

ACCOUNTABILITY AGREEMENT 2026/27

1	PURPOSE
1.1	Strategic Objectives and Mission Our mission is to deliver learning that works — providing high-quality technical and professional education that enables learners to progress into meaningful employment, apprenticeships or further study, while developing the skills, confidence and resilience needed to succeed in a changing economy. We are committed to widening opportunity and supporting social mobility, particularly for those facing barriers to participation, ensuring that all learners can access and benefit from education regardless of their starting point. Through this, we aim to support employers by equipping them with the skilled workforce they need to grow and innovate, and to play a leading role in strengthening the economic and social prosperity of Gloucestershire. Our mission reflects a strong sense of social purpose, placing equal emphasis on individual success, inclusive opportunity, and the collective wellbeing of the communities we serve. Gloucestershire College enters the 2026–2030 strategy period from a position of strength. The College has achieved positive Ofsted outcomes, demonstrating high-quality provision, strong inclusion and a values-led culture. It is financially resilient, has experienced sustained growth over recent years, and benefits from high levels of staff engagement and strong feedback from learners and employers. The College has also been designated as a Technical Excellence College for Digital and Technologies, one of only five nationally, reflecting its recognised strength in priority sectors. The period to 2030 will be characterised by significant change. National reforms, including qualification reform, SEND reform and evolving industrial strategy priorities, will reshape curriculum delivery and funding. These changes are taking place alongside financial pressures, demographic shifts, technological advancement and increasing expectations for local, place-based accountability through devolution. Gloucestershire presents both opportunity and challenge: the county benefits from growth in key sectors such as digital, cyber, construction and engineering, but continues to face productivity challenges, uneven economic performance and persistent gaps in social mobility and educational outcomes. To achieve this, the College has identified six strategic objectives; The first objective is to deliver consistently high-quality teaching, learning and assessment. While strong provision already exists, reducing variation across curriculum areas is a priority. Focus will be placed on improving attendance, English and maths outcomes, and progression. The College will embed a consistent model of high-quality pedagogy, strengthen support for staff transitioning from industry, and ensure effective leadership and quality improvement. Success will be demonstrated through improved learner outcomes, progression rates and sustained strong external judgements.

The second objective focuses on inclusion and social mobility.

The College will build on its existing strengths to become a leading inclusive institution, responding to increasing learner complexity, including SEND, SEMH needs and lower prior attainment. A key priority is reducing NEET levels, particularly in Gloucester and Cheltenham, through flexible provision, strengthened transitions and partnership working. The College will prepare for SEND reform by developing earlier, tiered and mainstream-led support models. Progress will be measured through improved participation, reduced NEET rates and improved outcomes for disadvantaged learners.

The third objective is to strengthen the College's role as a respected anchor skills institution.

The College will align its provision closely with Local Skills Improvement Plan priorities and the Gloucestershire Growth Plan, supporting key sectors including digital and cyber, construction and engineering. Employer engagement will be deepened through co-design of curriculum, advisory boards and high-quality industry placements. The College will expand apprenticeships and higher technical education, and maximise the opportunities presented by its Technical Excellence College status. Success will be evidenced through increased employer engagement, growth in priority sectors and strengthened regional and national reputation.

The fourth objective focuses on people and culture.

The College recognises that delivery during a period of change depends on a skilled, supported and engaged workforce. Priorities include strengthening leadership capability, enhancing staff development, improving recruitment and retention in shortage areas, and supporting wellbeing. A consistent, values-driven culture with clear accountability will underpin delivery. Success will be reflected in strong staff engagement, low vacancy levels and high retention.

The fifth objective is to maintain financial sustainability and resilience.

The College will operate within a challenging funding environment, requiring disciplined financial management and clear prioritisation of investment. Focus will be placed on maintaining a sustainable operating position, generating income, and investing in estates, workforce and digital infrastructure aligned to strategic priorities. The College will protect its market position during demographic change and respond proactively to funding pressures. Success will be demonstrated through financial stability, positive cash generation and continued investment capacity.

The sixth objective is digital transformation.

The College will use emerging technologies to improve quality, efficiency and organisational resilience. This includes strengthening staff digital capability, improving data quality and analytics, enhancing cyber security, and adopting automation and artificial intelligence where appropriate. As a Technical Excellence College, maintaining high standards of digital infrastructure and resilience is essential. Success will be measured through improved productivity, reliable systems and strong external assurance of cyber resilience.

