



**ACCOUNTABILITY
STATEMENT**
2024-25



PURPOSE

This accountability statement allows stakeholders to understand the key strategic objectives planned for Dudley College of Technology over the coming academic year. These objectives reflect key actions highlighted in our Strategic Plan, emerging activity identified through our Annual Strategic Impact Assessment (ASIA) and most importantly align to meeting priority skills development needs identified through the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) and ongoing actions from our Accountability Statement 2023-24.

THE COLLEGE'S MISSION STATEMENT:

Outstanding technical and professional learning, which raises aspirations, develops skills and changes lives.

OUR VISION:

Dudley College of Technology will be recognised as an anchor institution in the region, working collaboratively with local stakeholders to deliver highly valued education and training opportunities to our residents and beyond. Our learners, across all ages and programmes, will recognise the College as a great place to study and will leave us with the knowledge, behaviours and skills to move forward. Most importantly, we will be recognised as a driving force in the regional economy, supporting individual prosperity and business productivity through the education, training and services we deliver.



For further information on the wider plans for the College in each of the sectors we serve, please take a look at our new Strategic Plan 2024-27:

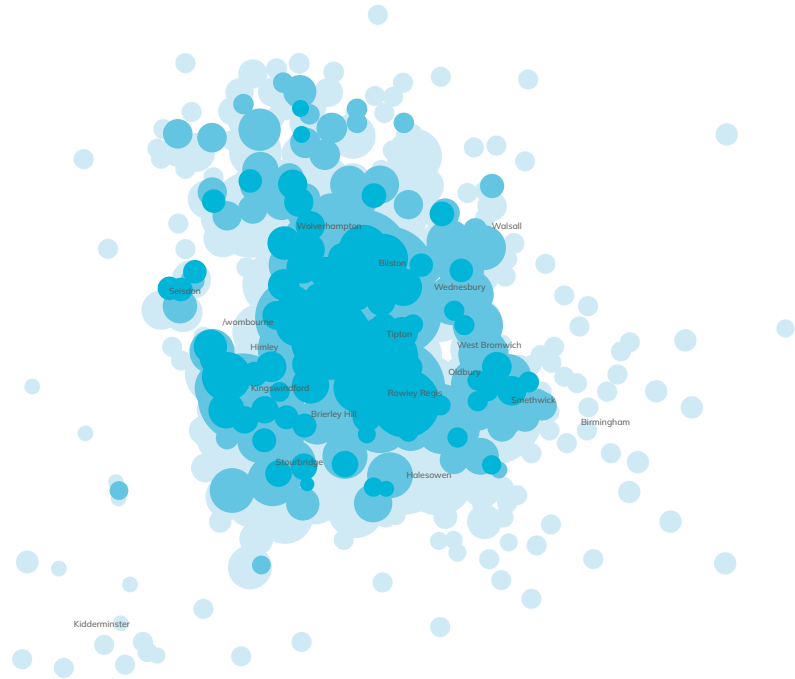
www.dudleycol.ac.uk/our-college/about-us/strategic-plan-2024-2027/

CONTEXT AND PLACE

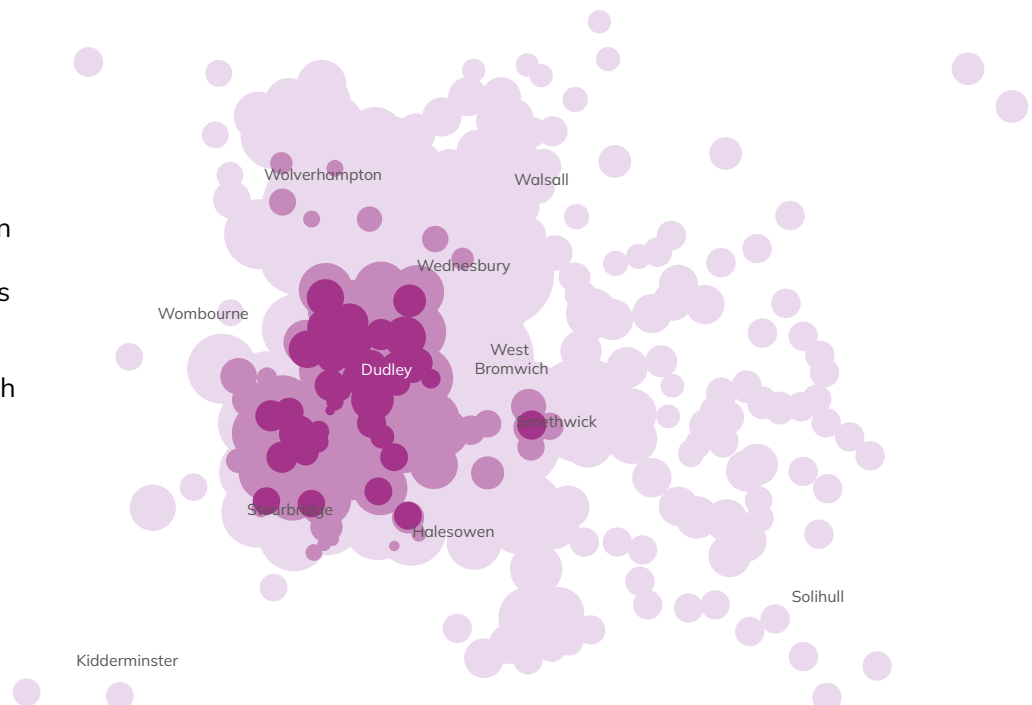
Dudley College of Technology is a large General Further Education (GFE) provider based in the heart of the Black Country in the West Midlands.

