



BMet Strategic Annual Plan 2021-22



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Welcome to BMet and its Future Focus

Birmingham Metropolitan College (BMet) is a college that is firmly focused on raising aspirations and improving life chances for young people and adults in Birmingham and its borders.

Since 2019 BMet is now recognised as a primarily Birmingham focussed college and we intend to continue to accelerate our improvement strategy so that high quality learning is delivered at every BMet college site with provision that equips local people with skills and knowledge to take them further in their careers.

In 20/21 BMet transferred its last provision (in sports) that sits outside Birmingham in Kidderminster to the Newcastle College Group. This transfer has been supported by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), the Further Education Commissioner's Office, Worcester University, Kidderminster Harriers and Wyre Forest District Council.

We want to enhance our relationships with employers and ensure that the skills and curriculum we provide meet their business needs for today and tomorrow. We need to ensure that we equip our students and apprentices with up-to-date skills and knowledge but also, crucially, confidence, resilience, interpersonal skills and the 'cultural capital' to succeed.

We have amazing staff at BMet whose dedication to their students is second to none. They give their very best, day in day out and our students recognise this. Our sports team have supported our students to retain the Ability Counts Knockout cup winners Championship and our digital staff have been praised by their students and employers for their support of students competing and winning national and regional digital competitions (e.g. Fujitsu's Operation Innovations). Our whole College response to Covid was recognised by the Birmingham Post Business Awards alongside our employer engagement work celebrated at the Greater Birmingham Chamber of Commerce Awards, as well as receiving Highly Commended status AoC Beacon Awards. We will endeavour to retain and attract high calibre staff to BMet during and beyond the period of this plan.

We have a talented and highly skilled Board of Governors who have steered the college through some challenging issues in recent years. They all recognise the fundamental values of Further Education and the opportunities it provides for people who may have experienced little success in education before stepping into the college. A few of our Governors are BMet alumni themselves who have gone on to very successful careers and we are fortunate to have such a wide range of skills and expertise around the Boardroom table.

BMet has a strong heritage in the City of Birmingham with two of the colleges, Matthew Boulton and James Watt, named after founding forefathers of the City of Birmingham who pioneered its global reputation. We are aware of our responsibility to ensure that the education and skills we provide equip the current generation to succeed and achieve fulfilling careers in the city and beyond.

We hope you enjoy reading our plan and that our ambitions for the continuing development of BMet resonate with your expectations of a future focused college with the City at its heart.

Context

The college sees itself as central to the City of Birmingham and seeks to take advantage of the political, economic and policy changes that continue to take place, for the benefit of our students. Collaboration is a key part of our success and alongside our stakeholders and partners we are keen to have influence in shaping a complex and uncertain landscape in which BMet and Further Education more broadly continue to operate.

The White Paper 'Skills for jobs: lifelong learning for opportunity and growth' reinforces our commitment to expanding and growing our apprenticeship offer as well as Level 4 and 5 programmes in line with regional skills needs. The post Brexit and COVID landscape continues to challenge our ability to remain competitive and deliver a thriving economy. We await further reform following Government reviews into Post 18 Funding Review; the Level 4 and Level 5 review; the Level 3 review; and the next spending review. However, the White Paper has set a clear direction with regard to Higher Technical Qualifications, a future adult entitlement and a stronger alignment with employers as well as flexibilities including Digital boot camps and the National Skills Fund. BMet is well positioned to enhance its relationships with employers through its membership of the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Institute of Technology and strong links with the Greater Birmingham Chambers and its apprenticeship work with hundreds of SMEs and large employers. BMet will build up its capacity to be responsive through its AEB funding working with a range of stakeholders to ensure adults are ready and entering jobs. For example, working with DWP, primes, employers and other stakeholders in the third sector who support those adults harder to reach.

More specifically, the publication of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) State of the Region 2021 Report (August) sets the challenges and priorities with which BMet is aligned.

WMCA five key short-term challenges

- Delivering Good Jobs
- Supporting Thriving Places
- Embedding our Green Ambitions
- Tackling inequality and Levelling-up
- Preventing a Lost Generation

WMCA long-term sustainable outcomes

- Good Health and Wellbeing – Happier, healthier Society
- Decent Work and Economic Growth – Prosperous Society
- Reduced inequalities – Fairer society
- Clean & Affordable energy – Greener Society
- Sustainable Communities – Strong Communities
- Industry, innovation and Infrastructure

WMCA – 100k Jobs Plan

- Retraining and job outcomes;
- Specialisms (level 3 & 4 delivery) – Construction, health, digital and green
- Place-based leadership (Youth hubs/Adult retraining hubs, locally focussed)
- Development of new curriculum (LSIP, communities, alternative offer for young people)

These aims are to be welcomed against a backdrop where the West Midlands has the lowest employment rate of any of the mayoral combined authorities, an unemployment rate above the national average and high numbers of residents in low paid jobs. The impact of the pandemic has only exacerbated these figures, particularly for young adults.

BMet continues to build and develop new partnerships and innovative collaborations both with the FE colleges in the region through Colleges West Midlands and joint funding opportunities; and with business driving an agile and responsive skills system supporting higher level skills, supporting businesses to adapt to new technologies and preparing young people for life and work. It is the partnership between BMet, our FE and University partners, businesses, key stakeholders including the WMCA, Local Authorities, Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce and the LEAs, and critically with our communities and residents that is a key component of our local skills ecosystem and a real driver for change, employability, productivity and prosperity for all.

Vision, Values, Strategic Priorities

In developing our vision, values and strategic priorities, we have consulted with our staff, students and stakeholders. We believe that our vision and values provide clear direction for a college that is for Birmingham and at the heart of Birmingham.

Our Strap Line

Inspiring Futures, Realising Dreams.

Our Vision

We aim to provide excellent learning opportunities to serve the needs of Birmingham and the City Region.

Our Values

- We are passionate to see our students achieve their full potential.
- We create an environment that is ready, respectful and safe.
- We see strength in our diversity and strive for equality of access and opportunity.
- We are inspired to be creative and continually develop our professional practice.
- We are three colleges, one team.

