

1. Purpose

Our Vision

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

Curriculum Intent

As a regional College, Birmingham Metropolitan College (BMet) is anchored in the communities that it serves. BMet does this by raising aspirations of young people and adults enabling them to develop skills and behaviours empowering them to progress in education and training as well as enter, upskill and reskill into jobs enhancing their life-time earnings. BMet brings value to the economy and local, regional, and national businesses by providing resilient, qualified and trained people into the workforce who make a positive contribution to society.

Our 2030 Strategic Plan was approved in 23/24 by the governing body. Our governors have considered the Local Needs Duty as part of this Plan. The long-term priorities are set out below:

- Be a significant contributor to skills development in Birmingham and the city region
- Provide a consistently high quality learning experience
- Equip our students for the future
- Be an inspiring place to work
- Have a strong financial base to invest in a sustainable future for the college

Collaboration with stakeholders and other key organisations (e.g., colleges, community associations) is central to delivering the growth KPIs against this strategy and BMet taking an ‘anchor’ role in Birmingham and the West Midlands to deliver against local, regional and national priorities.

2. Context and Place/Communities we serve

Birmingham Metropolitan College Learner Profile

In 2022-23, BMet supported over 11,000 learners and worked in partnership with approximately 1,000 employers. Our learner population is broken down into the following:

16-18	Adults	Apprentices hips	Community	Higher Education
4,282*	4169**	774	308	256

- *Inc. 191 learners with EHCPs of which 119 have High Needs
- **Inc. 825 learners in subcontracted provision

The BMet learner population is made up of a majority minority, with 62% Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) learners, with 38% White with the majority being White British and 1% Irish. Of the BAME learners, Pakistani learners are consistently the single largest group (14% of overall learner population) followed by African and Black Caribbean learners at 6% each. There is a steady representation of BAME apprentices at 29%.

Birmingham’s population is estimated at 1,144,900. In the 2021 census the population of the region is recorded to have grown by 6.8pp to 4.3m, with Birmingham remaining the youngest city with 46% of Birmingham residents aged between 0 and 29 and one in three born outside the UK. The predicted population growth for Birmingham is said to be equivalent to adding the population of Oxford to the city by 2031.

At BMet 75% of 16-18-year olds live in postcode areas that are in the top 30% most deprived (based on IMD, this is 5% points (pp) higher than last academic year), and of these 52% live in the most deprived 10% of postcodes nationally (3pp higher than last academic year). For our adults the figure of deprivation has

decreased by 4% to 61% in the lowest 30% of deprivation with 41% living in the most deprived 10% of postcodes nationally. Approximately 34% of our full-time 16-18-year olds have GCSE English below a grade 4 when starting at the college and 42% have GCSE Maths below a grade 4. Both these figures have grown by 4pp and 7pp respectively.

The 2021 school census reported, in Birmingham, there are 500 state-funded schools with over 66% of those learners from ethnic minority backgrounds and 40.6% having English as a second language (EAL). These numbers are higher than the England averages of 26.5% and 19.3%, respectively. Birmingham also had a higher level of children with special educational needs (SEN) compared to England (17.3% compared to 15.6%). The percentage of KS4 pupils achieving 9-4 passes in English and Maths in Birmingham (21/22) has dropped by 17.4pp from 67.1% to 49.7% this is slightly lower than the national rate of 51.9%.

Fourteen percent of students disclosed a disability or learning difficulty in 2022/23 compared to 12% in the previous year, reflecting a slight increase. Fifteen percent of apprentices disclosed a disability or difficulty, this is higher than 2021.

Qualifications gained 2022/3	Birmingham	National		Unemployment 2022/3	Birmingham	National
Level 4_	32%	37%		Economically active	55.6%	60.9%
Level 3	19%	20%		Claimant unemployment rate	8.6% Out of Work Benefits	3.7%
Level 2	20%	21%		Workless households	51 st out of 204 areas across GB	
Level 1	11%	10%		Economic Inactivity	13.4%	18%
No qualifications	18%	12%		Deprivation – in more than 1 dimension	61.6%	

(ONS 2021).

Where we have known destination data (3510) 76% adults have progressed into paid employment or further or higher education. For apprentices over 86% remain with the same employer or in new employment and 8.8% return to FE/HE. For 16-18 year olds known destinations (3951), 79% have a positive destination.

BMet actively promotes use of public transport for students supported by bursary and discretionary financial support.