The college supports around 12,000 students per year, including around 5,000 full time school leavers, 4,000 adults and 2,000 apprentices. At the time of writing the college is rated as 'Good' by Ofsted (Nov 2023), has received the Queens Anniversary Prize for Education (Feb 2020) and has its technical provision accredited to STEM Assured status.

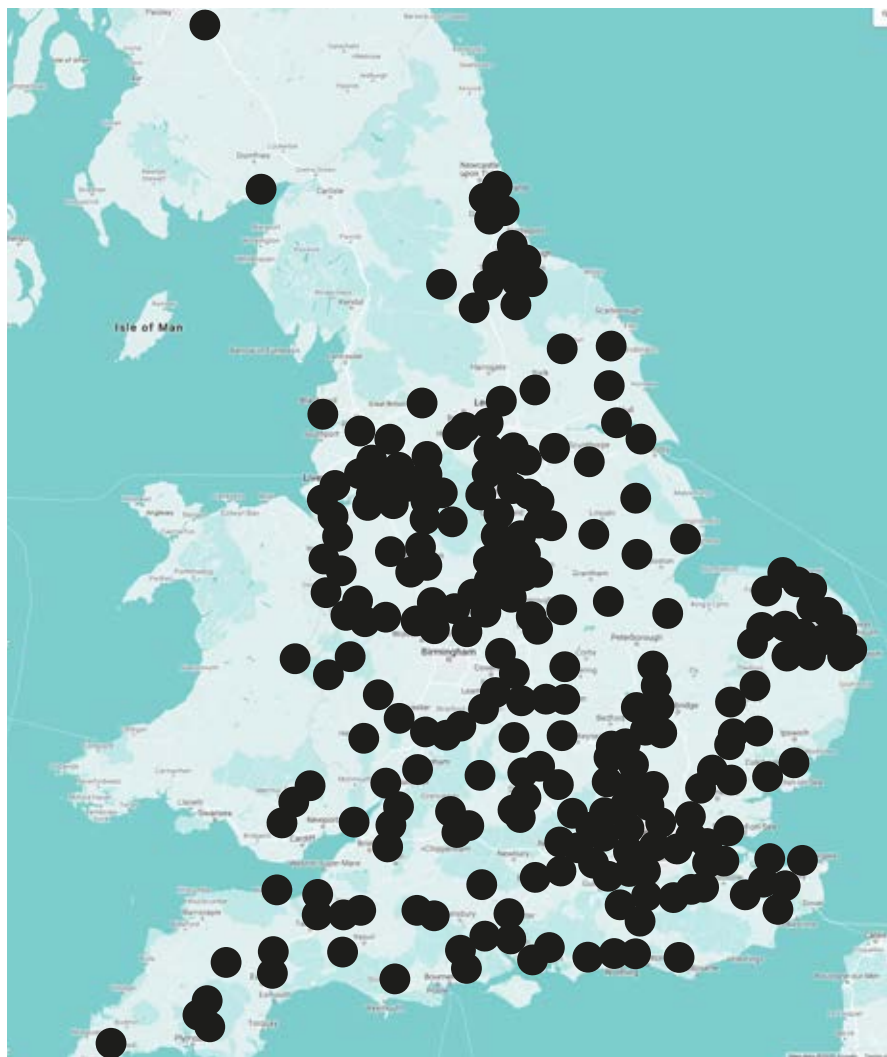
Over the past 15 years the College has invested in the creation of some truly state of the art facilities, co-developed with employer partners. Our main campus is based around Dudley town centre, with further facilities in Brierley Hill. Our most recent development is the collaborative creation of Innovation Park, which is home to The Black Country & Marches Institute of Technology (IoT) for which the College is the lead provider. You can see more about each of our facilities here: www.dudleycol.ac.uk/student-life/facilities/