Our strategic priorities are to:

1. be a significant contributor to skills development in Birmingham and the City Region;
2. provide a consistently high-quality learning experience;
3. equip our students for the future;
4. be an inspiring place to work; and
5. have a strong financial base to invest in a sustainable future for the college.



1

Strategic Priority 1: **To be a significant contributor to skills development in Birmingham and the City Region**

James Watt College

Vision

James Watt College aims to be a leading provider of technical and professional education in the region, offering high-quality training in priority sector subject areas that benefits the national and regional economy. The College aims to deliver provision in the West Midlands Combined Authority priority sectors of Construction and the Built Environment, Digital, Education, Health and Social Care and Early Years.

Building on Existing Strengths

The College offers high quality provision in Construction, Engineering, Education, Health and Social Care, Early Years and Digital and aims to grow these areas of strength over the next three years. The College also meets the local and regional economic need well by delivering provision in Rail, Construction, English, Maths and ESOL to those who are unemployed.

Around 70% of all apprentices at BMet go through James Watt College, with a significant number of apprentices in Engineering alone. The strength of the College is its relationships with key industry leading employers such as BMW, KnowHow, Tulip, Pladis, McVities, Schneider Electrical and Baxi and, to achieve the goals set out below, will further strengthen these over the coming year.

Expanding the Offer

The College will expand into the following areas over the next three years:

- **The Built Environment & Site Management:** The region has a significant skills gap in higher level Construction and construction management and the College will respond by offering a range of provision to contribute to closing this gap This will include the development of 'SOBE' - School of Built Environment, which will offer a range of programmes for 16-18's, Adults and employers.
- **Sustainable Technology:** With the growing desire for a greener economy, the College will offer provision in sustainable automotive technology to become a centre of excellence for sustainable technology and electric car charging points as well as a wider sustainability agenda including retro-fit
- **Rail:** The College will work with employers and partners ensuring Level 2 and Level 3 Rail Engineering programmes are of the highest quality and lead to job outcomes for all. We will develop provision into higher level Rail programmes and bespoke short programmes to support the industry and HS2 developments.

- **Digital:** The college will develop its digital curriculum offer through collaboration and partnership work with the IoT, Digital Construction College and employers. Expanding the curriculum to reflect industry 4.0 across all departments. There will be a considerable focus on Media and Games where we will look to increase the number of Junior Content Producer apprenticeships over the next 3 years and review and re-launch games design and development to meet the needs of industry.
- **Construction:** The College will continue to revise its Construction Trades offer to reflect the major Construction projects that will begin over the next three years, looking to work with Employers and partners to offer a range of programmes within house building and other growth areas with construction such as groundworks.
- **Gas Engineering:** Currently there are only two End Point Assessment Centres for Gas Engineering, with James Watt College being one of these. The College will become the number one training provider for Gas Apprenticeship Standards delivery in the UK by creating a national training centre and support employers with retrofit training.
- **Higher Education:** The College will continue to grow its Foundation Degree provision in Engineering, while developing an offer in Games Design, Early Years and Education. It will have an innovative curriculum design that enables highly flexible delivery both full and part time.
- **Food and Drink Manufacturing:** Grow apprenticeship provision with the targeting of national contracts, including growth in workshop facilities and development of a Food and Drink Academy to accommodate demand.
- **Teacher Training:** Through our new teacher training curriculum and launch of CTTLS (Centre for Teacher Training Learning and Sills) we will effectively deliver a range of programmes with different entry points from level 1 to level 6/7. We will provide high quality placements and opportunities for trainees at BMet which will enable us to 'grow our own' teachers and support staff of the future.

Matthew Boulton College

Matthew Boulton College is located in the heart of Birmingham's burgeoning Knowledge Quarter. Our impressive city centre site attracts large numbers of 16-18 year olds and adults, enrolling on to vocational training as well as short courses which provide upskilling opportunities with the majority of students coming from central Birmingham.

Vision

We aim to deliver ambitious personalised learning programmes matched to local and regional needs and learners' starting points and aspirations to develop the skills, knowledge and behaviours required for their progression. We align our curriculum to the emerging areas of economic growth ensuring that we have progression pathways for all age groups, in particular focusing on the WMCA transformational sectors of Business, Professional and Financial services, Digital and Creative and Life Sciences and Social Care.

We endeavour to become the first choice for students through:

- Promotion of career pathways with a focus on progression to next steps and implementing career pathways across all curriculum areas
- Establishing vocational progression opportunities for our adult ESOL and English and maths students
- Providing training and skills development for the unemployed in our city through engagement with communities and employers
- Nurturing the areas of growth for 16-19 curriculum in Digital, Law, Accounts, Vocational Business, Science and Health pathways
- Developing the Foundation Learning curriculum to support student progression internally and pathways into work and apprenticeships
- Further developing employer engagement links to support work experience for 16-19 students as well as identifying opportunities for adults

Building on Existing Strengths

It is our ambition to continue to promote the unique features of Greater Birmingham Professional Services Academy and Creative and Digital Career Colleges, including the collaboration with employers in designing the curriculum. We currently collaborate with a number of high profile employers in Birmingham including, KPMG, BNP Paribas, Gateleys and Lloyds and Al Rayan banks, who form an employer board focussing on developing the skills to prepare students for work in the Business and Professional Services sector.

The College has specialist facilities in a number of niche curriculum areas including, Dental Technology, Fashion and Fashion, Business retail, Horticulture, Dental nursing and Pharmacy apprenticeships.

Matthew Boulton college will deliver a skills-based curriculum through 3 career academies:

- Digital and Creative
- Business and Professional Services
- Health, Medical and Science

In addition, we will continue to meet the needs of our students and employers through our pathways in Foundation Learning, English, Early Years and Horticulture. We will continue to grow our substantial English maths and ESOL offer to adults, as well as working with unemployed learners to deliver the skills needed to progress into employment.

