

ACCOUNTABILITY AGREEMENT & LOCAL NEEDS DUTY 2025-2026





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STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

City College Plymouth is a large vocational and technical General Further Education (GFE) College offering both Further and Higher Education (FE and HE) provision.

£40m

The College has a turnover of over £40m (Group) and is a significant contributor to the educational, cultural and economic life of Plymouth.



The College is the anchor institution for skills, for the city and beyond, and the largest provider of full-time 16-18 education in Plymouth.



The College provides courses for those aged 16-18, adults and for young people aged 14 to 16 (schools provision). Courses range from pre-entry through to HE and cover 14 of the 15 Subject Sector Areas (SSAs).

The College's strategic intent has, as its foundation, a people-led and collaborative approach, that is both inspirational and aspirational.



The College was graded as Good by OFSTED in 2024.



In 2021 the College set out eight strategic actions to achieve our vision to be the Learning Destination of Choice.

- We will respond to a changing economy with education that connects learning and our learners to the real world, working with students, employers and other stakeholders to shape a flexible, agile skills provision, supporting employment, innovation and productivity and fundamentally delivering for our students, through our **strategic action: transforming futures**.
- We will empower our staff through clarity of purpose, confidence and shared understanding. A culture of trust will enable us all to embed our values - respect, ownership, integrity - motivating our daily actions, attitudes, language and decisions through our **strategic action: developing people**.
- We will become a cloud and digital-first college, maximising the use and benefits of our technologies to re-imagine our curriculum and services through our **strategic action: digital**.
- We will ensure we have the financial resilience to drive growth and innovation through our curriculum, partnerships and our estate through our **strategic action: finance**.
- We will create collaborative, integrated solutions to strengthen the current and future health and social care workforce and improve the wider determinants of health in our city through our **strategic action: health and active wellbeing**.
- We will co-create employer-responsive, flexible technical skills programmes in marine, advanced manufacturing, construction, digital and sciences to reshape the skills landscape of our community and drive growth through our **strategic action: maritime, manufacturing, construction and the built environment**.
- We will build and use our physical spaces, infrastructure and resources to drive and respond to key developments in our curriculum, our community and our economy through our **strategic action: estates and assets**.
- We will support the region by collaborating and innovating with the civic and commercial sectors, continually developing our curriculum and business models to deliver the true potential of the College through our **strategic action: opportunities**.

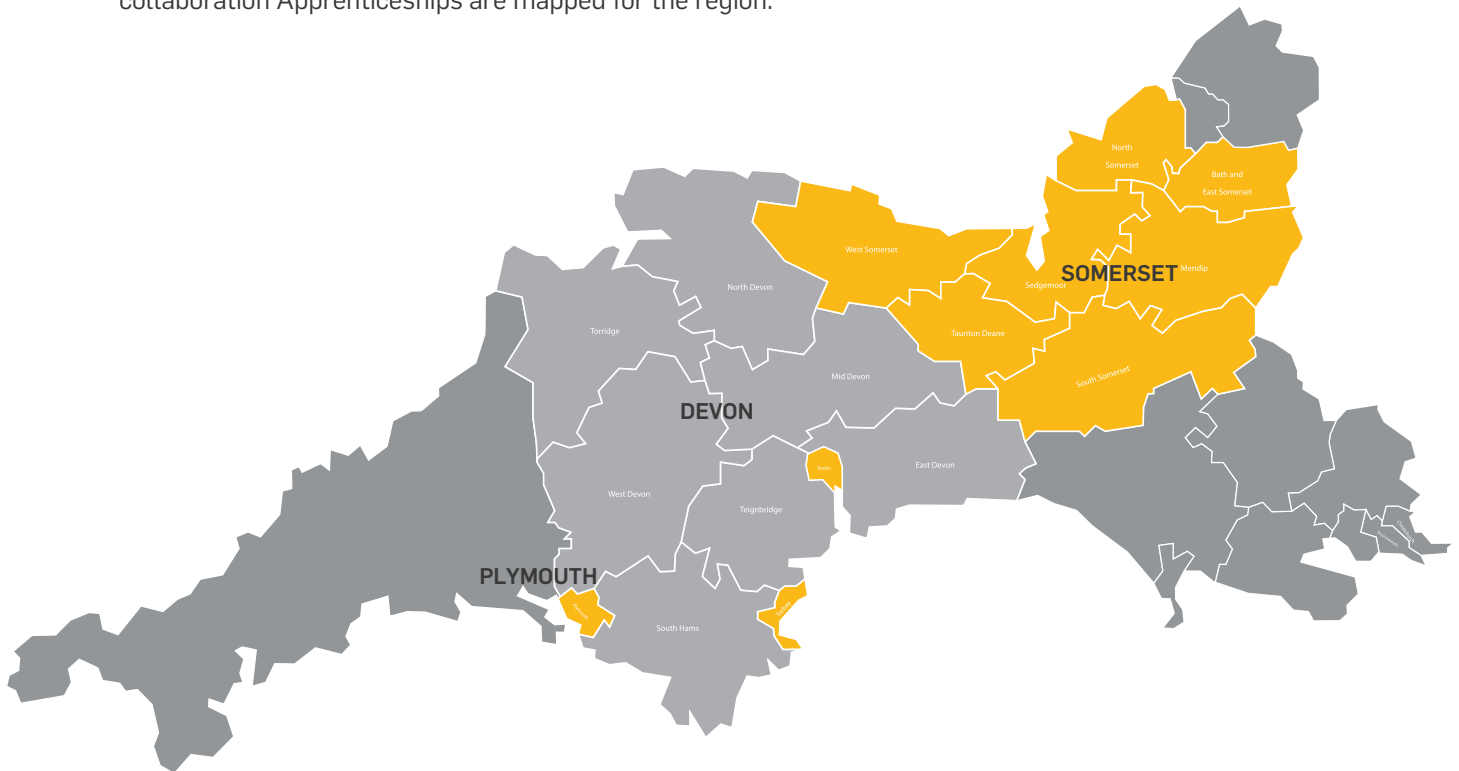
Since the publication of our Strategic Intent in 2021 the Skills Act passed into law and requires the College - through both the Local Skills Improvement Plan and Accountability Agreements - to ensure our curriculum contributes towards meeting local, regional and national skills needs and fulfils our Local Needs Duty. As our Strategic Intent had been created with extensive involvement from our employer, civic, community and educational stakeholders our eight strategic actions have subsequently been re-enforced by the activities surrounding the new statutory duties, ensuring that the College is well placed to deliver for the region as the anchor institution for skills.