Travel to learn patterns

Workforce: Sixty-four percent of our salaried staff live within ten miles of their base campus and 50% of our staff use their cars to travel to work. BMet has incentives to support more sustainable travel, cycle to work scheme, access to National Express WM discount offer to educational institution and enhanced expense payment for use of electric cars. BMet is working with other organisations (HE/FE Sustainability Group) to look at comparison data and as a result potential collective action on sustainable travel.

Students: The average length is 4.7 kilometres for both 16-18 year olds and adults. The furthest campus students travel to is Sutton Coldfield (over 5 kilometres) and the closest are our James Watt campus and Erdington Centre below 4 kilometres.

3. Approach to developing the annual Accountability Statement

BMet's stakeholder strategy focuses on building strong and effective relationships to plan our curriculum offer to meet local, regional and national skills needs.

The strategy focuses on key stakeholder groups employers (including business representative bodies) Political, Civic, Community, Education Partners (including schools, other FE providers and HEI's) and Alumni.

Our business planning cycle always considers demographic, local and regional labour market intelligence via EMSI, Vector, Chambers as well as from the WMCA and Birmingham City Council (BCC). Most recently our business planning cycle has also included LMI from the Local Skills Improvement Plan and subsequent research from the activity funded through Local Skills Improvement Fund. Senior Leaders and Directors have specific responsibilities for a sector across BMet. This is a transparent process enabling BMet to consider where provision is best placed to meet local needs.

Our 2030 Strategic Plan and this Plan benefit from a wide range of engagement with stakeholders and organisations including the WMCA, BCC and employers through the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Chambers, BMet employer boards and our business development activities. BMet has introduced two new employer boards in 23/24 (Engineering, Health) and hopes to add a Visitor Economy Board too. These seven employer Boards cover local and regional priority areas.

BMet is an active member of the College West Midlands Group (CWG) through which FE Colleges liaise strategically with the WMCA as well as individually, and engage in activities to develop and share innovation, for example, SWAPs, NEETs, SEND, sector innovation (green skills), sustainability, staff shortages and EDI.

Most recently, colleges are involved in the FE provider response through the Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF) taking on the recommendations from the Local Skills Improvement Plan and Innovate UK projects to strengthen engagement and impact for sector employers. For example, BMet has led on LSIF workstream 6 with its aim to improve engagement with employers to support their businesses and to help providers align provision to local needs and promote clearer progression pathways that employers understand. This workstream is across FE colleges and independent training providers. BMet will continue to lead this activity under the shared engagement brand and proposition of Skills West Midlands and Warwickshire during 24/25. BMet also leads the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Innovation Partnership Project funded by Innovate UK. The aim is for colleges to help businesses understand how they can adopt innovations in technologies, business models and processes, using their expertise and infrastructure.

Essential to our planning is the opportunity to work closely with BCC and in particular the Children and Families Directorate. The Principal is the chair of the Post-16 Exec Board. Its remit is for FE and school providers to inform, recommend and collaborate on post-16 matters such as sufficiency, transition arrangements and curriculum reforms. The Board reports into BCC. BMet continues to sit on SEN groups as well which have informed the development of our supported internships and helping BCC to address barriers to participation (new arrivals programme) and help align provision to local needs.

BMet is a lead member of the North Birmingham Recovery Taskforce which has provided opportunities to widen our adult education offer providing CPD for community organisations as well as working directly with adults on their next steps at community venues. This is alongside the programmes for the unemployed we deliver. The Taskforce has redeveloped its Strategic Plan with BMet taking a lead on the Skills and Training priority. BMet intends to take a collaborative approach working with other providers including ITPs, community organisations, DWP to take this forward.

BMet works closely with South and City College Birmingham and Solihull College and University Centre. Our colleges are members of the GBS Chambers and Greater Birmingham and Solihull Institute of Technology alongside local universities and collectively provide a range of programmes for engineering and digital sectors. Most recently we had successfully won grant funding across a range of HTQs that we are co-designing. Where there is an offer that is the same it is because local demographics and employer demand supports this duplication, for example, nursing and associated health professional roles. Indeed, our three colleges now sit on the Collaborative Group of the Integrated Care Board alongside universities, professionals and NHS Trust representatives. Local colleges have worked collaboratively to support T level student work placements across a number of NHS Trusts to create a sustainable model.

Outside of the IoT collaboration, BMet is either delivering or planning with local universities a range of level 4 and 5 programmes with progression to level 6 or employment. These programmes are designed to meet regional as well as national priorities. For example, in teacher training, law, digital, health sciences and engineering. This work is promoting clearer progression pathways and helping to align provision to local needs. We will be considering stronger partnerships with HEIs. The benefits to our students will be to offer them progression pathways and opportunities to access resources.

