



LOCAL NEEDS DUTY & ANNUAL ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

2026 – 2027

MISSION & PURPOSE

TO CREATE LIFE-CHANGING OPPORTUNITIES.

Yeovil College has a clear mission statement 'To Create Life-Changing Opportunities'.

Our purpose is to proactively engage with our stakeholders to identify the skills needs within our local community, with a particular focus on high value, priority sectors that drive the economy forward. These sectors have currently been identified as Advanced Manufacturing (Aerospace), Health, Science, Construction, Digital (& Design) and Electrical (& Cell) Technology. The College is designing and implementing a curriculum for the local, regional and national skills needs, balancing current and future workforce priorities.

The College is focused on creating and growing high quality employer partnerships, which provide opportunities for our learners and deliver the skilled workforce that our business community needs to thrive acknowledging that their prosperity is to the benefit of our whole community and our vision best places us to integrate this locally.

The Yeovil College Strategic Plan was last updated and approved in November 2023 and sets the College's direction of travel towards 2028 – in which we will deliver the government's national and regional skills priorities, while also transforming our campus with three brilliant new buildings made possible with more than £60 million of Department for Education capital investment.

Strategic Plan Link: [Yeovil College Vision, Mission, Values & Strategic Aims | Yeovil College](#)

BEHAVIOURS

The college commits to working in line with the following behaviours:

- **Aspirational** – High ambition, expectation and effort
- **Collaborative** – Collaborative, in it together
- **Exceptional** – Innovative and enterprising
- **Team YC** – Valued and supportive

These behaviours are a commitment to each other, our learners, and our partners. Our Local Needs Duty & Accountability Agreement is led from the uppermost levels of the organisation and the alignment is steadfast with Yeovil College's strategic plan and specialisms.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Yeovil College delivers a diverse curriculum that supports learners at every stage of their educational and career journey, from school leavers and apprentices through to adults seeking to upskill or retrain. Provision spans a wide range of vocational, technical, professional and academic disciplines, including engineering, construction, health and care, science, business, digital and computing, creative arts, sport, public services, hospitality, hair and beauty, automotive, education and early years. The College also offers apprenticeships, higher education programmes, specialist SEND provision, foundation learning and adult education, ensuring accessible pathways for learners of all backgrounds and abilities.

Yeovil College's 2026–2027 Accountability Statement sets out how the College will deliver high-quality education and training that meets local, regional and national skills priorities. Serving South Somerset, North and West Dorset, the College delivers a broad curriculum from entry level to higher technical provision (Level 6), aligned to key growth sectors including advanced manufacturing and aerospace, defence, digital and AI, construction, health and clean energy.

The College's provision is strongly aligned to employer demand and Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs), supported by extensive engagement with major regional employers such as Leonardo, Thales and Honeywell, alongside SME supply chains. This collaboration ensures that learners develop the technical skills, behaviours and competencies required for current and future workforce needs.

Through its Local Needs Duty review, the College has identified that it is effectively meeting local skills needs in priority sectors, particularly in engineering, apprenticeships and adult learning. However, there are opportunities to further strengthen provision by embedding digital and AI skills across all programmes, expanding flexible delivery models, and improving workforce productivity outcomes.

In response, the College will deliver a focused set of actions in 2026–2027, including the expansion of Skills Bootcamps, growth in apprenticeship provision, the launch of new employer-led provision, and the implementation of the Defence Technical Excellence College (DTEC) model. These actions will ensure the College continues to play a leading role in supporting regional economic growth and developing a highly skilled, future-ready workforce.

Whilst Yeovil College has developed particular strengths in advanced manufacturing, aerospace, defence, digital technologies, construction, health and clean energy, the College also remains committed to supporting the wider needs of the local economy. As the tertiary provider for South Somerset and a key provider for North and West Dorset, the College delivers education and training across a broad range of sectors including care, hospitality, retail, hair and beauty, automotive, education, public services and business. The College works closely with both major strategic employers and SMEs, ensuring learners at all levels are equipped with the knowledge, skills and behaviours required to access positive destinations, including employment, apprenticeships, further study and supported employment.



