

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

ESTATE STRATEGY FRAMEWORK 2025-2035

Delivering an Exceptional Learning Experience



Solihull College
& University Centre

Stratford-upon-Avon
College





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Executive Summary

The College has a diverse estate, formed principally of three campuses, Blossomfield, Woodlands and Stratford-upon-Avon.

Ongoing investment in our estate is critical to continuing our delivery of an exceptional learning experience for all.

This Estate Strategy Framework ('ESF') will support our decision making on our estate investment over the next 10 years, to ultimately deliver on our Estate Vision:

'To support the delivery of an inspiring and engaging learning environment suited to all, which is resilient, agile and fit for the future'.

To achieve our Estates Vision, it is important all our projects respond to our: **Strategic Estate Priorities, Essential Estate Requirements and Key Campus Themes.**

The Estate Strategy Framework



Introduction

At Solihull College and University Centre, we pride ourselves on delivering an exceptional learning experience, ensuring our students gain the skills and knowledge to excel in their future chosen career. Providing access to education from foundation learning through to degree-level, we strive to support every individual to excel.

As at the 2024/2025 academic year, the College provides for over 10,000 learners, including over 5,300 16–18-year-old learners, 750 apprentices, 4,100 adult learners and 400 students studying higher education, on either a full or part time basis. We work closely with our local and regional partners, ensuring we make a positive contribution to our local economy and community. Our commitment to delivering high-quality teaching is reflected in our recent Ofsted Grading as 'Good' and having a 'Strong' contribution to skills (May 2024). We have an impactful role in our region, providing access to education for all and a skilled workforce for the future.

Fundamental to what we do, how we operate and our College success, is our estate. It provides the environment within which we deliver our outstanding teaching and learning and unites our College community. It also is a platform for growth.

Our estate is formed of three campuses: **Blossomfield**, **Woodlands** and **Stratford-upon-Avon**. We continuously invest in their quality, expansion and redevelopment. We must keep adapting and innovating our approach to embrace new opportunities, the latest technology and changing policy, industry, or demographic needs. As a consequence, through pro-active planning, we must ensure our estate continues to respond to change and supports our long-term sustainable growth and success.

This Estate Strategy Framework ('ESF') sets out our future estate vision for the next 10 years. Its purpose is to:

1. Identify our priorities for investment across our estate linked to our overall Strategic Plan (**Strategic Estate Priorities**);
2. Provide a structure to address known needs/opportunities across our whole estate (**Essential Estate Requirements**);
3. A guide to areas of change required at each of our three campuses (**Key Campus Themes**).

Over the next 10 years, the ESF will support all our future estate decisions to allow us to continuously adapt and respond to new opportunities and unknown needs, whilst preserving our Estate Vision. It has been informed by extensive engagement with our students, staff and stakeholders to better understand their user experience. We have also undertaken assessments of the condition, operation, utilisation and sustainability of our estate.

Our Strategic Ambitions

The performance of our estate is integral to the success of the College and the fulfilment of our 'Inspire Success for All' **Strategic Plan (2022-2025)**, formed of five **Strategic Ambitions**:

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

AMBITION 2: Secure the future of our organisation in fast-changing sector through careful and appropriate income diversification and growth

AMBITION 3: Create a high-performing culture that attracts and retains the best people, is fully inclusive, and has a happy and proud workforce

AMBITION 4: Deliver a considered but ambitious programme of investment underpinned by financial stability

AMBITION 5: Net zero by 2030

Our **Strategic Plan** is bold, setting out our exciting plans for the future, which builds on our College success.

Our estate is fundamental in providing the spaces within which our College can grow and our students can thrive.

To support our five **Strategic Ambitions**, our estate must evolve and adapt in order to:

- *Provide facilities which enhance key curriculum areas to deliver vibrant and inspiring learning environments;*
- *Improve the condition and efficiency of our buildings, and their operations;*
- *Deliver a stimulating and inclusive workplace;*
- *Create a sense of community amongst all our students, staff, and partners; and*
- *Embed sustainability in all our future estate decisions.*

1.0 Our Existing Estate

Our College estate is formed of three campuses:

- Blossomfield
- Woodlands
- Stratford-upon-Avon

Each of which are distinct in their form, character, and location, but play a vital role in providing access to education across our region, and form part of our shared College identity.

Our aim is to ensure our students have a consistent, exceptional learning experience at each of our campuses.

Blossomfield Campus



Condition assessment summary (April 24)

- Indicative combined backlog and future maintenance costs (5 yr period): £8,400,000
- Priority works: 1% (Priority 1 – urgent), 45% (Priority 2 – essential), the remainder Priority 3 or 4 (desirable/aspirational)
- Grading: The majority of our buildings are graded B (satisfactory), with specific components such as external decorations and lighting, rainwater goods, internal finishes, sanitary fittings, and incidents of water ingress rated C (Poor) or D (Bad) in certain buildings. M&E across the campus is generally rated C (Poor), principally requiring systems upgrades.

