

# OPEN for BUSINESS

The title of our new strategic intentions framework, Open for Business, means many things to us. As a newly merged college serving a wider area it means we are very much open for business ready to receive students. As a college with a strong desire to work even closer with employers it says we are open to work in a flexible way to truly meet business needs. As a key part of the Bath and North East Somerset and West of England economies it says we know that our major focus has to be on the provision of excellent professional and technical skills to support business growth and economic development.

With our new vision and strategic intentions we are pushing ourselves towards a new future. This vision is the most demanding challenge we have set ourselves and we are clear that in laying out our new intentions we are fundamentally reshaping what a college like ours is all about.

Although our new vision takes us in a new direction we remain deeply committed to our community college ethos and role as a place where our communities can come to learn together. With exciting plans for our two campuses we are well positioned to serve our communities more effectively in the future.

If we are to succeed in achieving what we set out in this document, the development of enduring partnerships, strategic relationships and new innovative ventures are crucial. By publishing this strategic framework we are issuing an invitation to existing and new partners to join us in the next phase of the development of Bath College.

**Carole Stott MBE**  
Chair of Corporation





**B**ath College is a people oriented organisation fundamentally concerned with skills, education and training. We see our role as working with people and organisations to improve outcomes for individuals, businesses, communities and economies. As such we have defined our core purpose and mission as:

- **TALENT DEVELOPMENT**
- **CAREER DEVELOPMENT**
- **SELF-DEVELOPMENT**

We will work with new and emerging talent to prepare them to excel and to meet the needs of current or future employers. We will actively contribute to developing the careers of individuals through the provision of education and training. We will work with people from across our communities to develop their skills, to improve their life chances and to give them a passion for learning new things or mastering existing skills.

Our aim is to be recognised as one of the stars of the learning and skills sector. We want to become excellent in everything we do so that our students and staff can reap the benefits of being part of a highly successful organisation. As such, through this new strategic intentions framework and vision, we have set ourselves our most demanding challenge yet.

By 2020 Bath College will:

- **Become the country's most enterprising community college, focussing on collaboration and innovation**
- **Unashamedly celebrate the world of work and professional and technical education and training**
- **Celebrate emerging talent and be the first choice for those who want to enter the world of work or improve their place in it**
- **Make our students highly employable and enterprising by developing the skills employers want**
- **Be a place for the community to keep learning and for businesses to grow and develop**
- **Impact positively on the West of England economy and play an active role in economic development and regeneration**
- **Value the efforts and talents of our people and further develop their skills, impacting positively on their careers.**





In order to demonstrate our effectiveness and to ensure we are focusing on the right things to achieve our vision, the Board of Corporation has set the following strategic objectives to measure and monitor our performance. Our strategic objectives are underpinned by a number of challenging impact measures and we will share and celebrate our progress internally and externally. Our strategic objectives for the next five years are:

- 1. Enterprise - We are recognised for our enterprise culture, ambition, innovation and excellent partnerships.**
- 2. Employability - We will co-create high quality professional and technical routes to employment which progress individuals to the high level skills valued by employers.**
- 3. Economic Impact - We will establish effective partnerships to make a significant contribution to economic growth and regeneration, improving the competitiveness of the sub-region.**
- 4. Expertise - We will develop our team to excel at customer service, to be better connected with industry; systematically developing talent and aiding career progression.**

**W**e exist in a very dynamic and fast moving sector. Over the life of this strategic framework we expect to see significant changes and reform in the learning and skills sector therefore we are now setting out our major intentions rather than hard and fast plans. We have proved ourselves to be agile and adaptable and this approach will enable us to continue to be responsive to the world around us.

### **THE COUNTRY'S MOST ENTERPRISING COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

At Bath College we have our own definition of enterprise, a definition which not only sets a vision of what we want to become and how we want to work but also a definition which clarifies the skills we want to develop in our students. For us enterprise and enterprising mean:

- **Working with initiative and energy**
- **Experimenting and discovering**
- **Taking risks and being bold and adventurous**
- **Working in an entrepreneurial manner and collaborating to generate positive financial outcomes**
- **Having sufficient gumption to be known as a college that innovates.**

For us the desire to become the country's most enterprising college will impact on our work in a number of ways including how we work internally and how we develop our students.





