



Strategy 2026-2029

SKILLS READY
FUTURE READY



STOKE
ON TRENT
COLLEGE

A portrait of Jeremy Cartwright MBE, a middle-aged man with short grey hair, smiling. He is wearing a light blue shirt and a red lanyard with a badge. The background is dark.

FOREWORD

by **Jeremy Cartwright MBE**,
Chair of the Corporation Board

Stoke on Trent College is an anchor institution for our city and region. As a truly open and inclusive college, we welcome learners from all backgrounds and circumstances and are uniquely positioned to develop the technical and vocational skills our economy demands, while improving social mobility and economic growth. As the Chair of the Corporation Board, I am proud of the impact the College continues to have on our learners, communities and stakeholders.

Our Strategy for 2026–2029 builds on strong recent progress and sets a clear direction for the years ahead. It is grounded in three core commitments: maintaining our inclusive approach so every learner can access high-quality technical and vocational education; strengthening outcomes and progression into employment for young people and adults; and deepening our responsiveness to employers and regional partners, ensuring provision evolves with the changing demands of the local economy.

Delivering this strategy requires sustained collaboration with employers, education partners, and stakeholders. The Governing Body is actively committed to its success, providing both strategic oversight and constructive challenge to ensure

the College is at the forefront of technical and vocational education across the region and remains a high-performing, responsive institution meeting the needs of learners, employers and the communities we serve.

This is an exciting time for the College and the region. I look forward to the impact this strategy will deliver.

Jeremy Cartwright MBE
Chair of the Corporation Board



FOREWORD

by **Hassan Rizvi**, Principal & CEO

I am immensely proud of what we, at Stoke on Trent College, have achieved together. I have seen first-hand the dedication of our staff, the ambition of our learners, and the strength of our partnerships that enable us to make a meaningful difference to the lives of individuals within our city and the wider region.

This new strategy builds on those strong foundations and sets out our ambitions for the next stage of our development. It is focused on taking Stoke on Trent College to the next level by raising aspirations and ensuring that every learner has the opportunity to succeed by being *Skills Ready, Future Ready*.

At the heart of our strategy is a simple belief: **Every Learner Matters**. We are committed to creating a culture where everyone feels welcome, valued and supported to achieve their full potential. By continuing to be extremely inclusive, promoting a genuine sense of belonging and maintaining high expectations, we will ensure all learners thrive, regardless of their starting point or background.

We will further strengthen our collaboration with employers, industry partners and other stakeholders, building on the strong relationships we have already established and creating new ones, across the region. Through greater responsiveness to labour market needs, in line with the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), we will continue to ensure our provision meets the technical/vocational and wider skills required for current and future employment opportunities. In doing so, we will ensure our learners have the knowledge, skills and

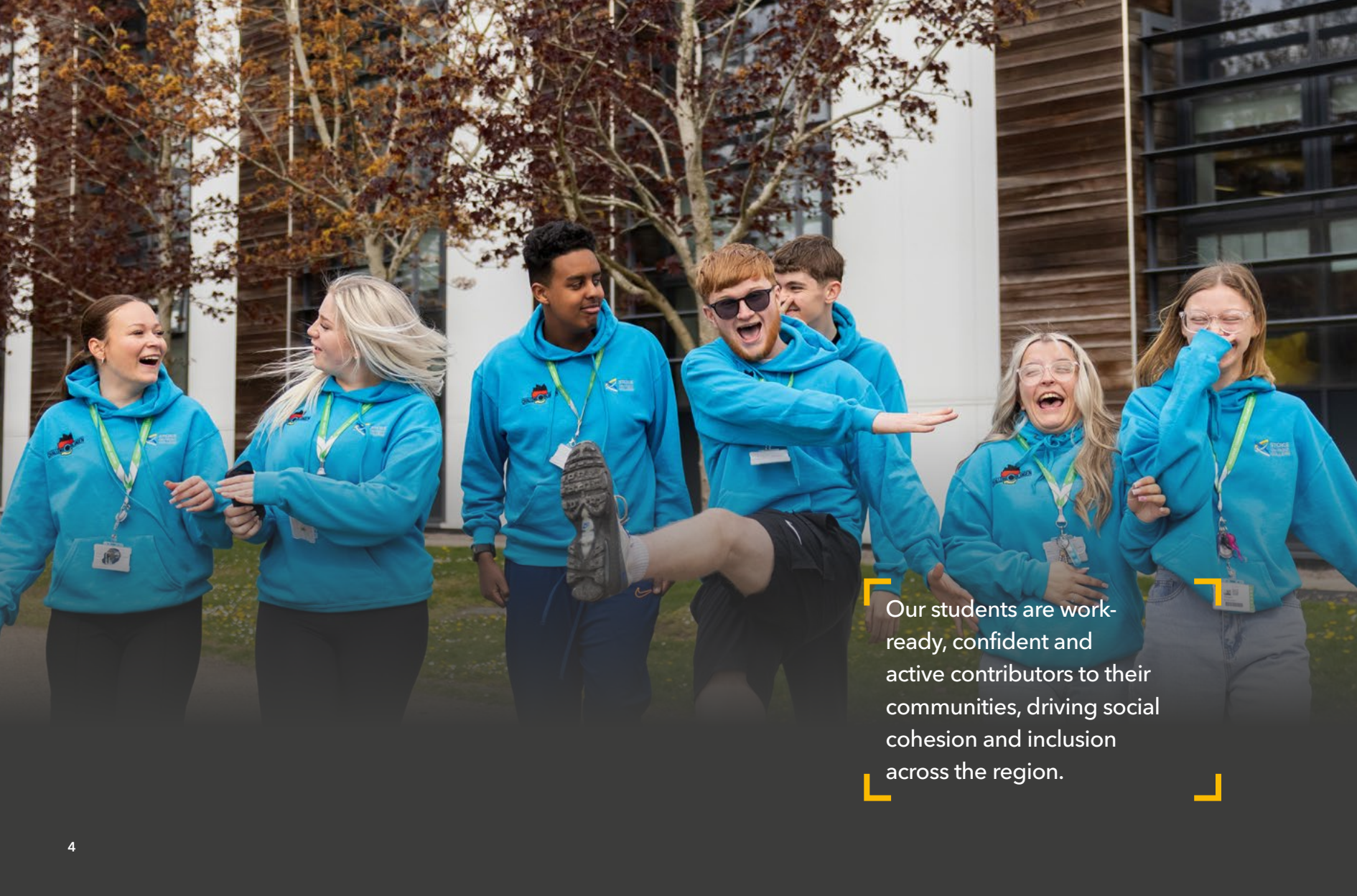
experiences needed to progress into rewarding careers while supporting regional growth.