1.2	Our Provision Our provision is important because: • We provide the largest FE offer in the County preparing people to enter the labour market, enhance their and play an active part in our community • We are the primary destination for those who have been less successful at school, providing opportunities to develop successfully in their lives but also have some high achieving students looking to specialise. • We provide the largest employer offer in the County • We have a large High needs provision both cross college and specialist stand alone
1.3	The Contribution that it makes The Colleges has assessed the contribution that it makes to meeting skills needs in line with the statutory Local Needs Duty, and this is set out in section 4 below.
2	CONTEXT AND PLACE
2.1	Gloucestershire College is the largest provider of further education in the County, with a significant employer-facing offer spanning apprenticeships, higher technical provision, adult skills and workforce development. In addition to its core role within Gloucestershire, the College delivers contracts aligned to key Government priorities in partnership with authorities across areas including Greater Manchester, Lancashire and the West of England, supporting national skills objectives and employer demand beyond the county boundary. The County's education and skills landscape is shaped by a high proportion of private and selective schools, which contributes to polarised outcomes. While overall attainment in Gloucestershire remains broadly in line with national averages, educational attainment, progression and social mobility for disadvantaged learners remain amongst the weakest in England, creating structural challenges in supporting inclusive economic growth. Recent economic and skills evidence continues to highlight significant and growing skills shortages across priority sectors including digital, cyber, engineering, construction, logistics, health and social care. These pressures are being intensified by demographic change. Gloucestershire's total population is forecast to grow, but growth in the working-age population remains marginal, significantly below the level required to meet projected demand from employers. County Council analysis confirms that constrained labour supply is now a key risk to economic growth, productivity and inward investment. National analysis published by Skills England reinforces this picture, identifying digital, engineering, construction and logistics as priority sectors to 2030, with demand for both entry-level and higher-level technical skills expected to accelerate. This aligns closely with Gloucestershire's sector profile and employer demand, particularly in cyber and advanced engineering. The local policy and governance environment has remained fluid. Since the submission of unitary proposals in November 2025, Gloucestershire has been subject to a statutory

consultation on local government reorganisation, with final decisions on unitary status and future devolution arrangements expected later in 2026. This uncertainty has delayed the finalisation of a new county-wide Growth Plan and the confirmation of priority sectors, though skills and workforce development remain central themes across all proposals.

Against this backdrop, Gloucestershire College plays a critical stabilising role in the local and regional skills system, providing scalable provision, supporting disadvantaged learners, and working with employers and public partners to respond quickly to emerging skills needs despite ongoing structural change.

2.2 Our Provision

The make-up of the College's provision is different to the sector with a lower % of 16-18 work than most Colleges. The College's income is split as follows:

Learner Group	Income %
Programmes for Young People	41%
Adults	13%
Employers	14%
HE	6%
High needs Learners	19%

The core groups we work with in each area are set out below:

Programme	Description
Programmes for Young People	Gloucestershire College offers a broad range of technical and vocational programmes for young people, spanning entry level through to higher-level study. While the College does not deliver A Levels directly, it works in partnership with Dene Magna School to ensure learners in the Forest of Dean can access an academic pathway alongside the College's strong technical offer. The College provides provision for learners of all abilities and is a key destination for young people who have not achieved as well at GCSE, particularly in English and maths. Recruitment patterns reflect the local context, with a high proportion of learners entering with low prior attainment, additional learning needs, and indicators of social and economic disadvantage. This position places the College at the centre of efforts to improve participation, attainment and progression for those learners most at risk of poor long-term outcomes. Learners benefit from the College's extensive employer networks, which provide meaningful work placements, project-based learning and clear pathways into apprenticeships, employment or further study. Teaching staff bring strong industry knowledge and current labour market insight, enabling programmes to remain closely aligned to employer needs and local and national skills priorities. This combination of inclusive provision, employer engagement and curriculum relevance supports improved progression, employability and social mobility for young people across the County.

	Adults	Gloucestershire College works with adults across the County to support entry into employment, progression within work, and retraining into new sectors, responding directly to local and national skills priorities. The College delivers a wide range of adult provision, including ESOL, programmes for unemployed adults, sector-based employability training and higher-impact short courses designed to address acute labour market shortages. A key element of the College's adult offer is the delivery of Skills Bootcamps and intensive training programmes in priority sectors such as logistics, digital and technical occupations, including HGV. These programmes are designed to accelerate progression into employment or enable adults already in work to upskill or retrain, supporting both individual outcomes and employer workforce needs. In addition to its core Gloucestershire provision, the College delivers adult skills programmes beyond the County through contracts with WECA and Greater Manchester, supporting regional workforce priorities at scale. Of particular note is the College's delivery of Rail Engineering provision within the prison estate, which provides learners with industry-recognised skills and clear progression routes into sustained employment on release. This provision supports employer demand in a nationally constrained sector while contributing to reduced reoffending and improved life chances. Across all adult provision, the College works closely with employers, combined authorities and public sector partners to ensure programmes remain responsive, inclusive and employment-focused, supporting economic growth, social mobility and long-term workforce resilience.
	Employers	Gloucestershire College works closely with employers across Gloucestershire and beyond to design and deliver high-quality, employer-led skills and training solutions that support recruitment, workforce development and productivity. The College partners with over 1,000 employers, ranging from SMEs to large national and international organisations, offering a comprehensive suite of apprenticeships, accredited training and full-cost bespoke provision tailored to individual business needs. A core part of the College's employer offer is the delivery of bespoke, full-cost programmes, designed in partnership with employers to address specific skills gaps, operational requirements and regulatory needs. These programmes provide flexibility in content, delivery model and timescale, enabling businesses to upskill or retrain their workforce efficiently and cost-effectively. Bespoke provision spans a range of sectors, with particular strength in construction, engineering, digital and technical disciplines, supported by industry-standard facilities and experienced, sector-qualified staff. The College also delivers a growing portfolio of higher-level and higher education (HE) programmes for employers, especially within

