

# City of Bristol College: Transforming Lives



2021/22 - 2025/26

Strategic Plan 2021/22 - 2025/26

This plan sets out the strategic direction of City of Bristol College from academic year 2021/22 to 2025/26. In developing this we have taken into account the educational character of the College, the external environment in which we operate, our current performance in various areas and the high-level aims and objectives which will guide our actions and decisions over the next few years.

The Strategic Plan is our key document which steers all of our other strategies and plans with a 'golden thread' through to individual appraisals for every member of staff so everyone understands how they contribute to our success.



## 01 The External Environment

### The National Picture

We know the external environment is constantly changing, and will continue to do so, over the lifetime of this plan. In setting out our aims and objectives we have considered the following as contextual guidance providing us with both opportunities and threats.

- The Government's vision for FE Colleges as set out in the FE Skills White Paper - 'to give people the technical skills they need to get good jobs and boost the UK's productivity.'<sup>1</sup>
- The role of FE Colleges in the proposed Local Skills Improvement Plans and related initiatives around funding and accountability in the Skills Bill
- The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and plans for the post pandemic economic recovery including 'levelling up' tied to the skills agenda and the needs of employers
- Long-term changes as a result of the UK leaving the EU
- The climate emergency and urgent need to act including in response to specific targets as set out in the Emerging Environment Bill 2019-2021.

### The Local Picture

The College is one of the key anchor institutions in Bristol working in partnership with other large 'place-based' organisations through the City Partnership Group. We have a proud history of delivering education and training in Bristol and can trace our roots back to the 1500s. The current College is a result of several mergers and this year, in 2021, we are celebrating our silver jubilee as it is 25 years since we were incorporated as 'City of Bristol College.' The College draws students from across the West of England Area.

1. Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth ([publishing.service.gov.uk](http://publishing.service.gov.uk))
2. Bristol Key Facts 2021
3. <http://www.bristol.gov.uk/population/> In Bristol, there are now at least 45 religions, at least 187 countries of birth represented and at least 91 main languages spoken.
4. The index of multiple deprivation indicates that there is significant regional variation within WECA, with Bristol having significantly higher numbers of LSOAs in the bottom most deprived 10% and 20%, nationally (41 in bottom 10% and 79 in bottom 20% compared to South Gloucestershire with 0 in bottom 10% and 2 in bottom 20%).

### Demographics

#### Bristol

In 2020 Bristol's population was an estimated 465,9002. Whilst population growth has slowed since 2016, the next few years continues to see a rise in the number of school leavers. The College's student body reflects the diverse population of Bristol. We are working to ensure our staff profile better matches the student population we serve.<sup>3</sup>

#### The West of England

As of 2020 the region's population had increased by 4.5% since 2015, growing by 41,160. Population is expected to increase by 4.5% between 2020 and 2025, adding an additional 42,397 people to the area. 18% of the WECA population are classed as being at 'retirement' risk which also falls below national comparable values. Within the region 42% of adults hold a degree equivalent or above which is 10pp above national average. 4% of residents hold no formal qualifications, compared to 7% nationally.

#### Areas of Deprivation

Despite high average prosperity in the city, and the region, areas of Bristol remain within the most deprived 10% in England. Over the lifetime of this plan we will work to address the economic inequalities across the city with a particular focus on South Bristol where the 10 most deprived neighbourhoods are located. We will also focus our work in the Central and East Bristol wards to support student progression for learners who study English as a Second Language (ESOL).<sup>4</sup>

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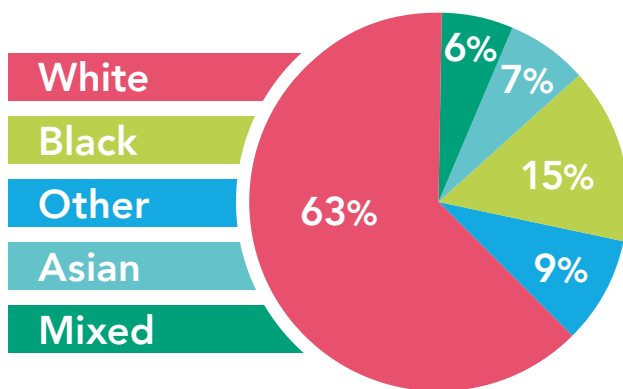
- The West of England Employment & Skills Plan and the regional Adult Education Budget Strategy
- Bristol One City Plan, Bristol Education Economic Recovery & Renewal Strategy, Bristol Post 16 Strategy and work to support Belonging in Education.

## 02 The Internal Environment – Our College

### Students

We currently educate and train around 11,000 student each year across a wide range of courses. We are committed to ensuring that we do not ‘close our doors’ to any minority group and seek to meet the needs of individuals from all communities. In 2019/20 the female / male ratio of students was 51 to 49.