Travel to learn heatmap – 16-18 full time



Full and part time adults



Student residence - Apprenticeships

performance is still below national levels, with some provision significantly below, meaning many young people are not ready to progress to level 3 provision when they leave school. There are fewer adults with level 4 or above qualifications than the national picture and pockets of very low-level skills (or no qualifications) and long term unemployment. The borough of Dudley is also very diverse with some areas of relative affluence and some areas facing significant economic challenges. Overall earnings per person are lower than the national rate and the GVA per head of residents in Dudley is lower than the Black Country and significantly lower than across the UK. Whilst there have been some improvements in recent years, there is still more to do.

The College serves a predominantly local student community for its 16-18 school leaver and adult provision. With most students travelling from around the borough or close neighbouring boroughs to study at one of the College sites. For apprenticeships however the reach is much greater. Our day release programmes still serve a relatively local community. However our block release models and provision delivered on employer premises allow us to attract employers from further afield where we are offering technical provision not widely available, such as modern construction methodologies and medical engineering.

The Black Country is well served in further education, with all providers in the region rated 'Good' by Ofsted and a wide range of provision available. These providers have responded well to skills challenges in the region, with a particular focus on 'into employment' provision and technical skills linked to priority sectors. Progress has been made, with good recovery of employment figures since the pandemic and an increasing number of residents educated to level 3. The region is not without its challenges however, and this is recognised by Dudley borough and other surrounding areas being identified as Education Investment Areas. School

Source: Dudley Economic Regeneration Strategy March 2024



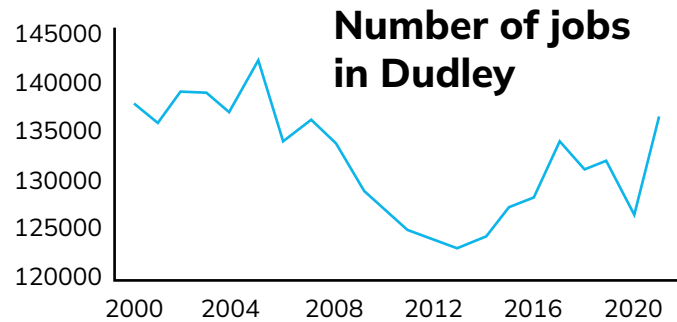
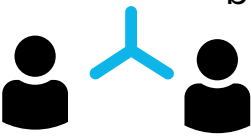
323,500
people



136,000
jobs



10,215
businesses



Productivity is **18%**
below national level but
comparable to other
Black Country boroughs

Despite these challenges, the borough of Dudley and beyond has some real opportunities. There is considerable investment currently underway to improve business opportunities, transport, tourism, healthcare and education opportunities. The region is home to some world-leading businesses, with particular strengths in engineering & manufacturing, construction, healthcare, business services and transport & logistics. The key to success for the region is to support more local people to develop the skills to work in these sectors, driving up their income and in turn driving up the innovation and productivity of our local businesses.

The College has worked hard to address some of these long term challenges by building an aspirational curriculum that supports more local people to achieve and be successful in priority employment sectors. In 2017 we formed Dudley Academies Trust to support a number of schools to improve their performance and enhance their curriculum offer through collaboration with the College. Through an innovative collaborative model between the College, employers, local universities and private training providers we have developed new routes for local adults to receive higher level training in a cost effective way. With the support of West Midlands Combined Authority and local employers, we have developed a wide range of

new flexible funded programmes to support adults into work or to progress in their chosen career.

Our work to date has made a real difference to the individuals, communities and employers we serve. However, there is more we need to do. Our Strategic Plan 2024-27 sets out our ambitions for every sector we serve over the coming three years. For the coming year, this accountability statement shares just some of our priority objectives from that plan and how they align with local skills needs.