Supporting these ambitions is the significant investment we have made across our campuses, including the recent opening of new facilities: the **Advanced Green Technology Centre** and the **Centenary Building** at our Burslem Campus, together with the new **Connect Building** at our Cauldon Campus. These facilities are transforming the learner experience by providing access to industry-standard environments and cutting-edge resources, while reinforcing our long-standing role as an anchor institution in Stoke-on-Trent. The Centenary Building, named in recognition of this heritage, celebrates our legacy of technical and vocational excellence and reflects our continued commitment to creating opportunity for all.

This strategy, rooted in stakeholders' input, reflects our ambition to make a lasting impact. Together, we will continue to transform lives through learning, meeting the skills needs of our city and the wider region and strengthen the communities we serve.

I invite you to join us on this exciting journey.

Hassan Rizvi
Principal & CEO



Our students are work-ready, confident and active contributors to their communities, driving social cohesion and inclusion across the region.

Stoke on Trent College is an inclusive and vibrant General Further Education College located in the West Midlands, serving a diverse community of around 6,000 learners annually, across our two campuses in the City of Stoke-on-Trent.

Our organisational values, industry-leading facilities and welcoming approach provide an exceptional environment for all students, staff, employers, other stakeholders and visitors.

The College is proud to deliver education, Apprenticeships, training and wider social and employability skills across multiple career pathways and levels in line with the Local Skills Improvement Plan and our community needs, that transforms lives.

Stoke on Trent College is the only General Further Education College in the City of

Stoke-on-Trent and, as an anchor institution, the College plays a key role in supporting the City's economic and social fabric.

We foster strong and sustainable partnerships with local, regional and national employers, ensuring our students gain the skills and experiences needed to thrive in their chosen careers. Our students are work-ready, confident and active contributors to their communities, driving social cohesion and inclusion across the region.



OUR SHARED VISION

Where learning and
progression for all
transforms lives and futures.

Our Mission

Transform lives through excellent technical education, employer partnerships, and inclusive support that empowers learners to build successful futures. *Skills Ready, Future Ready.*

Our Values

We are a people-focused organisation, driven by strong values that are deeply embedded within our culture.

We are inclusive and collaborative, we nurture ambitious outcomes, building resilience and empowerment.

Our values are developed collaboratively with our staff, students and stakeholders and form the core foundation of our interactions.





OUR CONTEXT

An inclusive approach to excellence, irrespective of individual learners' starting points. An anchor institution of the City of Stoke-on-Trent, focused on delivering specialist vocational and technical career pathways across various levels, alongside wider skills and knowledge to meet local, regional and national skills needs and serving our communities.





