

STRATEGIC Plan

2022/23 - 2026/27



South Gloucestershire
and Stroud College



Forward

We have now ended our second Elizabethan age, and as we emerge following the pandemic and Brexit, we face challenging times – but also potentially a period of optimism for the skills system, recognised as needing to be at the heart of economic growth for lasting prosperity.

The current Government recognise the vital role that Colleges play in providing sustained employment and a highly skilled workforce and that further education provision responds and anticipates future skills needs. With much political leadership change, the role of colleges and the importance of skills to re-establish Great Britain's global position remains unchallenged by all political parties.

South Gloucestershire and Stroud College (SGS) has an excellent track record of working collaboratively with stakeholders in order to collectively benefit our communities, however there is more we need to do to ensure we provide a skilled regional workforce for the future and continually develop our curriculum in response to emerging technologies and careers.

We have benefitted from being part of national Department of Education Skills Development pilots and we are excited about working with other educational partners to ensure the regional offer enables economic growth and prosperity and developing annual Accountability Agreements.

With a strong financial history and an excellent track record of capital projects that respond to emerging industries and demographic growth, we are well positioned to take full advantage of the anticipated opportunities across Gloucestershire, South Gloucestershire and Bristol.

Ensuring our learners are supported to achieve across a range of flexible learning opportunities, with the best quality resources and excellent committed staff is at the heart of our ethos.

We anticipate the next five years as a period of continued national and global change and we have the expertise, experience and vision to rise to the challenge set by government and to develop the College further for an inclusive, ethical and sustainable future.

David Hagg

Chair of the Corporation

Kevin Hamblin

Group Chief Executive Officer

Sara-Jane Watkins

College Principal



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Introduction

This Strategic Plan sets out the direction of travel for SGS College as we approach 2030 and delivering the Government's global goals. During this period, we aim to further develop the employer-led technical skills required for increased regional productivity and support a national economic transformation.

By working collaboratively with our stakeholders within an ethical regional skills planning landscape, SGS College will play an integral part in delivering and building a strong local economy.

SGS is innovative and flexible enabling us to respond imaginatively and effectively to opportunities which may change as a result of the post-pandemic economic impact, energy and cost of living increases and the Ukraine war.

As a regional college, we will respond to the expected demographic growth in the north of Bristol and the capacity issues this raises at our Filton and WISE campuses, whilst looking to innovate and diversify at our Stroud Campus in order to increase capacity and turnover.

We will continue to respond to new income streams in order to maintain our strong financial position and will focus on increasing our overall efficiency and maintaining a surplus in order to continually invest in our staff and learners.

Providing outstanding learner resources and responding to increasing demand and the need to deliver high quality skills in emerging technologies, the College will enhance its estate through our ambitious Master Planning programme and access capital support where available.