The age profile was 16-18 (29%); 19-23 (18%) and 24+ (53%). In 2019/20 we had 711 registered asylum seekers studying with us. There are 66 distinct first languages spoken by our students. In 2019/20 25% of our student cohort had a disability or learning difficulty. We have a diverse student population:



### Subsidiary Companies

The College has two subsidiary companies to support our curriculum offer in areas where a more flexible and tailored response is required:

**The South West Apprenticeship Company –**  
An Apprenticeship Training Agency which directly employs apprentices on behalf of employers and manages all aspects of the Apprenticeship.

**Partners in Bristol –**  
offering innovative and flexible solution-focused training for employers including work with the Department for Work and Pensions to support recruitment.

### Staff

We are one of the city’s larger employers with around 900 staff across teaching and professional support. 66% of our staff are female and over 70% are employed under part-time or flexible working arrangements. Our gender pay gap is currently 10% (against a national average of 15%, and a sector average of above 22%). We remain committed to reducing pay gaps where they occur.

We are a Real Living Wage employer and a Disability Confident Employer; ensuring that the college remains a place where our staff feel comfortable to be themselves. Over the lifetime of this plan we will continue to commit to emerging local and regional initiatives including the West of England Good Employment Charter. We also employ over 10 Apprentices in a wide range of business support roles.

### Curriculum

We are continuing our journey to ensure that all of our curriculum areas are of a consistently high quality. There is more work to do as we seek to establish the College as a regional centre of excellence for training with an Ofsted outstanding judgement for overall effectiveness, focused on the ‘craft of teaching’ and with a curriculum which is adaptable and responsive to continually meet the needs of our employers and our communities now and into the future.

### Finance

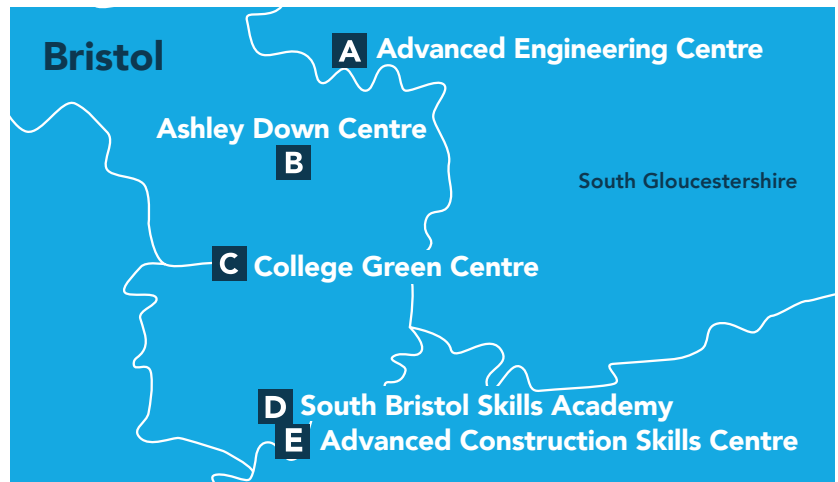
We have significantly improved our financial position in recent years and, over the lifetime of this plan, will continue to ensure that we take decisions which support our long-term financial sustainability.



### Estate & Infrastructure

We have outstanding facilities at our main centres in four key locations across the City and into South Gloucestershire:

- C** College Green in the centre of Bristol
- B** Ashley Down to the north
- D** The South Bristol Skills Academy and Advanced Construction Skills Centre in the South and;
- E** Parkway Motor Vehicle Technology Centre and the Advanced Engineering in Centre in South Gloucestershire.



In addition, to support our students with additional needs, we have a residential facility, The Brislington Centre. We also have plans to expand residential support in partnership with Bristol City Council at our Ashley Down site.

## 03 Our Mission, Vision and Values

Following extensive consultation with our staff, students and partners we have fully revised our mission, vision and values to guide our decision making and behaviours over the lifetime of this plan. We are a College focused on education and training which enables our students to access employment, thereby meeting the needs of the city and region, alongside working with community partners to meet wider needs and improve economic inequality.

### Mission

We are Bristol's College | Transforming Lives – Developing the Workforce of the Future.

### Vision

By 2024/2025 we want to be recognised as a high performing college that meets the needs of the city we serve.

### Values

#### Respect

We are Respectful to each other

#### Ambition

We are Ambitious for ourselves and for our College

#### Honesty

We are Honest in everything we do

#### Inclusion

We are Inclusive - everyone is welcome here and can achieve

## 04 Our Strategic Aims & Objectives

Following significant consultation, we have established four strategic aims. The first three aims are about our relationships with people – students, staff and partners all crucial to our success. The fourth aim relates directly to the need for us to ensure that the College is financially sustainable for the long term as this underpins all of our ambitions.