### **Working in an enterprising way**

In order to become the country's most enterprising community college we must become much more collaborative, internally and externally. Internal silos do nothing to promote collaboration and our people need to become more open to collaborating with one another.

Over the past five years we have taken a number of steps to become more innovative. We are clear that innovation is key to our future and in response to our new vision and mission we must now innovate to deliver a curriculum that truly responds to employer and economic need.

It is without doubt that our sector will continue to experience financial pressures over the life of this strategic framework. Over recent years we have managed to deliver and maintain efficiency when others have struggled. We have kept our strategic eye over the horizon and managed to plan for a challenging future. However as we go forward we must not be complacent and we must do even better to deliver our services in a more efficient manner.

Our students and partners tell us that we are doing a good job. However, as an organisation that challenges itself and is never satisfied with where we are, we know we must become even more student and employer focused. For us this means continuing to focus on the quality of what we do. Each and every one of our students and employer partners deserves the best possible experience.

Our on-going success and continued improvement very much depends on our financial strength. During these fiscally challenging times we must ensure we are financially resilient and that we have the strategies and plans to maintain a positive financial position, generating surpluses for on-going investment in the student experience.



### **Developing enterprising students**

We will ensure that our students are sufficiently skilled to meet the requirements of the modern day workplace. Developing enterprising students means giving them the skills to be adaptable, resilient, entrepreneurial and work-ready.

In order to do this we must embed enterprise into our curriculum through establishing first class and immersive partnerships with employers and provide our students with more opportunities to learn and develop outside of college boundaries.

Employers and businesses will be engaged in curriculum development and delivery, telling us what skills they need for their businesses to succeed.

We will become the talent pipeline for our local employers, partnering with them to jointly develop the skills our students will need to succeed once they enter the workplace.





## **CELEBRATING THE WORLD OF WORK**

We are proud that our curriculum, the courses we provide and the approaches we take are unashamedly focused on the world of work. In developing a new strategy we have redefined what it means to be a vocational college and in doing so we are boldly promoting professional and technical education. We believe that our country, and our education system, needs to develop a louder voice when it comes to professional and technical education. In promoting this new vision we are prioritising the development of careers and we are positioning ourselves as experts in the delivery of professional and technical learning routes that secure good quality employment for people.

We believe that there is no distinction between careers that people secure through a traditional academic route and careers that are secured through vocational routes. An engineer that succeeds through an apprenticeship route is just as successful as one that does so through pursuing a university degree. We believe that a professional chef who has succeeded in her profession by obtaining a strong foundation in a college such as ours is just as valuable to the national economy as someone who has succeeded in their career by following an academic route.

In developing a mission focused on professional and technical education we are confident that we are providing people with the skills required to help businesses grow and for the economy to strengthen. Construction industry experts, health care professionals, digital specialists and engineers are all vital to our country and the people that live in it and this is why we are determined to ensure that our curriculum reflects the needs of the economy. Our curriculum priorities are centred around the following economic sectors that are of significant importance to the West of England and Bath and North East Somerset economies:

- **Construction and Engineering**
- **Creative and Digital Industries**
- **Health and Care**
- **Professional Services**
- **Rural and land-based economy**
- **Leisure, Hospitality, Tourism and Well-being**

In setting out a new vision we recognise that maintaining a curriculum of appropriate breadth remains central to our mission, ensuring a range of access points to deliver educational inclusion is reflective of our role within the local landscape and placing an even greater emphasis on apprenticeships and higher level skills is a major part of our future.

## CELEBRATING TALENT

Bath College is full of talent and our role is to celebrate the talents of our students, give them experiences to become even more talented and continue to develop the talents of people from across the communities we serve.

