

SKILLS & ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT



Our mission and purpose

As stated in our Strategic Plan, called Vision 2025, our core purpose is to transform people's lives.

We do this through a set of priorities in order to overcome significant skills shortages, meet challenges within the economy and wider community needs. Our strategic aims and priorities have been aligned with our two Local Enterprise Partnerships priorities, and are identified as:



Boosting the skills of the workforce at all levels; increasing the awareness of local employment opportunities particularly in the sectors of digital, health & care, STEM including advanced manufacturing, auto/aero and agristem and construction.



Increasing the employability and self-confidence of all individuals through effective careers education, skills development and raising aspirations.



Increasing opportunities for our existing employees to complete high quality, relevant, CPD as well as maintaining sector specific skills through industrial placements.



Ensuring the content of education and training programmes is innovative, up to date, including supporting the green, sustainable and carbon neutral drive as well as meeting the current needs of local employers.

In a dynamic environment we ensure our provision meets needs through annual curriculum planning informed by national priorities, such as free courses for jobs and regional and local priorities in strategic economic plans and industrial strategies. This is complemented by ongoing curriculum review informed by labour market intelligence including job postings, employer feedback and demand and job centre feedback.



Strategic objectives

Our strategic priorities have been carefully considered by our Board and embedded within our college strategies, procedures and key performance indicators. They are:



Each strategic objective is underpinned by 5 key aims:

PARTICIPATION:

- The college will be recognised as the college of first choice with increased market share and conversion rates. This includes 14-19, adult provision, apprenticeships, as well as full cost and commercial programmes.
- Targeted areas for growth in engineering, electrical, digital and the health sector. As new careers emerge, or existing careers increase in popularity.
- Targeted growth in level 4, level 5, higher education and higher apprenticeships include engineering, digital, health and wellbeing sectors and business and creative industries.
- 4 local colleges recognised as "their" community college by the local population through identified site based USPs, well considered brand association and targeted local marketing campaigns with recruitment benchmarked against market share.
- Gatsby Benchmarks are fully embedded across college and support industrial placements and career opportunities to enable students to learn and develop the skills needed to be in demand for employment.

PROVISION:

- Create a flexible, responsive, 'industry-led' vocational and technical curriculum that is aligned to the needs of the local, and business, communities.
- Increase the breadth of higher education including higher level apprenticeships, ensuring we complement our specialisms establishing clear progression routes for existing learners.
- A flexible and inspiring adult learning offer to facilitate employment or personal development.
- Inspire our learners to develop their employability and relevant industry skills ensuring learners are resilient and prepared for their future careers.
- Engage with employers to develop our curriculum offer and improve the skills and aspirations of our learners.

PERFORMANCE:

- To be the college of choice delivering the best quality vocational and technical education.
- To be recognised as a good provider with outstanding features by all stakeholders (staff, learners, employers) including Ofsted. Ensuring learners enjoy a positive and personalised experience which provides holistic personal development with a proactive programme of learner involvement.
- Our students make excellent progress compared to their starting points. Through highly effective
 teaching, learning and support students achieve their target grades and, as a result, progress to positive
 destinations.
- We drive the effective use of digital delivery and implement the use of an industry standard platform (Teams) used for all online learning.
- We have effective business support services, supported by specific service level agreements which support students and staff.

PEOPLE:

- Contribute to our corporate responsibility via achieving recognisable accreditations.
- Improve employee engagement scores so that staff talk positively about us as an employer.
- Staff are well rewarded in the college so that we can attract new staff and retain current talent.
- Develop our college as a learning organisation growing and developing our own talent, tracking our retention and promotion success.
- Become an employer of choice where people believe that their wellbeing is an important factor in the development of a healthy and successful college.