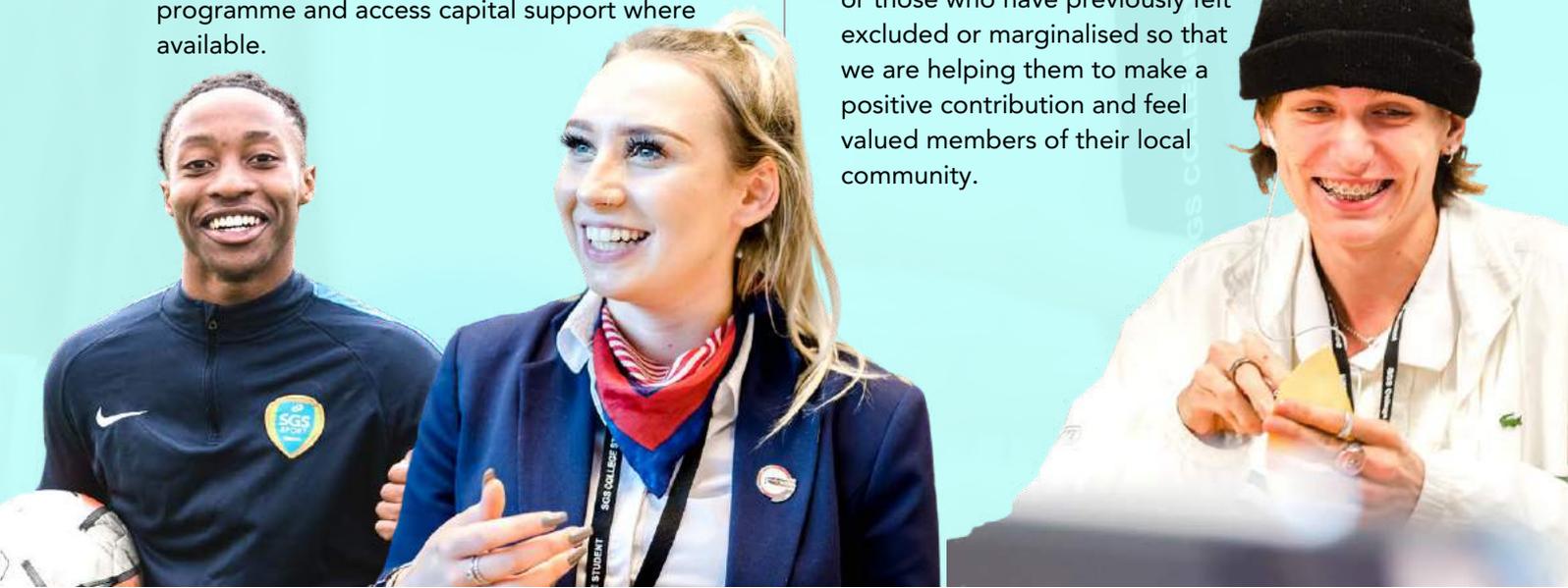
Working in partnership is vital to us and we will continue to work collaboratively with employers, communities, civic leaders and other providers in order to strategically plan skills provision and regional skills capital that enables sustained growth and investment in new technologies and markets whilst reducing duplication and promoting accessibility and specialisms where required.

Continued investment in services to support the well-being, mental health and progression of our learners and staff is vitally important to us and we recognise how challenging the pandemic and subsequent cost of living crisis has been on so many. We want staff and learners to feel that the College is their safe and supportive physical space. Happy Learners and staff that are kind to each other is the culture we want all to experience at SGS.

We want to invest in digital systems and platforms that enable learners to study flexibly, progress and succeed and to have the skills that employers need, whilst ensuring no individual is impacted due to digital poverty.

Our success will be defined by the positive destinations of our learners into sustained employment and the growth of our employer partnerships that enable enhanced work experience, apprenticeships and the co-design and delivery of our curriculum. In addition, another critical measure will be the retention of staff, who are supported to develop and progress throughout the organisation.

Finally, our annual self-assessment process will judge our performance based on our ability to positively impact and engage with students from diverse communities or those who have previously felt excluded or marginalised so that we are helping them to make a positive contribution and feel valued members of their local community.



Our Education Plan and Positive Behaviour Policy show our ambitions for an inclusive curriculum, with an enhanced focus on technical education and the behaviours required by learners in order for them to achieve sustained employment and community cohesion.

Education Plan Positive Behaviour Policy



Our Quality Strategy sets out our approach to maintaining and improving the quality of our provision and to securing progress towards the College's strategic priorities and this is supported by our Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Feedback Strategy which outlines our relentless focus on providing an outstanding learning experience and how we will develop our teaching staff to ensure learners receive a high quality experience.

Quality Strategy Teaching, Learning, Assessment & Feedback Strategy



Our People Strategy outlines our commitment to recruit, retain and reward the best talent and to provide opportunities that allow staff to flourish, progress and to be the best of themselves in a highly supportive inclusive environment where we support their health and well-being.