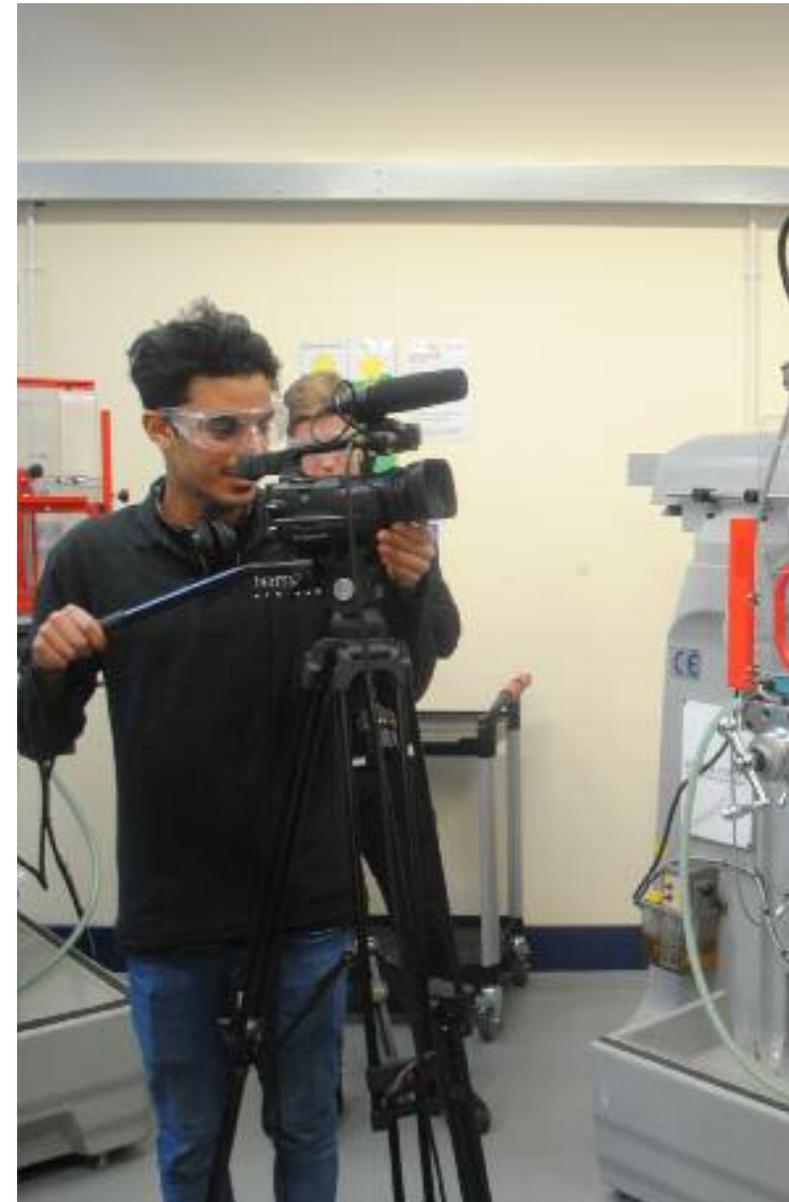
Our younger students come to us to develop new skills and to realise their talent and potential in order to embark on a successful career. Our job is to recognise their talents, to prepare them for their first careers or to develop their learning abilities to advance their education to the next stage. It is vital that we provide our students with the skills employers want and need and in doing so we will become even more ambitious for our students and more actively involved in getting them in front of employers. We will become a talent pipeline, a place where employers come to connect with their future employees, a place where businesses meaningfully engage in the development and delivery of training. In order to do this every area of the college needs to develop new strategic alliances with employers which provide students with immersive experiences of the world of work.

We also work with a significant number of people who are already in the world of work and who come to us to improve their careers and job prospects. Whether we are working with apprentices or experienced professionals, our role in up-skilling individuals to meet the demands of an increasingly competitive employment market is central to our mission. Being 'Open for Business' means we will be able to work with businesses on the creation of professional development opportunities for their people and we will actively engage with local agencies to support people into work.

Our college is located in one of the most creative parts of the country and we have made sure that we have developed a significant programme of part-time and informal learning opportunities for our citizens to keep their creative skills alive. Our communities love to learn and we love to work with them to discover new passions, to develop new skills and to ensure we become a place where intergenerational talent comes together to keep their enthusiasm for learning alive.

Our pedigree in the provision of education and training for overseas students also means that we benefit from the presence of talented people from all over the world. Our international provision adds to the richness and diversity of our college and we are committed to exploring new ways to enhance the international and global dimension to our programmes for home students.

In celebrating the talents of all of our students we will also refine the way we continue to engage our alumni, to take a more rigorous approach to tracking the destinations of our leavers and to foster a sense of pride in the college amongst those who trusted us with their own education and training.





