

Solihull College & University Centre
and Stratford-upon-Avon College

STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2025



Impact and Progress

Update 3

January to July 2024



Solihull College
& University Centre

Stratford-upon-Avon
College





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Foreword

As we reach the mid-point of our 2022-2025 Strategic Plan at Solihull College and University Centre, it is with great pride that we reflect on our progress and the successes we have achieved thus far. Our commitment to excellence, collaboration, and innovation has been unwavering, and the results speak for themselves.

One of the standout achievements during this period has been our recent Ofsted inspection in May 2024, where we were judged as 'Good' overall, with our contribution to skills being deemed 'strong.' We are particularly proud that we are the only general further education college within the Colleges West Midlands consortia to receive this highest judgement. This recognition not only affirms our dedication to quality but also highlights the significant impact we are making in the region by equipping our learners with the skills they need to thrive. Importantly, our impact on skills is also supporting businesses in our region by helping them upskill their staff and strengthen the talent pipeline of skilled individuals they need to meet emerging business requirements and build their future workforce.

Our reputation for quality excellence and collaboration has been further reinforced by our selection to lead the UK's largest Local Skills Improvement Fund project, across West Midlands and Warwickshire, a testament to our capability and leadership in driving regional skills development. Additionally, our representation at a wide range of events, as well as on regional and national boards—where some of our staff hold leadership positions—demonstrates the influence and respect we have garnered within the education sector.

While we have made remarkable strides, we recognise that there is still work to be done in the remaining 18 months of our strategic plan. Our focus remains on continuing our growth trajectory and advancing our significant investment and property strategy, ensuring that future cohorts of learners benefit from state-of-the-art facilities and an environment conducive to learning and personal development. We will also continue to improve learner outcomes and drive forward quality improvements across the College.

To further enhance our support for students, we have created the new role of 'Personal Development Coach' and recruited a team of 20 across the College. Additionally, we have appointed 'English and Maths Programme Managers' to bolster our ongoing efforts to enhance the quality of our Maths and English provision.

We are also proud of the culture we have cultivated at Solihull College and University Centre. Our ability to recruit and retain excellent staff, coupled with offering terms and conditions that exceed sector norms, has been a cornerstone of our success. It is this culture of excellence that propels us forward, ensuring that we remain at the forefront of further education and skills development.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to holding ourselves accountable for the success factors we identified under each of our strategic ambitions. Together, with our dedicated staff and stakeholders, we are confident that we will continue to achieve our goals and make a lasting impact on the lives of our learners and the broader community.



Dr Rebecca Gater
Principal & Chief Executive



Barbara Hughes
Chair of Corporation

6-Month Review

**JAN
2024**



The College joined others in the Colleges West Midlands consortium to launch a social media video campaign, aiming to recruit a more diverse workforce.

**JUN
2024**



College students host #BigFE Lunch, attended by Deputy Lord Lieutenant of the West Midlands, Everton Burke OBE.

**FEB
2024**



The College is named as a recipient of Innovate UK's Further Education Innovation Fund (FEIF), a £7.3 million investment that will put further education colleges at the forefront of local innovation.

**MAY
2024**



Successful Ofsted inspection - 'Good' with 'Strong' contribution to skills.

**MAR
2024**



Principal & CEO, Rebecca Gater invited to No.10 to celebrate impact of FE Colleges.

**APR
2024**



The Turing Scheme funded Animal Welfare students to visit Curio in the Netherlands to gain international work experience and learn about animal welfare approaches.

Strategic Ambition 1

Deliver a high-quality curriculum that enhances the life opportunities of our learners, the inclusive growth of our communities, and the productivity of the employers with which we work.



Quality and Curriculum

SUCCESS MEASURE

- We will be judged as 'Outstanding' by Ofsted.

IN PROGRESS

- Recent inspection in May 2024 judged the College as 'Good' with 'Strong' Contribution to Skills.
- Improvements made in AFIs from previous report (Safeguarding, Starting Points, Feedback and Attendance).
- Updates to quality assurance processes and activities (e.g. earlier SAR Validation and condensed Deep Dive activity window to enable more timely interventions).
- Teaching and Learning Coaches allocated improvement projects and delegation of key QIP priorities to operational managers.