PROSPERITY:

- Our financial grade gives confidence to the funding agencies and banks, however does not require the college to sacrifice investment in strategic developments.
- Increase the size and scope of provision whilst maintaining financial efficiency, improve surpluses and generate more cash for investment in resources.
- Ensure that the college has sufficient cash to operate without risk or need to cut corners. Reduced staff
 cost percentage supports increasing in cash reserves. Ensure that suppliers recognise the college as a
 good customer.
- Use generated funds to invest in excellence across the college with a priority on facilities and resources.
- Plan to become a carbon neutral organisation including energy, waste, building maintenance, vehicles and purchasing.

These are underpinned by our corporate values:







Transparent



Our Values

Ambitious



Respectful



Sustainable

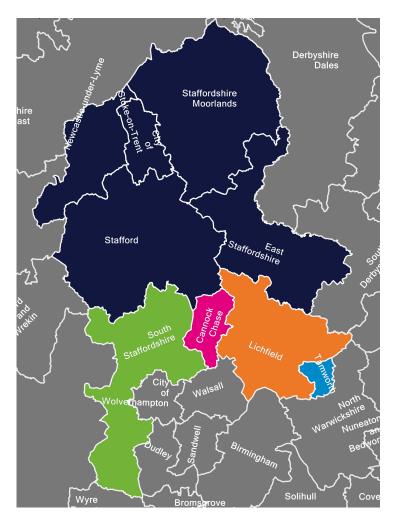


Context and place

South Staffordshire College was created in January 2009 and was formed from three, originally four, colleges that combined to serve a large area of the Midlands.

The college serves the needs of communities and businesses of a large geographic area within Staffordshire from Rodbaston College in South Staffordshire, through Cannock and onto Lichfield and Tamworth in East Staffordshire.

In addition, and due to our curriculum offer in terms of specialism and/or flexible delivery solutions, we also serve employers and students from the wider West Midlands including Birmingham and the Black Country and further afield where our specialisms in landbased provision and animal care including vet nursing meet regional need.



Staffordshire Observatory provide an area overview and using 2022 data state Staffordshire has these key measures:

Population: 883,200, 22% are 65+ years old, with this rising to 24% in Lichfield. This is above the West Midlands and England averages of 18%.

Deprivation: 9% of the population in Staffordshire live in the most deprived areas. This is significantly lower than the West Midlands average of 29%. However, the areas served by the college reflect significant variation in the percentages living in these areas including within Tamworth at 19%, 13% in Cannock Chase and 3.8% in Lichfield.

Education: GCSE attainment is low with the percentage achieving grade 5 or above in English and Maths at 37% compared to the West Midlands at 40%. Tamworth achievement is at 21.8%, approximately half the national average, and Cannock Chase at 28%.

Adults with no qualifications: Whilst Staffordshire is broadly in line with the national position at 6.2% (6.4% nationally) the percentage of 16-64 year olds in the areas served by the college is worse with Cannock Chase (8.8%), Lichfield (7.3%) and Tamworth (7.1%).

Employment: In Staffordshire 77.3% of 16-64 year olds are employed, 4% better than the West Midlands position of 73.6%. However, employment is lowest in Lichfield (67%) and Tamworth (71%). Tamworth and Lichfield have higher youth (18-24) claimants at 5.6% for Tamworth and 5.1% for Lichfield compared to 3.7% for Staffordshire as a whole.

NEETs: Those not in education, employment or training or where this is not known is better in Staffordshire at 1.9% than in the West Midlands (2.4%) or nationally (2.7%) however in our area this is worst in Cannock Chase at 2.9%.

Crime: Recorded crime in Staffordshire and all boroughs served by the college are lower than the West Midlands and national averages by more than 15%. Violent offences are similarly significantly lower.

Key stakeholders

The college works with a wide range of key stakeholders to ensure provision meets needs.

These stakeholders include Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Council, Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Council, The West Midlands Combined Authority, Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce (our areas Employer Representative Body), Staffordshire Council and our local borough councils including Tamworth Borough Council, Lichfield City Council, Cannock Chase District Council and South Staffordshire District Council.