Blossomfield Campus is our largest campus and managerial and administrative centre covering a gross site area of 21 acres. It is situated in an attractive leafy environment, located close to Solihull Town Centre and next to Tudor Grange Park. The campus is primarily formed of 8 blocks, connected via “the Link” building, with dedicated spaces for each curriculum area. The total built footprint is 27,119 sq m (GIA).

In addition to our teaching facilities, the campus has a sports centre, office accommodation, social spaces and business centre. There are three car parks and several outdoor spaces.

In 2011, we concluded a £31.5m programme of refurbishment and redevelopment, which included the Arts and Media Building and the Animal Care Building. We then delivered D Block (Computing Centre) in 2014, providing 16 new classrooms. Our most recent addition was The Animal Care T Level Centre in 2024. All buildings were delivered to BREEAM Very Good standard.

Recent refurbishments have included a virtual reality lab, high-tech science labs as well as a new dog grooming parlour and agility area.

This ESF presents an opportunity to review the existing configuration and location of key services, to better optimise the use of our campus buildings at Blossomfield and moreover improve the user experience for all.

Woodlands Campus



Condition assessment summary (April 24)

- Indicative combined backlog and future maintenance costs (5 yr period): £2,225,800
- Priority works: 17.9% (Priority 2 – essential), the remainder Priority 3 or 4 (desirable/aspirational)
- Grading: The majority of our buildings are graded B (satisfactory), with specific components such as external doors, internal decoration, internal doors, windows, lighting, incidents of water ingress, street furniture rated C (Poor) or D (Bad) in certain areas. M&E across the campus is generally rated C (Poor), principally requiring systems upgrades.

The Woodlands Campus is located at Smith's Wood, North Solihull. It was formed in 2006 to create a purpose-built college facility on a site of 6 gross acres. The total built footprint is 10,653 sq m (GIA) across two distinct buildings.

The campus currently provides a youth-sized football pitch to serve the College community, alongside extensive parking.

The campus is primarily focused on a vocational curriculum offer, with a number of specialist learning spaces, including aerospace, motor vehicle, hair and beauty, and construction. Investment has been made to provide industry grade equipment and training facilities, including a full Boeing 737 flight simulator and a second building focusing on construction and motor vehicle, which was added in 2013. A recent extension to the refectory has also been well-received.

Opportunities to significantly expand the campus beyond its current form are constrained, therefore this ESF allows us to identify opportunities to increase space utilisation and accommodate future growth.

Stratford-upon-Avon



Condition assessment summary (April 24)

- Indicative combined backlog and future maintenance costs (5 yr period): £2,268,000
- Priority works: 4% (Priority 1 – urgent), 23.1% (Priority 2 – essential), the remainder Priority 3 or 4 (desirable/aspirational)
- Grading: The majority of our buildings are graded B (satisfactory), with specific components such as roof coverings, masonry and cladding, rainwater goods, external grounds (rear areas), windows and internal decorations rated C (Poor) or D (Bad) in certain areas. M&E across the campus is generally rated B/C (satisfactory but will fall into poor within 5 years).

Formerly a stand-alone College, which merged with us in 2018, the Stratford-upon-Avon Campus lies west of the town centre and close to the train station. Over recent years, we have invested around £13 million to create a modern college environment via the disposal, refurbishment, and demolition of poor performing and surplus buildings. These works have successfully raised the standard of facilities, delivering new digital television and radio studios and new plumbing and electrical installation workshops. These investments have created learning environments reflective of the workplace, to prepare our students for their transition into employment.

Nearly all of the core teaching buildings are situated around a new 'Green Heart,' a landscaped courtyard, providing a useable outdoor space at the campus core.

The estate now extends to around 5.5 gross acres and a total built footprint of 9,420 sq m (GIA). We are already underway with further expansion, with plans to deliver electric vehicle and ground source heat pump training centres. These two new facilities will ensure we remain at the forefront of the training and skills required to support the green economy and emerging sustainable technologies.

As part of this ESF, we will focus on optimising the benefits of our recent campus investment, enhancing both the student and staff experience.

2.0 Our Estate Vision and Strategic Estate Priorities

“To support the delivery of an inspiring and engaging learning and working environment, suited to all, which is resilient, agile and fit for the future”

- Our Estate Vision (2025 – 2035)

Our Strategic Estate Priorities:

Our ESF is formed around five **Strategic Estate Priorities**, which draw on our five **Strategic Ambitions** as a College, our curriculum, our growth targets, and our sustainability goals.