People Strategy



Our Strategic Plan is a 'living' document, that is reviewed annually setting our ambition for the next five years whilst embracing the flexibility needed to respond to opportunities as they arise.

Annually, our plan is reviewed by both the Corporation and the Executive and our performance is monitored and reviewed through our Quality Assurance Framework, Self-Assessment Report and subsequent Quality Improvement Plan.

To ensure we successfully deliver our ambition, this College Strategy is supported by additional plans, policies and strategies that incorporate these key areas of delivery.



Our Strategic Review Cycle

Our Stakeholder Management Plan outlines our collaborative approach to working with employers, educators, communities and civic partners to deliver regional growth and a highly skilled workforce.

Stakeholder Management Plan



Our Estates Strategy, coupled with our Sustainability & Biodiversity and Digital Plans, outline the priorities that will enable us to meet increasing expectations and demographic growth whilst expanding in a way that does not damage our environment.

Estates Strategy Sustainability & Biodiversity Plan Digital Plan



Our Financial Plan provides the framework to deliver our objectives and ambition, whilst retaining, a strong financial position and continually investing in our staff, students and surroundings.

Financial Plan



Digitisation, decarbonisation, along with equality, diversity and inclusivity & belonging are 'golden threads' throughout all the strategies and plans at SGS and this is demonstrated further within our Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging Strategy. We are proud of the diversity of our student and staff communities and we will continue to ensure that this commitment is embedded within all of our plans and strategies.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging Strategy



Our Vision and Mission for the regions we serve:

Our Mission:

We positively change people's lives and add value to the social and economic well-being of our communities. We do this by providing high quality, innovative, accessible education and training in a friendly culture of mutual respect and support.

Our Vision by 2030:

'To be outstanding by standing out'



Our Ethics & Values

Our role as an anchor institution is to make a positive impact on the prosperity of our locality and equipping those that live and work within our communities with improved opportunities is more important than ever. Through our strategic plan we will:

- Ensure learners have the skills, attitudes, innovation and behaviours to thrive in our inclusive and diverse society through the experience of high quality teaching and learning
- Redesign our curriculum to enhance technical education and provide opportunities for all whilst supporting the needs of the employers we serve
- Collaborate, rather than compete, with local educational partners to ensure a sensible approach to area wide curriculum and capital planning
- Act with kindness, integrity and consistency
- Ensure digitisation, decarbonisation, equality, diversity and inclusivity & belonging are at the heart of all we do

Our ethics and values serve as the foundation for our strategies, policies, objectives, and procedures, as well as a reference point for everything we do. These values and beliefs will guide the whole College's approach to our decision making.





Our Students

To be recognised as an outstanding College by enhancing the quality of the experience we provide for all learners - **Our Students**



Our Staff

To ensure we invest and develop our staff to support our Plan - **Our Staff**



Our Stakeholders & Communities

To be visionary and innovative in providing educational opportunities by anticipating and meeting demand through our responsive partnerships with stakeholders - **Our Stakeholders & Communities**



Our Finance & Resources

To provide a sustainable educational and training environment which is equipped for the delivery of high-quality learning - **Our Finance & Resources**



Where We Are Now:

As a regional college, we deliver on two main campuses in South Gloucestershire (SGS Filton and SGS WISE), at SGS Stroud, Gloucestershire and with a further campus at SGS Berkeley that has been developed into the Gloucestershire Science and Technology Park (managed by the College's wholly-owned subsidiary company – SGS Commercial Services). The College also has satellite campuses at the Bristol Zoological Gardens and the Royal West of England Academy in Bristol and delivers in over 20 community venues.

With over 800 staff and 10,000 learners, we are viewed as key partners in delivering community prosperity and we enjoy positive working relationships with Civic organisations including the West of England Combined Authority, the Education and Skills Funding Agency, GFirst and West of England Local Enterprise Partnerships, South Gloucestershire Council, Stroud District Council and schools across the region and we work with over 1000 employers.