Expanding the Offer

The College will expand into the following areas over the next three years:

- **Digital and Creative:** We aim to expand our digital offer for students aged 16-18, and adults, through progression opportunities. We have introduced a careers' focus by rebranding the offer under the headings of creative industries and digital skills.
- **Business and Professional Services:** We continue to grow our provision in Financial Services, rebranding our AAT provision to Chartered and Certified Accounting, offering new book keeping and payroll pathways to meet the expected 8% growth in employment in our area. We have introduced a new two year level 2 pathways in Business to enable students to fully develop essential English and maths skills. We have also offer progression pathways in Law from level 1 to level 3 Criminology.
- **Health, Medical and Science:** we will continue to grow our Access offer, to underpin progression to nursing, midwifery and allied health degree pathways. We will develop the Health Science provision at level 3 and we aim to focus more on science-based pathways over the next three years to evidence clear career progression routes into radiography, paramedic science and physiotherapy.
- **Pharmacy and dental apprenticeships:** We have developed an introduction to dental nursing short course to equip our applicants with the skills needed to support entry into the workplace in response to feedback from employers. We have launched the new Pharmacy standards and continue to work with employers including the NHS to deliver this training to Pharmacy technicians in hospitals.
- **English, Maths and ESOL:** English and Maths GCSE and Functional Skills are facilitating courses that support our adult students to progress into the vocational curriculum, the workplace or promotion at work. We offer a variety of progression routes for ESOL students either through moving up levels in speaking and listening or across to develop reading and writing skills to enable students to progress to their chosen pathway. We are defining clear vocational progression routes to prepare students for employment in sectors such as Health and Care.
- **Foundation Learning:** There is strong growth in 16-18 numbers and significant activity continues to take place to ensure that the curriculum offers appropriate progression to the vocational offer at levels 1 and 2. We aim to personalise study programmes at this level to ensure that these students have the appropriate support and development time to improve Maths and English skills to enable their progression. It is our intention to introduce a kitchen to enable further development of independence and work ready skills.
- **Commercial Services:** Our ambition is to further develop relationships with the DWP and major employers in the city to increase the amount of sector-based work academy (SWAP) and Sector gateway (SG) programmes to offer pre-employment training for unemployed adults in the city. We continue to work successfully with Sigma Finance and the Civil Service to support recruitment of unemployed adults into their vacancies.



Sutton Coldfield College

Vision

Sutton Coldfield College is an inspirational place to work and study where the aim is to transform lives by having the highest ambitions for students from diverse backgrounds to become confident and skilled in their chosen field and dream career. We aim to ensure that we have curriculum pathways to meet our local business and economic needs both now and for future roles and to deliver provision in the WMCA priority sectors of Digital, Business, Professional, Life Sciences and Healthcare.

Building on Existing Strengths

The College meets the local and regional economic need by offering high quality provision and specialises in the areas of A Levels, Sports and Performing Arts. We offer five career pathways of:

- Creative and Digital Media;
- Business, Professional and Financial;
- STEM;
- Public Services and Lifesciences;
- Healthcare, Early Years and Education

We will grow these areas of strength over the next three years as part of our A Level Centre and the wider vocational offer. We will continue to focus on skills development, student progression and employability in the curriculum design and delivery through our collaborative work with employers

Expanding the Offer

The College will expand the following areas over the next three years:

- **The Specialist A Level Centre:** will build on our success in expanding the A Level offer by growing student numbers through increased enrolments and higher progression rates. It will continue with its strategy to ensure the maximum amount of progression for all of our students and the achievement of high grades.
- **Higher Level Skills:** The College will continue to develop the Professional Higher Level Skills offer and will expand the numbers of subjects offered by focusing on Digital, Science, STEM, Sports and Business, Management, Professional and Financial with well-established career pathways at the College

- **Digital:** The College will expand the digital offer including an increase in the 16-18 provision as well as the number of higher level apprenticeship standards by delivering in demand skills in areas such as Cyber Security, E-Sports, Cloud Computing and application development within different platforms. We will develop our adult digital retraining programmes to flexibly respond to economic needs and through boot camps we will provide the skills to help support the digital industry to prosper and grow. These courses will provide effective links with employers allowing us to ensure that the digital provision is always relevant across all levels and courses and will allow for successful implementation of the new digital T Levels. We will continue to develop and grow high level Cloud Computing courses and eventually move into high level E-sports courses and eventually engage with the delivery of level 6 provision.
- **Business, Professional and Financial:** The region has a significant skills gap in higher level Business, Professional and Finance skills and the College will respond by working with local and national employers to ensure we are offering a range of adult and apprenticeship provision to contribute to closing this gap
- **STEM:** The College will develop its higher-level offer including the addition of a level 4 Science and STEM offer
- **Lifesciences, Healthcare, Early Years and Education:** We will develop our health pathways provision to expand our offer to include level 4 programmes in areas such as counselling and Nursing with pathways into the NHS
- **Sports Centre of Excellence:** Sutton Coldfield College has always been a hub for sporting excellence. Supporting the forthcoming Commonwealth Games, we will continue to offer the new pathways in Sports Performance, Sports Science and Physical Activity and Lifestyles. We will expand our support for all budding athletes regardless of level and the wider supporting sporting industry such as Physical Instructors, Sports Scientists and Sports Therapists and the new Sports Coaching Apprenticeship through our work with partners and employers such as Aston Villa FC, West Bromwich Albion, Disability Counts and Boldmere St Michael. We will continue with the engagement in national competitions such as the Ability Counts Knockout where Sutton students were crowned champions
- **The Professional Academy of Performing Arts:** will further enhance its wide array of career pathways and continue to develop the brand of Professional Academy of Performing Arts by adding to the Higher Level Skills Centre through an addition of their level 4 offer.
- **Protective Services and the Service Sector:** Travel and Tourism will look to the future and engage with new skill demands that have surfaced due to the industry's dynamic response to recent events and changes in technology. It will develop growth by embedding these skills into courses ensuring that when students leave us to further their career pathways they do so with skill sets immediately beneficial to employers and which can fulfil these new emerging job roles which can go as far as commercial trips to space through companies such as Virgin Galaxy and Blue Origin.
- **Uniformed Protective Services:** will continue to adapt and develop its courses to ensure students are able to meet the demands of society. As pilots become drone operators, and data analytics becomes an essential skill UPS will ensure the curriculum offer provides a pathway from level 1 to 5 attracting young people and adults to careers into the uniformed protective services.
- **Art and Design:** To continue to develop the identity of Art and Design for it to be career focused through the work placement program and career specialist pathways, enlightening students understanding of the importance of creativity in a vibrant economy. This continued work in changing the perception of Art and Design will lead to growth in 16-19 provision across BMet by delivering courses including social application development and social media which will add to our current pathways in fashion, visual communications, architecture and 3D design amongst others.
- **Foundation Learning and Princes Trust:** FLPT will continue to adopt the technical skills provided at higher levels and incorporate into the delivery of their courses. It will use these to help students identify their interests and show them a pathway forward to engage in a career of their choice. This will be done whilst developing students' life and living skills ensuring their progress in their personal development as well as their skills for work.