APPROACH & PURPOSE

Shaping an exciting future with the best education and collaboration

The accountability agreement is required to set out how colleges and local authorities will use public funding to deliver education and training that meets national skills priorities and local labour market needs. It ensures providers assess how well their provision supports employers and communities, and clearly outline the actions they will take to improve outcomes and align with economic priorities.

The Yeovil College accountability agreement continues to set out our local industrial heritage and explains how we will further strategically invest and prioritise our curriculum to maximise the opportunities to support our local business communities' success. The College is committed to designing a forward-looking curriculum with high quality learning resources to develop our business partners' highly capable workforce, ensuring that we can support our community and businesses to be globally competitive, delivering more and better jobs, with a clear line of sight to exciting local careers for all our students.

Our Annual Accountability Statement integrates insights through essential sources including:

- Insights from the previous Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) from the Devon & Somerset, Dorset and the West of England regions.

- Insights from the draft and soon to be published LSIPs from Somerset, Dorset and the West of England (April 2026 drafts)

- Information for the Great South West partnership and its future position.

- Feedback from employers via our Employer Forums and Surveys and Reviews covering all areas of the curriculum.

- Analysis of education and training provision across Somerset, Dorset and the West of England.

- Partnerships with our civic, community, education and employer communities.

- The Yeovil College Defence Technical Excellence College prospectus

- Guidance from national skills policy.

- Emerging regional opportunities of investment and growth.

- Foresight to the upcoming Invest 2035.

- UK's modern industrial strategy.



CONTEXT & PLACE

Yeovil College is a medium-sized Tertiary General Further Education College (GFEC) serving Somerset and North & West Dorset with approximately 4,300 learners across all provisions (1200 Apprentices, 1600 Full Time, 300 Higher Education and 1200 adults). Yeovil College operates from a single main campus between two of the main access points into town, the A37 Ilchester Road and the A359 Mudford Road, within walking distance from the centre of Yeovil. As the only college in South Somerset and the tertiary provider for Yeovil, we are the largest and most diverse post-16 option for our local community across South Somerset and North & West Dorset and therefore have a responsibility to offer a curriculum that empowers our learners to develop the knowledge and skills demanded by our diverse economy.

The College remains committed to its role as a tertiary college for the whole community and offers a range of full time and part time Further Education (FE) provision from Pre-entry to Level 6, covering 14 of the 15 subject sectors. This includes Preparation for Life and Work, providing a varied curriculum that promotes appropriate individual progression into a positive destination, contributing within the community.

The nearest providers to the College include Strode College (part of the UCS College Group -15 miles / 30 minute car journey) and Kingston Maurward College – part of the Coastlands College Group - 22 miles / 36 minute car journey) demonstrating the importance and requirement for Yeovil to offer a broad curriculum to meet the needs of its local community.

As the principal tertiary provider for the area, the College's responsibility extends beyond supporting priority growth sectors. It includes raising aspirations, reducing barriers to opportunity, supporting learners at risk of becoming NEET and creating pathways into employment, further education and higher education. Through significant campus investment, strengthened employer partnerships and progression opportunities from entry level through to Level 6 provision, the College is committed to improving social mobility and economic participation across the communities it serves. The College continues to support regional ambitions relating to workforce development, skills progression and future economic growth

Social Mobility

A University of Exeter report (published April 2022) on social mobility and levelling up through education in the South West found that the South West (including Devon, Cornwall, and Somerset) has the worst educational outcomes for disadvantaged young people in the country. The region has the lowest rate of disadvantaged students going on to attend university (17 per cent), with only 40 per cent of disadvantaged pupils attaining a passing grade in GCSE English and Maths. The report also highlights that the region has low social mobility compared with other areas, and with fewer professional jobs available and a low return to education. The report presents three key challenges for the South West:

- A low wage economy, impacting working families and job opportunities for young people;
- Disconnected areas, with rural and coastal communities facing barriers to accessing services and education;
- A lack of impetus for change, with little national and political advocating on behalf of the region.