Nationally and internationally, we have an excellent reputation for sport.

With Good financial health, we are experienced in managing capital projects that improve resources for staff and learners, investing over £45m in the last fifteen years, to time and on budget and our recent £7m Brunel Building at WISE was completed in Spring 2021, increasing our capacity by 400 full-time students.



The National Context and the Impact on SGS:

During the period of this plan, economic pressures are likely to continue, with continued rising costs of living expected for the short-term. As predicted, BREXIT has contributed to national staff recruitment issues, and workforce retention will remain challenging if pay does not match the pace of inflation. To retain staff, we need to support flexible working practices through digital innovation, encourage professional development and provide progression routes whilst making a commitment to support our staff with their well-being.

A growth in Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) learner numbers as local authorities seek more cost-effective local solutions, combined with many young people joining college below their expected level of achievement, has been exacerbated by the pandemic. Ensuring learners, at all levels, are better prepared for employment, with improving maths and English skills will be a necessity as will our continued focus on the end destinations of learners.

The continuation of a flat-lining in funding rates is expected, with the likelihood that more central capital funds will be devolved to Combined Authorities. A need to source funding via other Government departments, such as the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), will be required as further Department for Education cuts are anticipated.

Adult funding also has uncertainty, with a more outcomes-based approach expected with growth in challenging government initiatives including Skills Bootcamps and the National Skills Fund. Adult learners will demand more flexible delivery, including online platforms as they juggle multiple pressures

Colleges working collectively with each other and with civic bodies to become local 'anchor institutions' to serve the regional need will become a major focus, in line with the Skills and Further Education Act 2022.

Employers will view colleges as strategic partners, in line with 'The College of the Future', and there is significant opportunity to increase apprenticeship opportunities if the current bureaucracy can ease.



Our Local Context and Strategic Analysis:

With campuses in prime locations in North Bristol/South Gloucestershire, Stroud and at our Science and Technology Park at Berkeley, we are located at the heart of a region seeing considerable housing growth and therefore we are planning for increasing demand. Already this is putting strain on the resources at our Filton and WISE Campuses, and a short-term solution to construction apprenticeship growth has been provided at SGS Horizon through a 10-year short-term lease.

Much of our growth in post-16 learners, will be those wishing to study our expanding suite of T-levels, which are capital hungry. Higher Education numbers may also increase, but only aligned to growth in Sports Academies and higher technical qualifications.

We have a diverse student population at all ages, making us an established provider of lifelong learning. Learners study at our attractive and student-friendly WISE and Stroud campuses, but we have less attractive building stock at our Filton Campus.

Our flexible and loyal staff, with a proven commitment to SGS are a strength, however strategies to retain and reward them are now a critical priority.

The College has a good reputation for quality education, and we are regional leaders on some of our most popular provision (sport, performing arts, visual arts), with growing experience and a strong reputation in work-based learning including apprenticeships.

We are seeing reduced numbers in our professional provision and we are planning for our local devolved authority, the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) to refocus adult funding on outcomes with further cuts expected in community learning.

We are committed to the role we play in contributing to the cultural, economic and social prosperity of our local communities and we are excellent partners, developing especially close collaborations with the University of Gloucestershire and City of Bristol College.

Since merger and the creation of SGS in 2012, we have forged positive relationships with local media and with an effective marketing team our brand has grown.

With economic pressures, the lack of capital funding to support the additional capacity needed whilst maintaining a financial strength of at least 'Good' with limited possibilities to borrow remains our greatest challenge.





Strategic Priority 1: Our Students

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: To be recognised as an outstanding College by enhancing the quality of the experience we provide for all learners.

SGS has a distinctive role as a major provider of academic, technical, vocational, community and professional education. We recognise the importance of placing our students at the centre of everything we do and in preparing them for work, their continuing careers and lifelong learning.