Our **Strategic Estate Priorities** are to underpin all estate decisions, ensuring they are implemented consistently and proactively considered across all three campuses over the next 10 years. This will ensure:

- The estate intuitively provides a robust foundation to achieve our five Strategic Ambitions
- We address shared key challenges experienced at all three of our campuses
- Our students, staff and visitors have a consistent high-quality experience across all our campuses
- We can effectively guide decision-making on all our campus projects and future investment

Delivering on each of our five **Strategic Estate Priorities** is fundamental to achieving our Estate Vision:



CAMPUS LIFE - Access, security & wellbeing

Creating Safe, Secure and Healthy Campuses

All our students, staff and the wider community must feel safe at our campuses, in an enabling environment which supports their health and wellbeing. We also want to reflect an environment that has synergies with our students' onwards career or workplace settings. Over the course of the strategy period, we will explore:

- **Implementation of access controls at each campus** - to improve security, capture real time data on utilisation, and better direct movement across each campus
- **An upgrade to our campus arrival experience** - to ensure each campus entrance is welcoming and impactful
- **Centralisation of our student services** - to better their visibility and effectiveness on campus
- **Implementation of new staff workplace guidelines** - to support healthy and sustainable working practices
- **Upgrades to our outdoor amenity** – to improve the quality and amenity of our green spaces and the ease of access to them from around our campuses
- **Functionality** - ensuring our furniture and equipment is fit for purpose and supports professional, inspiring and comfortable learning and working environments
- **CCTV improvements** - across each of our campuses to further improve security



GROWTH & FUTURE-PROOFING

Providing an Exceptional Learning Experience

The College prides itself on innovative learning environments, reflective of industry to support a seamless transition into employment. Our strategic growth plan keeps evolving to deliver on this. We continue to review our curriculum offer and market share to identify areas for growth.

We plan to invest in the continued provision of outstanding educational facilities, which support our curriculum offer now and into the future. This will focus on:

- **Pro-active planning for growth** - creating adaptable, flexible spaces across our campuses. This includes our teaching classrooms and specialist learning spaces. In doing so, we will future-proof our campuses.
- **Enhancing the identity of curriculum areas** – exploring opportunities to consolidate curriculum areas in spaces which are in the right place, functional and exceed expectations.
- **Data-driven decisions** – all future estate decisions must respond to our space utilisation data and growth projections to ensure we are best optimising our existing spaces.
- **Collaboration with third parties** – sharing our campuses with other users links us with our community and connects our students with industry.



SUSTAINABILITY

Operating a Sustainable Estate

We are committed to being a **Sustainable College**, as outlined in our Sustainability Strategy (2022-2030). This includes our Strategic Ambition to **achieve Net Zero Carbon by 2030**, for all emissions (Scope 1,2 & 3), as well as encouraging our community to **actively engage in sustainable practices and behaviours** when at our campuses.

The estate has an integral role to play in meeting our sustainability commitments and therefore all key estate decisions will be measured against their ability to support the following sustainability priorities:

- **Upgrade Existing Utilities and Infrastructure** – to help meet our sustainability commitments, we will be upgrading our current infrastructure to improve its energy performance and, where feasible, implement on-site low carbon/ renewable energy solutions.
- **Promoting Green Travel** – our campuses will prioritise pedestrians and cyclists travelling to and from our campus, facilitating safe routes and secure on-campus cycle storage.
- **Increasing Biodiversity** – each of our campuses benefit from outdoor spaces. Not only do we want to encourage greater use of these spaces, but to enhance their contribution to the biodiversity of our estate.
- **Implementing Sustainable Construction** – all new development or significant refurbishment/ maintenance projects should:
 - o Accommodate low carbon/ renewable energy solutions, such as air source heat pump or solar panels, unless an equally or a more environmentally sustainable alternative can be evidenced.
 - o Adopt a low carbon design (new development) or implement energy efficiency enhancements (refurbishment).
 - o Demonstrate sustainable procurement of materials, with consideration given to the whole project life cycle.

THE DIGITAL ESTATE

Maximising the Effectiveness of our Digital Estate

Our Digital Strategy (2023-2026) has a clear vision: *'...to equip our community with the skills and resources to creatively and effectively use digital services, technology, and data to maximise the impact of teaching and learning'*.

We must ensure our physical estate supports the delivery of our Digital Strategy. For optimising functionality, user experience and innovation they are inextricably linked. This includes ensuring consistent facilities across all our campuses, especially within the classroom to support our blended learning model.

Our campuses must also provide easy access to, and training on, innovative education technologies ('EdTech'), digital learning resources and IT support. Through this, we can empower our staff to embed innovative technology in their teaching and improve student access to IT to enhance learning.

To deliver on our digital aims, we will seek to:

- **Revitalise our Open Access Centres & Libraries** - to deliver Study Centres, aimed at improving access to digital learning resources, IT equipment and IT support.
- **Deliver fit-for-purpose IT classrooms** – with a refurbishment programme focused on improved delivery and effectiveness of our on-campus digital learning and space efficiencies.
- **Better support blended learning** – ensuring we can adapt with the future evolution of EdTech.
- **Preserve and enhance our specialist software** – where necessary and specific to curriculum areas.
- **Create 'connected campuses'** - using Building Management Systems to optimise the control of our environments, so our buildings are comfortable, secure and sustainable

Where relevant, our future campus estate projects must consider any required digital enhancements as part of their business case.