Our strong and good working relationships with these stakeholders in the development of the curriculum and its resources have ensured significant capital investment in skills for our college in recent years including in our Engineering Academy (£1.5m), Digital Skills Hubs (£1m) and Motion Capture Studios (£600k). Such relationships are currently supporting a range of new capital investments spanning electric and hybrid vehicles (£300k), a construction centre of excellence (£400k), a recent bid for £1.6m towards a 'Green Village' based at Rodbaston for sustainable energy training and development, and a significant investment in the new build campus (c. £30m) for Tamworth with a scheduled opening of early 2025.

Engagement with other providers in the area

The college has strong relationships with the other local colleges, Newcastle and Stafford College Group, Stoke on Trent College and Burton and South Derbyshire College.

The CEOs meet regularly and are utilised as a forum by Staffordshire County Council regarding skills and employment matters. In support of this strategic group each colleges' Deputy CEO/Principal also meet to discuss skills-based matters.

Given the geographic location of the college, it also has strong connections with the other west midlands colleges through the Colleges West Midlands group operating at CEO and Deputy CEO levels with a range of specialist work-strand groups spanning NEETs, the unemployed, construction, digital and more.

The college also has well developed relationships with two local Universities for the provision of Higher Education provision. Strategic and operational links with Staffordshire University and Wolverhampton University ensures the most appropriate Higher Education offer is available for our students with progression to a local university. In addition, one of the college campus sites is jointly owned by the college and Staffordshire University.



Contribution to national, regional and local priorities – the SSC approach to meeting skills needs

The college invests considerable time in planning its curriculum to meet local, regional or national needs. Whilst incorporating new curriculum is a feature of each academic year, the major investment of time is concentrated in key phases:

- July to September Strategic planning and updates to course guides for publication end Sept to schools.
- October to December Detailed planning of courses and content for the following academic year
- January to February Plans to be detailed utilising a sector leading curriculum planning platform
- March to April Curriculum plan validation events and draft timetabling
- June timetabled finalised and input to central platform
- June- Curriculum plan signed off by our governing body
- Throughout October and the remainder of the college academic year reviews of applications and consideration of additional programmes required in order to meet new or emerging needs.

In order to plan our curriculum and offer we use a wide range of data sources, focusing on skills needs, including:

- Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs)
- Employer feedback from Skills Advisors and Skills Advisory Panels
- Employer feedback from work-based learning account managers' dialogue
- Employer feedback from work experience or industry placements
- Employer and Alumni feedback from industry visits or quest speaker visits
- · Staffordshire County Council Skills and Employment data
- Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SSLEP) Skills Advisory Panel (SAP) including the Local Skills Report
- West Midlands Combined Authority Skills and Employment data and feedback from subgroups, such as the 'Employed Sub-group'
- EMSI/Lightcast Labour Market Information
- Vector Market Share Analysis
- Reviews of Students destinations post course
- Staff feedback on sector needs (many still work in industry)
- · Awarding body reviews
- · Funding allocation statements
- Sector feedback from professional groups including The Association of Colleges and LANDEX and networks including Colleges West Midlands

In addition, auditors externally and independently test and validate our curriculum planning processes, including the use of Labour Market Information.

National skills priorities

The college notes the national skills priorities, set out below, and that many of these are covered in the Local Skills Improvement Plans for our area.

- Construction
- Manufacturing
- · Digital and Technology
- · Health and Social Care
- Haulage and Logistics
- Engineering
- Science and Mathematics

Local and regional skills priorities

It will be noted from the above that our college falls within the scope of two LSIPs, as it has for many years with two different LEPs, Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire LEP and Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP.

The **Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire LSIP** was provided in draft at the end of March entitled 'Emerging Priorities', feedback provided by various groups including our college, the other Stoke and Staffordshire colleges as well as Staffordshire Partnership for Employment and Skills. A further working draft issued 16th May and 26th May 2023. This Accountability Statement responds to the latter.

The draft document identifies the following key sectors (in **bold** indicates alignment with the national skills priorities):

- Engineering and advanced manufacturing including Ceramics
- Advanced Logistics
- Health and Social Care
- Construction including modern methods of construction
- Decarbonisation and energy distribution

Ceramics is a significant component in the high-tech sector as an applied material and included within electronic devices such as mobile phones, CPUs, lasers, solar cells, fibre optics, sensors, imaging devices and more and therefore is considered within the context of engineering and manufacturing rather than creative skills.