## **DEVELOPING THE SKILLS EMPLOYERS WANT**

Giving people qualifications to work in organisations is only one dimension of what we do. Whilst qualifications may serve as a licence to practise in a number of professions we fully understand that our approaches have to place a greater emphasis on giving students the skills employers want.

As we formulate this new strategy we have a long way to go to achieving this. However, internally we have the drive and determination to make this a reality. We know that innovation is key to us becoming more employer and employment focussed. We need to enter into new strategic alliances with employers and each and every one of our programmes needs to have deep and immersive relationships with the sectors they are serving. In order to do this we will build strong customer insight to know what our partners really want.

Our employer partners need to accompany us on a journey of redesigning our curriculum, refining and refreshing our approaches to teaching and learning and to providing students with the opportunities that will make them effective employees.

The College will become a talent pool for the West of England economy, a place where employers and students meet to develop enduring professional relationships. Through engaging with students early on in their programmes of study, employers can spot emerging talent and secure their future workforce.

In responding more effectively to the needs of employers we will take full advantage of the funding and programme flexibilities available to us and innovate to develop new approaches that build excellent employability skills of our students.



## **A PLACE FOR THE COMMUNITY TO KEEP LEARNING**

We take great pride in being a community college. Our buildings, facilities and intellectual capital belong to our communities. We are a community resource that seeks to have a positive impact on the lives and well-being of individuals, businesses and the local economy.

Whilst our main focus is on professional and technical skills based education and training and preparing people for the world of work, we also have a significant role to play in enhancing the lives of local people through providing the widest range of learning opportunities. We will provide learning to bring our communities together, we will provide learning to meet the learning needs of some of society's most disadvantaged and we will provide learning to those who enrich their lives through learning new things or mastering existing skills.

Whilst we are firmly geographically rooted in the life and economy of Bath and North East Somerset we are a college making a major contribution to the West of England economy. We work with a range of businesses from across the sub-region, our curriculum is sharply focussed on the key economic sectors of the sub-region and we actively work with our college partners to shape the skills agenda for the whole economic area.

## **GROWING AND DEVELOPING BUSINESSES**

What better way for a college to prove its worth and value than by actively contributing to the growth of new businesses or the development of existing ones.

We have a desire to develop entrepreneurs from within our student body and to be with them in the journey from business concept to business launch. A large number of our students will become self-employed at some point in their lives so we want to give them the skills now to develop their own businesses. In order to do this we will develop an appropriate learning and training offer to develop business start-up skills and in some cases we may even be prepared to act as an angel investor for the right businesses.

We are very fortunate to be located in one of the most economically vibrant parts of the country, where the number of start-ups are rising, where businesses from across the country are relocating and where major investment and development will be taking place over the next few years. We want to have a role in this growth story. We want to closely link our campuses to economic development and regeneration projects. We want to become the home to new and growing businesses and we want to be the provider of talent to these entrepreneurial organisations.





## IMPACTING ON THE WEST OF ENGLAND ECONOMY

The impact of our college extends far and wide, however we consider ourselves to be a vital element of the West of England economy. We are part of the West of England engine room, contributing to business growth and productivity and in recognising our role we also recognise that we need to be more in tune with economic needs and be more responsive in meeting skills shortages and needs.

The West of England is one of the most dynamic parts of the UK economy, we benefit from high levels of employment, business start-ups and business innovation. Our area is recognised as a significant contributor to the nation's treasury and over the past 10 years the population has grown faster than the UK average.

Within the West of England, Bath and North East Somerset is one of the most vibrant, creative and attractive places to live work and learn. The area's heritage, combined with a significant number of market leading businesses provide a wide range of opportunities. However, the area does have a number of challenges and it is the role of our college to work with a range of partners to provide solutions. Going forward we need to be stronger in demonstrating the impact we have on the West of England and Bath and North East Somerset economies. We need to show how we have responded to skills shortages, we need to develop innovative ways of responding to local economic needs and we need to play our part in improving the prosperity, productivity and competitiveness of the sub-region.

## PREPARING COLLEAGUES FOR A NEW FUTURE

In delivering this vision, we have set ourselves one of the most challenging and ambitious agendas ever faced by our organisation. We recognise that delivering our intentions will require our colleagues to be flexible, adaptable and fleet of foot. We benefit from a committed and professional workforce made up of people who consistently put our students first and strive to deliver experiences founded on high quality.