Regional Demand

The original Devon & Somerset LSIP development focused on the priority sectors identified by the HotSW Skills Advisory Panel's Local Skills Report 2022-2024 and aligned closely with the SDF programme in the area. The LSIP made a decision at the outset to focus on the three sectors identified as Transformational Opportunities for the area: Energy, Engineering and Digital. These three were key opportunities to provide significant growth opportunities for the region and they are also broad enough to include local specialisms, place based clusters of expertise and centres of excellence. Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths careers across the Heart of the South West region contribute to 30% of the area's economic output (circa £10 billion worth to the economy) and 200,000 are employed within STEM centric job roles. It is forecast that production, manufacturing and 'Science, Technology, Engineering and Math' (STEM) based employment opportunities are expected to increase by 19,000, while the requirement for skilled trades will also further increase by 10,000 over the next 10-year period (HotSW LEP 2022 Local Skills Report publication).

MEETING LOCAL, REGIONAL & NATIONAL NEEDS

NATIONAL SKILLS PRIORITIES

National Skills Priorities have been agreed across Government and take into account the Skills England report, Industrial Strategy Priorities and Plan for Change and are areas with high volumes of vacancies which are expected to increase; long-term structural barriers to recruitment, retention and progression issues; and are important in providing opportunities for employment in key growth areas such as green jobs and net zero, creative industries and science and technology (including AI and quantum computing).

These sectors are:

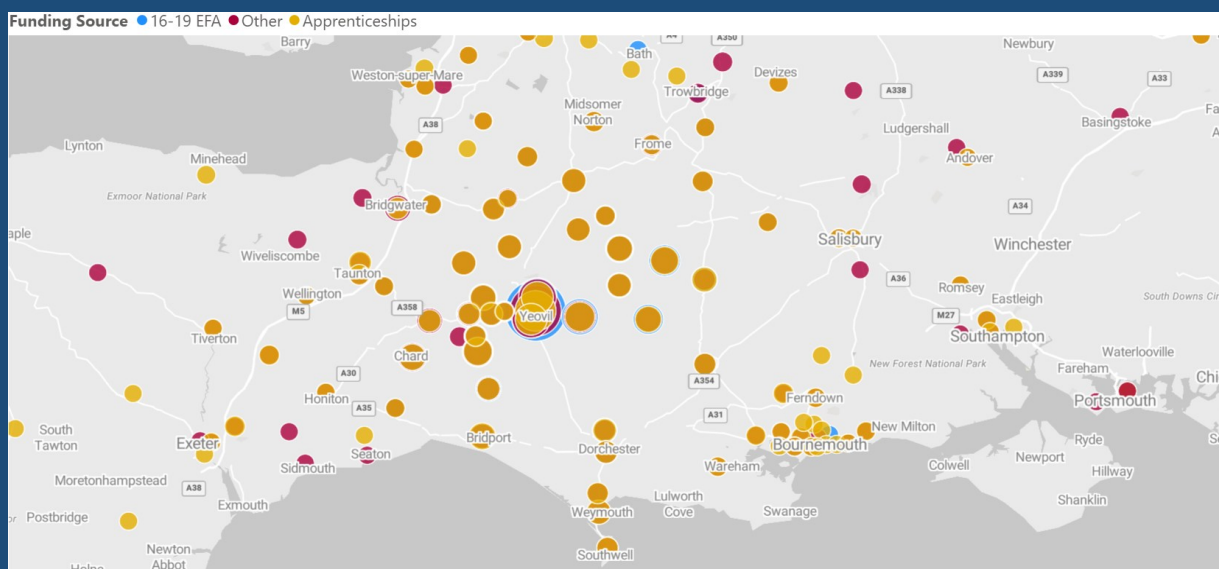
- advanced manufacturing
- creative industries
- defence
- digital and technologies
- financial services
- life sciences
- professional and business services
- clean energy industries
- construction
- health



As part of the Colleges' Accountability Agreement, we will be prioritising the delivery of high-quality programmes that have been co-designed with employers which align to government identified priority sectors, and that are transferable to the local and regional skills requirements. National priority delivery programmes include T Levels, apprenticeships, Free courses for jobs, Skills Bootcamps, and Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs).

TRAVEL TO LEARN

The College serves a broad community across South Somerset, North and West Dorset, supporting both local learners and employers. Through the development of increasingly distinctive specialist curriculum areas, the College is strengthening its reputation and attracting learners and business partners from a wider geography, extending its reach and impact beyond its immediate locality.