BMet is not able to plan curriculum with schools and sixth forms, though we take an active interest in the introduction of new post-16 academies and free schools to understand the impact on an annual basis. However, through the work of the Post-16 Executive Board's operations group BMet hopes to actively pursue collaboration for the benefit of Birmingham. The College does have a Schools Liaison Team and its work with local schools does help validate demand for programmes.

4. Contribution to National, Regional, Local Priorities

The 2030 Strategic Plan was developed in consultation with our stakeholders, and we have ensured that the aims and objectives in this Plan align with our Strategic Plan. The longer-term priorities include the financial sustainability of BMet, improving quality and being an inspiring place to work and study/train for our staff, young people and adults through a focus on technical and essential skills development. The Plan recognises the need to collaborate and innovate with partners in areas such as sustainability and digital requiring both investment in the physical infrastructure and specialist equipment as well as developing staff and learner skills. It also acknowledges BMet needs to do more from level 1 and above ensuring suitable progression routes for adults leading to higher level skills in line with employer demand.

Priorities and Actions

Aim/Action	Outcome/Impact
Introduce new T levels programmes in Management & Admin, Engineering, Health, Science, Accounting and Media and associated transition programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enrol 120 new T level learners (enrolled 44 in 23/24 on Construction, Digital and Early Years) At least 60% of learners progress from transition programmes into T levels for 2024/25 (started T levels in 23/24) 70%+ lecturers to undertake Industry updating for new T levels. (100% for new T levels in 23/24)
SEN delivery and progression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 new supported internships (5 in 23/24) Develop accessible apprenticeships following 23/24 pilot Launch employer forum focused on career opportunities Seek funding for Inclusive Sports Centre

Develop and recruit to HE inc. new HTQs in priority sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enrol 90 additional HE learners across priority sectors including HTQs (105 in 23/24)
Develop a plan for Lifelong Learning Entitlement LLE implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation plan to be ready for implementation of LLE in September 25 Develop flexible learning opportunities for various learning pathways, individual modules, and higher technical qualifications (HTQs)
Develop innovative approaches for adult provision above entry level in priority sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on achieving the North Birmingham Action Plan (NBMER) Develop and pilot innovative approaches to deliver level 3 training to adults, that are flexible, modular, stackable to meet employer and adult needs, building on the research through the Local Skills Improvement Fund activity Launch Bootcamp delivery in 3 sectors
Implement BMet sustainability plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be an active partner within the LSIF green skills workstream in developing a green skills roadmap Work towards 'Leading' status on the FE Sustainability Roadmap Implement plan to raise awareness with staff and students
Increase level of digital skills across BMet for staff, learners and employers	<p>Through our Digital and Tech Employer and Stakeholder board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of AI and VR programme for the development of skills Drive BMet Digital Learning Academy - 80% of all students on programmes of study participating. Whilst underpinning with a communication plan to the regional business community Launch of Immersive classrooms across the 3 sites Increase digital within the community provision utilising Local Skills Improvement Fund capital equipment.
Promote and collaborate with employers to support workforce and essential skills development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of LSIF strand 6: "Skills West Midlands and Warwickshire" delivering SME focussed package and solutions. Pilot of Innovate UK funded Innovation Hub model to support technology adaption in priority sectors and in particular Healthtech at BMet Development of employer-demand research piece in partnership with local HEI and BMet student population to support businesses attract and retain young people in work and to support young people explore their relationship with work.

5. Local Needs Duty

Key action outcomes of governor review:

- To further develop BMet' corporate and social responsibilities including students' 'essential skills' and community engagement.
- To support the creation of a sustainable model to continue collaboration with regional providers to meet LSIF and Innovate UK outcomes which are aligned to regional and national priorities.
- To develop the BMet estate to deliver its digital strategy.
- To continuously measure the impact of our Skills activity on our students' careers and destination delivering on the Ofsted Skills Judgement

6. Corporate statement

On behalf of the BMet corporation, it is hereby confirmed that the plan as set out above reflects an agreed statement of purpose, aims and objectives as approved by the corporation at their meeting on 9th of May 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:



Signed: Dexter Hutt
Chair of Corporation



Pat Carvalho
Principal and CEO

Links

Strategic Plan 2030 (attached)

Stakeholder Map 2022_23.docx (attached)

BMet Self-Assessment 22/23 (attached)

[Local Skills Plan 2022 – West Midlands Combined Authority](#)

[Birmingham City Council – Corporate Plan 2022-2026](#)

[WMCA Employment and Skills Strategy 2024-2027](#)

[Skills West Midlands and Warwickshire Employer Skills Report](#)