As the anchor institution for skills in the city, the College works heavily with the Local Authority and the city's skills landscape. Our Chief Executive is both the skills lead for Plymouth, and also the skills lead for Growth Alliance Plymouth, a partnership between Babcock International Group, the Royal Navy and Plymouth City Council to put in place the infrastructure, workforce and support for the wider business ecosystem, to drive inclusive growth. The College also sits on the highly influential Plymouth Growth Board, the primary forum for public/private engagement that shapes city-wide activity. This is the delivery partnership of the local growth plan of which the local skills plan is one of the key pillars. Our involvement with this group is significant with the chair of this board also being the College's

Chair of Governors. Our Chief Executive also sits on this board. Other representation includes the Chief Executives of Plymouth City Council, University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust, Devon Chamber of Commerce and the University of Plymouth; as well as leaders from key employers across the city such as Princess Yachts, Babcock International Group, Livewell and the Theatre Royal Plymouth. Membership of this group ensures that the College reflects the needs of the city.

The College is also an active partner in the wider regional skills landscape. We are closely engaged with the newly devolved combined authority of Devon and Torbay (where we sit on the Skills Board) and with the Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly devolved body. In addition, we are an active partner both through the formation and delivery of the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) and through the delivery of the identified priorities supported by the Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF). Through this initiative, along with its predecessor the Strategic Development Fund, we have developed strong partnerships with our fellow regional colleges Bridgwater & Taunton College, Yeovil College, Strode College, Petroc, South Devon College and Exeter College.

The College is also a member of the Devon Colleges Group, where an important element of our close regional working relationship within the Devon Colleges Group has been to map our curriculum across the region to ensure that there is effective curriculum coverage to meet skills needs identified through LMI and stakeholder engagement. As a result of this collaboration Apprenticeships are mapped for the region.



CONTEXT & PLACE

City College Plymouth is at the heart of its community and offers high quality provision developed to meet its unique and diverse needs. It operates from three locations across the city, with the majority of provision based at the Kings Road site, with marine carpentry and additional construction programmes run from our Picquet location and HE marine provision run out of the Centre for Higher Technical Innovation & Maritime Skills at the heart of the Oceansgate Marine Enterprise location.

£6.97bn
Real economic output

With a growing population approaching 268,000, a real economic output of £6.97 billion and a workforce of 118,702 jobs, Plymouth is the most significant urban area on the South West peninsula. A further 100,000 people live within the city's travel-to-work area.

118,702


£1bn
Secured submarine & nuclear work


Plymouth is an ambitious city with huge growth potential. Home to the largest naval base in Western Europe, with investments of over £1 billion having secured submarine and nuclear work for the next 70 years, the marine and defence sector accounts for 20% of the city's GVA, 18.1% of total employment and over 19,000 jobs.

19,000


However, with a renewed national focus on defence the dockyard is now primed for further growth and investment in the coming years that will require a significant increase in workforce and skills provision.

8.3%
Exceeds national average


The city also has the highest concentration of manufacturing employment on the south coast of Britain with over 14.6% of Plymouth's jobs being in the manufacturing industry, far exceeding the 8.3% national average.

14.6%


As a centre of excellence for marine autonomy, science and manufacturing, Plymouth has a unique set of competitive advantages on which to build upon in its transition to a more competitive and thriving knowledge based economy with a focus on autonomy, robotics and AI.

The construction sector is also a priority for the city with an already strong pipeline of 10,000 construction jobs demonstrating the city's growth potential and commitment. However, with significant work already underway at the multi-billion pound dockyard redevelopment, a major hospital renovation underway, and a city commitment to a significant housebuilding programme to support growth the sector is one needing an increase in skilled workforce.

10,000



Plymouth also has a growing cluster of innovative life science companies utilising the area's technology infrastructure, resulting in a healthy mix of established and emerging companies across medical device and diagnostics, biologics and biotech, contract research organisations and pharmaceuticals.

48,000

Derriford hospital is a large teaching hospital with 48,000 patients per week and the University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust is the largest hospital trust in the South West Peninsula.

Finally, the digital economy in Plymouth is recognised as a key strength and forms one of the five key pillars within the Local Economic Strategy.

However, Plymouth also has a number of challenges which focus and frame College activities:



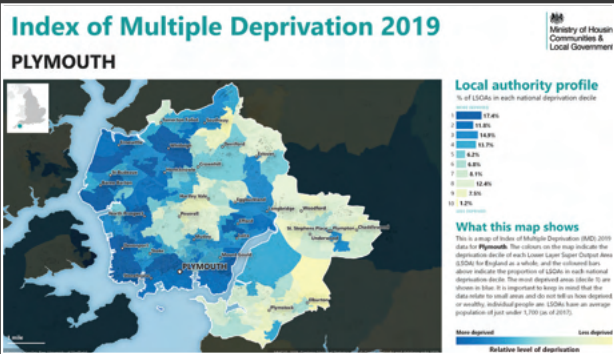
Jobs and skills

We have a significant volume of job vacancies, high volumes of economic inactivity and a skills deficit set against a picture of strong growth sectors and strong demand for high level skills, particularly in marine, defence, manufacturing and engineering, health and care, construction and the built environment.

The significant skills gaps and shortages are particularly in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) sectors, which accounts for nearly 60% of all jobs in the city, with a skills need for 5,500 people over the next ten years (1,800 entry level jobs and 3,700 experienced workers) for the Dockyard alone, and an additional 4,250 construction workers needed by 2027.

English Indices of Deprivation

Plymouth ranked as the 64th most deprived local authority district in England (of 317 LAs). The summary measure places Plymouth within the 20% most deprived local authority districts in England. 13.2% of Plymouth residents (34,432) live in the 10% most income deprived areas nationally. Of these, two of the LSOAs are in the most deprived 1% for income nationally which relates to 4,119 residents.



Health and disability is a particular issue with 62,575 residents in the most deprived 10% for this measure covering 23.9% of the Plymouth population. There are varied health outcomes for residents with life expectancy over four years lower in some of the most deprived areas of the city compared to the least deprived group of neighbourhoods.

Low-income families

£718-£148

Full-time weekly earnings

Average full-time weekly earnings in Plymouth are £718 - £148 less than the national average of £866.

£866

National average

Despite recent increases, Plymouth's average annual gross pay remains more than £4,600 below the national average of £36,200. There is also a significant gender imbalance in the city with male full-time weekly earnings in 2022 at £722 per week compared to female full-time weekly earnings of £641 per week.