IDENTITY, BRANDING & CULTURE

Connecting our College Community

We recognise the importance of our physical spaces in connecting our College community and creating a sense of belonging. Our College spaces should be vibrant, inspiring and inclusive. Across our estate we will seek to:

- **Implement the identity and branding guidelines for all of our campuses** – reflective of our shared College identity.
- **Strengthen our wayfinding and communication** - via improved signage, to include digital displays
- **Provide inclusive social spaces (indoor and outdoor)** - to be designed in close collaboration with our students to ensure they are welcoming to all
- **Ensure appropriate spaces for our adult learners** - to support our commitment to life-long learning

All planned maintenance and campus projects must ensure the continuous delivery of this Strategic Estate Priority.



The **Strategic Estate Priorities** are to shape the parameters for decision-making for future capital projects. They ensure our ESF is flexible, to allow new opportunities to be explored over the next 10 years. Consideration of how future individual projects best deliver on those priorities will be a requirement for all estate decisions. This will allow for agile but consistent decision-making on our future estate, ensuring our priorities are weaved through our capital and operational investments in order to achieve our Estate Vision.

The process and parameters for estate decision making are set out at **Section 6**, known as the **Estate Strategy Framework Matrix**.



3.0 Essential Estate Requirements

Consistent across all our campuses are the **Essential Estate Requirements**, which will involve continual investment across our estate over the next 10 years to:

- Continue our proactive planned maintenance annually, aligned to our Strategic Estate Priorities
- Enhance and regularly review our space utilisation and requirements bi-annually, ensuring right sized and located rooms/spaces which reflect actual usage and its user needs
- Ensure all spaces are functional and meet the learning requirements, which feeds into the wider digital strategy
- Make sure we continue to meet our legislative requirements to exceptional standards

We set out below our **Essential Estate Requirements**, detailing how they will be implemented across our estate.

Whilst they focus on maintaining and upgrading our existing estate, where we have land or buildings which no longer positively contribute to our estate operations, we may explore the **release of assets**, with any funds generated to be reinvested into our estate.

*Any decision to be made on surplus asset release must be informed and considered alongside the Strategic Estate Priorities with a long-term outlook. This is to avoid perceived quick wins that might ultimately impact future-proofing and growth. The decision should be informed by the **Estate Strategy Framework Matrix**.*

Annual Operational Requirements

We are committed to our annual operational investment across our hard and soft services, including maintenance and systems upgrades, to ensure a compliant, safe and secure estate. Most recently this has included catering refurbishments, improvements to CCTV, upgrade of Building Management Systems, new fire systems, new lifts and the introduction of LED lighting.

To make sure our whole estate continues to provide a high quality learning environment, annual investment is required to support its ongoing maintenance, and improve its operational efficiency and functional effectiveness.

To support the formation of our ESF, we commissioned independent condition surveys of each campus. The outputs of which are captured in a comprehensive planned preventative maintenance schedule and budget, covering the next five-year period.

The College will address the ongoing operational requirements for maintenance and functionality across our estate in a planned and measured way. This will include a more regular and structured assessment of our furniture and a rolling programme of replacement and upgrade. To support with this proactive approach, our students and staff are encouraged to log any estate fixtures, fittings or furniture defects impacting on their day-to-day experience. In addition, every campus requires a long term, sustainable storage solution which can accommodate growth, changing learning and working practices, and alleviate pressures points throughout each academic year.

The business case for any new capital project must have engaged with the planned operational requirements to assess any efficiencies that may be identified in the proposals. This is a key measurable component of the **Estate Strategy Framework Matrix**.

Strategic Estate Requirements

Our **Strategic Estate Requirements** set out what we would like to deliver over the next 10 years to upgrade and enhance our estate and are important in meeting our five **Strategic Estate Priorities**.

They respond to estate 'macro' challenges and opportunities identified across all three of our campuses, signalling where investment in our estate is to be focused.

Our Strategic Estate Requirements are to be implemented at each campus on a phased basis, subject to funding availability.

To deliver on these requirements, the solution at each campus is likely to be different, recognising the 'micro' needs and requirements of each campus. Certain aspects will be achievable via our annual capital programme, but the availability of grant funding to support wider delivery will be explored.

SECURITY AND ACCESS CONTROLS: our **Strategic Estate Priority: Campus Life** outlines our priority to ensure our students, staff and visitors continue to feel safe at our campuses.

On a phased basis, our intention is to introduce access control in the form of entry/exit barriers at each of our campus entrances. The purpose being to increase security, but also implement an orderly and efficient campus entry and exit system. The priority campus for this roll out will be Woodlands.

As a second phase, we would like to implement a door access control system across each campus to capture 'real time' utilisation data, to support with estate planning and to restrict access.

STUDENT SERVICES: our **Strategic Estate Priority: Campus Life** also outlines our commitment to the wellbeing of our students, by creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment.

An important part is our student services. Across our campuses, we have found our student services are not always in the most appropriate locations, often making them difficult to locate.