Higher Level Skills

Our vision for Higher Level Skills is to provide a high quality offer designed to respond to demand and serve the needs of the local community and regional priorities. We will offer learners attractive flexible routes which provide value for money, are accessible to everyone and enable confident and equipped learners to progress into graduate level employment and highly skilled jobs.

The college plays a vital role in providing opportunities and promoting social mobility and we will invest in expanding our higher level skills offer to meet the skills needs of the region. We will forge stronger alliances with employers locally, and regionally to align our higher level skills to meet their demand.

Our strategic plan for higher levels skills builds on the strength of the College in the specialist areas of Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering, Business Professional Services, Construction, Creative and Digital, Medical and Health and will focus on the following priorities:

- To provide our students with a high quality learning environment and student experience
- To develop career progression pathways in the specialist key sector areas of higher level technical skills to meet present and future employment needs
- To work with employers and partners to design, develop and inform higher level provision and higher apprenticeships. Technical and Higher Apprenticeships will be key areas of growth and we will create progression routes to higher level skills
- To provide innovative opportunities for widening participation and increasing access to higher level provision through promotion of higher level skills as an attractive internal progression option.

Our ambition is to provide an accessible and distinctive education and student experience, designed in partnership with students, industry and our HE partners, focused on value added experience which is industry driven, preparing our students for life focusing on:

- Investing in a high quality, innovative learning environment with great facilities through the creation of a Higher Level Skills 'Industry Centre of Excellence' at each College housing the latest equipment and technology with excellent teaching, study and social space including physical and virtual resources
- Expanding and re-shaping our course portfolio to ensure that it is fit for purpose and aligned to regional skills demand in terms of content, structure and modes of delivery.
- Growing the number of students who will progress into highly competitive courses and Universities and an increased number of learners will progress to graduate level employment and take up highly skilled jobs.
- Developing our Teaching and Learning Strategy to support teaching quality, lead on industry-led projects, and embed innovative teaching methods leading to improved continuation rates and levels of student satisfaction
- Developing opportunities for students to be engaged with and be able to influence and shape all aspects of the curriculum
- Providing opportunities for research, development, scholarly activity and sharing good practice to improve teaching and learning

Apprenticeships

Our vision is to develop market-led, innovative and employer focussed programmes enabling BMet to double its apprenticeship provision within a 3 year period. With colleges across Birmingham as well as specialist sites throughout the UK, we are well positioned as a training provider to work with employers on a regional and national basis Our team of business development and sector specialists, recruitment advisors, experienced lecturers and assessors who are specialists in their field strive to provide our clients with a high quality experience focussing on excellent training and delivery, regular and timely communication and support on accessing financial models and funding.

Our priorities for 2021/22 continue to be centred around:

- Developing an apprenticeship product portfolio that meets regional employer and market needs
- Providing a fully employer responsive service which is customer centric.
- Continuing to foster strong client and employer relations integrated into the regional business and economic community
- Developing our recruitment service providing candidates and clients with a high quality and customer centric service

Our areas of sector-specialism reflect the regional economic priorities and include Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering, Business Professional Services, Construction, Creative and Digital, Medical and Health

Through focussing on our priorities we will aim to:

- Constantly review and develop our suite of programmes from Intermediate (Level 2), Advanced (Level 3) and Higher (Level 4 – 6) to ensure we are meeting market needs
- Continue to build our employer-led boards and activity in our key markets such as our Professional Services Academy and Food and Drink Academy

- Develop adaptable and flexible delivery models to provide businesses with training opportunities throughout the year, minimising disruption to employers' core business whilst maximising training and development services provided
- Foster strong client relations, ensuring that we fully understand our clients' needs, markets and priorities and provide strong account management and communication to all clients
- Provide a high quality, responsive recruitment service to our clients and candidates
- Focus on increasing our profile as a regional training provider within our key sectors through the implementation of a tactical business development, sales and marketing activity
- Invest in our team through continuous professional development

Employer Engagement

Our Employer Engagement activity is built around 3 pillars, embedding BMet into the regional community:

- **Regional economic business partner:** ensuring BMet has a key part of the regional economic eco-system supporting businesses and organisations with business stability and growth
- **Skills Leadership:** offering guidance, insight into the regional business community, providing BMet with a positive reputation of helping others with their knowledge and insight
- **Voice of young people:** amplifying the voice, concerns and achievements of young people to the business community

Through ensuring that we are fully integrated into the regional business community through our team and our strategic partnerships with business and industry groups, we will be focussing on:

- Growing the number of work experience opportunities available to all BMet full-time students
- Providing a programme of engagement activity enabling businesses to work with and identify prospective candidates for current and future vacancies
- Investing in our apprenticeship candidate talent bank, providing applicants with excellent support, advice and guidance
- Developing our employer boards in our specialist sectors providing innovation hubs enabling our curriculum and training content, delivery and facilities to match industry needs
- Evolving our relationships with referral stakeholders including local schools, job centres and community organisations to increase our candidate and student population
- Identifying opportunities for curriculum and programme development through continuing to capitalise on our horizon scanning and bid opportunity activity.

Adults

Our Adult Education strategy aims to enable BMet to deliver AEB activity in line with both the WMCA Regional Skills Plan and ESFA priorities, in order to provide a clear operating structure across all of BMet with clarity over roles, responsibilities, accountabilities and targets.