31%

Children living in poverty in Plymouth

Recent figures from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation showed that 31% of children in Plymouth in 2024 were living in poverty - up from 29% in 2014/15 and above the figure for England of 30%.

30%

Children living in poverty in England

This was the highest figure in at least eight years, and some wards continued to experience children in poverty levels in excess of 35%.

Economic inactivity

25.1%

16 to 64 year olds
economically inactive

Plymouth has high levels of economic inactivity. Around 41,300 people or 25.1% of the population aged 16 to 64 years in Plymouth were "economically inactive" in the year ending December 2023.



Comparatively, the percentage of people aged 16 to 64 years economically inactive across the South West was at 19.1% and in Great Britain this was 21.2%. In terms of Plymouth, there is a higher proportion of economically inactive residents due to long term sickness.

35%

Economically inactive
residents in Plymouth

Residents suffering from long term sickness accounts for 35% of economically inactive residents in Plymouth. In comparison, the national average is 25.8%.

25.8%

National average

Young people with experience of the care system

91 per 10,000

Children in the care
system in Plymouth

In 2022 there were 500 young people (aged 0 to 17 inclusive) in care, with 187 aged 14 to 17 and a further 180 young people aged 18 to 20, and 82 aged 21 to 24. At 91 per 10,000 children, Plymouth had more looked after children than the South West (56) and England (67) average. This had risen from 78 per 10,000 in 2019, showing how the pandemic has impacted this age group.

Young carers

The 2024 school census found 730 young carers across both primary and secondary schools and historic impact indicates that one in three of these young people are likely to experience educational difficulties or miss schooling.

APPROACH

City College Plymouth is committed to being the training provider of choice, ensuring that our curriculum aligns with the evolving needs of local, regional, and national employers. To achieve this, the College places diversification and strong industry partnerships at the heart of its strategy, requiring staff at all levels to actively engage with key stakeholders across multiple sectors. By creating robust relationships with wider civic, educational, and community partners, the College ensures a cohesive approach to workforce development, where all partners receive a consistent level of quality, engagement, and service.

A fundamental element of this engagement is providing a single point of contact for employers and stakeholders, ensuring that businesses seeking training solutions can easily access tailored support and expertise. This approach allows organisations to navigate the College's training offer efficiently, ensuring that decision-makers responsible for workforce development understand available opportunities and can seamlessly integrate them into their operations. By reducing complexity and enhancing employer engagement, the College strengthens collaborative partnerships that drive economic growth and skills development.

A strategic approach

To ensure long-term sustainability and adaptability, the College has developed strategic actions to be delivered over a ten-year period. These actions serve as guiding frameworks, providing focus and direction while retaining the flexibility to respond to emerging opportunities that align with industry and community needs. They concentrate on high-growth, high-demand sectors, ensuring alignment with both regional priorities and national agendas.

The plans directly support the Skills 4 Plymouth Local Authority Plan and align with the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), reinforcing the College's commitment to meeting the skills needs of the local and regional economy.

By aligning skills development with key economic drivers, the College ensures that businesses, industries, and individuals have the training and expertise needed to thrive in an evolving economy. Through long-term planning, strong employer engagement, and strategic investment in state-of-the-art training facilities, the College is future-proofing Plymouth's workforce while strengthening its position as a national leader in technical and vocational education. By integrating green and blue skills, driving digital transformation, and prioritising workforce upskilling, the College is not only supporting economic growth but also ensuring that no one is left behind as the city's landscape continues to evolve.

The College actively engages with a diverse range of stakeholders across the Plymouth travel-to-learn area and beyond, leveraging technological advancements in education to extend its reach. It builds strong partnerships with tier-one companies, SMEs, strategic organisations, and community groups, ensuring a collaborative and demand-led approach to skills development.

Key industry partners include Babcock International Group, University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust, Princess Yachts, Livewell, Plymouth Argyle Community Trust, and Kier Construction, alongside smaller but equally important organisations such as BIT Group, Acronyms IT, Improving lives and YGS Landscapes. Additionally, the College maintains

strategic collaborations with institutions such as the University of Plymouth, the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), the Local Authority, and Devon Chamber, as well as a wide range of community-based organisations.

The College makes extensive use of labour market intelligence (LMI), alongside local insights, industry data, and employer feedback, to shape its strategy. This data-driven approach ensures that skills planning, curriculum development, and future investments are closely aligned with the evolving needs of the economy. As a result, the College has made significant investments in cutting-edge training facilities, such as ...

£2m
Investment

£2 million investment in the Engineering & Nuclear Skills building, developed in partnership with Babcock International Group to support the defence and nuclear sectors



The redevelopment of health and business curriculum delivery spaces, including the introduction of the College's anatomage table, providing state-of-the-art interactive learning for healthcare students.

Investment in cyber security facilities and immersive classroom facilities.

Strategic industry engagement

Ensuring broad sector engagement across organisations of all sizes is vital to delivering a comprehensive and responsive skills provision. This is particularly important in Plymouth and the wider South West, where a significant proportion of businesses fall within the SME category.

With a sector-focused approach, the College facilitates regular meetings with sector partners, incorporating industry bodies wherever possible.

This collaborative method reduces competition in an already crowded training market while promoting cooperation and alignment between training providers and employers, resulting in successful partnerships and stronger collaboration with key industry networks.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT CHANNEL	DESCRIPTION
Industry & Community Events	Participation in and hosting of networking events to promote collaboration.
Membership in Strategic Organisations	Ensuring alignment with regional and national economic strategies.
Sector Partner Meetings	Regular discussions with industry leaders to identify emerging skills needs.
Key Account & Partnership Management	Structured engagement with key employers to drive workforce development.
Employer Forums & Onsite Meetings	Strengthening industry links through direct engagement at College and employer premises.
Surveys & Feedback Mechanisms	Capturing insights to continuously refine training and curriculum offerings.
Marketing & Public Relations	Promoting key initiatives and partnerships to enhance visibility and impact.
Government Initiative Engagement	Aligning College activities with national skills and workforce development strategies.
'Skilfully Speaking' Podcast Series	Providing a platform for industry voices to discuss trends, innovations, and opportunities in skills development.



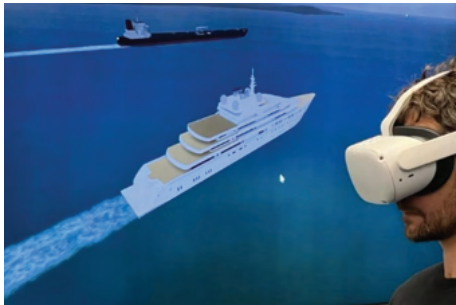
By maintaining a proactive and responsive engagement strategy, the College ensures that its curriculum, training programmes, and wider educational initiatives remain aligned with industry needs and community aspirations, supporting both economic growth and social mobility.