SUCCESS MEASURE

- 97% of our learners will progress to positive destinations.

IN PROGRESS

- Overall Destination Data for 22/23 (16-18 and 19+):
Progressed in college – 52.1%
Other education – 9.8%
Employment – 31.2%
Looking for employment – 7%
- Destination Data for 23/24 is in the process of being collected by Personal Tutors and will be available later in the Autumn Term.

SUCCESS MEASURE

- Our overall achievement will be $\geq 10\%$ above national rates and all curriculum areas will be above national rates.

IN PROGRESS

- Overall achievement for 16-18 is 79.1% and -2.6% below the NA (81.7%)

- Overall achievement for 19+ is 81.3% and -5.7% below the NA (87%).
- Overall achievement for Apprentices is 61.5% and +3.7% above the NA.
- Achievement in Early Years, Performing Arts, English, Animal Care, Certificate Programmes, HSC, Sport, Public Services, Engineering and Motor Vehicle was above the NA for 16-18 provision.
- Achievement in Animal Care, Management & Professional, Business, Early Years, Certificate Programmes, Public Services, English and provision subcontracted to Learning Curve was above the NA for 19+ provision.

SUCCESS MEASURE

- We will be in the top quartile for progress in maths and English.

IN PROGRESS

- Math English and maths progress measures have been suspended until 2024/25 due to needing to use KS4 prior attainment data from summer 2020 or summer 2021.
- English and Maths provision has been restructured and combined led by one Head of School and supported by Programme Managers.

FUTURE FOCUS

- An English and Maths Action Plan will be created to provide a clear focus on improvements needed.

SUCCESS MEASURE

- A 60% increase in participation of unemployed and unskilled adults from deprived postcodes.

IN PROGRESS

- Adult participation from deprived wards has increased by 13% over the life of the plan. The creation of a new Adult Skills directorate will continue to grow participation through a new suite of pre-employment programmes.

SUCCESS MEASURE

- We will have achieved the action plan as set out by the JISC digital elevation tool.

ACHIEVED

- We have appointed a new manager with responsibility for digital elevation.
- All staff have completed the JISC digital capabilities tool to give us a starting point of the organisation's digital skills.
- We have developed our own digital elevation tool 'DigiLearn' with over 1,500 courses delivered to staff to date. All staff have had training on AI, and DIGIDAY delivered digital skills sessions to all staff, supporting the use innovative and transformational technology to enhance learner experience and outcomes.

IN PROGRESS

- We are continuing to promote digital learning to elevate the digital skills of all staff. Three AI focussed projects Student Attrition, Teachermatic and working with JISC on risks/benefits of AI with other colleges.

FUTURE FOCUS

- We will conduct a trial of the DigiLearn platform for A-Level learners.
- We will re-run the JISC digital capabilities tool so we can measure progress.
- Continue to input into the property strategy to create immersive spaces and make getting help with digital easier for all stakeholders.

SUCCESS MEASURE

- Our FE, HE and apprentice learner satisfaction rates will be above 95%.

IN PROGRESS

- FE Learner Satisfaction:
Autumn 23/24 – 90% (No. 3273)
Autumn 22/23 – 93% (No.2917)
- FE Learner Satisfaction:
Spring 23/24 – 88% - (No. 2593)
Spring 22/23 – 88% (No.2089)
- Apprentice Satisfaction:
June 24 – 90% (No. 222)
June 23 – 88% (No. 195)
- HE Satisfaction (NSS):
June 24 – 93% (No. 68)
June 23 – 94% (No. 57)

Figures in brackets represent number of participants.

FUTURE FOCUS

- Increase engagement and response rates for future surveys.
- Link with Apprenticeship Coordinators and Personal Development Coaches to promote completion.
- T&L Coaches now allocated to schools in order to support staff to improve all aspects of Teaching and Learning to increase satisfaction.



Partnerships and Outreach

SUCCESS MEASURE

- We will have an active involvement in and representation on regional (and national) decision-making bodies and professional groups.