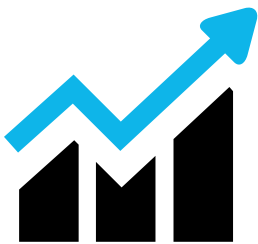
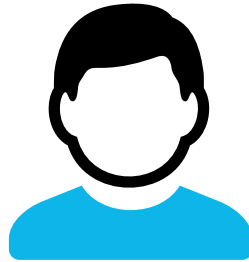


35% of residents are qualified to degree level, the highest percentage in the Black Country

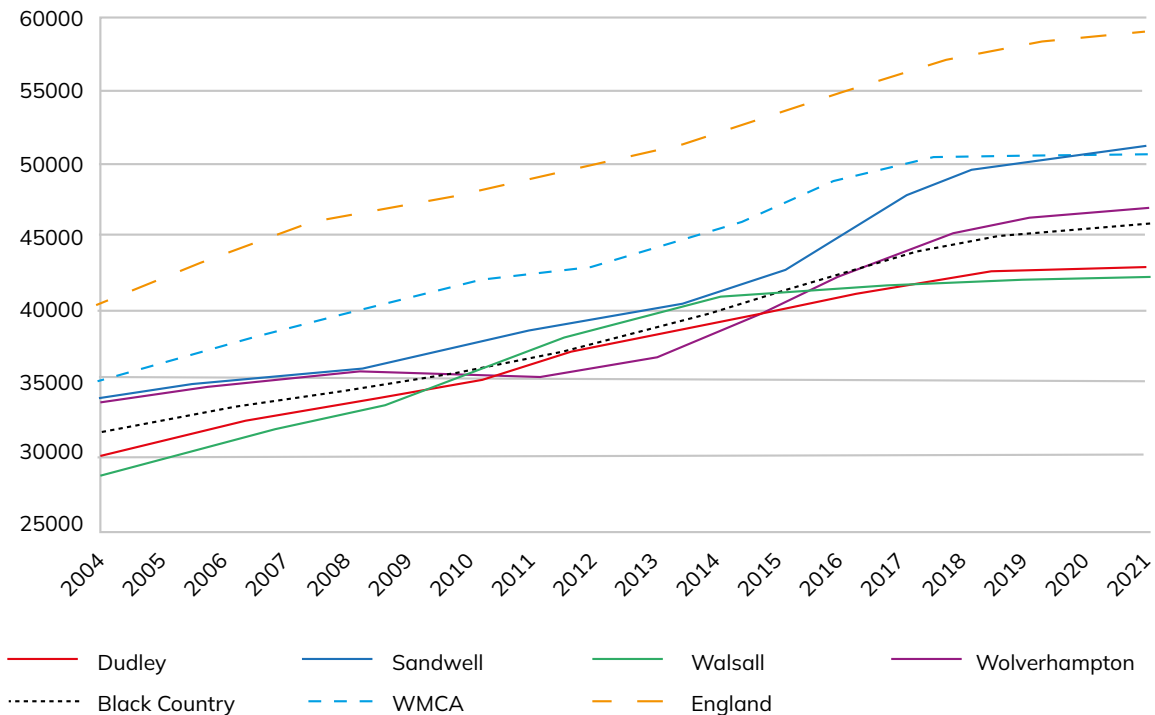


Dudley is the **second** least deprived local authority area in the West Midlands, but there are challenges in some neighbourhoods

82% of residents are economically active, this is higher than the Black Country & WMCA average



Dudley has **bounced** back from the pandemic the best in the Black Country - number of jobs and unemployment rate have already returned to pre-pandemic levels



GVA per filled job, smoothed, 2004-21, £ (current price estimates)

APPROACH TO DEVELOPING THE ANNUAL ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

Throughout the journey of investment in college facilities, we have ensured that we use these developments to reinvent ourselves in terms of the curriculum we offer.

At the heart of this has been a clear strategy of ensuring our provision is led by employers, aligned to priority skills needs and innovative in its approach to collaboration, to ensure the best outcomes. We work to ensure that our full-time offer, apprenticeship programmes, upskilling training and CPD offer is industry led and drives growth in the local economy.

The College has always taken a detailed approach to Strategic Planning, including our recently published 2024-27 plan. This plan has a dedicated section for each of the main sectors we serve, explicitly detailing the new curriculum, facilities and employer engagement approaches we will implement. These plans are built bottom up with input from staff, students and a wide range of stakeholders (most importantly employers). For each priority sector, prior to developing any new facilities, a steering group of employers from that sector was formed. These steering groups have led on ensuring the design

of the technical facilities we have created and the curriculum offered meet industry needs.

The College has been active in spearheading collaboration to ensure the skills needs put forward by employers can be met. Utilising the strengths of other providers and employers to create bespoke programmes and delivery models. Most notably in the secondment of specialist staff from local employers to support technical skills delivery and the partnerships with higher level providers to deliver the curriculum in our IoT. Our links with schools through Dudley Academies Trust and these collaborative partners have given us a strong base of stakeholders to consult with when developing our plans.