These engagements have been highly successful, offering employers a platform to discuss sector challenges, skills gaps, and training requirements while also enabling the College to showcase its current and future training programmes. The direct exchange of feedback during these events ensures that course development remains industry-relevant, allowing the College to make real-time adjustments that support local and regional economic growth.



OUR PRIORITIES

To meet key national, regional and local priorities, and our Local Needs Duty, the College has identified key areas where we will prioritise our activities in the next year. Through these priorities we aim to have a transformational impact on the opportunities for our communities, delivering leading skills training to realise full potential and meet aspirations.



BLUE SKILLS: THE MARITIME AND DEFENCE SECTOR

As the anchor institution for skills in Britain's Ocean City, City College Plymouth plays a pivotal role in shaping the future of the blue/maritime sector. This industry is a strategic priority for the region, the city, and the College, reflecting Plymouth's national leadership in maritime defence, marine technology, and luxury boat production. As one of eight Freeport regions, Plymouth is primed for further growth, presenting significant recruitment and skills challenges that require an agile and responsive training framework.



To address the evolving needs of the maritime and defence sector, the College has taken proactive steps to develop a comprehensive skills pipeline, ensuring that industry demands are met with a highly skilled workforce. Key initiatives include:

- **leading the Maritime & Defence Sector Skills Partnership** - working closely with Babcock International Group on behalf of the city, identifying and coordinating essential skills development to future-proof the industry
- **expanding social mobility** - developing pre-Apprenticeship programmes in collaboration with industry partners to build on essential skills before entering an Apprenticeship scheme
- **expanding Apprenticeships** - growth in level 3 and Higher Apprenticeship programmes to provide sustainable career pathways
- **developing industry-focused Skills Bootcamps at level 3** - designed to upskill individuals in maritime engineering, marine technology, and digital skills
- **workforce planning with key employers** - creating long-term workforce strategies, aligning training provision with future industry needs
- **enhancing marine engineering and boat outfitting provision** - expanding marine and leisure boat manufacturing courses to meet demand in the luxury yacht sector
- **investing in immersive learning technologies** - deploying cutting-edge simulation tools to train professionals in high-risk maritime activities, ensuring safe and cost-effective skill development.

Recognising the need for state-of-the-art training facilities, the College has made significant investments in blue skills infrastructure. Key developments include the Centre for Higher Technical Innovation & Maritime Skills, created in collaboration with industry leaders to deliver specialist training in marine technology, engineering, and digital maritime solutions, and the Engineering & Nuclear Skills Building, launched in partnership with Babcock International Group to support nuclear defence and maritime maintenance. We have strategic plans underway to further expand our training facilities, ensuring Plymouth remains at the forefront of maritime innovation and workforce development, while fully capitalising on the city's maritime strengths.

Plymouth's blue economy extends beyond defence and engineering, encompassing tourism, leisure, and conservation. The city is home to the UK's first National Marine Park, along with the associated Digital Marine Park project. These initiatives engage the entire community in marine heritage and conservation efforts, promote sustainable tourism and economic development, and create hundreds of new jobs. They also enhance education, raise awareness, and inspire the next generation of marine professionals. In addition, they showcase Plymouth Sound to a global audience, integrating blue and digital skills, and enabling individuals who cannot physically access the park to experience real-time or on-demand views of the marine ecosystem. Together, these projects strengthen Plymouth's position as a leader in marine tourism, digital tourism, and interactive technology.

Plymouth's visitor economy strategy aims to increase employment by 33%, creating 4,000 new jobs by 2026 spanning maritime and coastal tourism, sport and leisure (including marine-based activities), health and wellbeing careers linked to outdoor activity and conservation, as well as multi-trade and digital skills roles supporting blue sector growth.


4,000
New jobs by 2026

ACTION: EXPANDING THE BLUE SKILLS CURRICULUM

To ensure continued growth and sustainability, the College is committed to:

- expanding course provision in welding, science, marine, defence, manufacturing, and the visitor economy by 5% in 2025/26
- developing at least five new specialised training pathways for the visitor economy, maritime engineering, and offshore industries in 2025/26
- by July 2026, the College will establish or formalise at least five new collaborative partnerships with businesses, environmental organisations, and government bodies. These partnerships will contribute to the creation of a cohesive and responsive skills ecosystem, evidenced through signed partnership agreements, co-designed curriculum input, or jointly delivered programmes aligned to regional skills needs and sustainability goals.

As Britain's Ocean City, Plymouth is uniquely positioned to lead the blue skills revolution, ensuring that its workforce is equipped to support industry growth, drive innovation, and maintain its status as a global maritime hub.



GREEN SKILLS FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Green skills are one of the fastest-growing areas of workforce demand and are essential for both environmental sustainability and economic resilience in the South West. We are committed to playing a leading role in meeting the challenges of climate change, ensuring that both individuals and businesses are equipped with the skills necessary to support the transition to a net-zero economy.

In 2021, City College Plymouth became the first college in the South West to declare a climate emergency, committing to becoming a carbon-neutral organisation.

Since then, we have continued to lead the way in green skills training, ensuring that our curriculum and industry partnerships align with local, regional, and national sustainability priorities.

Renewable energy and green technologies

Recognising the rapid growth of the renewable energy sector, we have made significant investments in electric vehicles to support practical training in EV maintenance. We have also expanded our Green Skills Centre, enhancing access to cutting-edge training in solar panel installation, electric vehicle charging point technology, battery storage, and hydrogen technologies.

In addition, we continue to work closely with industry stakeholders to ensure our training aligns with regional sustainability goals.

To further support the city's green transition, we actively contribute to the Plymouth Green Skills Board and the Plymouth NetZero Executive Board, helping to shape the Plymouth Green Skills Action Plan. This initiative targets major carbon-producing industries, focusing on:

- **buildings** - sustainable construction, maintenance, and retrofitting
- **power and heat** - solar, hydrogen, heat network and heat pump technologies
- **mobility** - electric vehicle charging infrastructure and smart transport solutions
- **waste management** - environmental sustainability and circular economy practices.

By embedding these priorities into our curriculum and employer engagement strategy, we are ensuring that Plymouth remains at the forefront of green skills development.