INVEST 2035: THE UK's MODERN INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

The 'Invest 2035: the UK's Modern Industrial Strategy' is a 10-year plan by the UK government to drive economic growth by focusing on high-growth sectors and places. It aims to create a more stable and predictable environment for businesses, encouraging investment in sectors with high growth potential and ensuring tangible impact across the UK. The strategy emphasises a collaborative approach, involving local and devolved governments, businesses, and other stakeholders.

The strategy aims to attract a greater share of internationally mobile investment in strategic sectors. It also seeks to encourage domestic businesses to increase their investment and scale up their growth. The goal is to achieve this with sustainable, inclusive, and resilient economic growth across the UK.

The Industrial Strategy, focuses on eight growth-driving sectors, which are: advanced manufacturing, clean energy, creative industries, defence, digital and technologies, financial services, life sciences, and professional and business services.

Key Areas of Focus for the UK's Modern Industrial Strategy include:

High-growth sectors -

The strategy will prioritise and support sectors with strong growth potential, such as advanced manufacturing, clean energy, and digital technologies.

Strategic places -

It will focus on areas with the greatest potential for growth, including city regions, high-potential clusters, and strategic industrial sites.

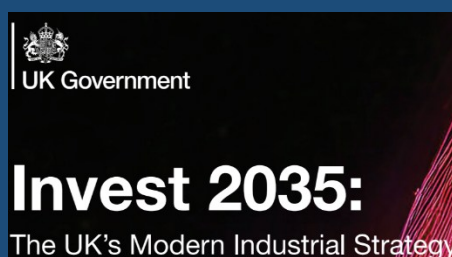
Local and devolved governments -

The strategy emphasises collaboration with local and devolved governments to tailor growth initiatives to specific regional needs.

Skills and workforce -

The strategy will recognise the importance of investing in skills and training to support a skilled and adaptable workforce.

Within its Accountability Statement the College is looking to the future and the expected emerging priorities and investments of the Invest 2035: the UK's Modern Industrial Strategy'. Related to these priorities the UK government has committed to increasing its defence spending to 2.6% of gross domestic product (GDP) by 2027, with an ambition to reach 3% in the next parliament as economic and fiscal conditions allow. This commitment is a significant increase from the previous target of 2.5% by the end of the decade and is intended to be offset by cuts to aid spending. In the financial year 2023-2024, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) spent £6.9 billion in the South West region of England. This represents a significant portion of the MOD's overall spending with UK businesses which and was the second largest regional spend behind the South East (£7.1bn.).



THE GREAT SOUTH WEST

The Great South West (GSW) is a well-established private–public sector pan-regional partnership, committed to driving investment, delivering major projects, developing a testbed for innovation, and ensuring the region's opportunities are clearly understood by Government.

As the Pan-Regional Partnership for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, Devon, Dorset and Somerset, GSW is focused on:

Shifting the needle on UK economic growth.

Driving the UK economy forward.

Leading in globally critical sectors for the UK.

The GSW Partnership Board brings together representatives from business, education, local authorities and wider stakeholders. Key sectors including transport, energy, advanced manufacturing, agriculture, marine and space are all represented. The Board works closely with Government and actively champions the region on both a national and international stage.



The GSW mission is to deliver a prosperous future for all communities by driving long-term investment, boosting the economy by up to £45bn, creating 190,000 new jobs by 2035, and establishing the region as a leader in the UK's green and blue economy.

The College continues to play an active role within the GSW partnership, contributing to Programme Boards covering Food Security, Energy Security, Defence and Internationalisation, while also supporting the development and delivery of the Great South West Industrial Workforce Plan (IWP). The IWP builds on the Great South West Independent Economic Review (IER), Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs), and a range of regionally secured sector initiatives linked to nationally significant flagship projects.

A 2024 GSW High Value Manufacturing Technical Report highlights that 120,000 people were employed in 7,880 manufacturing businesses across the region in 2023, representing 7% of the regional economy. Notably, manufacturing in the Great South West has grown at an average annual rate of 1.2% in the five years to 2022, significantly outperforming the 0.5% decline seen across Great Britain over the same period.

Opportunities within the GSW region

The GSW region continues to secure significant investment through a range of nationally critical flagship projects. While this presents a major economic opportunity, it also places increasing pressure on an already constrained labour market.