Providing more adults with the ability to access training and learning flexibly throughout their lives, providing people with the technical skills to get jobs, alongside ensuring that people with lower level skills are able to further their development and independence is a principal pillar of the Skills for Jobs White Paper.

This strategy builds on this vision, to enable BMet to provide a supported, career-led service to our adult population, whether that be to re-enter the employment market after years away, re-skilling into a new career due to changes in the regional economy, continued professional development or supporting those enter the working environment for the first time.

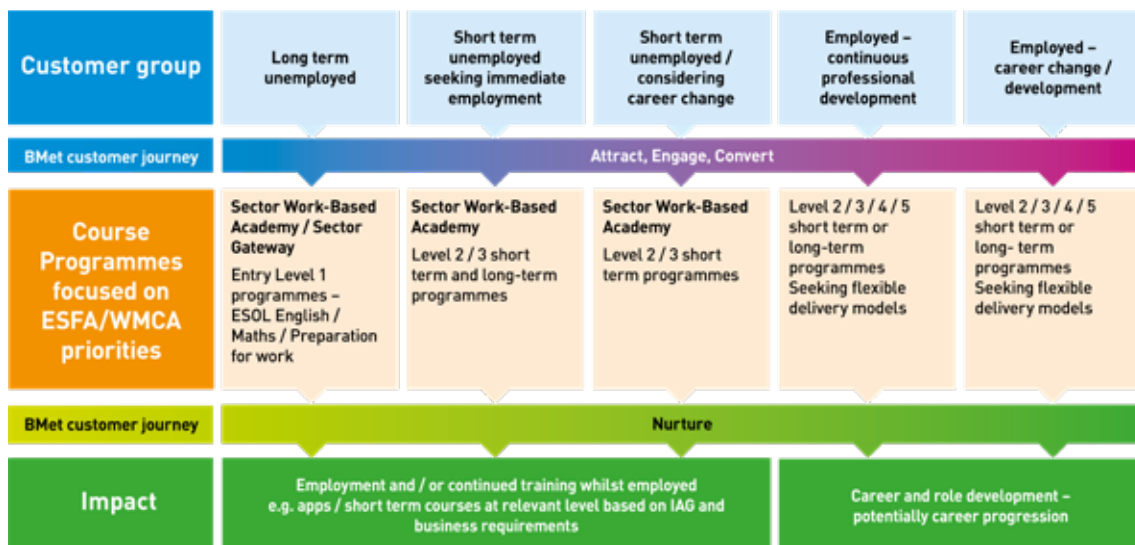
At the heart of the strategy is a centralised, customer-centric approach to AEB delivery.

The specific priorities WMCA are asking providers to respond to include:

1. Targeting **low-skilled and low-paid adults** in the workforce, or looking to enter employment, to secure skills at Level 3 and above to enable them to progress in employment with a particular focus on progression in priority sectors*
2. Deliver greater volumes of **digital provision** – the digital entitlement including basic digital skills for people to operate in a digital world; general level digital skills at level 2 and a significant increase at advanced level digital qualification at level 3 and 4.

3. Increase the volumes of **qualifications at all levels in priority sectors** – *construction and building technologies, automotive/advanced manufacturing, business and professional services and digital, medical and life sciences
4. More **flexible models** of learning delivery that supports adults in work to upskill
5. Deliver **adult community learning provision** to engage communities and support priorities relating to skills, cohesion and integration, health and mental health.
6. Targeting of people in **priority communities**, working with Local Authorities and other key local stakeholders, to maximise impact and increase qualification levels and ultimately employment in those areas that have remained persistently difficult to change.
7. Improve **progression between Levels and into employment** - ensure there is support and progression routes in place to move people from basic skills through to Level 2 and into employment
8. Delivery of **vacancy-led skills** support programmes that deliver entry to employment for those out of work.

The table below outlines our approach taken from the view point of the differing needs of adults aligned to priorities which enables us to plan more effectively to meet both the needs of adults but also employers.



2

Strategic Priority 2: To provide a consistently high quality learning experience

Excellent teaching, learning and assessment practice across all provision

The Classroom and Workplace Principles and Practices, designed to promote excellent teaching, learning and assessment practice across BMet were introduced in June 2019. These are now embedded into daily practice and will continue to shape our professional practice to ensure that all our students and apprentices have an excellent experience at BMet. These principles and practices aim to ensure that students and apprentices are exposed to a variety of teaching, learning and assessment strategies to ensure all achieve their potential. Our practitioners are keen to develop a culture of high expectations through a continued focus on the sequencing of curriculum delivery to ensure that it clearly develops knowledge, skills and behaviours to ensure deeper learning is taking place. In addition, to help students and apprentices to exceed expectations, practitioners aim to be responsive to individual needs, by taking time to find out about each and every one of our students through the assessment of prior knowledge and attainment, current strengths and capabilities, barriers to being confident and motivated, disabilities and difficulties, personal ambitions and career goals and gaps in knowledge of the subjects being studied. This enables us to provide an inclusive curriculum, using a variety of assessment for learning strategies to inform future planning for highly effective lessons.

BMet recognises just how valuable our staff are and therefore supporting new staff is important. An extensive and personalised induction programme is delivered to all new staff to ensure they promote the vision and values of BMet within all they do with support and activities on hand promoting continual professional development.

Highly skilled practitioners embracing continual professional development in subject and content pedagogy

A range of quality and inspirational professional development activities encourage the continual drive to deliver outstanding experiences by our practitioners. Opportunities to share best practice through collaborative initiatives, action-based research and research-based teaching initiatives are provided through dedicated time. Enhancing practice within BMet is viewed as a key driver to inspire colleagues to greater performance.

BMet has extensive links with employers, and these continue to be developed to provide opportunities for practitioners to keep up to date with current practices within their specialist area. Industry updating helps to ensure that the latest changes in the sector are incorporated within delivery and preparing our students for their future.

The investment in digital upskilling for all staff is paramount to the success of our students and apprentices. We continue to ensure our practitioners equip our students and apprentices, both within and outside the classroom with the required skills to support the changing digital landscape of the workforce.