		construction and engineering, supporting progression to Level 4–6 qualifications and degree-level outcomes. Delivered through the College’s Institute of Technology and advanced technical facilities, these programmes enable employers to develop higher-level technical capability, strengthen succession planning and improve retention by offering clear progression routes for their workforce. In April 2026, Gloucestershire College was awarded Technical Excellence College (TEC) status for Digital, recognising the strength of its employer partnerships and its ability to deliver high-quality, employer-led technical training in priority growth sectors. This designation enables the College to deepen collaboration with employers, particularly in digital and technical roles aligned to cyber, engineering and advanced manufacturing, and to further strengthen the regional skills pipeline.
	HE	The College’s full-time HE provision has traditionally been focused on providing clear progression routes for learners completing Level 3 programmes at Gloucestershire College, particularly in technical and vocational subjects. In response, the College has increasingly focused its part-time HE and higher technical offer on meeting employer demand, supporting workforce development, progression and retention. This includes delivery of Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs), HNCs/HNDs and higher apprenticeships, with particular strengths in construction, engineering and computing, where employers require higher-level technical capability and flexible study models. These programmes are designed to align with workplace practice and are typically delivered on a part-time basis, enabling learners to combine study with employment. HE provision for employers is closely aligned to the College’s wider employer engagement strategy, with curriculum developed in partnership with industry and delivered using specialist facilities. In construction and the built environment, this includes part-time HTQs and HNCs that support progression into roles such as site management, quantity surveying and technical specialisms, while in engineering and computing the offer supports higher-level technical and professional pathways. Overall, the College’s HE strategy is increasingly employer-focused, selective and demand-led, prioritising areas where it can add the greatest value to learners and employers, support regional and national skills priorities, and complement rather than compete directly with the expanding full-time university market.
	High needs Learners	Gloucestershire College works closely with Gloucestershire County Council to deliver its High Needs provision, playing a central role in the local SEND system. In recent years, the College has remodelled and expanded its discrete High Needs offer, at the request of the Local

	Authority, to respond to increasing demand and to support learners with more complex and specialist needs. The discrete provision is now structured to provide highly tailored, person-centred programmes, focused on building independence, employability and progression into adulthood. This includes strengthened preparation for adulthood pathways, greater emphasis on life and work readiness, and curriculum models aligned to individual Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). Alongside discrete provision, the College provides embedded support for High Needs learners within mainstream programmes across its campuses. This enables learners, where appropriate, to access inclusive education opportunities alongside their peers, supported by specialist staff, assistive technology and targeted interventions. This blended approach supports aspiration, inclusion and progression, while maintaining appropriate levels of challenge and support. Through close partnership working with the Local Authority and other agencies, Gloucestershire College continues to adapt and scale its High Needs provision to meet rising levels of need, contribute to SEND sufficiency across the County, and improve long-term outcomes for learners with additional needs.
2.3	Our Campuses The College is the largest provider of FE training to employers within the County. Whilst it serves the whole County, its campuses are set in the primary conurbations of Gloucester and Cheltenham, and across to Cinderford in the Forest of Dean. Each of the campuses have been built in the last 20 years, and each located as part of regeneration schemes in those areas. Gloucester Campus Our Gloucester campus is set in a prime location in the heart of the city as the anchor tenant within the Gloucester Quays regeneration scheme. Around 70% of our work is delivered from Gloucester, with provision across all curriculum areas except Hospitality and Agriculture. 

Cheltenham Campus

Our Cheltenham campus is located next door to GCHQ and is focussed primarily on Adult, Professional and Higher programmes. It is home to our Cyber provision and IOT facilities, and also comprises several zones occupied by employers, including start up innovation space operated by Hub 8. A new Green Construction Centre was opened in September 2024. This Campus will be the TEC Digital lead.



Cheltenham Hardwick

The Hardwick Campus in Cheltenham has been established as a dedicated specialist centre for NEET learners, addressing a long-standing gap in local provision. Located on the former University of Gloucestershire site, the campus will initially deliver First Steps programmes, providing small-group, high-support education focused on re-engagement, employability, and progression into further education, apprenticeships or employment. The campus also helps relieve capacity pressures at the main Cheltenham Campus and supports the College's wider inclusion and participation strategy.



Forest Campus

The College's Cinderford campus was opened in 2018 and provides a broad 16-18 offer. The campus also makes an A Level offer, provided in conjunction with Dene Magna school.



Approach to Developing the Annual Accountability Statement

Since 2022/23, further education colleges have been subject to a statutory Local Needs Duty under Section 52B of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 (as amended by the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022). Governing bodies are required to review how well their provision meets local needs, having regard to relevant guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

This Accountability Statement has been developed in line with Department for Education (DfE) guidance for 2026–27, which brings together the requirements of the Annual Accountability Statement and the Local Needs Duty into a single, concise public document. The Statement sets out:

- the type and scale of provision the College intends to deliver;
- how this provision responds to Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) priorities and wider economic strategies;
- the key conclusions from the College’s review of how well provision meets local needs; and
- the actions and outcomes planned for the year ahead.

Evidence Base and Local Skills Intelligence

The College has developed this Statement using a comprehensive evidence base, combining national policy direction with local economic intelligence and employer-led insight.

A central component of this is the 2026 Gloucestershire Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), developed by Business West as the Employer Representative Body. As a statutory, employer-led plan, the LSIP provides a coordinated framework to align provision with labour market demand, address geographic inequalities and support inclusive economic growth across both urban and rural communities.

The College has been actively involved throughout the LSIP lifecycle and continues to work closely with Business West and Gloucestershire County Council. The 2026 LSIP identifies a consistent set of cross-cutting skills priorities, including:

- digital and AI capability;
- sustainability and net zero skills;
- transferable and employability skills; and
- workforce attraction, progression and retention challenges.

These priorities are reflected directly in the College’s curriculum development, investment decisions and planned delivery, including expansion in digital, construction, engineering and inclusion-focused provision.