ACHIEVED

- Lead provider in GBSIoT.
- Lead provider in West Midlands and Warwickshire LSIF.
- Principal is Vice President of Solihull Chamber of Commerce.
- Principal selected to join AoC's national Curriculum Strategy Group.
- CFO leads the AoC West & East Midlands Finance Director's network and member of Colleges FD Group.

SUCCESS MEASURE

- We will have very strong links with other colleges locally, regionally and nationally, working together to develop and share best practice.

ACHIEVED

- Solihull College and University Centre currently works in partnership with all in Colleges West Midlands, and actively collaborates with Cheshire College South & West, Hull College, Riverside College, East Kent College Group, Waltham Forest College.
- Emily Cossey presented at DigiFest 2024 on how VR can prepare students for the future.

SUCCESS MEASURE

- We will be involved in pilot and trailblazing projects and initiatives, for example with ETF, AoC and other external organisations.

IN PROGRESS

- Multiple ongoing initiatives including:
 - o Regional lead in MEI Maths Challenge.
 - o Maths staff involved in mastery programme with NCTEM.
 - o Continuing Teach the Teacher and Make the Days Count.
 - o QAA project on enhancing teaching and learning quality through collaborative observation.
 - o Green Change Makers engaging in LSIF-funded Wider Green Skills Project.
 - o ETF T-Level delivery project to support training of FE staff across the region in T-Level delivery.

FUTURE FOCUS

- Exploring new projects including:
 - o Animal Care working with a college in the Netherlands to enrich their programme of study and take students abroad.
 - o Early Years working with external provider (Mighty Roar) to organise a trip to Gambia focussed around sustainability.

SUCCESS MEASURE

- We will receive high satisfaction from employers through feedback and further opportunities of upskilling their workforce.

IN PROGRESS

- Employer satisfaction retains the “good” rating on the Apprenticeship Accountability Framework (3/4 stars). Whilst overall satisfaction is strong, a few key areas of improvement are required including reporting on progress of apprentices, communication with employers and adapting to specific employer needs. The College has established employer boards in each curriculum area to facilitate this.
- Ofsted conducted 64 employer and stakeholder visits and calls. Satisfaction was high and the stakeholder partnerships that the College has in place are meaningful and drive the skills agenda. This was externally validated as “strong” Contribution to Skills Needs in the May 2024 Ofsted report. This reflects positive employer feedback received throughout the College’s internal deep dives process.

SUCCESS MEASURE

- We will work collaboratively with external agencies and employers to augment the skills agenda and positively impact the current and future workforce.

ACHIEVED

- The College is highly effective at working with external agencies and employers to shape the skills agenda. We have external validation of this from our recent Ofsted inspection, where we were the only college in the College's West Midlands consortia to achieve “Strong” for Contribution to Skills Needs.
- The College is the lead partner for the largest of the Local Skills Improvement Funds, successfully bringing together a range of FE providers and agencies to ensure the region is equipped and resourced to deliver on the skills priorities identified in the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP).



Reputation

SUCCESS MEASURE

- We will have received awards and accolades for learner, staff and organisational achievement.

ACHIEVED

- Won 'Education, Training and Professional Development' at Solihull Chamber of Commerce Awards in 2022 and 2023.
- Rachel Arnold, Quality Coach, won 'Rising Star and Future Leader' at Solihull Chamber of Commerce Awards in 2023.
- Students across various departments have reached national finals in WorldSkills 2022 and 2023.
- Harry Scolding, carpentry and joinery apprentice, winner of WorldSkills 2022 national finals, was selected to join team GB at WorldSkills international in 2024.
- Hairdressing and barbering students have won a range of medals at North of England Hair Awards 2022 and 2023.
- AoC Commended status for 'Education for Sustainable Development' - November 2023.

Strategic Ambition 2

Secure the future of our organisation in a fast-changing sector through careful and appropriate income diversification and growth.



Quality and Curriculum

SUCCESS MEASURE

- Our internal progression rates will increase from 44% to 70% for learners progressing from Entry, Level 1 and Level 2 programmes.
- Progression rates will increase from 68% to 85% for learners progressing into the second year of a Level 3 programme.
- We will have achieved our implementation plan for technical education (Transition Programmes T-Levels and HTQs).

