autumn term, for all full-time students and young apprentices focussed on work readiness which will include the 'Velocity' event. Invest in four new Digital Champions roles who will promote, train and support curriculum staff to integrate transformational technologies such as Microsoft Teams, VR/AR and Interactive classroom technologies into learning for all students
Cross sectoral – essential skills	✓	✓	Essential skills up to Level 2 in English, mathematics, and Level 1 for digital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support county wide 'Opportunity Bucks' work through the Personal Career and Apprenticeship Mentors' work with OB students to improve their study and progression outcomes, specifically increasing the numbers of OB students who progress to apprenticeship, next level learning and Higher Education. As part of Multiply Project, increase the participation in the Strand 3 numeracy courses, with a target of 350 enrolments, an increase from 216 learners in 23/24. Launch a wider variety of stepping stone essential skills courses for adults to target 140 enrolments by July 2025 (increase of 100%).
Cross sectoral – supporting skills		✓	Need to support job roles, e.g. business administration and leadership and management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce Business Administration and Accountancy apprenticeships with 10 apprentices on each in learning by end July 2025 Upskill 12 employees into supervisory roles working for Buckinghamshire SMEs on the Step into Leadership Skills Bootcamp by July 2025
Cross sectoral - green skills	✓	✓	Employers identified need to enhance knowledge of green agenda throughout priority industry sectors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through our 'curriculum 2030' strategy, as part of redesigned study programmes and apprenticeships, industry relevant sustainability, green skills and knowledge will be included in every programme. Upskill all staff in sustainability through our 'GreenFest' CPD event, supported by the Sustainability Academy so that all staff relate Sustainability Development Goals to their job role. By July 2025, all Course Learning Plan course profiles will articulate how the course content meets at least one Sustainability Development Goal.

9 Corporation Statement of Endorsement

On behalf of Buckinghamshire College Group, it is hereby confirmed that the College plan as set out above reflects an agreed statement of purpose, aims and objectives as recommended by the Quality, Curriculum & Students governance committee meeting on 12 June 2024 and approved via email by the Corporation Board on 21 June 2024. The plan will be published on the College's website within three months of the start of the new academic year and can be accessed from the following link: <https://www.buckscollegigroup.ac.uk/about-the-college/corporate-information/strategic-plan>.



Martin Tugwell

Chair of Governors

Dated: 24/06/2024



Jenny Craig

Principal/Chief Executive and Accounting Officer

10 Linked Documents

Please see links below to documents which have been referenced or informed this accountability agreement:

BCG strategic plan 2023-28 <https://www.buckscollegigroup.ac.uk/ambition>

Buckinghamshire Local Skills Improvement Plan [Local Skills Improvement Plan - Buckinghamshire Business First \(bbf.uk.com\)](https://www.bbf.uk.com)