In parallel, the College has aligned its approach to the Gloucestershire Local Growth Plan (2025–2035), which provides the overarching economic strategy for the county. The Growth Plan identifies high-growth sectors, including advanced manufacturing, cyber and digital

technologies, low carbon industries and agri-tech, while emphasising the need to improve productivity, address inequality and strengthen workforce participation.

The Growth Plan's five missions, particularly "Talent and Future Skills" and "Supporting Employment Opportunities for All", reinforce the importance of employer-led skills provision, progression pathways and inclusive access. The College has used these priorities to guide curriculum planning, capital investment and partnership working, ensuring provision supports both economic growth and social mobility.

Wider Engagement and Intelligence Sources

The College has triangulated LSIP and Growth Plan priorities with a broad range of additional intelligence, including:

- Direct employer engagement through Business Development teams, apprenticeship delivery, employer forums and sector networks such as Constructing Excellence and CyNam
- Feedback from employers on curriculum relevance, skills gaps and workforce needs, gathered through structured engagement and ongoing relationships
- Local and national labour market intelligence, including DfE priority sectors and Skills England analysis
- Collaboration with other education providers, including schools, FE colleges and universities, supporting a coordinated system-wide response
- Engagement with civic and community partners, including Gloucestershire County Council, Jobcentre Plus, GARAS and voluntary sector organisations, to understand barriers to participation and progression
- Insights from delivery of targeted provision, including NEET, SEND and adult reskilling programmes

This approach ensures that the College's understanding of skills needs is robust, current and reflective of both employer demand and community need.

Alignment with National Policy and Inspection Expectations

The College has also taken account of national policy and inspection expectations, including the Enhanced Education Inspection Framework (EIF) introduced in November 2025. Under this framework, inspectors evaluate how effectively colleges:

- align provision to local and national skills priorities;
- adapt curriculum in response to employer and labour market change; and
- use evidence to demonstrate impact and responsiveness.

This Accountability Statement therefore forms a key part of the College's governance, self-evaluation and inspection readiness, linking strategic intent to delivery and measurable outcomes.

Sector Collaboration and Governance

In line with DfE expectations, the College has engaged with other further education providers across Gloucestershire to ensure transparency, complementarity and system coherence.

	Draft accountability statements have been shared and discussed, supporting alignment of provision and reducing duplication across the county. The College continues to play a leadership role within the local skills system, representing the FE sector on the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Board and contributing to system-wide planning in collaboration with key partners. This Accountability Statement has been reviewed and approved through the College's governance processes, ensuring appropriate oversight of its commitments, delivery and impact. Summary Overall, the College has adopted a structured, evidence-led approach to developing its Accountability Statement. By aligning closely with the 2026 LSIP and the Gloucestershire Growth Plan, and by drawing on a wide range of employer, partner and community intelligence, the College ensures that its provision is responsive, strategically aligned and capable of meeting current and future skills needs.								
4	LOCAL NEEDS DUTY								
	The College has undertaken a detailed assessment of how well it meets needs, using the criteria used in the Enhanced Inspection Framework, and concluded as follows: <table border="1" data-bbox="167 1037 1436 1485"> <tr> <th data-bbox="167 1037 1145 1149">Criteria</th><th data-bbox="1145 1037 1436 1149">How well we meet</th></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="167 1149 1145 1261">Engage our community to understand skills needs and how we have planned our curriculum accordingly</td><td data-bbox="1145 1149 1436 1261">Strong</td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="167 1261 1145 1406">Involve employers and other stakeholders very effectively in the design and implement of the curriculum to prepare student for future education, employment or work</td><td data-bbox="1145 1261 1436 1406">Reasonable</td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="167 1406 1145 1485">are very clear how we contribute to skills needs</td><td data-bbox="1145 1406 1436 1485">Strong</td></tr> </table> The College makes a very effective contribution to meeting skills needs – including the following: Strategic overview: The College is closely connected to the local community and responsive to skills needs. Gloucestershire College is deeply embedded within its local community and plays a leading role in responding to local, regional and national skills priorities. Its strategic approach is informed by strong employer partnerships, community engagement and alignment with Government skills policy. The College has identified and invested in key growth sectors for the County, particularly digital, cyber, construction and engineering, and has developed a suite of technical,	Criteria	How well we meet	Engage our community to understand skills needs and how we have planned our curriculum accordingly	Strong	Involve employers and other stakeholders very effectively in the design and implement of the curriculum to prepare student for future education, employment or work	Reasonable	are very clear how we contribute to skills needs	Strong
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are very clear how we contribute to skills needs	Strong								

higher-level and employer-led programmes to meet these needs. Recent investments include the expansion of digital and cyber provision through the Advanced Digital Academy and the opening of a new Cheltenham Construction Centre to support construction and green skills demand.

In April 2026, Gloucestershire College was awarded Technical Excellence College (TEC) status for Digital, recognising the College's exceptional employer engagement, high-quality technical provision and strong alignment to regional and national workforce priorities. This designation places the College among a small national cohort selected by the Department for Education and confirms its role as a key driver of digital skills growth across Gloucestershire.

The College has engaged effectively with Business West as the designated Employer Representative Body (ERB) leading the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) for Gloucestershire. It has worked throughout all stages of LSIP development and delivery, ensuring curriculum planning and employer provision reflect identified priority sectors and skills gaps.