The LSIP also recognises the cross-cutting sector themes of digital, digital skills, net zero and green skills.

In addition, the LSIP identifies six objectives and nine priorities.

The six objectives are:

- 1. Ensure a more comprehensive match between the demand for, and supply of, the skills that employers most need to thrive and boost their growth and productivity.
- 2. Help support collaboration between providers, businesses, and the public sector stakeholders to deliver a more responsive and future-facing skills system in the region
- Increase awareness and accessibility of provision and address barriers to progression, especially for the adult workforce and those from diverse backgrounds, disadvantaged communities and underrepresented groups.
- 4. Recognise that improving the supply of skills must be accompanied by demand-side measures there needs to be greater employer engagement
- 5. Ensure that there are effective pathways for learners to achieve their potential and ambitions, from foundation through to higher technical qualifications

6. Support individuals in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire through enhanced careers guidance to gain the best skills to realise their aspirations and potential to find employment in the area.

The nine priorities are:

- 1. Improved co-ordination and collaboration
- 2. A simplified and flexible skills system more responsive to employers needs
- 3. Addressing recruitment and challenges in education
- 4. Development of Skills Growth Maps on cross-cutting themes
- 5. Unlocking further opportunities in apprenticeships
- 6. Promoting and developing best practice in business
- 7. Careers transition period
- 8. Challenge and lobby national structural barriers within the skills system

At the same time the West Midlands and Warwickshire LSIP was also provided to colleges.

The draft document identifies the following eight 'Priority Growth Clusters', however as work continues to identify those sector needs then the 'skills needs' remain unclear:

- **Manufacturing** of electric light vehicles and associated battery storage devices and Aerospace (including manufacturing alternative fuel) (combined)
- **Logistics** and distribution
- Health Tech and med tech
- · Professional and financial services and supply chain
- Modern and low carbon utility and manufacturing of future housing

It also identified the following cross cutting themes:

- Digital
- · Green Skills
- Leadership and Management capabilities

Much of the draft document has focussed on the identification of more generic themes and from the Priority Growth Clusters has identified 'five broad draft priorities':

- · Strategic Leadership
- · 'Essential Skills' and Practical Experience
- · Recruiting into Education
- · Identifying the Right Providers
- · Identifying the Right Means of Delivery

It can be seen that in terms of priority 'sectors' both LSIP documents cover broadly similar areas. The **West Midlands and Warwickshire LSIP** whilst identifying five broad areas much of this is infrastructure or systems related. Our strategic aims and objectives for 2023/24, where it is within the college remit and ability, take account of the above.

Staffordshire County Council

The college, through its curriculum planning, has previously taken account of Staffordshire County Council's "Staffordshire Economic Strategy". However, having received the draft "Staffordshire Employment and Skills Strategy 2023-2030" at the end of March, we have considered its contents in developing our strategic aims and objectives which will, of course, also feature at detailed curriculum planning level.

The document outlines the five priorities supported by the Staffordshire Leaders Board, which is comprised of all Stoke and Staffordshire Local Authorities including, Staffordshire County Council, Cannock Chase District Council, East Staffordshire Borough Council, Lichfield District Council, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, South Staffordshire District Council, Stafford Borough Council, Staffordshire Moorlands District Council and Tamworth Borough Council.

The five priorities are:

- · Creating an Aspirational and Active Workforce
- · Providing Inspirational Careers Advice
- · Developing Technical Skills to Drive Productivity and Growth with 'priority growth sectors' of
 - Engineering & Advanced Manufacturing (Automation/Al/Machine Learning)
 - Construction including Modern Methods (Automation/Al/Retrofitting)
 - Advanced Logistics (Automation/Al)
 - Health and Social Care (Digitisation of Services/New Technologies).
- · Supporting Innovation and Enterprise
- · Creating a Place of Learning

The college currently offers provision in all the priority areas with the exception of haulage, which is covered by another college within Staffordshire, and science, which is covered by other colleges in Stoke and Staffordshire as well as Sixth Forms.