As part of the Celtic Sea Offshore Wind project, the College is working closely with the Floating Offshore Wind (FLOW) Accelerator to develop the workforce required to support this emerging industry. With a projected lifespan of over 25 years, the renewable energy sector will require skills in:

- **engineering and design** - civil, electrical, and mechanical engineering expertise
- **construction and assembly** - large-scale infrastructure and turbine manufacturing
- **operations and maintenance** - ongoing servicing of offshore wind assets
- **decommissioning and sustainability** - end-of-life management for renewable infrastructure.

The South West is uniquely positioned to benefit from the FLOW industry, with Plymouth playing a crucial role. The College has taken a proactive approach to ensure that engineering graduates access career opportunities by partnering with a local maritime provider to ensure students gain industry-recognised at-sea qualifications, develop transferable engineering and project management skills applicable to offshore wind projects and also access a pipeline of employment opportunities within the FLOW supply chain.

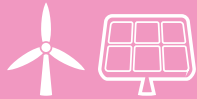


ACTION: HYDROGEN AND FUTURE GREEN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

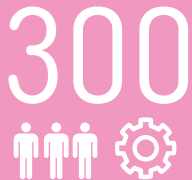
To further enhance our green skills provision, the College will:



introduce hydrogen training, engaging with employers to develop specialist upskilling programmes for this emerging sector in 2025/26



develop a partnership with at least one renewable energy firm in 2025/26, ensuring that our students have access to cutting-edge industry placements and job opportunities



by July 2026, the College will align at least five existing or new training programmes with national net-zero priorities by embedding green skills, low-carbon technologies, or sustainability-focused content, ensuring at least 300 students are enrolled in programmes that directly support the development of a sustainable future workforce for Plymouth and the wider region.



By prioritising sustainable skills development, employer engagement, and investment in green technologies, the College is not only preparing students for future-proofed careers but also ensuring Plymouth as a key hub for green and blue economy growth, ensuring long-term employment opportunities while driving national and international energy transition efforts.

CONSTRUCTION

The construction industry in the South West faces a significant recruitment challenge, with an annual workforce growth requirement of 3.4%, surpassing the UK's average of 1.9%. This equates to an urgent need for 8,480 new workers per year, with a total demand of 42,400 additional workers between 2024 and 2028.

42,400



Workers in demand

Many of these roles are in green construction sectors, including retrofit and sustainable building techniques, as well as in traditional trades such as bricklaying, woodwork and fit-out.

However, these already significant figures may be conservative, as they do not account for the multi-billion-pound redevelopment of Devonport Dockyard. Additional major projects, including the renovation of Derriford Hospital, the development of Sherford town, and the construction of 12,000 new city centre homes, are all scheduled for Plymouth over the next five to ten years, potentially driving the demand for more than 4,250 new construction workers by 2027.

As such, construction skills are a high priority for the College, with a particular focus on increasing capacity, broadening the range of courses, and diversifying the offer to meet student demand and improve gender balance in the industry. At the same time, we are committed to supporting employers in upskilling their workforce and recruiting new talent to meet critical retrofit and sustainable construction objectives.

To meet this growing demand, the College has significantly expanded the capacity of high-demand courses such as bricklaying, carpentry and joinery,

and electrical installation. We have partnered with Kier Construction to deliver the Hard Hat Ready course, creating clear pathways into the industry, and have continued our collaboration with Building Heroes to support veterans transitioning into construction careers.

2→5
Expand training levels

In the area of green construction, we launched a Green Construction Skills Bootcamp in 2023, and are planning to expand training from levels 2 to 5.



This expansion will integrate emerging technologies such as drones and robotics to enhance efficiency and innovation in sustainable building practices.

ACTION: MEETING DEMAND WITH INCREASED SUPPLY AND DIVERSIFICATION OF OFFER

To meet growing demand, the College will introduce new Skills Bootcamps in 2025/26 to support traditional construction trades, alongside a new Solar PV Bootcamp and our existing retrofit training offer. We will also expand the capacity of our construction facilities to accommodate growth in core trades and increase construction enrolments in 2025/26 by 20%.

20%



Increase in
construction
enrolments



NUCLEAR: DEFENCE AND ENERGY SECURITY

City College Plymouth plays a strategic role in developing the skills pipeline for the nuclear industry, supporting both national security and energy resilience. Our contribution extends beyond Plymouth's role in nuclear submarine maintenance to the broader nuclear sector, ensuring that highly skilled professionals are available to meet the growing demands of this critical industry.

With global tensions and evolving security challenges, the Nuclear Continuous at Sea Deterrent (CASD) remains fundamental to national defence. Since its establishment in April 1969, CASD has ensured a credible and uninterrupted nuclear presence, reinforcing the need for a highly trained workforce capable of maintaining the nuclear-powered Royal Navy submarine fleet.

Supporting the UK's Nuclear Energy Strategy

Beyond defence, the College is also actively contributing to the nation's civil nuclear industry, ensuring energy security through specialist training and workforce development. Collaboration with the National College for Nuclear (NCfN) network is central to this mission, enabling the College to:

- develop industry-aligned nuclear training programmes
- collaborate with other educational institutions to deliver specialist nuclear skills at scale
- expand opportunities for students and apprentices to gain sector-relevant experience in both defence and energy.

Addressing the nuclear skills gap

120,000

The nuclear sector faces a significant workforce challenge, with an estimated 120,000 new positions required by 2040.



To address this, the College is working closely with industry partners and the Nuclear Skills Task Force (NSTF) to deliver the Destination Nuclear campaign, a nationwide initiative designed to:

- promote careers in nuclear and attract new entrants into the sector
- provide training pathways across multiple disciplines, ensuring a diverse and adaptable workforce
- support the development of nuclear-ready professionals in fields such as engineering, science, business, and construction.

ACTION: EMBEDDING NUCLEAR SKILLS ACROSS DISCIPLINES

200

Jobs taken
by women

By July 2026, the College will embed a 'Skills for Nuclear' curriculum across at least four key sectors (engineering, science, construction, and business), ensuring that a minimum of 200 students receive sector-specific nuclear safety and awareness training.