We have ensured we are at the heart of our community so that we can hear and respond quickly to the needs of stakeholders. This includes our Chief Executive & Principal being the lead for 'Employment & Skills' in Dudley Metropolitan

Borough Council (DMBC) Forging a Future Executive as well as chairing Dudley Employment & Skills Board. The College is also represented at a senior level on Dudley Economic Growth Board, Dudley Towns Board and Brierley Hill Town Board.

At a local level, the five colleges across the Black Country work together to plan provision that is complimentary and in some cases (such as the recent Local Skills Improvement Fund projects) delivered collaboratively between providers. At a regional level, Dudley College of Technology is also part of Colleges West Midlands (CWM). CWM is a highly successful collaboration between all colleges in the West Midlands, working closely with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) to design and deliver curriculum required across the region and support sharing of best practice.

Building upon all of the above, the College has worked to support the production of the Local Skills

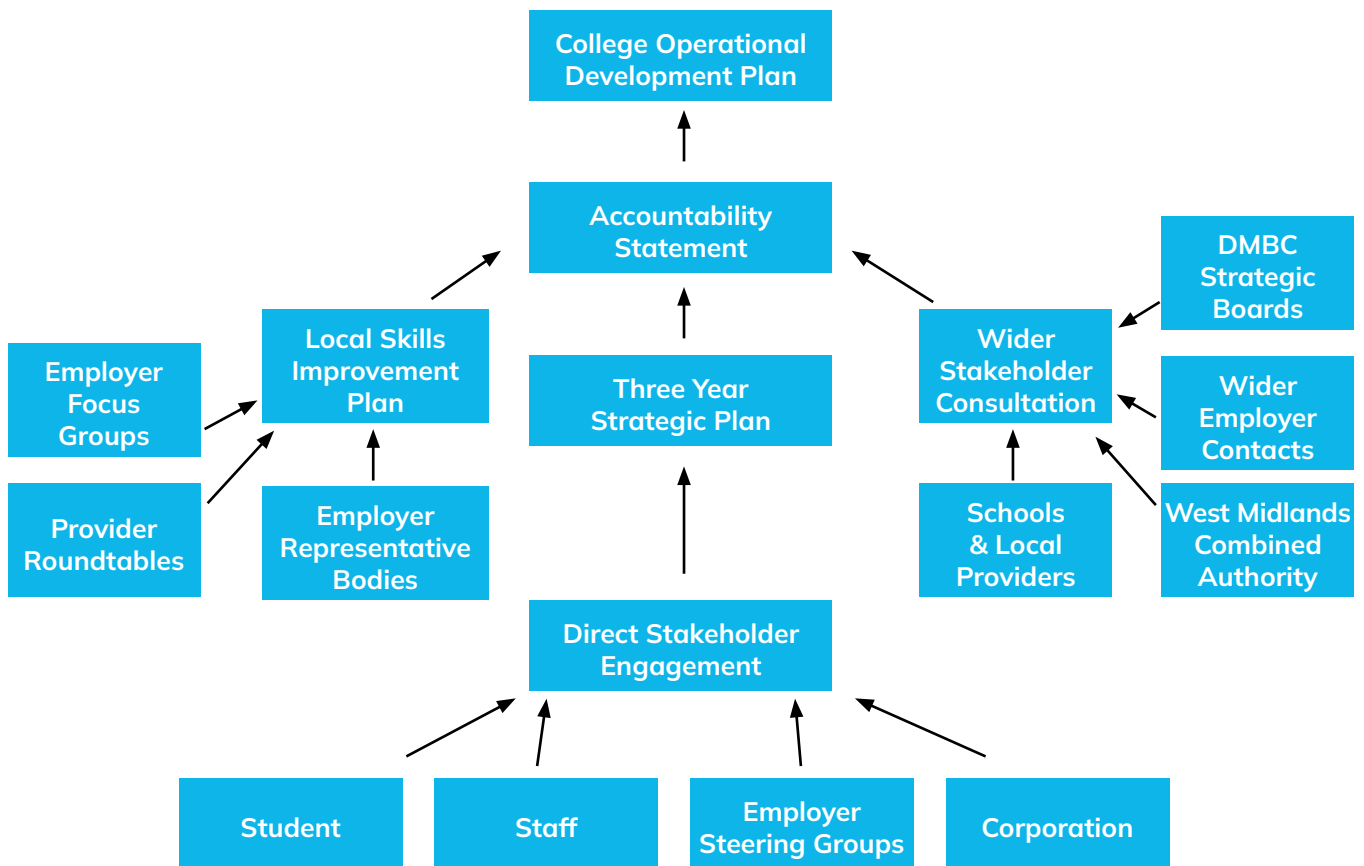


Improvement Plan (LSIP) and the implementation of the resulting Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF) project. The plan covers the West Midlands region and has been led by Coventry & Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce in partnership with other employer representative bodies. This has included a series of sector-based workshops with employers from across the region, surveys to understand local skills needs, roundtable discussions with providers and employers and a detailed analysis of local employment and skills gaps. Dudley College is pleased to be leading the LSIF project on electrification and manufacturing.