The College is well connected to a wide network of employer, public sector and community partners, enabling it to respond to skills needs beyond those of employers alone. This includes the targeted support for migrant and refugee communities through partnerships with GARAS, and close collaboration with Gloucestershire County Council to expand and remodel High Needs provision for learners with additional and complex needs.

Gloucestershire College is a key anchor partner in one of the most significant and high-profile skills developments in the County – the Golden Valley Cyber Development. Working alongside local authorities, employers, universities and national partners, the College is central to building a sustainable pipeline of cyber and digital skills to support this £1bn innovation and technology development adjacent to GCHQ. Its role includes delivering cyber pathways, higher-level apprenticeships and employer-led training aligned to the needs of the emerging cyber ecosystem

Capital investment: It has been successful in securing capital investment to develop facilities for the local community. In particular, in 2025/6 the College opened its new £5m Construction facility in Cheltenham and in 25/26 purchased a new campus in Cheltenham to need growing lower level skills needs.

All of these investments have enabled us to develop and deliver new programmes including,

- Cyber Degree Apprenticeship recognised by the NCSC
- A range of new IT apprenticeships at Level 3 and 4
- Top up computing degree in partnership with UWE
- New HTQs in Construction and IT
- New Construction Management Apprenticeship
- Expanded First Steps programme
- Short courses in Construction aimed at the unemployed
- A range of short digital courses aimed at the unemployed including Intro to AI.

Responding to Government priorities

During 2025/26, the College has responded strongly to Government priorities by aligning provision to LSIP and national skills priorities, particularly in digital, cyber, construction, engineering, health and inclusion. This includes achieving Technical Excellence College (TEC) status for Digital, expanding high-level digital provision such as the Cyber Security Degree Apprenticeship, Digital and Technology Solutions Professional (Level 6), and launching new AI-focused provision, including an AI Apprenticeship Unit and short courses such as Introduction to AI in the Workplace.

In construction and net zero, the College introduced new dry-lining provision, expanded electrical installation capacity, and developed a heat-pump apprenticeship pathway for launch in 2026, supported by the opening of a new Cheltenham Construction Centre. To support productivity and labour market participation, the College significantly expanded First Steps NEET provision, enhanced Supported Internships, including a self-employment route, and introduced T Levels in Health and Social Care and Early Years, replacing lower-value qualifications.

Tailored Learning Provision

The College's tailored learning provision enables flexible programmes that respond to individual learner needs while remaining aligned to priorities set out in the Gloucestershire Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP). Through small-group delivery, adaptable timetables, rolling starts and personalised support, learners are able to enter provision at different points and progress at an appropriate pace, particularly where confidence, prior attainment or personal circumstances act as barriers. This flexibility supports re-engagement and progression into LSIP priority sectors such as digital, construction, health and care, ensuring that learners develop the skills, behaviours and confidence required by local employers while addressing participation gaps identified through the LSIP

Curriculum changes: We have developed a range of new programmes often with partners to meet skills needs.

New provision launched in 2025/26:

First Steps (NEET provision):

- Expanded First Steps provision beyond target, increasing capacity by 60 learners.
- Opened a new Cheltenham campus with capacity for 90 learners, scalable to 400+ learners.

Supported Internships (SEND):

- Significant expansion of Supported Internship (SI) provision:
- Increased from 11 learners (2024/25) to 23 learners (2025/26).
- Included a self-employment Supported Internship route.
- Introduced Pre-SI pathways to support progression into SI from 2026/27.
- Strengthened links with JOLT to develop creative freelance SI pathways (Gloucester).

Construction and Net Zero:

- Dry lining programme introduced at the Forest of Dean campus.
- Electrical installation capacity increased to support an additional 20 learners.
- Heat pump apprenticeship pathway developed and scheduled for launch in September 2026.

Digital and AI:

- Achieved Technical Excellence College (TEC) status for Digital.
- Launched AI Apprenticeship Unit (starting summer 2026).
- Introduced new short courses in response to labour market intelligence:
- Introduction to AI in the workplace (5 cohorts)
- Mastering Microsoft Teams

Developed and enrolled learners on new online digital courses:

- Principles of Cyber Security
- Understanding Coding

Health, Social Care and Early Years:

- Successfully launched T Levels in Health and Social Care, including the midwifery progression route.
- Introduced Early Years T Level provision, replacing the Level 3 CACHE offer:
 - One group launched in Gloucester (28 initial enrolments). Planning for two groups in 2026/27.

Embedding employability in the curriculum

- Employers and other stakeholders are systematically involved in curriculum planning, design and delivery across most curriculum areas.
- Technical and wider skills are well taught across most areas, which support the development of employability skills
- Staff implement ambitious curriculums across most subjects to enable learners and apprentices to acquire in-demand technical skills and knowledge.
- The college continues to receive external validation of the strength of careers and CEIAG; the recent matrix accreditation review highlights the ambitious careers strategy
- Embedding employability is a clear strength across the college. Teachers make effective use of learners' and apprentices prior experiences alongside their own industry expertise. In many sessions, the tutors' experiences are skilfully integrated to enhance engagement and provide meaningful real-world examples.
- There are school level evaluations of the new meeting skills needs Ofsted criteria embedded into performance reviews and the school level self-assessment
- The industry update day for staff is fully embedded into the college calendar and staff submit a summary of their activities and identify how this input from employers is embedded into the curriculum
- Which three skills is embedded into the curriculum offer and was positively recognised by Ofsted