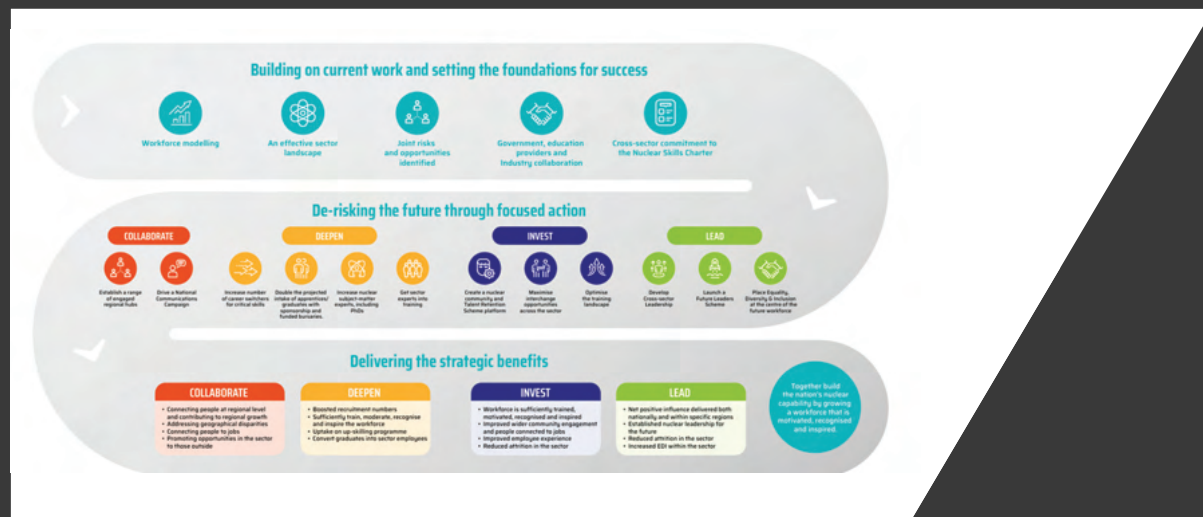


Nuclear safety & awareness training

This will be achieved through the integration of specialist modules, guest lectures from industry experts, and accredited short courses aligned with Nuclear Skills Strategy Group (NSSG) standards. These will include:

- **engineering** - mechanical, electrical, and nuclear-specific engineering disciplines
- **science** - radiological safety, nuclear physics, and materials science
- **business and project management** - ensuring the effective delivery of nuclear-related infrastructure projects
- **construction and infrastructure** - supporting the safe and efficient development of nuclear facilities.

By aligning training provision with national and industry-led nuclear strategies, the College is ensuring that Plymouth remains a key hub for nuclear workforce development, supporting both national security and the transition to a low-carbon energy future.



HEALTH AND ACTIVE WELLBEING

The government views health and skills as interconnected, aiming to improve both through initiatives such as the “Get Britain Working” White Paper, the NHS Long Term Plan, and the establishment of Skills England, focusing on economic inactivity, workforce development, and addressing skills gaps.



In 2025, the government's health sector priorities have a focus on:

- improving patient access to timely care including expanding community care
- increasing productivity and efficiency through improvement of workforce planning by investing in workforce training and addressing staff retention issues
- driving reforms within the NHS with a focus on digital health.

11,000

Staff &
volunteers

These priorities are essential nationally, regionally and locally where the city has the largest specialist teaching hospital in the South West peninsula and the region's major trauma centre employing over 11,000 staff and volunteers, alongside an additional 9,000 roles/staff within the associated social care sector.

9,000



Against this backdrop, the health and social care sector has a high turnover of staff due to work-life balance challenges, and increased workload, as well as concerns about career progression.

The health and wellbeing of the population are further impacting the sector with those furthest from the employment market struggling with poor health and an over-reliance on the already overburdened health and social care services, whilst also directly impacting their levels of income and quality of life.

As part of the Skills England: Driving growth and widening opportunities (September 2024) priorities, the health and social care sector has been identified as having the highest volume of roles in demand. Furthermore, forecasts indicate that many of the skills needed in the labour market in 2035 will be impacted by demographic and technological shifts, including this sector.

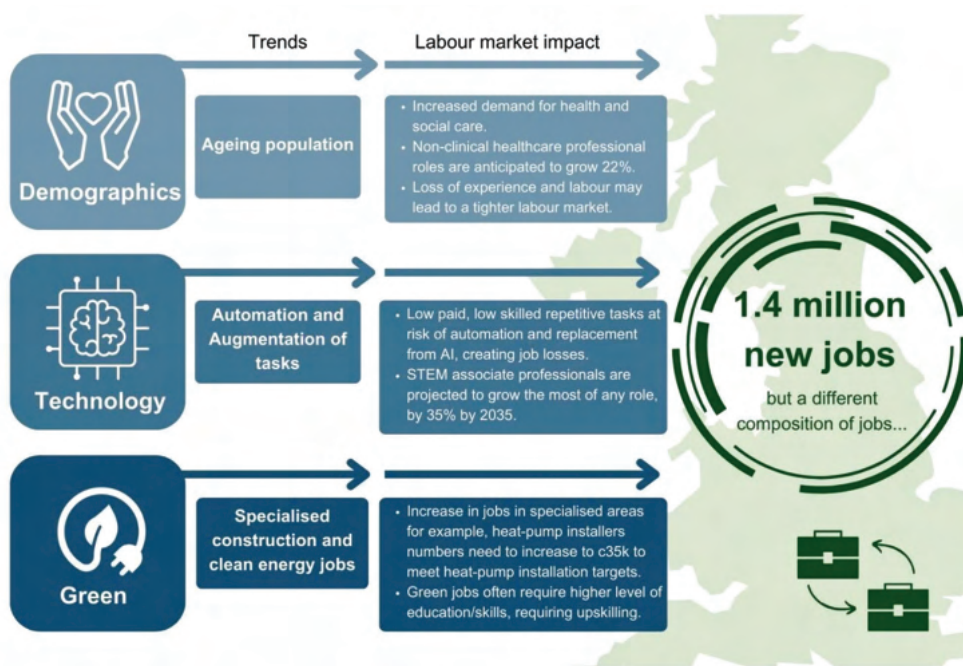
60%

In addition, following recent labour market trends of increasing female participation and historical shares of women working in growing sectors, most (60%) of the newly created jobs in 2035 are projected to be taken by women.



This follows growth in sectors such as health and social care, in line with the ageing population, where historically more women have been employed. To meet the growing demand for labour in this expanding sector, historically some male-dominated roles may need to increase female participation thereby also realising aspirations.

Locally, the University Hospital Plymouth NHS Trust has identified that the jobs currently on offer will be dramatically different due to the drive to move from major hospitals to community care; again a different skills set will be required.



Source: Skills England Analysis Infographic

ACTION: DEVELOPING SKILLS FOR THE WORKFORCE OF THE FUTURE

Skills England identified that the health and social care sector are currently seeing high demand for employees, alongside the need to improve the NHS and break down the barriers to opportunity for young people.

To address this demand, the College provides, and will continue to develop, a suite of qualifications that allow students to take their first career steps in the sector or continue into higher education to seek those higher level roles.