As an inclusive college, SGS supports learners to progress from as early as age 14 where they can leave with a full honours degree if they choose. With a broad and diverse curriculum, learners have a choice of provision which is commensurate with their ability and with delivery to suit their needs. We foster ambition, support progression and we are visionary and innovative in our approach to learning, embracing blended approaches where appropriate.

We want the experience of learning at SGS to be fun, and where our teaching excites and inspires and where the success of every learner is championed and celebrated.

Our culture of openness and continuous improvement prevails and we want employers to seek out SGS learners as future employees due to recognising the excellent education and preparation for employment and progression they have received at the College.





Strategic Priority 1: Our Students

To be recognised as an outstanding College by enhancing the quality of the experience we provide for all learners, we will:

- Ensure a high quality breadth of offer in all vocational areas from entry to higher education level that is individualised, professional and appropriate, with a significant focus on developing technical education
- Increase the offer and support for SEND and vulnerable learners so they thrive and succeed within their locality
- Improve achievement rates, to pre-pandemic levels, with positive value added in all programmes whilst celebrating the success and achievement of every learner
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning, assessment and feedback with face to face delivery prioritised, but enhanced through additional online learning opportunities
- Collaborate with employers to equip learners with employability skills to enable SGS learners to gain a competitive advantage in the workplace and to aid their progression within the community
- Deliver a positive and consistent approach to behaviour management, with high expectations for all learners, so that they are prepared for life within British society
- Enable an outstanding well-being service to ensure nothing detracts from a learner succeeding and achieving their full potential
- Offer a comprehensive enrichment programme for all students, with our sports academies being the best in the country at Further Education level

Success measures in support of this priority:



Ofsted outstanding at our next full inspection



College performance in the top quartile nationally by 2025



Learner satisfaction at 98% by 2025



Teaching Education Framework Gold by 2026



Expansion from 3 T-Levels in 2022 to 12 by 2026



Strategic Priority 2: Our Staff

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: To ensure we invest and develop our staff

As a people business, we must have the right staff, that are respected and rewarded in order to deliver our strategy.

The highest priority will be to recruit, retain and motivate high calibre staff. Without them, none of this will be possible.

The pandemic and the cost of living crises has placed considerable pressure on staff and the College must respond by identifying policies and approaches which retain and attract talent, whilst also supporting their health and well-being and their work-life balance.

Ensuring a diverse and representative workforce is also vital in order to enable learners to feel supported in an inclusive organisation.





Strategic Priority 2: Our Staff

To ensure we invest and develop our staff we will:

- Deliver targeted staff development and coaching programmes to improve teaching and learning and to enable strong and supportive leadership and management
- Ensure a commitment to support both our teachers and corporate staff through reviewing pay scales and implementing our pay progression approach, linked to annual conversations, in order to recruit and retain excellent staff
- Continue to support staff with flexibility, where their attendance on site is not essential, and where their role can be completed off-site
- Develop succession planning mechanisms to ensure our flexible staff are supported, motivated and continually developed to meet the changing demands of the sector
- Deliver the SGS Well-being Commitment that places the well-being of our staff equally to that of staff productivity and performance
- Enable wherever operationally possible, that all vacancies are considered as possible apprenticeships
- Provide an entrepreneurial working environment that encourages both creativity and innovation.

Success measures in support of this priority:



Implement pay progression schemes, linked to quality and performance, for both curriculum and corporate staff by 2024



Increase staff retention rates by 10% annually



Ensure the diversity of our workforce matches the diversity of our student cohort by 2026



Reduce staff absence rates by 10% annually



Improve outcomes in our biennial staff survey so that we are in the top decile of Colleges by 2026



Strategic Priority 3: Our Stakeholders & Communities

**STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3:
To be visionary and innovative
in providing educational
opportunities by anticipating
and meeting demand through
our responsive partnerships
with stakeholders.**

SGS College are excellent partners and we recognise that engagement with businesses, civic bodies, education providers, public services and the community is increasingly acknowledged to be a fundamental part of our remit, with the objective of transferring knowledge between partners.