Volumes: against the sector trend, volumes of employer work have continued to grow. In addition, our annual report on destinations shows that very many learners go onto excellent

	destinations making a real difference to employers. As set out in 5.2 below, the overwhelming majority of provision is focussed on local and national priorities. Balance: This contribution has been achieved by Governors while balance priorities of quality, meeting local needs and maintaining financial viability if the College. The College can demonstrate areas of provision which have been continued in spite of their challenging financial position e.g. Hospitality Innovation: The College has identified innovative ways to support community needs e.g. Rail Engineering in HMPs; new HE programmes in BAME communities; HUB 8; Launchpad. Against this there are some areas for development which form part of our accountability agreement: - Whilst in many curriculum areas there is strong involvement of employers in design and / or delivery of the curriculum, in other areas further development is required. We have incorporated meeting skills needs into our Self-Assessment Review process but this requires further embedding in 2026/27. - New employer forums will be introduced in 26/27 to formally get input from employers into the curriculum. - The “Which Three Skills” programme was launched in 23/4 to help develop work readiness skills amongst full time learners – this will need further development in 25/6; and there is a need to develop the foundation IT skills required in the workplace across programmes. - Our ability to meet employer needs is necessarily limited by market demand, but also our ability to recruit and retain staff in key sectors - Further work is needed to systematically share employer needs information with curriculum heads that is captured through e.g. business consultant visits - Employability skills need further development within elements of the curriculum for High Needs Learners
5	Inclusive Mainstream Fund In 2026–2027, the College will use the Inclusive Mainstream Fund to support the transition towards the reformed SEND system, in line with national policy and expectations for inclusive practice. The funding will be used to strengthen inclusive, early intervention approaches within mainstream 16–19 provision, focusing on removing commonly occurring and predictable barriers to learning without reliance on diagnosis or statutory processes. This will include enhancing adaptive teaching, small group support, staff development and flexible learning approaches, ensuring that learners with additional needs are supported effectively within mainstream programmes and can progress successfully into further learning, apprenticeships or employment. We are focused on the key elements of: • Staff training • Resources/equipment • People

	Each element will be considered through an action research lens, where we will review specific requests in relation to how impact will be measured and the teaching and learning team will review and evaluate impact on learners. A key priority will be investing in staff capability. The College will deliver structured training in SEND and inclusive practice, focusing on effective, evidence-informed strategies that can be applied consistently across all curriculum areas. This will include adaptive teaching approaches, strategies to support learners with SEMH and communication needs, and practical tools that enable staff to respond to varying levels of need within mainstream settings. Coaching and mentoring will be used to embed these approaches and ensure sustained impact on teaching, learning and assessment. The College will also strengthen its capacity for early identification and coordinated support. This includes enhancing SEND coordination, improving onboarding processes for learners with additional needs, and using data more effectively to identify risk and trigger timely intervention. Administrative and support capacity will be aligned to ensure that learners receive appropriate support as early as possible in their college journey. Funding will support the development and use of assistive technology, accessibility tools and learning resources that remove common barriers to participation and enable greater independence. This will be complemented by targeted improvements to the learning environment, including access to appropriate breakout and regulation spaces where required. Where universal provision is not sufficient, the College will provide targeted interventions, including small-group and short-term support, wellbeing provision, and structured transition programmes. Particular focus will be placed on supporting learners transitioning from school, and those at risk of disengagement, through strengthened liaison with schools, enhanced transition activities, and engagement with parents and carers. All funding will be used to build sustainable inclusion capacity and strengthen the College's universal offer. Impact will be measured through improved participation, attendance, retention and progression for learners with additional needs, alongside a reduction in barriers to learning and improved learner experience.
6	CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL, REGIONAL, LOCAL PRIORITIES
6.1	Background This section provides a summary of our main objectives for 2025/6 to contribute to national, local and regional priorities. It is not intended to provide a comprehensive statement of all our initiatives for 2025/6.
6.2	Progress and position The College has attempted to map its provision against the new national priority sectors and local priority sectors identified in the Gloucestershire Skills Strategy, Gloucestershire post 16 review, and also against other government priorities such as NEET and SEND, using the primary learning aim of each learner. Growth in the period from 2022/23 to 25/6 (YTD) is summarised below:

Full Time programmes – 72% of learners follow programmes across the full range of priority sectors. Programmes within these sectors have seen an increase of 50% in learners, with significant increases in Health, Engineering, Creative Industries and Professional/Business Services. This exceeds growth in non-priority sectors.

Apprenticeships – 81% of learners follow programmes in priority sectors. This is a 2% increase across all sectors, impacted by a reduction in Professional/Business, which masks significant growth in some priority areas such as Advanced Manufacturing and Financial Services. Areas of decline have been correlated with the effect of current economic challenges that businesses are facing.

Part Time programmes – 72% of programmes are in either priority sectors or other government priority areas. Whilst overall numbers have declined as a reflection of changes to adult education budgets, the proportion of aims delivered within priority sectors has still increased significantly across the timeperiod, reflecting our commitment to provision in these areas.

The College is planning changes to the content, sequencing and implementation of many existing programmes in 2026/7 in response to feedback from employers. However, the analysis above does not suggest the need for a large shift in programmes at the College to better meet priority areas, but to increase numbers on programmes. There are a number of challenges to this:

1. The introduction of T Levels is expected to result in fewer learners on programmes in some of the priority sectors
2. Increased capacity is required in both facilities and staffing to meet demand in key areas, especially Construction
3. Reductions in adult education budgets necessarily limit growth, a further 15% reduction in 26/27
4. The impact of the economic situation and fiscal policy has resulted nationally in fewer employers taking on apprenticeships.