Our aim is to consolidate our student services to a central, easily accessible location at each campus. This will provide a single point of contact for our students where they can access our full range services, to include student finance, mental health support and welfare.

STUDENT SOCIAL SPACES: our College has grown and the needs of our students have diversified, impacting on their social space requirements outside of the classroom. Our **Strategic Estate Priority: Campus Life** identifies the need for a more varied provision of breakout spaces at each of our campuses. This includes both indoor and outdoor settings for eating and socialising, as well as more private, quieter spaces away from the hustle and bustle.

To deliver on this we need to review the locations, design, safeguarding and connection to outdoor spaces at all our existing social settings, at each campus. We may also need to add new spaces to our current provision.

NET ZERO CARBON: changing how we power our buildings is integral to achieving our target of Net Zero Carbon by 2030. Our **Strategic Estate Priority: Sustainability** sets out our intention to upgrade our current utilities and infrastructure to achieve this. This includes our ambitious aim to transition all our campuses to low carbon or renewable energy sources. This will require significant investment and, where possible, we will be seeking grant funding to support us.

Plans are already underway, with our Blossomfield Campus signed up to connect into the proposed Solihull Town Centre Energy Network, a low carbon energy network.

In parallel, there will be a **planned operational rollout of energy upgrades** across our campuses where M&E is due for major renewal or new buildings are introduced. **Critical upgrades**, such as where our servicing infrastructure is life expired, is where available funds will need to be prioritised.

Any proposal for an individual campus project, must demonstrate synergies with this planned operational rollout have been explored.

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION: technology has and will continue to impact how and where we learn. A core component of our **Strategic Estate Priority: The Digital Estate** is providing consistent, high-quality IT provision in our classrooms to support learning and teaching delivery.

There is an increasing demand for our general IT classrooms and we also are challenged by the varying quality of our provision, to include the technology but also the functionality of those spaces. To address this, our aim is to undertake an **IT refurbishment programme** of all our general IT classrooms, across our campuses. Aligned with our Digital Strategy, we will assess industry best practice to inform a plan to deliver the most effective technology and classroom setting.

MODERNISING OPEN ACCESS: to deliver on our digital ambitions, part of our **Strategic Estate Priority: The Digital Strategy** is to reinvigorate our Open Access Centres & Libraries, transforming them into Study Centres fit for the future learner. To deliver a supportive learning environment our Study Centres will provide access to digital learning resources, IT equipment and IT support. For Blossomfield, this may result in a relocated **Study Centre**, to create a new knowledge hub at the heart of our campus. For Woodlands and Stratford-upon-Avon, there are opportunities to create enhanced and/or expanded offers in their current locations.

IDENTITY AND BRANDING GUIDELINES: part of delivering on our **Strategic Estate Priority: Identity, Branding and Culture**, is the formulation and implementation of our new College Identity and Branding Guidelines. The guidelines will set out our College brand identity, colour palette for walls and finishes, and display and signage protocols to ensure we are consistent across our campuses, strengthening our shared College identity. This will include a new **Streets and Squares Policy** focused on celebrating the identity of each curriculum area ('the squares') as well as supporting campus wayfinding ('the streets'). We will work closely with our student community in the development of new identity and branding guidelines.

There will be a phased roll-out of our new guidelines across each campus, with the intention it forms part of our annual maintenance, but also must be part of any individual campus projects, to deliver a consistent approach.

FUTURE-PROOFING: In accordance with our **Strategic Estate Priority: Growth & Future-proofing** it is critical we identify solutions now to support growth in the future. These opportunities need to be preserved across each of our campuses. This includes right sizing our classrooms, with the delivery of larger, more flexible teaching classrooms, which are multi-purpose, multi-user and in the right location. This will allow the College to be more agile in how it responds to pressures points across the academic year and provides 'breathing space' for short term flux. We will implement the **introduction of larger, flexible multi-purpose spaces** across each campus on a phased basis.

Longer term growth opportunities are to be explored through the identification of **new build development plots** or existing building expansion options. Their locations must be carefully planned in advance of any potential requirement to best integrate into campus life and infrastructure.

The business case for any new capital project must consider potential alignments with the **Strategic Estate Requirements** and their associated rollouts, to assess any efficiencies that may be identified in the proposals. This is a key measurable component of the **Estate Strategy Framework Matrix**.