Collaboration, rather than competition, is the key to regional collective success. We want to be seen as an enabler of community cohesion and the first point of contact for employers when seeking their new workforce.

Our role is to provide an able pool of talented and employable people that can help the region prosper and through the positive behaviours and attitudes of completing students, ensure that we are contributing to highly resilient, innovative, tolerant and motivated regional society.





Strategic Priority 3: Our Stakeholders & Communities

To be visionary and innovative in providing educational opportunities by anticipating and meeting demand through our responsive partnerships with stakeholders, we will:

- Strategically review our provision, in partnership with other providers, to ensure a lack of duplication across the local area and to collectively agree areas of retraction and new areas of curriculum development in order to benefit the communities we serve
- Form and strengthen partnerships with training providers and educational institutions to meet local needs through collaboration on local provision reviews, Local Skills Investment Plans and Skills Development Fund projects
- Encourage local businesses and public sector organisations to engage with the College, through our Employer Business Panels, and to continue to position the College as the first stop for skills training in the West of England and Gloucestershire LEP areas, including the continued success of the Gloucestershire LEP supported Stroud Growth Hub, based at SGS Stroud
- To deliver an annual 'SGS as Partners' stakeholder conference to showcase how we continue to innovate and develop based on Stakeholder feedback
- Continue to innovate and to develop the SGS Berkeley Campus as a regional hub for low-carbon and green technology stakeholders
- Recognise our essential role as a community anchor and the needs of groups within the locality by making College facilities available for community use in order to support and enhance community cohesion
- Champion the involvement of staff and students in the community, particularly through volunteering opportunities, in order to enable the locality to prosper

Success measures in support of this priority:



To deliver the outcomes of the Skills Development Fund for Gloucestershire and open a low carbon training centre at SGS Berkeley by end of 2023 (enabled by SDF and SEDF funding)



To increase apprenticeship starts by 15% annually and outcomes to 75%



To ensure 100% of eligible 16-18 learners undertake external work experience placements



To publish annual Accountability Agreements, in collaboration with FE partners across the West of England and Gloucestershire



To deliver all outcomes targets for the Stroud Growth Hub by 2026



Strategic Priority 4: Our Finance & Resources

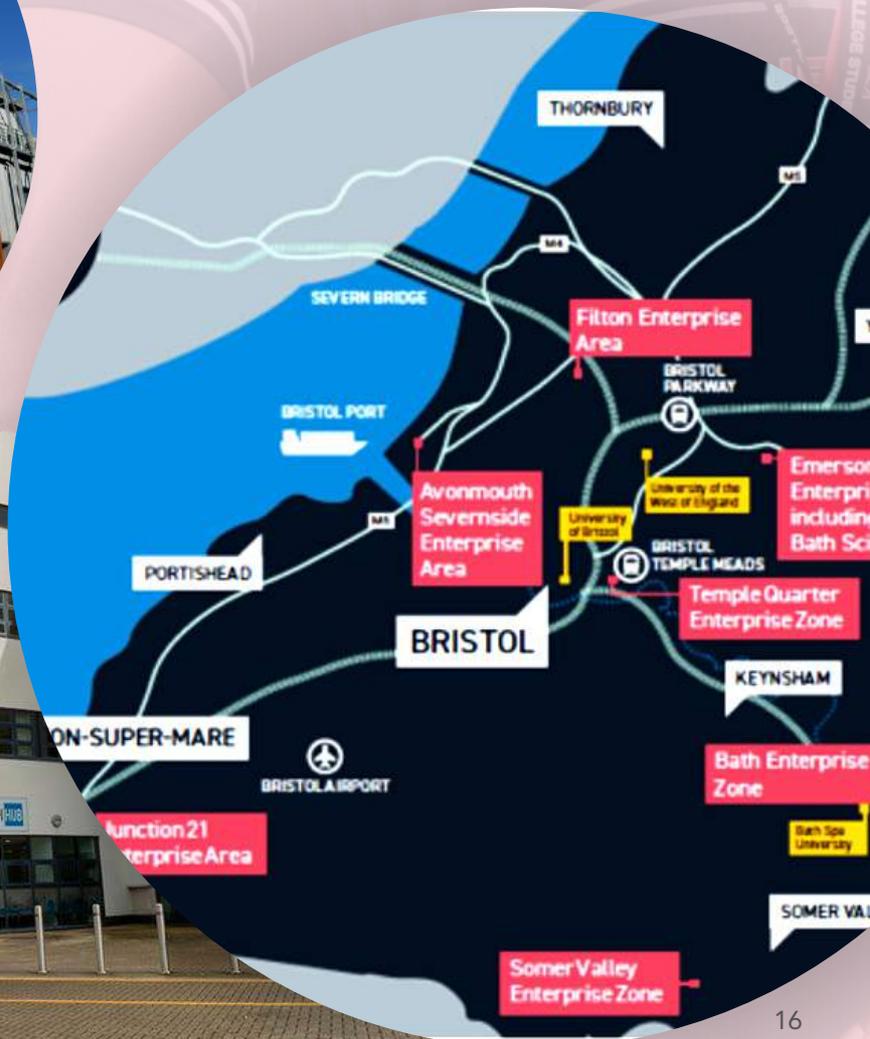
STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4: To provide a sustainable educational and training environment which is equipped for the delivery of high-quality learning