- Continue providing T Level Health and Science qualifications whilst in 2025/26 securing the NHS and Livewell Southwest as the placement provider with a view to providing employment or support for the students into a Higher Apprenticeship, to provide a workforce to take on the higher clinical roles.
- Develop a “new to care” Pre-Apprenticeship in 2025/26 for those who seek “new into care” roles.
- In 2025/26, include digital skills within the health qualifications to address the move into digital health.
- As the new health and social care qualifications are released in 2025, review and expand course provision to meet the needs of the sector



350

During 2025, develop Phase 2 of the NHS & Livewell Southwest Careers Hub to widen the outreach and provide direct support/ access to over 350 job roles, for those within the College, city schools and the community.



Access to job
roles

ACTION: TACKLING HEALTH AND WELLBEING THROUGH STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

To increase individuals' opportunities, reduce inequalities, improve individuals' health and wellbeing and enhance social cohesion, development of strategic partnerships are essential; this allows for effective use of government funding within skills and qualifications.

- To tackle health and wellbeing in 2025/26, we shall:
 - develop bespoke training in complex needs through funding via Skills Bootcamps in 2025/26
 - upskill our partners' workforce to work alongside those finding their health challenging and being furthest from the employment market
 - work alongside our partners to provide relevant work experience leading to employment for those furthest from the employment market
 - work alongside strategic partners to develop their offering to provide both health and long term economic impact on the local population.

ACTION: ACCESSING GOVERNMENT FUNDING TO SKILL AND UPSKILL

As part of funding streams available in the academic year 2025/26 (such as Shared Prosperity Funding and Skills Bootcamp funding), we will develop essential skills that indirectly impact those who struggle with their health and wellbeing (and have a direct impact on the health services, the economy and personal lives).



DIGITAL FUTURES

Driving the development of digital skills is a strategic priority for the College and the city.

The College's Strategic Intent to become a cloud and digital-first college - maximising the use and benefits of technologies to reimagine curriculum and services - has been realised through the achievement of a number of key milestones, including achieving Google Reference College accolade in 2022, achieving AWS academy status in 2024 and being awarded the prestigious Beacon Award for Digital Technology in 2025.

Our continuing goal is to drive further digital equity and innovation across our curriculum and communities.

The CBI identified in 2019 that we were in the midst of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, driven by technologies such as AI, automation and biotechnology. Providing our communities with access to, and training in, these future skills is essential for digital equity and prosperity with estimates suggesting more than three quarters of all jobs globally will require some element of digital skills by 2030.

81%
Digital skills

However, Skills England recently identified that digital and computing occupations in the UK face significant shortages which were more likely to be due to skills (81%) than they were across all occupations (63%).

63%
All occupations

While rapid advances in AI will increase productivity and create new high value jobs, digital skills will be the basis of this adoption and will be essential to provide an opportunity for a wider range of people to benefit from digital jobs.

8.6m

Nationally, the UK is making significant strides regarding essential digital skills with data from 2024 indicating that 8.6 million more people have the highest digital capability since 2020.



At the same time, the number of people digitally disengaged has steadily decreased with just 3% (1.6 million) people offline. While this is positive, around eight million people (15% of the UK population) still lack the fundamental digital skills for life.

7.3m

With regard to employment, the data shows that 7.3 million people (18% of the workforce) lack the essential digital skills for work.

18%



When accounting for educational attainment there is significant disparity with only 45% of people without formal qualifications having the essential digital skills for work increasing to 67% for those educated to level 2 - compared to 82% for the UK labour force as a whole.

79%

When assessing this at a regional level, the South West at 79% is 3% lower than the national average - highly likely to be reflective of lower educational attainment.

3%

lower than the national average

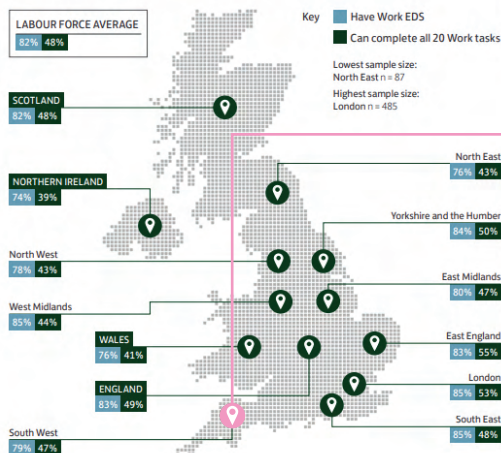
11%

Advanced digital skills in the UK

In addition, 2023 surveys on Advanced Digital Skills from Amazon/Gallop identified that only 11% of UK workers possessed advanced digital skills, 68% of businesses found it difficult to recruit the digital skills they need, and 45% of these say this is due to a shortage of qualified applicants.



Figure 43. Proportion of UK labour force adults 18+ who have Work Essential Digital Skills and the proportion that can complete all 20 Work tasks, 2024 n = 3,021



South West

79%

Have Work EDS

47%

Can Complete all 20 work tasks

These challenges, combined with a growing skills gap, have resulted in local, regional and national plans all highlighting this as a priority sector. The College, already a digital leader, is ideally positioned to meet the skills needed.

In order to meet these priorities there are two core focusses over the next 12 months:

ACTION: ESSENTIAL DIGITAL SKILLS

As part of our Shared Prosperity and Tailored Learning offer, in 2025/26 we will introduce a range of broad digital upskilling provisions to meet skills gaps across core competencies, support improved employment and progression opportunities, and meet core business needs.

ACTION: ADVANCED DIGITAL SKILLS

It is essential that we provide advanced digital skills to enable employers to meet the rapid challenges of new technology adoption. To do this we will deliver in:

- **cyber security** - this will include the new BSc in Cyber Security in 2025/26 and shorter, employer-focused courses (bespoke and accredited)
- **data analytics** - we will offer the Data Analytics Standard for the first time in 2025/26, deliver industry-focused shorter masterclasses and a new full-time sports analytics course at level 2 and level 3
- **cloud computing** - we will embed AWS micro-credentials into full-time computing courses and professional courses for Google, Microsoft and Amazon for 2025/26

- **artificial intelligence** - in 2025/26 we will deliver short courses on practical implementation and leveraging of AI for business, a Skills Bootcamp on AI and productivity for business and equipping existing learners with AI skills to support knowledge transfer upon progression through tutorial programmes
- **networking and programming** - in addition to the existing full-time and higher education offers, the College will develop shorter, employer-focused courses (bespoke and accredited) to support both retraining and upskilling.