Space Utilisation and Timetabling

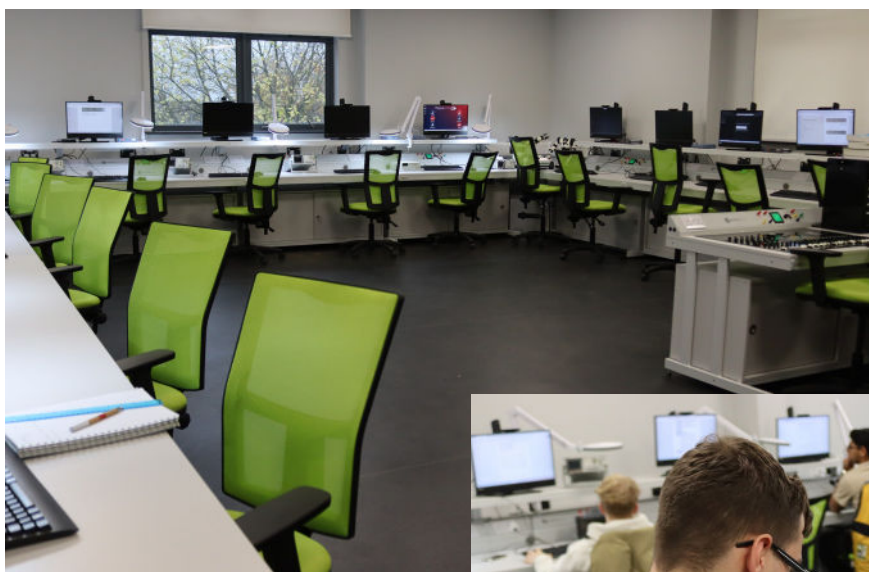
To deliver on our **Strategic Estate Priority: Growth & Future-proofing**, we must optimise the use of our existing buildings and spaces. A core component of this is to make our existing estate work harder, enabling us to prioritise refurbishment over rebuild, supporting our sustainability aims.

Our recent space utilisation assessment, based on the 2023/24 academic year, found overall College utilisation is 28.5% which sits below a current DfE target of 33-37%. In part, this is due to higher levels of specialist teaching facilities, particularly at Woodlands and Stratford-upon-Avon. The assessment also identified:

- Whilst the College are generally achieving a good level of room occupancy, there is scope for **increased frequency of room use** through expanded timetabling (i.e. late afternoons and Fridays).
- **Capacity of rooms** could be increased by revisiting layouts, this is particularly applicable for IT rooms, but also includes some general and specialists teaching spaces.
- There is an evident need to increase the **number of larger, flexible teaching spaces** (accommodating 20-30 students, and in some instances, 30+ students).

Across all our campuses, we will undertake a **bi-annual review of our space utilisation and timetabling** aligned to our planning cycle. This will identify any immediate or short-term changes required to accommodate new space requests/needs.

All estate projects that come forward, where relevant, should consider the opportunity for a utilisation/timetabling review to address the need in the first instance, ahead of any commitment to deliver or take on additional space. This is a key measurable component of the **Estate Strategy Framework Matrix**.



4.0 Our Campus Solutions

In addition to the **Essential Estate Requirements**, we have identified more 'micro' campus requirements which require solutions to address specific needs and opportunities over time.

These solutions will further inform the development of our future **Capital Projects Plan** and the **phasing considerations of our Essential Estate Requirements**, ensuring our future projects effectively respond to identified campus requirements.

We recognise the Further Education sector is ever-changing and our ability to fund new capital projects is often subject to the availability of grant funding. This ESF is therefore to be used to help determine where our investment should be prioritised, so whilst our access to funding may vary our decision-making is well considered and consistent.

The prioritisation of all potential campus projects will be driven by:

- The estate need and measurable benefits of the intervention against our **Strategic Estate Priorities**
- Ability to demonstrate alignment or synergies with **Essential Estate Requirements**; or that it is not already planned for within those requirements
- Ability to demonstrate how the space is to be utilised and that it cannot be better accommodated through timetabling
- The level of investment required and source of funding
- The extent of work to be undertaken
- The impact on current campus operations

To support with this, all future capital projects are to be assessed against the requirements of the **Estate Strategy Framework Matrix** set out at **Section 6**.

Potential investment into more 'micro' campus solutions is in addition to the identified **Essential Estate Requirements** outlined in **Section 3.0**.

Critical Operational Requirements

Budgeted spending on planned, preventative maintenance and critical operational requirements (such as ensuring the continued compliant, safe and sustainable operation of the campus), will be prioritised in funding allocations and programme delivery. Such requirements will not be subject to the assessment for capital projects, which is set out in the **Estate Strategy Framework Matrix** at **Section 6**.

Blossomfield Campus

The Agile Campus



Solihull College
& University Centre

All of our growth has been accommodated within our existing buildings at Blossomfield. Yet to keep pace with changing space needs, our decisions have often been reactionary; meaning not all of our spaces are in the most suitable location. To ensure the continued success of our Blossomfield Campus, our focus is on the delivery of an agile campus.



We outline below potential campus solutions specific to Blossomfield that will help positively reset the campus and pro-actively guide potential future investment.

- **Reconfigure the zones** - our curriculum areas are generally zoned across the campus, but not necessarily in the right locations. There is opportunity to ensure our curriculum areas have the right sized and type of spaces to deliver their specialism, as well as a more considered juxtaposition of curriculum areas. This also includes opportunities to relocate Access to FE to a more appropriate and accessible position as part of the reconfiguration. We also need to deliver dedicated spaces for our growing cohort of A-level students and adult learners.
- **Delivery of multi-event spaces** - to further to support our ability to provide flex, we should explore those larger spaces on campus which have a low space utilisation and could better contribute to the operations of the campus and the wider College offer. This should consider our most prominent areas such as the business centre and theatre space. These spaces could deliver a mix of College activities and support our interactions with the community and local business.