SGS College has invested £45m+ on estates since 2005 and the College has an aspiration to continue to invest in its estate as capital and borrowing allows.

We wish to ensure all campuses provide inspirational learning, delivery and social spaces that support aspirations. Our greatest pressure is the need to respond to the anticipated growth in Bristol, specifically impacting our Filton and WISE campuses whilst recognising that the whole economy is facing extensive pressure which may impact on our ability to secure much-needed capital funding.

Ensuring the long-term viability of the Stroud Campus, with declining demographics, will also require innovation and a commitment to review alternative options that also fulfil community need.

Delivering a commercially viable Science and Technology Park, through our subsidiary company – SGS Commercial Services – is also critical to the long-term financial stability of the College.





Strategic Priority 4: Finance & Resources

To provide a sustainable educational and training environment which is equipped for the delivery of high-quality learning, we will:

- Maintain financial stability and focus on 'growth strategies' rather than 'retraction' during the 'cost-of-living' crisis
- Ensure that the college estate is appropriate to the changing needs of learners and how they learn through collaboration and socialisation and provide resources that support theory and practice that prepare learners for employment in a rapidly changing world
- Undertake master planning at our Bristol sites in order to increase capacity at the WISE Campus and to enable the expansion of Construction replacing inadequate and inefficient building stock
- Become sector leaders in the development of facilities and training programmes to support the Low Carbon sectors, with a specific focus on our Berkeley Campus
- Support new businesses through the development of a zones and within the Growth Hub at the Stroud Campus
- Commit to being carbon-neutral by 2030 and installing renewable energy sources at all campuses
- Expand our higher education degree offer to enable the development of a business case to consider on-campus student accommodation
- Diversify at Stroud, through the creation of a 14-16 centre (SGS Create) focussed on supporting young people with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs who wish to access a non-schools-based 14-16 curriculum
- Invest in digital innovation and sustainability to support with blended learning and to ensure efficient operations and management across all campuses

Success measures in support of this priority:



Maintain good financial health for the period of this plan



Reduce our carbon footprint 10% annually



Obtain South Gloucestershire Council's outline support for the Filton/WISE masterplans



Complete SGS Horizon to time and budget and deliver the business plan by 2026



Complete SGS Create at Stroud and deliver the business plan by 2026



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South Gloucestershire
and Stroud College