Our history of employer engagement and our involvement in the LSIP production has allowed us to align our accountability statement with the skills needs identified. After the first draft was developed, we have circulated this to the wide range of stakeholders identified above for further input and development. The feedback from this consultation was then fed into the final version agreed by our Corporation in June 2024. These objectives will be delivered through the College's existing processes, including our annual operational development plan and individual performance management system. Our stakeholders will be

able to monitor our performance against these objectives through our performance dashboard (available on our website) and through our Annual Strategic Impact Assessment which we produce each year.

The college strategic objectives contained within this accountability statement will be updated annually to share our priorities for each academic year with all stakeholders. This will continue to reflect the needs of employers set out in the next Strategic Plan as well as responding to emerging local or national priorities identified.



CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND LOCAL PRIORITIES

The College undertakes detailed strategic and curriculum planning activity to respond to skills needs in each sector, which is detailed in our Strategic Plan and actioned through our annual Operational Development Plan, monitored by Corporation. Below we have highlighted a number of actions for the year ahead from these documents, that reflect how we are responding to national, regional and/or local priorities and skills needs.

College strategic objective	Impact and/or Contribution towards National, Regional and Local Priorities for Learning and Skills
<p>We will continue to innovate in the design of our curriculum for young people to support progression and employment.</p>	<p>Continue the successful roll out of our T-level pathways, with the introduction of Animal Care and Management, Craft and Design, Media, Broadcast and Production and Automotive, growing our T-level student students to at least the same numbers as A-levels.</p> <p>Develop a new programme of study structure that provides a heightened focus on English & mathematics, supporting more students to progress to the new T-level programmes if they were unsuccessful at school.</p> <p>Continue to expand the number of hours all young people undertake meaningful work experience linked to their programme of study, through support from local employers.</p> <p>Launch our new Master Collaboration Agreement with Dudley Academies Trust to make clear our joint activities to support outcome for school pupils, including the development of new alternative provision linked to priority sectors.</p> <p>In order to mitigate the potentially negative impact of curriculum reform on our local community, we will develop a new level 1 and 2 suite of progression programmes and gateways, to support all capable students to progress to T-levels or other suitable level 3 provision.</p> <p>We will ensure our programmes prepare young people for the future, through a dedicated digital and artificial intelligence policy and associated programmes.</p>

College strategic objective	Impact and/or Contribution towards National, Regional and Local Priorities for Learning and Skills
<p>We will continue to expand opportunities for adults to undertake training that supports their success.</p>	<p>Further expand our adult upskilling offer with new technical programmes linked to manufacturing, electrification, digital, health and language skills linked to priority sectors.</p> <p>Deliver our expansion plans for the Skills Shop, further expanding our 'into employment' programmes for adults, such as Sector-Based Work Academy Programmes.</p> <p>Design and deliver an enhanced set of next steps/careers services to adults, supporting more residents to progress in their employment/career.</p> <p>Actively engage with the introduction of the Lifelong Learning Entitlement and roll out of new HTQ programmes to support more local adults to achieve higher level qualifications.</p> <p>Launch our new partnership with Resonance to support the delivery of higher level programmes linked to the music and performance industry.</p>
<p>We will ensure our employer offer and services remain responsive and accessible.</p>	<p>Through consultation with our dedicated employer Board and advisory group, we will develop our new Strategic Plan for the Institute of Technology.</p> <p>To respond to the Local Skills Improvement Plan, we will actively develop provision under all six LSIF project strands in year two. Our College will lead on the electrification/ manufacturing strand, introducing a range of new provision in 2024-25 academic year.</p> <p>Complete a rebrand and relaunch of Apprenticeship Hub into Employment Hub, covering all employer services.</p> <p>We will focus our apprenticeship offer on priority sectors, ensuring that at least two-thirds of our new apprenticeship enrolments are in construction, engineering, healthcare or digital.</p> <p>Design and deliver a calendar of effective employer events that help raise awareness and engagement of provision available to our local businesses.</p> <p>Introduce a pilot of employer innovation support services available to local SMEs, through Innovate UK funded programme.</p>