An aligned and responsive skills ecosystem is therefore essential to support delivery at pace. This includes meeting workforce demands across projects such as Hinkley Point C, Ministry of Defence investments (including Leonardo and AUKUS), Floating Offshore Wind, Critical Minerals, Gravity Campus (including the Agratas gigafactory), Devonport, the Dorset Clean Energy Super Cluster, and wider advanced manufacturing growth across the region.

Additional Narrative – Funding Transition

It is important to note that pan-regional partnership funding for the Great South West is coming to an end. While this marks a shift in the formal funding model, it does not signal the end of the partnership itself. GSW partners remain committed to continuing collaboration across the peninsula, recognising the enduring value of a shared regional voice in influencing national policy, securing investment, and coordinating delivery at scale.

Going forward, the Great South West will evolve into a more agile, partner-led collaboration, continuing to champion the region's strategic priorities, support major investment opportunities, and align key sectors such as defence, clean energy, advanced manufacturing and food security. This transition places even greater emphasis on strong local leadership, institutional partnerships, and employer engagement to sustain momentum and ensure that the region continues to capitalise on its nationally significant opportunities.



The Great South West is a powerhouse of opportunity, combining strategic assets, cutting-edge technologies, a unique innovation ecosystem, and a highly skilled workforce to drive investment into the UK's most critical industries.

With strengths in clean energy, defence, advanced manufacturing, agrifood, and maritime innovation, the region is primed to deliver the Government's growth ambitions while securing a more resilient and sustainable future.

The Great South West is also home to a dynamic innovation ecosystem. Our recent High Growth Business Tracker identifies 100 of the region's strongest-performing companies, collectively holding around £4 billion in assets, with 65% forecast to achieve over 20% growth in the next year. This depth of high-potential businesses, supported by strong research institutions and collaborative networks, offers investors direct access to a pipeline of ambitious companies ready to deliver long-term value.

CLEAN ENERGY

The Great South West is helping lead the UK's transition to secure, low-carbon energy, developing innovative solutions across nuclear power, floating offshore wind, hydrogen, battery production, and critical minerals.

- ✓ **Nuclear Power:** Hinkley Point C - the UK's largest low-carbon energy project - will provide clean electricity for over six million homes while establishing a globally significant nuclear supply chain in the region. This, coupled with the region's considerable nuclear expertise, assets, supply chain and research capabilities means the region is pivotal to the UK's new nuclear future.
- ✓ **Battery Manufacturing:** The Agratas gigafactory and associated supply chain investments are transforming the nation's battery ecosystem, strengthening domestic energy storage, recycling, and EV production to position the region and UK in a globally competitive position.
- ✓ **Floating Offshore Wind (FLOW):** The Celtic Sea has the potential to generate up to 20GW of floating offshore wind, positioning the region at the centre of the UK's next generation of renewable energy deployment, and expanding the range of economic opportunities this presents for people, place, and the domestic supply chain.
- ✓ **Critical Minerals:** The Great South West holds the UK's largest reserves of lithium, copper, tin and tungsten - essential materials for batteries, clean energy technologies, and advanced manufacturing to serve multiple industries.

DEFENCE & ADVANCED MANUFACTURING

The Great South West is one of the UK's most significant defence and advanced manufacturing hubs, with global strengths in marine engineering, aerospace, cybersecurity, and autonomy.

The region's defence sector generates over £2.8 billion in GVA and supports over 61,000 jobs, making it a key pillar of the UK's national security capability.

- ✓ **Naval & Maritime Defence:** The region is home to Devonport, the largest naval base in Western Europe, alongside a growing cluster specialising in marine autonomy and defence technologies.
- ✓ **Aerospace & Aviation:** The Great South West hosts the UK's largest aerospace cluster, including Leonardo in Yeovil and major aviation infrastructure across Cornwall, Exeter, and Bournemouth.
- ✓ **Electronics & Photonics:** Innovation centres such as the EPIC Centre in Torbay support developments in quantum technologies, advanced communications and semiconductor innovation.
- ✓ **Space & Satellite Technology:** Facilities including Goonhilly Earth Station and Spaceport Cornwall are advancing the UK's commercial space capabilities.