All students and apprentices will progress to further learning or employment following a pathway to their chosen career

Equipping our students and apprentices with the right knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes to support their progress to aspirational destinations is a priority. An enhanced and comprehensive tutorial and enrichment programme, and opportunities to become work ready and undertake real work experience compliment the main programme of study for all our full-time students. In addition, comprehensive careers education, information, advice and guidance is embedded into all programmes of study and strong progression routes provide the opportunity for our students and apprentices to continue studying at BMet from Entry Level qualifications to Level 6. This provides students and apprentices with a variety of experiences, preparing them for their future pathway.

High levels of student satisfaction through internal and external surveys and student voice forums

Enhanced links with students and apprentices through key student voice mechanisms help to shape the direction of BMet on our journey to outstanding. By increasing the number of opportunities to listen to students and respond to their feedback through a variety of channels the college can make informed decisions about how best to improve the student experience.

Outstanding achievement rates for Young People, Adults and Apprentices

Our robust quality improvement framework enables continual self-assessment throughout the year resulting in a comprehensive quality improvement plan to drive improvements. In-year performance is continually monitored, and a range of intervention strategies implemented to support our students' and apprentices' progress. This includes providing a number of initiatives to support students within priority groups to overcome barriers and issues they face to make good progress in line with their peers adding value to their achievements.

Enhanced reporting continues to be developed to ensure that staff can respond quickly and effectively to a range of indicators through the Teacher and Manager Dashboards.



To be recognised by Ofsted as a consistently good provider with many outstanding features.

It is an aspiration for BMet College to be recognised as an outstanding provider supporting the needs of Birmingham and the wider area. With the changes to the Education Inspection Framework (EIF), which places an emphasis on the quality of education, we have worked hard to ensure that our curriculum aligns to the EIF for FE and Skills. The curriculum design within each Directorate and Department ensures clarity around the intent and implementation of each pathway to meet the needs of the region, leading to positive destinations of our students and apprentices.

All students and apprentices have access to an extensive, rich set of experiences both inside and outside the college environment that develops their personal skills, behaviours and attitudes

We are committed to creating an environment where positive behaviour is at the heart of productive learning. The college has high expectations of all staff, students and stakeholders to maintain the uppermost standards of behaviour in line with our Ready, Respectful and Safe ethos. We promote an inclusive environment that meets the needs of all students and apprentices. An enhanced and comprehensive tutorial and enrichment programme has been introduced to develop students and apprentices' confidence, resilience and knowledge enabling them to keep themselves mentally and physically healthy and safe. Our enrichment programme for students and apprentices maximises opportunities for participation in competitions, community projects and volunteering to prepare them for their next steps.

Learning technologies are seamlessly embedded into practice for the benefit of students, apprentices and practitioners

Preparing our students and apprentices for the ever-changing digital landscape requires investment in relevant technologies to enhance the student experience. We are committed to maximising the usage of the VLE and other learning technologies to provide a flexible learning environment, thus meeting the diverse needs of our students, apprentices and employers. In order to accomplish this, we will prioritise the digital upskilling of all our staff, students and apprentices.



3

Strategic Priority 3: To equip our students for the future

Work Experience

We are focused on providing a personalised and effective study programme for learners at all levels with a variety of high-quality work experience opportunities that support them to progress to further or higher education, or onto an apprenticeship and into employment.

Our approach is informed by the Gatsby Benchmarks and we adopt best practice for activities when supporting students to develop clear career plans and undertake work-related activities to support their skills development.

Our vision aims to increase relevant work experience opportunities and increase employer involvement in our study programmes and set out the following priorities.

Our priorities are:

- To give young people the opportunity to develop their career choices, get a first taste of work, and develop the critical employability skills needed for the world of work
- To be planned to take account of students' needs and career plans

Our work experience strategy will:

- Be purposeful, offer challenge and be relevant to the young person's study programme and career aspirations
- Allow the learner to apply the technical and practical skills learned in the classroom or workshop
- Provide employers with the opportunity to form close working partnerships with the College, enabling businesses to embed work experience into their early talent recruitment programmes
- Strive for continuous development ensuring there are opportunities for both students and employers to provide feedback on the experience programme

We will ensure that all of our learners are able to use their new skills, attributes and attitudes to enhance their ability to progress into their chosen career paths through further or higher study or onto an apprenticeship and employment and we will focus on:

- Creating a differentiated offer based on activities that equip our learners to get 'ready' for work and progress into 'real' work opportunities.
- Enhancing our dedicated team of Work Experience Coordinators who will collaborate with curriculum and support colleagues to help learners define their career aspirations and will facilitate meaningful, high-quality work experience opportunities
- Utilising our strong relationships with hundreds of employers across a range of sectors to provide 'ready' (preparation) and 'real' opportunities including: developing live project briefs; industry-led workshops and seminars; and work and industry placements.

Careers, Progression and Destinations

Our vision is to offer a high quality, impartial Careers Service delivering information, advice and guidance with integrity, ensuring all students are on the right course and preparing them to progress into sustainable education, training and employment to realise their ambitions.

This Strategy applies to every student at the College and is inclusive of all levels and modes of study.

Our careers service is run by highly qualified and award winning advisers who have achieved the Matrix quality standard for their impartial careers advice services and hold the national Quality in Careers standard (QiCS) quality Gold award.

We have established strong links with the Careers & Enterprise Company and are the only FE College in the region to sit on the Birmingham Careers Hub. We sit on a number of careers boards including the West Midlands branch of the National Careers Service and the national UCAS school education advisory group to influence and keep up to date with regional and national priorities for the benefit of our students. We successfully work in partnership with universities to develop progression scholarships for our students.