- **Identifying and preserving future development plots** - we are fortunate to have room for expansion at Blossomfield and development plots should be preserved for growth where viable business cases can be presented. We recognise there are demand opportunities to introduce Construction at Blossomfield, for example, which will require bespoke specialist facilities to be delivered. It is important that we identify plots that can be best integrated with campus life, with minimal impact to campus operations.
- **Staff workplace setting** - we must continue to deliver inspiring work environments for our staff, which support and promote healthy and sustainable working practices. We have successfully upgraded the main staff workplace and social space at Stratford-upon-Avon Campus, and our ambition is to undertake a comparable project at Blossomfield.

- **Making the most of our existing outdoor space** - our two internal courtyards are underutilised and uninviting. We are committed to upgrading these spaces to encourage greater access to the outdoors, with wider amenity, greening and interest. Any changes will consider the useability of these spaces throughout the year, in all weathers.
- **Navigating Blossomfield** - the diversity of our curriculum areas at Blossomfield creates interest and vibrancy, but with that comes scale, and locating our curriculum areas and dedicated student spaces within our interlinked blocks can be difficult, especially for our new arrivals. To support this, a solution for more permanent and effective wayfinding is required, alongside the implementation of the new College Identity and Branding Guidelines. Blossomfield should be the priority for this Strategic Estate Requirement.
- **A new arrival experience** - our entrance is the first impression of our College and needs to be inviting and welcoming to all. At peak times, we recognise that it can become constrained and hectic. We will explore solutions to improve this experience. As part of this, expanding the campus entrance may be considered, to deliver a larger visitor area and bookable meeting rooms for our staff to meet with parents, visitors and industry partners. Such a solution would need to be considered alongside the Strategic Estate Requirement for security access controls.

Example entrance reconfiguration





Solihull College
& University Centre

Woodlands Campus
Building Resilience

Our Woodlands Campus accommodates a diverse range of courses, which is important to sustain for a thriving inclusive campus. At the same time, we must accommodate growth in key curriculum areas, within what is a physically constrained site.

Opportunities for Woodlands Campus are borne out of driving efficiencies in how the Campus is utilised and how growth can be accommodated in the future, whilst enhancing the day-to-day experience for all our students, staff and visitors.



We have identified potential solutions for Woodlands below that will enable us to build resilience now and into the future.

- **Introducing zoning** - Courses such as Construction, Motor Vehicle, Engineering and Hair & Beauty, are a core part of Woodlands provision and require dedicated areas for their use and to accommodate projected growth. Introducing zoning for different curriculum areas at Woodlands Campus is essential to improve functionality and efficiencies of how our spaces are used. This involves consolidating the assigned spaces for each curriculum area into zones and considering the juxtaposition of those zones throughout buildings. A Zoning Plan will be prepared and it will be implemented on a phased basis. Shared teaching spaces will also need to be preserved in locations that allow flex across the zones.
- **Re-activate underutilised spaces** - To further support growth and resilience, we should bring back into use low utilised spaces, such as the old nursery block, and better use larger accessible spaces on the ground floor of W Block. This includes spaces that may be sterilised due to specialist equipment, which is infrequently used.



- **Future expansion** - Zoning and the improved focus on space utilisation and timetabling at Woodlands will drive a more intensive use of the space we already have. With the continued success of specialist courses, such as construction, further expansion will ultimately be required. Opportunities to extend our current buildings or unlock a new building plot, through a review of our sports pitch provision, should be explored. It is important that we plan for and preserve these opportunities to future-proof Woodlands.
- **Operational requirements** - Accommodating exams, transportation to / from the site, and storage solutions are critical areas which need to be considered to enhance the functionality of our Woodlands Campus.

- **College entrance** - The potential for upgrading the campus arrival experience and reconfiguration of the ground floor of Block W (our main entrance and surrounding rooms) will be considered. The spaces around the central atrium are easily accessible and visible spaces which could better serve opportunities for our consolidated student services provision, as well showcasing the diverse curriculum offer at Woodlands. A long-term aspiration is the reorientation of the Woodlands Campus to enhance the arrival experience more holistically, allowing us to maximise our useable space within safeguarded areas.
- **Enhancing our outdoor spaces** - There is limited outdoor space amenity at Woodlands currently and we have identified the spaces between W Block and Z block, as well as the green space to the north of the entrance, as having potential to provide more attractive, greener outdoor amenity and opening out of campus.
- **Upgraded staff workplace setting** - Our staff workplace offer should be consistent with our other campuses, delivering a modern, supportive workplace environment. This will also factor in more dedicated, appropriately located spaces for our staff to meet with visitors, students and parents.