IN PROGRESS

- Internal progression rates from Entry, Level 1 and Level 2 are at 42%.
- Progression rates from Year 1 to Year 2 of Level 3 programmes are 82%.
- Provision continues to expand within technical education with T-Level approval secured for Animal Care and Media for first delivery in 2024/25. However, applications for some T-Levels are low and if not recruited to in greater numbers will not run.



Finance and Resources

SUCCESS MEASURE

- Apprenticeship income will increase by 20%.

IN PROGRESS

- Apprenticeship income has increased by 16% since the inception of this strategic plan. A new senior director is now in post to drive apprenticeship income to the 20% target over the life of the plan.

SUCCESS MEASURE

- Increase our success rate at winning bids by 10%.

FUTURE FOCUS

- The number of successful bids has reduced from 36 to 24 over the current period of the Strategic Plan, compared to the same period preceding the launch of the plan. The College's approach to bidding is evolving and is in the process of bidding for multiple civic Dynamic Purchasing Systems to increase successful bids in the latter half of the strategic plan.

SUCCESS MEASURE

- We will have increased our 16-18 student numbers by 10%.

IN PROGRESS

- Currently at 9% growth in 16-18 numbers:
 - o 22/23 – 4782
 - o 23/24 - 5218
- The 3-year Curriculum Plans completed by Heads of School will be stress tested and gaps identified to ensure these are robust.
- Work with curriculum heads to develop a three-year curriculum plan for each school, focussing on skills priorities and regional employment gaps.

SUCCESS MEASURE

- Adult income will increase by 10%.

FUTURE FOCUS

- Adult income has not yet increased. The College has invested significantly in a new directorate comprising a senior leader for adult skills and five sector skills leads aligned to the WMCA's priority sectors (engineering, health, digital, business, and construction). The structure of this new team is designed to improve the College's responsiveness to the skills needs of employers and adult residents. The team is operational from September 2024 and will drive income throughout the second half of the Strategic Plan.

Strategic Ambition 3

Create a high-performing culture that attracts and retains the best people, is fully inclusive, and produces a happy and proud workforce.



People and Culture

SUCCESS MEASURE

- We will have achieved the Leaders in Diversity accreditation.

ACHIEVED

- This has proved to be cost prohibitive.

FUTURE FOCUS

- We are exploring other options, such as Race Equality Matters.

SUCCESS MEASURE

- Our Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) action plan will have been achieved with measurable impact.

IN PROGRESS

- We are making good progress towards our equality goals and have seen an increase in the profile of Black and Asian staff.

FUTURE FOCUS

- Diversifying the Curriculum workshops with teaching staff.

SUCCESS MEASURE

- Minimal turnover and recruitment concerns.

IN PROGRESS

- Turnover (13.97%) continues to be below sector average (17.8%) and we are experiencing high numbers of strong applications.

SUCCESS MEASURE

- Our staff will be involved in wider sector organisations such as Ofsted inspectors, external quality assurance, ETF ambassadors.

IN PROGRESS

- Kerry Scattergood chair of Research Colleges group.
- 2 Ofsted inspectors in management team (Rebecca Gater and Ravinder Jhite).
- A number of staff across various departments work as external verifiers and examiners for a range of awarding bodies.
- Work with FE Commissioners team on pilot project to benchmark support area costs.

SUCCESS MEASURE

- We will have consistently high levels of staff satisfaction from employee survey.

ACHIEVED

- Our culture survey in July 23 indicated staff generally have a will to stay at the College (higher than the median average across 1000+ organisations).

FUTURE FOCUS

- A new survey is planned for staff in 2024/5 academic year.



Reputation

SUCCESS MEASURE

- We will have very strong links with other colleges locally, regionally and nationally, working together to develop and share best practice.

ACHIEVED

- Solihull College and University Centre currently works in partnership with all in Colleges West Midlands, and actively collaborates with Cheshire College South & West, Hull College, Riverside College, East Kent College Group, Waltham Forest College.