Each year the careers team deliver vocational guidance interviews and we run an annual Careers Calendar of events with over 10,000 students attending. We will continue to build on this work with the aim of equipping our students with up to date relevant employability skills to succeed in the job market. Our priorities will be:

- To deliver information, advice and guidance with integrity, ensuring students are on the right course to develop the skills, knowledge and behaviours to succeed through their adult lives with resilience
- To engage with partners and the wider community to inspire students to reach higher and progress further
- To maximise the in-year progression of our students and to grow the progression pathways from Entry to Higher Education ensuring all courses provide strong routes into further and higher study or onto an apprenticeship or into employment
- To use actual progression and destination data to evaluate the effectiveness of our CEIAG programme and the wider curriculum and proactively make changes



4

Strategic Priority 4: To be an inspiring place to work

Diversity & Inclusion

We aim to lead in best practice as diversity is genuinely desired and sought and where inclusion is nurtured through trust and engagement to positively impact and inspire. We will empower a diversity and inclusion focused community to build organisational capability, develop demonstrable inclusive practice by all and increase the inclusivity of our environments. We will be ambitious about encouraging a more diverse workforce to join BMet and strengthening our promotion of and support for career development. This year we will look at different aspects of what we do (e.g., recruitment, teaching and learning and performance development) through the lens of specific protected characteristics to enhance practice.

Wellbeing & Engagement

We are dedicated to nurturing a healthy and engaged community, improving the quality of working lives for all staff through the promotion and integration of positive health and wellbeing behaviours and the facilitation of a range of engagement activities. We will continue to create a sense of belonging where everyone feels included and valued as part of the college community; support staff to maintain good mental and physical health; and, engage employee voice to drive change locally, making a difference to employees' immediate environments and their wider community.

Resourcing

The agility and responsiveness of our organisation will be increasingly important as the pace of change in the needs of our students, staff and the employers we work with accelerates. This will be reflected in what we do and how we work together with an overarching theme of flexibility and collaboration.

We will further develop the ways in which we ensure that we have the right people in place across the organisation to contribute to our success. Our aim will be to fill all our roles with people who are skilled at what they do and who are motivated to strive to exceed expectations. We will prioritise areas where there are skills shortages and establish a strong talent pipeline through succession planning, career pathways and effective relationships with organisations where potential talent may be found.

We will reinvigorate our employer brand and recruitment activities by articulating a compelling value proposition which captures reward and benefits information plus commitments around our values, diversity and inclusion, wellbeing and development; and, by effectively utilising an agile range of media to attract great candidates.



Development

We will extend our leadership development activities in recognition of the influential role of leaders and managers in building a high performing, continuous improvement culture where everyone feels supported, encouraged, valued and recognised. The characteristics of high performing teams will be introduced, developed and reviewed across all BMet teams.

We will further embed a culture of personal performance development and improvement, in which everyone, regardless of their role, seeks to understand their individual development needs and proactively accesses learning and development opportunities which will further improve their skills and competencies, and which align with their career aspirations. Ensuring that everyone keeps their subject knowledge current through specialist professional development and industrial updating.

5

Strategic Priority 5: To have a strong financial base to invest in the future of the college

Building an Outstanding BMet Estate

BMet has continued to rationalise its estate, disposing of all properties except MB, JW, SC and our Erdington Skills Centre.

The College estate is a key platform for providing a high-quality student experience and therefore the estate will focus on remodelling its teaching and learning spaces to provide the right facilities for excellent further education. The three priorities will be:

1. **Condition** – The College now has a full, priced Planned, Preventative Maintenance Plan (PPMP) for the estate (commissioned in 2020), which identifies, prioritises and prices the work required to take all areas of the College to at least RICS Condition B over the next 4 years, including roof and window replacements, plant and equipment, decoration and finishes. The result of implementation will be a well-maintained Estate, fit for purpose, maximising user experience and minimising down-time and disruption from maintenance issues.
2. **Efficient** – The Estates budget is one of the largest costs in the College and this year builds on the consolidation of the last two years, driving down costs in the use of energy, maintenance and contractors. Our priority is to deliver a well-maintained, efficient Estate with effective utilisation of space. Efficiency will be driven through the management and monitoring of the use of key costs, such as natural resources, the measure of space utilisation and the cost/benefit of major contracts such as cleaning, catering and maintenance. Environmental sustainability will also form a major part of improvements in efficiency, measuring the College's carbon footprint and decreasing output over a 5-year period. The improvements in the College condition will be a major factor in sustainable development.
3. **Suitable** – In addition to a well maintained and efficient estate, this Plan ensures the Estate is suitable, flexible and agile to enable the College to respond effectively in a fast-changing further education environment. An Estate Strategy and PPMP with a portfolio of information and data on the Estate's use and costs, allows monitoring and management of fitness for purpose and ensures the College is well placed to quickly and continually identify areas for growth and development to meet teaching and learning needs; providing the confidence to attract external funders to support our meeting of national and regional training priorities. The Estates team will be enhanced and upskilled to provide less reliance on external contractors, thereby providing a more responsive service to our users.

Building a Sustainable Future

BMet has undergone a positive transformation over the last three years, in terms of financial stability, educational excellence and rationalising its Estate. With improved performance and a smaller, more manageable footprint, the College is in an excellent position to develop its environmental sustainability over the next three years. To do this the College will adopt the following three priorities:

1. An Environmental Sustainability Policy and Action Plan will be developed. The Policy will outline the College's environmental objectives and provide a clear commitment to comply with relevant environmental legislation, regulations and other good practice requirements. The Action Plan will focus on compliance, continuous improvement, energy management, water use, waste control and collaboration. Progress against the plan will be reviewed and reported annually.

2. A Carbon Management Plan will be implemented. Climate change is widely accepted as one of the greatest threats facing the world today. The UK government has set a legally binding target to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions from across the UK economy by 2050. BMet is committed to sustainable development and good carbon management. The College will measure its Carbon Footprint and develop a Carbon Management Plan, which underpins BMet's commitment to carbon reduction. Achieving the targets included in the plan will represent a significant challenge but will direct investment strategy and decision making over the period of the plan.
3. Sustainability and social responsibility will require strong engagement and collaboration. Staff and particularly students are a significant part of the internal community both in terms of numbers and in the potential they offer. Every new intake of students offers a surge of fresh energy and ideas that can be harnessed for the benefit of all; being future 'change agents', using their learning and influence in our wider society where impacts can continue to be felt long after they have left College. Students who are actively engaged with sustainability as part of their student experience are more likely to be equipped with the skills, knowledge and experience to make positive contributions to sustainable development throughout their lives. BMet is committed to engaging with staff and students, initiating forums and consultation groups and organising activities to engender interest and action.