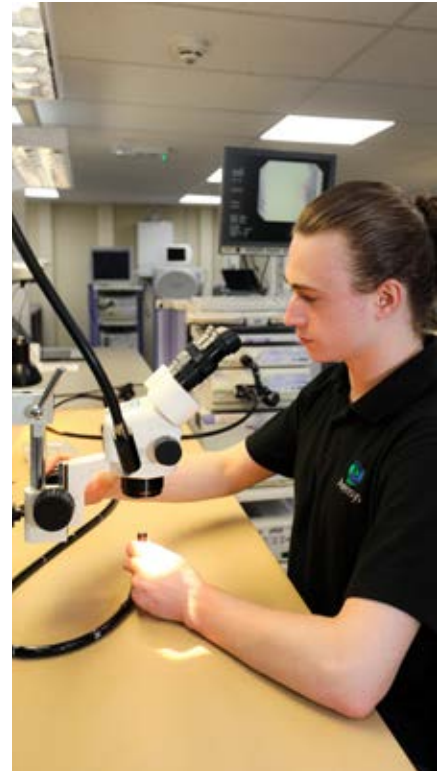


College strategic objective	Impact and/or Contribution towards National, Regional and Local Priorities for Learning and Skills
<p>We will continue our focus on providing industry standard facilities that develop the skills needed for our region.</p>	<p>Complete construction and launch the new animal management facility.</p> <p>Complete the redevelopment of our third Aspire facility, offering support for SEND students to gain valuable work experience and progress into employment.</p> <p>Complete the first stages of Health Innovation Dudley construction following land acquisition by DMBC, led by a new Advisory Group of NHS and wider care sector colleagues.</p> <p>Complete the design stage of the new Transport Technologies Centre for construction to begin within this academic year, with a focus on meeting future transport and electrification training needs.</p> <p>Introduce a new role to lead on sustainability activity across college, with a focus on ensuring that this is embedded into all programmes.</p>
<p>We will continue to support the development of our staff to ensure we have the skilled people we need to deliver the training needs of the future.</p>	<p>Develop and launch a set of new 'aspiring' programmes to support staff to progress in the College.</p> <p>Actively engage in initiatives that help foster collaborative delivery of provision with employers, including the FE Reserve programme being developed by Warwick Manufacturing Group.</p> <p>Launch a new training programme to support industry professionals to deliver teaching for the College.</p>

LOCAL NEEDS DUTY

In our first Accountability Statement (2023-24) we set out a series of targets from our Strategic Plan that reflected our response to meeting skills priorities. As a result we have:

- Published our Strategic Plan 2024-27. Following extensive consultation and building on outcomes from LSIP engagement, the plan provides a detailed set of actions for each of the employment sectors we serve, all underpinned by our core aspirations of people, innovation, place and sustainability.
- Destinations data gathered from completing students showed a continued improvement in positive next steps (education or employment), with 93.3% of 16-18s and 85.2% of adults moving into a positive destination after their time at College.
- Grown our adult upskilling offer from the previous year, with particular growth in level 3 technical provision linked to local employment sectors.
- Successfully introduced new ESOL vocation pathways, offering routes into priority sectors for learners developing their English language skills.
- Secured funding and agreed plans for the expansion of our Skills Shop, specialising in sector based work academy programmes for local employers.
- Been actively involved in all six project streams of the Local Skills Improvement Fund. The college has also led on the 'electrification and manufacturing' project stream which has focused to date on a significant staff upskilling programme, employer engagement in programme development and capital investments to expand technical facilities.
- Expanded the offer from our Institute of Technology in the areas of engineering, construction and medical technologies at higher level.
- Through collaboration with Colleges West Midlands and independently, we have held a number of employer engagement events to help raise awareness of our offer and inform future curriculum. We now have employer advisory boards in place in all priority sectors.
- Further progressed the development of Health Innovation Dudley, due to open in 2026, offering higher level provision for the health and care sector.
- Secured funding for the development of our new Transport Technologies Centre to replace our existing traditional automotive facility, with a focus on electric, hydrogen and autonomous vehicle systems.





- Undertaken the development of our new science and animal management facility, due to open in September 2024, featuring new provision for upskilling local adults.
- Undertaken a range of sustainability actions to reduce our impact on the environment, as well as delivering dedicated sustainability programmes to local employers.
- Achieved financial health grade of Good, a year earlier than planned.