This is the context for our aims for 2026/27

6.3 Aims for 2026/7 -

For the purposes of the accountability statement, our initiatives to help meet skills needs include the following aims:

Theme	Accountability Statement goals for 2026/7
Strategic Developments	1. Continue to work with Business West, GCC and other providers to identify solutions to needs identified in the LSIP 2. Work with GCC to develop an effective adult skills system for the County following any devolution deal for Gloucestershire 3. Develop plans to increase capacity by redeveloping the 125 Business Park, subject to capital funding becoming available. This will enable us to increase capacity for Construction and associated renewable technologies, and also address issues of NEET.

	4. Develop our new campus in Cheltenham to further meet skills needs especially a lower levels. 5. Launch the DIGITEC and ensure Aims and KPIs are met
Employer engagement	6. Extend and deepen the involvement of employers in the design and delivery of the curriculum so that is effective in all areas, and embed assessment into the Self-assessment process and launch employer forum boards for each subject area
Core workplace skills	7. Further develop and embed the “which three skills” programme to enhance workplace skills.
NEET	8. Increase capacity in First Steps provision – to accommodate a further 90 learners in Cheltenham Hardwick
SEND	9. Grow supported internship programme.
Net Zero and Construction	10. Develop short courses in green skills areas 11. Launch new T Level in Design Surveying 12. Launch new Level 4 Construction & Build Technician Apprenticeship
Digital	13. Continue to work with the Golden Valley Delivery Group to support the development of the Cheltenham Cyber Park 14. Introduce new AI leadership short courses 15. Plan for the introduction of T Levels in 2027/8 and removal of alternative qualifications.
Engineering	16. Launch new Mechatronics Apprenticeship 17. Launch new Manufacturing Engineering degree apprenticeship
Creative	18. Introduction of Level 2 Fashion 19. Introduction of Level 3 production live events 20. Introduction of Level 6 Creative Practice (subject to validation)
Health and Social care	21. Plan for the introduction of T Levels in 2027/8 and removal of alternative qualifications.
Underpinning all of these ambitions will be our ability to recruit and retain staff with key technical skills. These ambitions are set out in more detail below.	
6.3.1 Strategic Developments As the largest provider of skills training in Gloucestershire, the College has a critical role to play in shaping and responding to a number of significant strategic developments at both national and local level. We will continue to respond proactively to national skills policy, maintaining a strong and flexible programme of apprenticeship delivery and positioning the College to bid for new programmes and initiatives introduced by Government. Alongside this, we are planning for a major programme of curriculum reform, including potentially significant changes to Level 3 provision in priority sectors such as Digital and Health and Social Care. Our analysis indicates that these reforms are likely to lead to a reduction in learner numbers in some strategic priority areas, requiring careful curriculum planning and mitigation.	

	The College has recently secured Digital Technical Excellence College (TEC) status, strengthening our position as a regional and national leader in advanced digital and cyber skills. This investment directly supports Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) priorities around digital, cyber, productivity and innovation, and will enable us to expand employer-led provision aligned to current and future labour market need. We will continue to work closely with key partners to deliver against local skills priorities, including: • Business West, contributing to the next phase of LSIP development and delivery, ensuring provision remains employer-led and responsive to identified skills gaps • Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) to help shape a potential devolution deal and maximise its impact on skills, productivity and economic growth • The Department for Education (DfE) to support the sustainability of an effective education and skills system across the Forest of Dean • Gloucestershire County Council to meet long-term demand for High Needs and SEND provision across the county, aligned to demographic growth and statutory responsibilities In addition, the College has submitted planning permission to remodel the 125 Business Park surrounding the Gloucester campus. This development will expand construction capacity, support delivery of green skills programmes aligned to LSIP and net zero priorities, and provide increased and more flexible capacity for NEET and high-needs learners.
	6.3.2 Employer Engagement Our last Ofsted report identified a need for greater involvement of employers in the design and delivery of the curriculum in some areas. Detailed reviews during the year demonstrate that in most areas there has been significant progress and employer engagement involvement is strong. However, in a minority of areas there is further development required. This is now forming a key part of the annual Self-Assessment process in curriculum teams, supported by greater opportunities to engage with employers. New employer forums will be set up for each curriculum area. These forums will bring together key local and regional employers to provide regular, structured input into curriculum design, delivery models and future skills demand. The forums will play a central role in ensuring our provision remains employer-led, aligned to LSIP priorities and responsive to labour market change, while also strengthening employer engagement, work placement opportunities and progression routes into apprenticeships and higher-level technical provision.
	6.3.3 Core workplace skills The development of core workplace skills continues to be a consistent priority within the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), cutting across all sectors and technical pathways. Building on