Example of new entrance option



Stratford-upon-Avon Campus Maintaining Momentum



Our recent investment and changes at Stratford-upon-Avon have delivered state-of-the-art facilities for our students and attractive working environments for our staff. We have created a new central 'green' heart at the Campus, the connecting node to all our buildings. With the disposal of surplus assets on the campus periphery, we have delivered a more focussed and nurturing learning environment for our students.



The opportunity now is to **maintain momentum**; to continue to enhance the student and staff experience at the Stratford-upon-Avon Campus.

Potential campus solutions should consider the following areas:

- **New teaching facilities** - We are already committed to investing in key areas of industry growth focussing on sustainable technologies, to include a Ground Source Heat Pump Training Facility and Electrical Vehicles Training Centre, which will deliver two new buildings in 2025. These buildings will need to be integrated into the wider campus setting.
- **Preserving future build plot** - We must continually plan for growth and recognise our Boiler House (Block J) occupies a prominent position, at the centre of our campus. Our review of our energy solutions may allow us to future-proof Block J as a future prominent new build plot.
- **Improving connections** - This starts from the campus arrival, onwards wayfinding and finding opportunities to dwell both within the buildings and in our outdoor spaces. Solutions to bolster the new identity at Stratford-upon-Avon and improve these connections will enhance belonging for all users and support navigation. This should include how each of the activities within each building are celebrated externally and entrance upgrades at each building. External areas and pathways beyond the main courtyard and circulation routes should be enhanced to ensure accessibility for all, consistency of offer for all learners, and more attractive options for amenity/dwell time.
- **Right-sizing the campus** – Whilst this forms a Strategic Estate Requirement, there is a pressing need at Stratford-upon-Avon to review the functionality of key spaces and the opportunities (through utilisation, timetabling and some key moves) to deliver a greater number of larger, flexible classrooms to allow the campus to be more agile and resilient. Relocating IT classrooms into the right locations needs to form part of this solution.
- **Opening up campus life to the courtyard** - Improving and expanding the arrival experience at Stratford-upon-Avon to address pinchpoints, whilst considering factors such as the optimum location for café provision and additional breakout spaces, may collectively provide an opportunity to open out / expand Block A into the outdoor courtyard.



5.0 Satellite Locations

Whilst our estate is principally formed of our three campuses, there are opportunities to expand beyond our campus' boundaries to facilitate growth and community impact. These are defined as our Satellite Locations. Any future commitments or investments into Satellite Locations should be guided by the five Strategic Estate Priorities of this ESF. Further, any future opportunities will need to demonstrate how they deliver on those priorities, and therefore positively contribute to achieving our Estate Vision over the next 10 years.

One such proposal is the development of an **Education Village and Racing School** in the West Midlands. This project would be a joint venture with RMF Group, and is supported by the West Midlands Combined Authority, British Horse Racing Association (BHA) and Careers in Racing.

The aim is to meet a gap in the market for lands-based (to include Equine, Racing and associated sectors) education establishments in the region, providing learners with access to job opportunities in this sector. The project will be off-campus, but aligns with our commitment to providing our region access to diverse educational opportunities, and to work collaboratively with our key partners.

Our commitments also extend to our existing partnerships with wider business and education providers to deliver accessible education to our community, whether at satellite locations or within our existing campuses.



6.0 Estate Strategy Framework Matrix

The Estate Strategy Framework Matrix has been formed to support the prioritisation of investment across projects / opportunities over the next 10 years.

The Matrix has been prepared to ensure our **Strategic Estate Priorities** are weaved through all estate decisions and encourages pro-active decision making with a coordinated and evidenced case for investment. Additional operational and Strategic Estate Requirements set out in the ESF will also steer how and when opportunities should be delivered.

The Matrix will support us in proactively planning for growth as well as being better able to respond to change in an efficient and effective way. We have also prepared an **accompanying guide** to how the Matrix should be used.

Every capital project will require the preparation of a **Project Feasibility Proforma** which sets out the evidenced business case for the project. In addition to **financial considerations** and **strategic alignment**, any proposed project is subject to the following key gateways:

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Gateway 1 | Defined and evidenced the opportunity or need |
| Gateway 2 | Evidenced space utilisation review or timetabling cannot resolve the required need |
| Gateway 3 | Demonstrated consideration has been given to synergies with Essential Estate Requirements (Annual Operational and Strategic) |
| Gateway 4 | Considered risk and deliverability factors |

Should each of the gateways be met the project can be assessed against the Matrix.

See **Appendix A** for a copy of the Matrix.

This ESF, supported by the matrix, sets our direction of travel and parameters for change to allow us to implement positive transformation across all areas of our estate and succeed in achieving our 10 year Estates Vision. We are very excited to see our estate evolve.

Appendices

Appendix A: Estate Strategy Project Matrix (Example Template)

Appendix B: Project Assessment Guide

Appendix C: Project Feasibility Proforma

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

ESTATE STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

2025-2035

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Solihull College
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