A GREAT PLACE TO LEARN

Paige Collins
Level 3 Sports, Coaching & Development Student

I love being at Stoke on Trent College. I feel like I belong here. The support I have received has been fantastic. I feel motivated to come in, I've grown in confidence and learning has become more important to me.



A GREAT PLACE TO WORK

Mez Siddiquee
HR & Recruitment Officer

The College has a strong commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equality, providing opportunities for students and staff to develop and succeed. Its inclusive approach encourages collaboration and mutual respect, and creates a supportive community. The people are consistently approachable and supportive, making it a place where individuals feel valued and work collaboratively.



A GREAT PLACE TO TEACH

Stephen Heaton
Course Lead – Hospitality & Catering

Teaching is both a privilege and a responsibility. Having worked in hospitality for over 40 years, including 28 years in education, I see how quality teaching and industry engagement can transform learners' confidence, skills and career prospects. Supporting learners as they grow into confident professionals is what makes hospitality education such a rewarding career.



A GREAT PLACE TO LEAD

Dave Hopley
Assistant Principal – Student Experience

Our people are the pulse of the College. The drive and passion of our staff, students and partners create a genuine sense of belonging, where everyone has the opportunity to learn, progress and transform their lives and futures. Having worked here for over 20 years, I am proud to be a leader in such an ambitious, collaborative and inclusive team.

Celebrating a History of Transforming Lives Through Learning

As Stoke on Trent College enters a new chapter in its history, it is important that we recognise and celebrate the foundations on which our future success is built.

Our new Centenary Timeline, positioned in the corridor that connects our Burslem Campus reception and the new Centenary Building, tells the story of a college that has been at the heart of Stoke-on-Trent for decades, supporting generations of learners, employers and communities.

The timeline showcases key moments in the College's development, highlighting how technical and vocational education has continually adapted to meet the demands of industry and support economic growth. It celebrates the achievements of learners, staff and partners whose collective efforts have shaped the College's reputation for excellence, inclusion and innovation.

The opening of the Centenary Building reflects our ongoing investment in industry-standard learning environments and our commitment to ensuring learners are Skills Ready and Future Ready. At the same time, it honours the generations who have studied, worked and partnered with the College, helping to establish the strong foundations on which we continue to build.

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CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF HISTORY



1802

Master potter John Ridgway established the Caudon Place Works beside the Caudon Canal. This pottery factory occupied the land that would later become today's **Caudon Campus**.



1839

John Ridgway received the prestigious appointment of Potter to Her Majesty Queen Victoria, bringing international recognition to the **Caudon Place Works**.



DID YOU KNOW?
The original pottery works were built on the site of the Caudon Canal. In 1839, the Caudon Canal was the largest pottery factory in the world.

1882



1925

1938

1942

1958

1973

1987

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF HISTORY
CENTENARY BUILDING

STRATEGIC PLAN 2026–2029

This Strategic Plan outlines the direction and priorities for Stoke on Trent College for the period of 2026–2029. It is shaped by the evolving local, regional and national skills landscape, ensuring alignment with current and future skills needs as envisaged in our Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP).

The plan reflects the College's critical role as an anchor institution of the city. We have a dedicated commitment to collaboration with employers, representative bodies and all stakeholders. Together, we strive to serve and empower our local communities, fostering growth, opportunity and inclusion.



The Strategic Plan 2026–2029 builds on the successful delivery of our 2023–2026 Strategic Plan with these key outcomes.

Student Satisfaction

91%

Positive Progression

94%

‘GOOD’

Ofsted Rating

FEC Financial Grading

‘OUTSTANDING’

Student Success

92%

28%

Study Programme learner growth

Staff Satisfaction

89%

Investment of approx.

£20m

in new buildings at our Caudon and Burslem Campuses, and a new Advanced Green Technology Centre at our Burslem Campus



Stoke on Trent College is committed to preparing students with the skills needed to progress their careers, while also supporting businesses to thrive in an ever-changing and challenging economic environment.

Economic and Political Context

In developing this Strategic Plan, the economic and political drivers shaping the future landscape are included. Aligning our Strategy with the Government's Missions, the National Industrial Strategy and growth plans is given the primary focus to maximise the opportunities of driving economic growth. As such, Stoke on Trent College is committed to preparing students with the skills needed to progress their careers, while also supporting businesses to thrive in an ever-changing and challenging economic environment.

The Further Education sector is navigating a period of significant change, with numerous curriculum, qualification, and assessment reforms. The College recognises the need to be agile and responsive to these evolving demands, ensuring that learners are equipped with future-proofed skills and

career opportunities, and that the College remains resilient and adaptable to change.

Furthermore, we acknowledge that economic, political, and social factors may shift priorities over the duration of this Strategic Plan. This also includes the potential impact of the impending devolution deal for Staffordshire. Our ability to remain agile, flexible and proactive will be key to maintaining our success and continuing to serve the needs of our learners, communities, and stakeholders effectively.