this, during 2025/26 the College further embedded and refined its “Which Three Skills” approach to strengthen learner preparedness for the workplace. The programme is aligned to the National Skills Builder framework and ensures that every curriculum area explicitly develops three transferable skills: confidence, alongside two skills tailored to the specific occupational sector. Learners are required to evidence skills development throughout their programme, enabling the College to better track and demonstrate distance travelled and employability outcomes. Alongside this work, we have continued to expand work experience opportunities, employer-led projects, CPD activity and social action programmes, particularly for full-time learners. These are designed to strengthen behaviours, attitudes and practical workplace readiness, and to reinforce the importance of professionalism, teamwork and communication. Recognising the growing importance of digital capability across all roles, the College is refreshing its approach to foundation IT and digital skills, ensuring all full-time learners have access to baseline digital skills development aligned to modern workplace expectations. This includes greater consistency in skills such as digital communication, cyber awareness and effective use of workplace technologies. While strong progress has been made in a number of curriculum areas, delivery and impact are not yet consistent across the College. As a result, core workplace skills remain a focused area for improvement, with further work underway to strengthen curriculum leadership, share best practice and ensure a more consistent learner experience across all pathways.
6.3.4 NEET – Over the past year, Gloucestershire College has significantly strengthened its support for young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET), responding to rising need and clear gaps in local provision. Building on its established First Steps programme in Gloucester and the Forest of Dean, the College has expanded early-intervention, small-group provision focused on re-engagement, English and maths, employability and resilience, alongside high-intensity pastoral and mental-health support for vulnerable learners. During the year, the College has also developed and secured approval for a dedicated NEET centre in Cheltenham at the Hardwick Campus, working closely with Gloucestershire County Council and specialist partners to address the absence of suitable local provision. This includes designing flexible timetables, rolling enrolment, vocational taster pathways and specialist staffing models to support learners with complex needs and improve progression back into education, training and apprenticeships.
6.3.5 SEND Over the past few years, Gloucestershire College has significantly strengthened and expanded its support for learners with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in response to growing demand across the county. The number of SEND learners has increased by 21% over the last two years, and the College has worked closely with Gloucestershire County Council to adapt capacity, facilities and delivery models to ensure needs continue to be met. This has included the expansion of specialist provision across multiple sites, the enhancement of transition and pastoral support, and a substantial scaling of Supported

	Internship provision, which has grown from 11 learners in 2024/25 to 23 learners in 2025/26, alongside the development of pre-internship pathways. The College has also invested in inclusive teaching practice, specialist staffing, and partnership working with employers and local agencies to improve progression into employment and independence for learners with SEND. As part of this continued commitment, the College will introduce a new Supported Internship programme in Gloucester in 2025/26, initially supporting up to 12 learners, further strengthening pathways into sustainable employment and adult outcomes
	6.3.6 Net Zero & Construction Over the past few years, the College has made significant strategic investments in construction and net zero skills to respond to sustained learner demand, acute labour shortages and the transition to a low-carbon economy. Full-time learner numbers on construction programmes have increased by 43% over the last two years, and the College has deliberately aligned its estates strategy, curriculum planning and employer engagement to support this growth. A major milestone was the opening of the £5 million Sustainable Construction Centre in Cheltenham in September 2024, which created additional specialist capacity in wood occupations, plumbing and electrical installation and established a comprehensive offer supporting both traditional construction skills and emerging net zero technologies. Building on this model, the College is now investing in a new Construction Centre at 125 Business Park in Gloucester, through the refurbishment and expansion of College-owned industrial units. This strategic development will address capacity constraints in existing provision, significantly enhance the quality of specialist workshops, and expand delivery across core trades including electrical installation, plumbing and heating, carpentry and joinery, brickwork, plastering and retrofit. The centre has been designed to provide flexible space for modern methods of construction, retrofitting and green technologies, and forms a central part of the College's long-term response to construction and net zero skills shortages in Gloucestershire. In addition, employer forums have confirmed a desire for short courses in green skills such as, Solar PV installation, EV charging points, heat source pumps (ground and air) and in retrofit drylining, plastering, and switching from gas boilers to heat source pumps in older social housing developments. Within the 16-18 curriculum there is a focus on green skills, either as a separate unit or embedded within other units and this is the same for apprenticeships, although within electrical Solar PV, EV charging points and theory around connecting heat source pumps are within the "Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours".
	6.3.7 Digital Over the past few years, the College has made substantial strategic investments to strengthen and grow its digital and cyber provision, aligning closely to employer demand, LSIP priorities and national skills policy. Full-time 16–18 provision has growth over 20% over the past 2 years and now offers clear progression from Level 1 through to Level 6 across cyber security, software development, networking, games design and computing.

	A major development has been the expansion of high-level and specialist digital provision, including delivery of the only Cyber Security Degree Apprenticeship in England endorsed by the National Cyber Security Centre, delivered in partnership with UWE, alongside the relaunch of the Level 6 Digital and Technology Solutions apprenticeship in 2024/25 with approved pathways in Cyber Security, Network Engineering and Software Engineering. The College has achieved Technical Excellence College (TEC) status in Digital, reflecting the quality, employer-led design and national significance of its digital offer, and has introduced new provision responding to emerging skills such as AI-focused short courses and an AI Apprenticeship Unit. At Level 3, the College currently delivers the Digital Support Services T Level and is introducing the Digital Software Development T Level to broaden appeal and support future growth. Across apprenticeships, employer engagement is embedded in curriculum design and delivery, and for 2026/27 the strategic focus will be on managing the transition from legacy Level 3 funding to T Levels, while continuing to expand high-level digital and cyber pathways in response to employer demand
6	CORPORATION STATEMENT Confirmation of governance sign-off. For colleges and designated institutions in scope the statement should explicitly confirm this document as having fulfilled the statutory Local Needs Duty.
7	HYPERLINK https://www.gloscol.ac.uk/policies-and-reports/accountability-agreement/