The college continues to plan its curriculum in detail which includes a review of local and regional labour needs and the provision available across the area. The rationale for the curriculum provision and how it meets local, regional and national priorities is scrutinised by the Governing Body who approve such plans annually.



College strategic aims and objectives

For 2023/24 the college has detailed curriculum plans, however from that we have identified the following as strategic aims and objectives aligned to the two LSIPs whilst also ensuring alignment with the college Strategic Objectives:

College Strategic Aims and Objectives

Impact and/or Contribution towards National, Regional and Local Priorities for Learning and Skills

AIM 1

PARTICIPATION

Offer courses which meet the needs of local and regional priorities.

Objective 1.1

Enrolment increases at SSC, in priority areas, from our local community ensures local needs are met

 Target increase in enrolments of 3% per year in priority areas for 2023/2024

Subject Sector Areas All Learners (including apprenticeships) Baseline Measure 2022/23

Health & Care

Engineering & Manufacturing

Advanced Logistics

Construction

Digital

Professional & Financial Services including Business Administration Total enrols 2050 (May 2023)

Objective 1.2

Destination of our learners into further study or employment ensures employment needs are being met

 Target to achieve or maintain at least 90% positive destinations in the following priority sectors:

Health & Care

Engineering & Manufacturing

Advanced Logistics

Construction

Digital

Professional & Financial Services including Business Administration

AIM 2

PROVISION

Deliver demand led, well sequenced, high quality vocational, technical and professional skills in collaboration with employers; meeting local, regional skills and LSIP needs, that lead to sustainable careers and employment.

Objective 2.1

Implement T level curriculum as part of our offer

 Introduction of 2 new T-Level courses starting in Sept 2023 (commencing with Early Years and Health a regional and national priority).

Objective 2.2

Develop sustainable, engineering and 'green' curriculum

- Introduction of a new Sustainability Centre including energy production, storage and distribution at our Rodbaston Campus in 2023-2024 delivering in-demand skills, from September 2024, which meet regional and national priorities, linking to the governments '10 point plan for green revolution'.
- Deliver new hybrid and electric vehicle skills and qualifications.

Objective 2.3

Develop curriculum in digital technologies including robotics and AI and higher level skills

- Explore opportunities for collaboration in engineering, such as, IOTs.
 To allow learners to develop high quality industry skills for example in Robotics / AI.
- Develop our higher-level skills offer in key priority areas, such as in Digital,
 Introduce and grow Level 5 Web Development and the HNC/D in Games.

Objective 2.4

Increase the employer voice in our curriculum design to ensure local/regional skills needs are being met

• Establish employer-led skills advisory panels to ensure the employers shape and influence our curriculum and qualifications.

Objective 2.5

 Develop short, sharp upskilling courses and bootcamps in priority sectors to support adult learners back into work and/or to progress at work.

AIM 3

PERFORMANCE

Inspire our learners to develop high quality skills leading to sustainable careers; driven by excellent teaching and business

Objective 3.1

Ensure our students develop relevant industry and key transferable skills through:

- Engagement with employers through visits, trips and guest speakers.
- High quality work placements.
- Develop and embed key digital skills within all curriculum areas, including the use of AR/VR to deepen understanding.
- A well-developed tutorial programme to further develop key transferable skills.
- Engagement with WorldSkills events and competitions.

The above leading to:

Headline achievement of 83%+

Objective 3.2

Streamline Apprenticeship provision and review delivery models to ensure we are offering high quality provision that meets local, regional, national and LSIP skills needs.

The above leading to:

- At least 85% of employers are likely to recommend the college.
- Apprenticeship provision self-assessed as good in 23-24.
- 85% of Apprentices would recommend the college to a friend.



AIM 4

PEOPLE

To recruit people who have the skills needed or who want to develop those skills to meet the needs of the learners now and in the future.