Stoke on Trent College is in a very strong position to enter the next phase of its journey, building on its current strengths. The College continues to strive for growth, innovation and excellence for its next chapter, *Skills Ready, Future Ready*.

OUR STRATEGIC PILLARS



1

EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION & SKILLS TRAINING



2

TRUSTED PARTNERSHIPS & FUTURE CAREERS



3

PEOPLE & CULTURE



4

FINANCIAL RESILIENCE, GROWTH & SUSTAINABILITY



Strategic Pillar 1

EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION & SKILLS TRAINING

To enhance and expand the College's influence and reputation through a commitment to excellence and innovation, establishing Stoke on Trent College as the aspirational college of choice. Our focus is on fostering an environment where students thrive, excel, and reach their full potential.

We will achieve this through

Outstanding Student Outcomes	Embed an engaging careers curriculum, in line with the Local Skills Improvement Plan and local needs, working with employers to deliver the highest levels of progression into employment/next level of study.
Exceptional Experiences	Deliver an outstanding learning and collaborative experience for students and employers. We will also invest in resources and expand opportunities for our learners through an enhanced enrichment programme.
Exemplary Teaching and Learning	Providing exceptional and innovative teaching and learning strategies to equip learners and Apprentices for high-quality and skilled employment and/or higher education.
Driving Innovation	Keeping curriculum and practices at the forefront of industry developments including use of AI in teaching, learning and assessment.
Progression	Embed an engaging careers curriculum throughout the learner journey, working with employers to deliver the highest levels of progression
Cross Cutting Skills	Embed and contextualise literacy, numeracy and digital skills across the curriculum to drive progression and continue with strategies such as Maths Mastery to boost high grades in GCSEs.

Strategic Pillar 2

TRUSTED PARTNERSHIPS & FUTURE CAREERS

To equip students with the skills, knowledge and behaviours required to advance their careers, creating a resilient and adaptable workforce that meets the evolving needs of employers. We are committed to providing a high-quality, sustainable learning environment able to fulfil future skills demands.

We will achieve this through

Industry Leading Facilities	Providing industry-standard facilities to prepare learners for future careers.
Responding to Skills Needs	Ensuring curriculum and programmes align to the Local Skills Improvement Plan, with evolving industry demands.
Employer Collaboration	Strengthening links with employers to support career progression and work-ready learners.
Local and Regional Decision Making	Be an actively engaged contributor and collaborator to key local decisions and policy-making bodies and work in partnership with other further education partners, MATs and universities to grow the capacity and impact of further education.
Broadening Strategic Partnerships	Leveraging the College's Anchor Institution role to improve student, Apprentices and community outcomes.



Strategic Pillar 3

PEOPLE & CULTURE

To establish Stoke on Trent College as an employer of choice, fostering an inclusive, equitable, and ambitious workplace that values and empowers its people.

We will achieve this through

Championing Equity and Inclusion

Tackling inequalities, ensuring diverse representation and creating a culture of 'belonging'.

Investing in Talent

Supporting professional growth to recruit, retain, and reward a skilled workforce.

Living Our Values

Embedding core values into every aspect of College operations.

Enhancing the Staff Experience

Creating an exceptional workplace for all staff.

'One Team' Culture

Further develop, promote and embed a 'One Team' culture at all levels.

FINANCIAL RESILIENCE, GROWTH & SUSTAINABILITY

To be a financially strong and resilient organisation, able to invest in future growth and innovation. We will provide estate facilities that support growth, enhance learning experiences, and meet the evolving needs of students, staff, industry and the wider community.

We will achieve this through

Diversifying Offer	Expanding programmes and revenue streams by staying agile and flexible to meet skills needs.
Partner of Choice	Strengthening partnerships with employers and stakeholders to enhance financial sustainability.
Sustainable Financial Health	Achieving consistent financial surpluses to reinvest in students, staff, and our estate.
Future-Focused Facilities	Delivering industry-standard, cutting-edge facilities and capacity.
Carbon Neutral Commitment	Working towards a carbon-neutral estate.
Infrastructure for Innovation	Investing in systems and facilities to further enhance learner experience and innovation including the implementation of AI.

A range of
our Partners



Accreditations





MEASURING OUR SUCCESS

To continue to thrive and remain a high-performing and sustainable organisation, Stoke on Trent College will continue its achievements while embracing continuous evolution and improvement. The Strategic Plan will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains agile and adapts to the dynamic needs of the region and remains aligned with identified priorities.

Each year, the Corporation will set detailed targets and monitor their impact to measure progress against the Strategic Priorities. Progress and success will be reported at every Corporation meeting and summarised in the annual 'Progress and Impact Report'.



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