The College was inspected in November 2023 and received a 'Good' overall grade and a judgement that we were making a 'reasonable contribution' to meeting skills needs. In relation to meeting skills needs, the report read as follows:

"Leaders have an accurate understanding of the skills needs in the Black Country. They work collaboratively with stakeholders, such as the local authority, on a range of projects. This includes training for long-term unemployed residents in Dudley, programmes for 14- to 16-year-olds who are not engaged in education, and

rebuilding new college facilities. Leaders focus provision in their new buildings on the sectors most in need in the Black Country. This includes dedicated buildings for manufacturing and engineering, the Black Country and Marches IoT, service industries and arts, and current plans for a new healthcare training facility in partnership with a local university. The local authority and other stakeholders are highly complimentary about the college.

Leaders plan training effectively with employers to meet their skills needs. They provide specialised training in higher-level skills in engineering manufacturing such as robotics and automation. Leaders have developed bespoke leadership and management training for aspiring managers within the local authority to provide a talent pipeline for succession planning and promotion. Many staff have moved on to roles with higher responsibility following their courses.

Leaders work with the local community to improve the area for residents and to provide opportunities for learners to practise their skills. Learners take part in gardening and planting for Brierley Hill in Bloom. Performing arts learners perform at local museum events on occasions such as Halloween and Christmas. Animal care learners learn new skills at the local zoo, such as moving giraffes. Learners gain valuable work experience and improve their skills and self-esteem.

Leaders are highly visible in the community and work very effectively with many stakeholders for the best interests of Dudley and the surrounding area. However, in a few curriculum areas, leaders recognise that there is still more work to do to ensure that their courses are more closely aligned to industry skills requirements."

The senior team and governing body of the College remain absolutely committed to our ongoing actions to ensure we continue to develop our provision to meet skills need and have invested considerable time and effort in the production of our new Strategic Plan through consultation with local employers. We have also taken into account the findings from our recent Ofsted inspection and the Local Skills Improvement Plan in developing this strategy. Underpinning the new Strategic Plan is a separate Estates Strategy 2024-27 which details our commitment to the ongoing development of our technical facilities to ensure we continue to expand our offer in response to skills needs. As well as regularly reviewing our curriculum offer, the Board will also provide assurance that the College continues to deliver on the actions set out in our Strategic Plan, through monitoring of our annual College Operational Development Plan and scrutiny of our Annual Strategic Impact Assessment.

Our Strategic Plan makes clear our aspiration to do all of this through effective collaboration with all education providers in our region and to be transparent in reporting our progress and impact through a range of mechanisms. We will continue to act as a key contributor to educational partnerships and initiatives across the region, sharing best practice, resources and skills. Our collaborative approach will build on our historic work across the sub region to date, strengthening our relationships to develop collaborative models and agree solutions to meet local need.

CORPORATION STATEMENT

On behalf of the Dudley College of Technology corporation, it is hereby confirmed that the college plan as set out above reflects an agreed statement of purpose, aims and objectives as approved by the corporation at their meeting on 18th June 2024.

This statement will be published on the College's website which can be accessed from the following link: www.dudleycol.ac.uk/our-college/about-us/strategic-plan-2024-2027/

Chair of Governors

Signed: 

Name: Paul Noon

Date:

Chief Executive and Principal

Signed: 

Name: Neil Thomas

Date:

SUPPORTING LINKS

- This accountability statement can be accessed online at www.dudleycol.ac.uk/our-college/about-us/strategic-plan-2024-2027/
- College Strategic Plan www.dudleycol.ac.uk/our-college/about-us/strategic-plan-2024-2027/
- College performance dashboard www.dudleycol.ac.uk/our-college/about-us/dashboard/
- College Ofsted inspection report www.reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/31/130475
- College annual financial accounts www.dudleycol.ac.uk/our-college/about-us/
- Local Skills Improvement Plan www.cw-chamber.co.uk/business-support/lqip/
- Regeneration plan for Dudley - www.dudley.gov.uk/business/regeneration/ www.regeneratingdudley.org.uk/
- Dudley Economic Regeneration Strategy - www.regeneratingdudley.org.uk/
- Black Country & West Birmingham Socio-Economic Profile (Black Country Consortium) - www.strategyunitwm.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/2020-10/BCWB%20Socioeconomic%20Profile%20July%202020%20-%20Final.pdf
- West Midlands Combined Authority Plan for Growth www.wmca.org.uk/what-we-do/economy-and-innovation/plan-for-growth/
- WMCA Employment & Skills Strategy www.wmca.org.uk/media/wtwpjng2/wmca-employment-and-skills-strategy-2024-2027.pdf



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