- 1.** Enable all students to achieve their potential by delivering high-quality education, training and support to meet wider needs
  - 1.1 Raise academic standards to ensure high quality student outcomes in all areas
  - 1.2 Ensure all students have a 'go to' person at the College to best support their individual needs including around health & wellbeing
  - 1.3 Deliver a curriculum that enables students to develop skills in English, Maths and Digital at all levels
  - 1.4 Develop an enrichment offer which builds on student's wider skills, interests and aspirations and supports diversity
  - 1.5 Create pathways to enable students to progress through employment
  - 1.6 Maximise the use of digital technology to support lifelong learning and retraining opportunities.
- 2.** Work together as a valued and proactive workforce committed to continuing professional development for all
  - 2.1 Implement a cultural change programme, listening to staff, and making improvements, at pace, through strong, visible leadership and clear communications
  - 2.2 Ensure all staff understand how they contribute to the College's key strategic aims and objectives
  - 2.3 Provide an appraisal framework which enhances performance, prioritises CPD and which supports succession planning including developing our leaders and managers of the future
  - 2.4 Review staff rewards and recognition - including for long serving employees
  - 2.5 Develop a programme of activities which supports the health and wellbeing of all staff
- 3.** Work collaboratively to meet the needs of the City, and the wider region, responsive to current and future demands
  - 3.1 Work with UWE Bristol, University of Bristol, employer and civic partners, including WECA and Bristol City Council, to encourage positive progression to address HE inequalities in the City.
  - 3.2 Develop partnerships with secondary schools in South Bristol to plan and deliver a cohesive A Level offer
  - 3.3 Expand partnership arrangements to maximise Apprenticeship opportunities in Bristol and the region
  - 3.4 Listen to employers to understand what they require and develop provision to drive inclusive economic prosperity
  - 3.5 Ensure sub-contracting empowers and enables community partners to reach areas of the City most in need
  - 3.6 Grow our subsidiary companies where they are the best means to meet specific delivery for learners and employers
- 4.** Ensure strategic decisions and operational activity support the long-term financial sustainability of the College
  - 4.1 Ensure robust information is available to inform evidence-based decision making in all areas
  - 4.2 Plan for targeted growth in areas of priority in the City, and the region, through financially aware curriculum planning supported by increased partnership working
  - 4.3 Position the College Estate & Infrastructure to benefit the City we serve, support the Green agenda, and maximise opportunities for efficiency and utilisation
  - 4.4 Ensure staff, our most valuable asset, are deployed effectively
  - 4.5 Ensure professional services teams consistently offer a high level of operational support, working alongside curriculum colleagues, to enhance the student experience

## 05 Key themes that underpin everything we do

There are three key themes that underpin everything we do - working with partners to make a difference in the College, the City and beyond. The three themes are all interlinked and we will be mindful of the need to consider them as a whole rather than as individual strands.

### 1. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

We will establish an EDI steering group to develop a monitored action plan to measure how we meet the needs of all our learners and staff in the thriving and diverse City we serve. We will act, at pace, to tackle inequalities wherever these arise. We will work closely with other partners in the City around EDI training for staff, plans to ensure our staff profile, and Board profile, better reflect the diverse population we serve and identifying measures to close pay gaps where these exist.

#### Our partners

- Bristol Race Commission
- Bristol Women in Business
- Bristol Women's Commission
- Bristol City of Sanctuary
- Bristol Future Talent
- BAME Apprenticeship Alliance
- Bristol Disability Commission
- Babbasa
- Bristol Pride



### 2. Addressing Economic Inequality

Addressing economic inequality is at the heart of what we, as an FE College, do. We will continue to work with our students to transform their lives through education, training and wider support. We will work with partners to identify the city and regional needs around inclusive economic prosperity. We will open up our Estate & Infrastructure to the wider communities served by each of our campuses, with a particular focus on South Bristol, to provide additional support to those who have barriers to accessing, or progressing through education.

#### Our partners

- UWE
- WECA
- DWP
- HWV
- University of Bristol
- FutureQuest (Uniconnect)



### 3. Sustainability & Climate Action

Bristol was the UK's first ever European Green Capital, the first UK city to declare a climate emergency and the first UK city to publish a Voluntary Local Review of implementation of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We have recently joined with partners from across the City as well as the FE & HE sectors taking forward the Green Agenda. Our Action Plan sets out how we will support Bristol's climate change ambitions and, through doing so, contribute to local, regional, national and international targets through our Estate. We will also teach the next generation of sustainability champions through our curriculum and through extra curricula activities.

#### Our partners

- One City
- Bristol City Council
- Bristol Green Capital Partnership
- WECA
- Business West



## 06 Monitoring & Evaluation – how will we know when we have been successful?

Evaluation of the objectives in the plan will be monitored through the College risk register and associated Key Performance Indicators. These will be viewed regularly by the Executive Team and Strategic Leadership Team and termly by each Board Committee and the full Corporation.

SMART targets under each of the Strategic Objectives will be provided through the strategies and plans which fit under the Strategic Plan containing more detailed information regarding monitoring and evaluation.