Strategic Ambition 4

Deliver a considered but ambitious programme of investment underpinned by financial stability



Finance and Resources

SUCCESS MEASURE

- Achieve our financial Key Performance Indicators.

ACHIEVED

- We have achieved our financial KPIs for 2022/23 and 2023/24. In June 2024 our Financial Strategy and KPIs were reviewed by governors to ensure 'Good' financial health is maintained whilst investing cash balances.
- We completed financial modelling and sensitivity analysis to support pay awards to staff within our agreed pay percentage.

IN PROGRESS

- Continue to deliver financial strategy and monitor the KPIs.

SUCCESS MEASURE

- Our capital spend from both grants and reserves ensures our estate, facilities and equipment provide the best possible learner experience.

ACHIEVED

- Approved and launched our new Digital Strategy.
- 309 laptops, 125 Macs and 188 PCs purchased in 2023/24.
- Roll out of 105 brand new interactive whiteboards with training materials.
- Firewalls on all campuses upgraded.
- Works to phase 1 of the CCTV project are now complete and we continue to progress fire safety systems and building management system upgrades.
- Exchanged contracts for the sale of the student residences on the Stratford-upon-Avon Campus, subject to planning approval this is expected to complete in the next 12 months.
- Refurbishment of refectory spaces on all 3 campuses – summer 2023.

- Facilities upgraded for T-Level learners in Health and Care and Higher Education learners including lesson capture rooms.
- Additional brick workshops completed to accommodate increasing learner numbers.
- Stratford refurbishment completed and launch held in November 2023.

IN PROGRESS

- Launched Property Strategy refresh and held workshops with staff and students, manager, governors and other stakeholders. A number of projects have been identified which will be incorporated into the Property Strategy for consideration by governors.
- We are working with the developer to complete the sale of the student residences.

FUTURE FOCUS

- Delivery priorities agreed within the Property Strategy and Investment Plan.

SUCCESS MEASURE

- We will have won bids for capital grants which enable us to bring all our estate and resources up to the quality of the best.

ACHIEVED

- We have received funding from LSIF for Heat Pump training centre at Stratford, immersive classroom and AI lab at Blossomfield.
- Funding for HTQs £800K via the GBSIoT with over £500K for Solihull College.
- We have received £625K from the UK Prosperity Fund and SDC for an electric vehicle training centre at Stratford.
- We have received DfE funding for a new dog grooming parlour and agility centre at Blossomfield to support T-Levels in Animal Care.

IN PROGRESS

- Review of space utilisation is being undertaken as part of the Property Strategy.

SUCCESS MEASURE

- All our facilities will be used efficiently and effectively, ensuring that investment can be directed where it is needed.
- All of our college estate will be in ESFA condition category B as a minimum.

ACHIEVED

- Following the refurbishment of the Stratford Campus all of the College's estate is at least condition B.

IN PROGRESS

- A condition survey has been completed for all campuses and this will inform both the Property Strategy and a long-term maintenance plan to ensure all of the estate remains at least condition B.



People and Culture

SUCCESS MEASURE

- High levels of learner, staff and visitor satisfaction regarding the quality of learning resources and environments.

ACHIEVED

- Ofsted report May 2024 'have invested in specialised resources such as construction and equine centres, health technologies, and aviation equipment. This comprehensive approach ensures that learners, including those with high needs, acquire the necessary skills, gain independence, and build social confidence, preparing them effectively for their future careers.'

SUCCESS MEASURE

- We will have received awards and accolades for our innovative use of learning and digital technologies.

ACHIEVED

- College won Chamber of Commerce award for Excellence in Training & Education for Digital Work.
- Digital technologist, Emily Cossey, presented at DigiFest 2024.

SUCCESS MEASURE

- We will attract additional staff and students as a result of our high-class facilities.

ACHIEVED

- 8% increases in 16-18 learner numbers.

Strategic Ambition 5

Be net zero by 2030.



Finance and Resources

SUCCESS MEASURE

- We will have developed a climate change strategy and delivery plan.

ACHIEVED

- We have developed a climate change strategy and delivery plan.