Objective 4.1

The college utilises a range of staff recruitment strategies yet still struggles to recruit in some sector areas including technology-based subjects. This restricts the curriculum offer and our ability to meet local or regional need.

- We will develop a talent pool from our most able students, including adult students, and promote the wide range of benefits available to them for appropriate vacancies/potential vacancies.
- We will expand our talent pool by working strategically with our partner universities to promote opportunities to their final year graduates.
- We will contact our local Chambers of Commerce to promote the opportunities we have in the College within their networks to identify potential candidates with vocational skills.
- We will continue to offer Taking Teaching Further (TTF) to encourage vocationally competent people to train as teachers and teach within the College.
- We will promote all vacancies on our weekly Key Messages to utilise our existing workforce extended network, coupled with incentives for successful recruitment such as Place the Face.
- We will continue to develop our recruitment practices and processes as best practice to ensure that applicants talk positively about the College to drive our brand as an employer of choice.

The above leading to:

- Restrictions on the curriculum offer, especially in Electrical, being lifted (2024)
- Increased applicants for vacancies (2024)
- A talent pool created, where appropriate (2024)

AIM 5

PROSPERITY

Use our financial strength to invest in excellent facilities and resources to support the development of skills

Objective 5.1

The College aims to ensure that learners are using industry standard equipment and resources. This supports the development of relevant skills and inspires learners to achieve.

The College currently has areas of its campuses that are in need of refurbishment and improvement to improve their effectiveness and also the sustainability credentials.

The College will aim to identify sources of and secure external funding to invest in the following areas

- New construction workshops at Cannock (Sep 2023)
- Upgraded plumbing/sustainability facilities at Rodbaston (2024)
- The rebuild of the Tamworth Campus (Jan 2025*)
- Updating of technical equipment and resources (2024-2025*)
- Refreshed media facilities at Lichfield (2025*)
- Refreshed gaming facilities at Lichfield (2025*)
- New teaching, student support and customer service facilities at Rodbaston (2025*)
- Improved animal care facilities at Rodbaston (2025*)
- Improved equine facilities at Rodbaston (2026*)
- Expanded performing arts and music facilities (2028*)

*Note that projects outside of the 23/24 academic year are included as the activity to identify and secure funding is expected to take place in 23/24.

AIM 6

LEADERSHIP

To actively engage with leadership groups to deliver LSIP priorities.

Objective 6.1

The college notes the more general, non-sector specific, 9 priorities from the Stoke and Staffordshire LSIP and the 5 'broad priorities' of the West Midlands and Warwickshire LSIP.

We will continue to engage in debate and action through, for example, the LSIP Governance group, LSIP provider forum, Staffordshire Providers for Employment and Skills, Colleges West Midlands as well as national bodies such as the Chartered Institute for Further Education and Association of Colleges.

Through this approach we will support the objectives and actions identified in the LSIP action plans and the broader ambitions they seek to achieve.

Corporation statement

On behalf of South Staffordshire College 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 23rd May 2023. The plan will be published on the college's website within three months of the start of the new academic year.

Chair of Governors

Mike Rowley

Dated: 26/05/2023

Principal Chief Executive

Claire Boliver

Dated: 26/05/2023

Location of our Accountability Statement

Our Accountability Statement can be accessed from the college website when uploaded. A link will be added here in line with the deadline for publication.

Supporting documentation

The College Vision 2025 document is available here

Latest Ofsted Inspection report available here

Staffordshire Observatory data is available here

Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire LEP (SSLEP) Strategic Economic Plan

Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP (GBSLEP) Strategic Economic Plan 2016-30

West Midlands Combined Authority Local Skills Report 2022

West Midlands Combined Authority Regional Skills Plan

Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire SAP Local Skills Report is available here

Staffordshire County Council Economic Strategy 2022-30

West Midlands and Warwickshire Local Skills Improvement Plan - Draft Priorities (31/03/23) available here

Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire Local Skills Improvement Plan - (31/05/23) available here

UK Government Policy Paper. "The ten point plan for a green industrial revolution" is available here