Digital Priorities

Covid has provided unprecedented insight and acceleration of the use of digital technology across different organisations. For BMet this has meant delivering teaching and learning remotely as well as ensuring our professional services continue to operate safely and securely outside the organisation through remote working. We will develop for 21/22 our Digital Strategy which will focus on the four priorities below.

1. Digital in everything we do: Digital will not be an afterthought it will be built into the processes of all our academic and business operations. Innovation will be supported by implementation where projects have a robust implementation phase to ensure good ideas don't wither on the vine where gains can be measurable and the innovation can be future proofed through iterative development.
2. Outstanding Digital Service: Digital will not be associated with stress and inaccuracy and we will move on from technologies which are not beneficial for all. Digital will be about removing barriers and enabling the highest levels of professional practice on a safe and secure eco-system which will operate across platforms and meet user needs in device selection wherever possible.
3. Innovative Digital Teaching and Learning: To ensure that digital literacy is more than learning how to use technology but how we encourage a healthy relationship with technology as a whole and a focus on existing/emerging technologies used across sectors for both staff and students. Our staff and students will have the knowledge and skills to take full advantage of a digitally rich environment.



4. Trust in a digital Infrastructure: We will provide an infrastructure which will enable our digital innovation to ensure it can deliver appropriate digital solutions that improve the experience for all stakeholders.

This year will see a focus on teaching and learning and curriculum planning, for example, developing shorter blended models of delivery in specific areas such as accountancy. Within the digital budget we will continue with our planned IT infrastructure updates.

Financial Objectives

The financial plan is based on the BMet strategic plan for 2020-23 and delivers the following financial objectives:

- Improvement in financial stability and financial health and achievement of a sustainable 'Good' rating by 2023
- Planned reduction in overall borrowing to below 20% of income by 2023
- Pay costs below 65% of adjusted turnover from 2020
- Positive EBITDA of at least £3m or 7% from 2023
- Achievement of a future breakeven budget
- Minimum year-end cash days in hand of 35 from 2020

The financial plan follows from the college's improvement and recovery plan that was established in 2019. The improvement plan is based on cost control and reduction in income following the final transfer of provision outside of Birmingham in July 2021. It also includes an income strategy that sets out how the College will diversify income streams to make more from a wider product portfolio, increasing income from apprenticeship levy, full cost income and meeting our AEB funding allocations.

The pandemic has impacted our enrolments across all age groups and all income streams. This has had a significant impact on income for both 16-18 and adults. However, we have seen an increase in applications but our challenge is conversion to enrolments for 21/22. The College will continue its approach to offer a more holistic experience for students applying to the college, focusing on career pathways to enable students to clearly see where their next steps are. The College will focus on retaining more students in the first six weeks of their programme and will provide support for these students to ensure they are successful. These actions will result in more students enrolling and staying at the college and thus, increasing student numbers.

We will continue to deliver an efficient cost base through a focus on maintaining the low cost of sickness absence and delivering a more flexible workforce to meet the changing needs of students and employers. Our management information and IT teams will provide more robust data solutions to enable better decision making on a real-time basis, when adjustments in resource levels are quickly needed and to ensure efficient use of resources at all times. In 2021/22 as the College returns to a substantially on-site model College managers will concentrate on group sizes and utilisation in order to improve efficiencies. Continuing our planned investment in the resilience of the network and systems will support increased digitalisation of curriculum and professional services operations.

The financial plan demonstrates how, based on the actions being implemented across the college, through curriculum and support teams, a more sustainable financial basis is achieved. We will continue to demonstrate realistic ambition to increase income whilst ensuring our costs secure quality delivery and services. This approach will generate more positive cash balances for the college enabling continued repayment of the outstanding government debt and bank loans.

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	2021/22: Proposed Measure	Target
1.1	Achieve 16-18 enrolment numbers 21/22	4,634
1.2	Achieve 16-18 application numbers for 22/23	5,654
1.3	Achieve 16-18 acceptance of offer 22/23	2,700
1.4	Achieve WMCA funding: Priority 2 £'000	1,942
1.5	Achieve WMCA funding: Priority 3 £'000	1,011
1.6	20/21 leavers (all ages) going into employment	30%
1.7	Internal progression (16-18) for 21/22	80%
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2.1	Ofsted judge the college to be Good or better	
2.2	Retention for study programme students aged 16-18	94%
2.3	Observed sessions meet or exceed BMet teaching and learning standards	80%
2.4	Students would recommend the college	97%
2.5	Students agree teaching is good	97%
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3.1	16-18 classroom funded learners undertake 'real' work experience where planned	90%
3.2	Industry Placements (CDF)	348
3.3	Apprenticeship starts in priority sectors	352
3.4	Deliver SWAPs/sector gateways	10
3.5	TBC: Target on Career Advice for Students	
3.6	Staff undertake industrial upskilling	75%
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4.1	Staff satisfaction (Ofsted measure) meets benchmark	82%
4.2	Positive staff feedback on our approach to inclusivity and diversity	80%
4.3	Staff feedback on our approach to health and well-being	60%
4.4	Lost time percentage meets target (sickness absence including Covid19)	3.8%
4.5	Staff turnover (voluntary)	9%
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5.1	EBITDA as a percentage of income	5%
5.2	Current ratio	0.87
5.3	Cash days	47
5.4	Staff costs as a percentage of income	65%

Glossary

AEB	Adult education budget
ALL	Advanced learner loans
BAME	Black, Asian and minority ethnic
CDF	Capacity development fund
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
EBITDA	Earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation
EGP	Employment Gateway Programmes
ESFA	Education and Skills Funding Agency
ESOL	English to speakers of other languages
IFMC	Integrated financial model for colleges
LEP	Local Enterprise Partnership
PPMP	Planned, preventative maintenance programme
SBWA	Sector-based work academy
STEM	Science, technology, English and maths
VLE	Virtual learning environment
WMCA	West Midlands Combined Authority