DELIVERING FOR EMPLOYERS

Support for employers is a further strategic priority for the College, with their success essential to the health and prosperity of our wider communities. This is also central to our Local Needs Duty.

While the College already has extensive employer engagement, with the creation and delivery of our curriculum we intend to further strengthen these relationships over the next 12 months in line with the intention of the Skills for Jobs White paper of 2021.

We recognise the Local Skills Improvement Plan for the Devon and Somerset region is formally placing employers at the heart of defining local skills needs - and we fully embrace this. Our commitment to this process can be seen through the first four strategies identified in this document which align with the core priorities from the LSIP: blue skills (marine engineering and maritime), green skills (green construction, green energy and sustainability), health and digital. Over the next 12 months we will continue to work with the Devon Chamber of Commerce as the employer representative body for the LSIP to address the priorities identified, develop and deliver new curriculum to meet demand in each of the defined areas.



We will also focus on continuing to engage and co-design curriculum with employers to address the challenges of meeting both the skills gaps and the need for new talent across SMEs. To do this we will continue to partner with key employers across the region to address skills shortages and workforce planning through curriculum initiatives. We will deliver a range of provision including skills academies and Skills Bootcamps to meet needs across the marine, health, blue economy including visitor economy, digital and green construction areas aligned with the LSIP, as well as ones in logistics aligned to the emerging Freeport skills needs.

ACTION: WORKING WITH EMPLOYERS

We will significantly expand our Skills Bootcamps offer for 25/26 by working with employers to co-design provision to address sector skill needs across Engineering, Construction, Health, Business and Digital

DELIVERING FOR OUR COMMUNITIES

City College Plymouth has a learning environment and organisational culture that is focussed on positively impacting the health, wellbeing and sustainability of our community and enables all of our students and staff to achieve their full potential. We also recognise that within a changing political and economic environment, City College Plymouth now, more than ever, needs to establish itself as a significant element of our city's civic infrastructure - an anchor institution - vital to the development of our community and our economy.

As defined earlier in this document the city has challenges with significant deprivation, educational engagement, attainment and progression. The College cannot meet these significant challenges alone and as such works with a wide number of civic and community partners to positively impact our city and region.

To respond to this challenge, the College has developed an innovative tool to support people through their educational journey but to also provide support to re-engage with education and to access employment. Caerus is a map for our city, created by our city, with a difference. This innovative navigational tool is structured to address the whole person in addition to the logistical signposting of a career journey. Underpinned by several key concepts including 'Who am i?', 'What happens next?' and 'Elevate you'; it leads with a consistency of reflective questioning. Further to this, Caerus works positively to support growth by addressing the city's key economic strengths and assets such as, marine and maritime, and medical and healthcare sector; with a collection of employment sector maps. This united approach to creating something for our city that will make an impact, makes Caerus so unique.

The health and wellbeing of our communities is a priority activity for the College. The pandemic and subsequent cost of living crisis exacerbated what had already been significant mental health problems across society that has subsequently impacted many students' ability to commence or continue their studies. The College has invested significantly in its mental health and wellbeing facilities to support our vulnerable students and staff, including

having a wellbeing centre, the "Lighthouse" which has already had a significant impact. However, over the next 12 months we will continue to work with our partners to support the wider community with a wellbeing offer to key sectors such as the health and social care sector, carers, veterans and the third sector.

An important and developing area of provision across the city is for people with Special Educational Needs (SEN). Given the volume of people in the city and the region with SEN and the limited provision that is available, the College is committed to reviewing this particular provision to ensure that it provides outstanding educational experiences and outcomes. This is not limited to young people (aged 16-24) and will include the provision for those above the age of 24 to address isolation and engagement.

Another key aspect to our civic and community duties will be to empower low skilled and low waged members of our society to upskill and to raise the average wage of city residents.

We will undertake this activity through provision of the core skills required for improved employability - maths, English and essential digital skills though to level 2 - with a broadened offer of delivery. To address the disproportionate number of adults who do not progress from level 1 to study level 2 and also from level 2 to 3 - which has a direct correlation to average wage levels - the College will review its adult offer to ensure that it meets the city's skills needs and is accessible around both childcare and work commitments with both increased evening, weekend and online learning solutions.

To support equity, equality, diversity and inclusion we will take a range of measures to ensure access to all. This will include: the delivery of substantial English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) with linked vocational specialisms to support second language speakers with employment and social integration; specific women only sessions for vulnerable or isolated groups to encourage confidence in engaging with educational programmes.

ACTION:

We will increase the breadth of adult courses to meet skills need and grow adult engagement across provision. Specifically we will look to address Economic Inactivity through specific programmes to support removing barriers in terms of health or skills, as well as working with the DWP on targeted Sector Based Work Academies in key sectors.



CORPORATION ACCOUNTABILITY & LOCAL NEEDS DUTY SIGN-OFF

In line with the Local Needs Duty, the Corporation has reviewed how well the College's curriculum meets local, regional and national skills needs, assessing both immediate skills shortages as well as long-term strategic planning.

The key aspects of the College's approach are contained within our Strategic Intent 2021-2031 document, which sets out eight ambitious strategic actions. With specific skills needs focused on health and active wellbeing; maritime, manufacturing construction and the built environment, as well as the broader digital skills needs, the College has positioned itself in full alignment with key regional and local drivers such as the Local Skills Improvement Plan and the Skills 4 Plymouth plan. This accountability agreement fully reflects these skill needs and sets out in detail our approach.

We recognise that collaboration is essential to meeting skills needs and the corporation notes the strong links demonstrated with employers, educational partners and other key civic and community stakeholders in both the identification of skills needs and also the co-design of provision to specifically address needs. In line with this, we welcome the exciting initiatives to meet the needs of the emerging blue/green sector in the city through new curriculum - especially in the nuclear sector, as well as the many new curriculum developments in

the health and wellbeing sector and an increasing focus on SEN provision for the city.

The Corporation continues to champion an ambitious approach, responding agilely to changing local, regional, national and global skills landscapes to ensure that City College Plymouth leads on technical education, boosting productivity and inclusive growth across Plymouth and the wider region.

We conclude that we make a strong contribution to local and national skills needs and wish to continually improve this with priority actions as outlined in this document.

On behalf of the City College Plymouth Board, it is hereby confirmed that the plan as set out above reflects an agreed statement of purpose, aims and objectives and is approved by the Corporation at their meeting on Monday 19 May 2025. The plan will be published on the College's website.

Chair of Governors



Chief Executive / Principal



Dated: 19 May 2025