However this new direction and approach, focused on jobs, economic regeneration and business growth requires our people to be better connected to the world of work, to foster excellent relationships with external organisations and to be more informed about the requirements of employers. This requires a shift in focus and essentially redefines the competencies required to succeed within our college. To do this leaders and managers will take the lead on establishing new industry relationships that significantly benefit staff and students, new professional development opportunities will be implemented and innovative approaches to colleague engagement will be introduced. We will create new opportunities for those who want to excel in their careers and we will work towards developing a culture where those engaged in delivering education and skills are dual professionals – people who are experts in delivering teaching and learning whilst being highly knowledgeable about their industries.

Our staff have got us to where we are today, a good college with the potential to be great, a college that has continued to grow and improve, a well-respected part of the local educational and economic landscape.

In realising the potential of our organisation we need to be open to change and challenge, we need to explore and incorporate the outstanding practices from within and outside our world and we need to prioritise the achievement of excellence across all aspects of the organisation.

We need to develop a comprehensive talent development framework, accessible to colleagues from across the organisation and the opportunities we provide to our staff need to be career defining and career enhancing experiences.

We are an organisation fundamentally concerned with the development of people and this must now extend more fully to our staff as well as the students, apprentices and employers we serve.

In delivering on our new vision and strategic intentions we will need to develop a new culture. In doing so we will retain the best of our current culture. We will remain focused on the quality of teaching and learning, we will challenge our colleagues to deliver their absolute best, we will remain highly ambitious for our students and the college and we will continue to foster a climate of openness accompanied by leadership behaviours that have integrity at the core.

We recognise however that we need to develop new behaviours, practices and attitudes to deliver a new culture. In doing so we must focus on being more collaborative and actively break down internal barriers to joint working. We must be more flexible in our approach to learning delivery, not being bound by qualifications and timetables. We must build confidence in our staff to be better connected with the world of work, dual professionals with strong employer links and the confidence to truly prepare students for employment.

Our new leadership structures must develop employment sector expertise in our managers and we must shift the responsibility for opportunity spotting and entrepreneurial practices from senior leaders to middle managers. We must build the professional capacities of our new leaders and managers, making them confident to meet the challenges of this new world.

We must take positive steps to make innovation a core practice rather than a fringe activity. We must also empower all of our colleagues to be part of the innovation process and open up new opportunities for talented people from across the organisation to contribute to achieving this new vision.

Our new culture must also prioritise the provision of excellent customer service across the organisation and we must learn from those from beyond our sector that are renowned for delivering an outstanding customer experience.

Our new culture will therefore be characterised by:

- **The delivery of great teaching, learning and employment experiences**
- **The provision of outstanding customer service to students, employers and staff.**
- **A strong vision and ambition that challenges everyone to do their best**
- **Open and honest leadership underpinned by integrity**
- **Internal and external collaboration which delivers innovation in learning**
- **Confident staff, well connected to employment sectors, empowered to innovate**
- **Staff feeling valued and recognised for their dedication and professionalism**
- **An openness to connecting proactively with the business community**
- **Entrepreneurial leaders and managers that know how to succeed in the new FE and Skills landscape.**





It is without doubt that the Post 16 education and training sector is crucial to economic recovery and business growth. However government policy points in the direction of substantial reform to the FE and Skills sector and explicitly sets out a vision based on fewer and larger institutions.

We believe that the vision and intentions we set forward in this document will position Bath College as a strong institution which successfully responds to sub-regional economic and business needs. We believe that through our strategies we will become even better at delivering credible routes to employment and we will increase our impact on the West of England economy.

We recognise however that as we change, the world around us will also change. Over the recent past we have been open to change, even excited by it and this will remain a key feature of the culture of the College. We also recognise that our sector will undergo significant transformation during the life of this strategic framework and throughout this process we will display our willingness to collaborate with others, innovate to stay ahead, consider our operating models and always ensure that our communities and businesses are well served. We will always seek out opportunities to improve our position and to continue to improve what we do for students, employers and communities.



**City Centre Campus**  
Avon Street  
Bath BA1 1UP

**Somer Valley Campus**  
South Hill Park  
Wells Road  
Westfield BA3 3RW

[www.bathcollege.ac.uk](http://www.bathcollege.ac.uk)  
01225 312191