IN PROGRESS

- Attained Governor approval for our Sustainability Strategy (Climate Change) which sets out a clear plan for meeting 2030 Net Zero target, in May 2023.

SUCCESS MEASURE

- We will have reduced our annual carbon footprint by 25% from a 2022/23 baseline.

ACHIEVED

- 24.7% reduction from 2021/22 - 2023/24 for Scope 1 and Scope 2 and business travel / fleet (Scope 3).
- Stage 1 and 2 of BMS system upgrade complete.

IN PROGRESS

- Energy efficiency and decarbonisation plan will progress this carbon emissions reduction. Scope 3 supply chain emissions to be determined as part of a parallel project.

SUCCESS MEASURE

- We will have completed condition surveys, energy audits and feasibility studies to identify energy efficiency and decarbonisation solutions for all three campuses.

ACHIEVED

- We have developed a climate change strategy and delivery plan.

IN PROGRESS

- Attained Governor approval for our Sustainability Strategy (Climate Change) which sets out a clear plan for meeting 2030 Net Zero target, in May 2023.

SUCCESS MEASURE

- We will have reduced our annual carbon footprint by 25% from a 2022/23 baseline.

ACHIEVED

- 24.7% reduction from 2021/22 - 2023/24 for Scope 1 and Scope 2 and business travel / fleet (Scope 3).
- Stage 1 and 2 of BMS system upgrade complete.
- T&T energy efficiency audit and decarbonisation report.
- Condition and energy audit complete.
- LED lighting installed across all 3 campuses.

IN PROGRESS

- Energy efficiency and decarbonisation plan will progress this carbon emissions reduction. Scope 3 supply chain emissions to be determined as part of a parallel project.
- Feasibility study for Heat Pumps at Woodlands and Stratford.
- Feasibility Study for Solar Panels.
- District Heat Network Blossomfield Campus.
- Salix bid for ASHP at Woodlands and Stratford Campuses.

FUTURE FOCUS

- Energy efficiency and decarbonisation plan will progress this carbon emissions reduction. Scope 3 supply chain emissions to be determined as part of a parallel project.
- Install Heat Pumps at Woodlands and Stratford.
- Install Solar Panels.
- Switch to District Heat Network for heat and power at the Blossomfield Campus.



People and Culture

SUCCESS MEASURE

- Our Green Champions forum will be relaunched, actively engaged with and will have made a demonstrable impact.

ACHIEVED

- Appointed 60 Green Champions (Staff and Students) who are actively engaging in initiatives on campus.
- Held Green Champions launch events at all campuses.

IN PROGRESS

- Set up 5 Green Champions Project Groups, developing an action plan for 2024/25 on; Travel, Food, Biodiversity, Energy Use and Waste & Recycling.

SUCCESS MEASURE

- We will have surveyed staff and learners to establish and measure effectiveness of interventions and actions taken.

ACHIEVED

- Staff and student travel survey completed.

SUCCESS MEASURE

- All curriculum areas will have embedded the delivery of sustainability into their curriculum, based on the UN sustainable development goals.

ACHIEVED

- Appointed a Fixed Term Teaching and Learning Coach for Sustainability.
- Developed a new sustainability tutorial which has been rolled out across all schools.
- Undertaken an evaluation of sustainability content and quality across the curriculum (deep dives, lesson planning etc).
- Supported two members of the teaching staff to attend the LSIF Green Skills Leadership Programme.
- Delivered 'Sustainability in the Curriculum' development sessions to teaching staff as part of the Cultivate Teacher Summer Development Programme.

IN PROGRESS

- Remission hours have been agreed for curriculum sustainability leads to roll-out learning from Green Skills Leadership Programme.
- Develop / signpost to resources being developed through the LSIF programme, for inclusion in both generic and specific course content.

FUTURE FOCUS

- A comprehensive sustainability survey will be carried out to analyse impact of sustainability measures to date.
- Further audit of curriculum practice (aligned with the UN SDGs) will be undertaken in 24/25.

SUCCESS MEASURE

- Active engagement in 'Students Organising for Sustainability' events and initiatives.

FUTURE FOCUS

- Engage and work with SoS on student--focused initiatives.



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