PORTS & MARITIME INFRASTRUCTURE

The Great South West's ports are strategic assets supporting international trade, industrial supply chains, and the delivery of major energy infrastructure.

- ✓ **Floating Offshore Wind Support:** Ports including Falmouth, Plymouth, Portland, and Appledore have immense potential to support the assembly, deployment, and servicing of floating offshore wind infrastructure and associated industrial and service clusters.
- Global Trade & Logistics:** The region's ports provide gateways connecting local industries to global markets, supporting manufacturing, marine engineering, and energy supply chains.
- Maritime Innovation:** With world-class marine research institutions and a strong maritime cluster, the region is advancing innovation in offshore engineering, marine autonomy and next-generation maritime technologies.

The Wider Eco-system

Alongside engagement with nationally significant employers, the College recognises the vital contribution of SMEs and local supply chain businesses across South Somerset, North and West Dorset. These organisations provide substantial employment opportunities, support economic resilience and frequently offer learners their first experience of work. Through employer forums, curriculum reviews, work placements, apprenticeships, Skills Bootcamps and collaborative projects, the College ensures that the needs of smaller businesses are reflected within curriculum planning and skills development activities.

LSIP PROGRESS (SUMMER 2024) AND AREAS OF GROWTH

Outlined in the Department for Education's Further Education white paper, the aim of Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) is to give employers a voice and opportunity to collaborate and contribute to the future skills landscape in their locality as an integral part of addressing skills gaps. Yeovil College has a clear geographical focus to serve the skills needs across South Somerset, North & West Dorset and, as a result, the College supports businesses and communities multiple LEP areas and continues to engage with stakeholders across the traditional geographical boundaries.

In addition, the College proactively engages with the designated employer representative bodies (ERBs) that are assigned to lead the development of the Local Skills Improvement Plans across the West of England, Devon and Somerset (Heart of the South West) and Dorset to ensure the skills being planned, designed and delivered are supporting the needs of its business community.

The Secretary of State for Education approved all 38 LSIPs in line with the approval criteria set out in the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022 and in accordance with the LSIP statutory guidance in August 2023. Since then regional LSIPs have been updated with regular reviews to ensure they remain relevant and are currently in effect until September 2025, where the government intend to re-commission the LSIPs aligned to new geographical and devolved regional boundaries helping shape the future Growth and Skills Levy requirements, which replaced the Apprenticeship Levy in April 2025.

Devon & Somerset

Somerset LSIP Progress Report - August 2024

The Summer 2024 Progress Report from the Devon and Somerset Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) outlines the region's ongoing efforts to align education and training with employer needs. It emphasises a collaborative, employer-led approach to skills development, aiming to address persistent talent shortages and future-proof the workforce. The report highlights progress made since the original LSIP publication in 2023, including strengthened partnerships between businesses and education providers, the development of new training pathways, and a focus on digital and green skills. It also identifies areas needing further work, such as improving access to training in rural areas and enhancing employer engagement across sectors.

Yeovil College Highlights:

Employer Collaboration: Yeovil College is recognised for its proactive engagement with local employers to co-design curriculum and training that meet real-world business needs.

Digital and Technical Skills: The college has expanded its digital and technical training offerings, aligning with regional priorities for a future-ready workforce.

Apprenticeship Growth: Yeovil College has seen growth in degree apprenticeships (including HTQ's), providing alternative higher education routes that combine work and study.

Case Studies: The report includes case studies featuring Yeovil College's role in innovative partnerships, particularly in engineering and health sectors.

Dorset

Dorset LSIP Progress Report - June 2024

The Dorset LSIP Progress Report (June 2024) provides an update on the region's progress in aligning post-16 technical education with employer needs, nearly a year after the original plan was published. The report reflects

a strong foundation of collaboration among employers, educators, and stakeholders, with a focus on addressing skills shortages, improving training accessibility, and supporting economic growth. Key themes include the importance of apprenticeships, employer-led curriculum development, and targeted support for disadvantaged learners. The report also highlights the role of local initiatives in tackling broader social challenges, such as homelessness and youth unemployment.

Other emerging opportunities include:

PortWind: Proposed 2GW offshore wind farm in Dorset to power 3 million homes.

£28bn Dorset Clean Energy Cluster: Includes wind, hydrogen, carbon capture, and nuclear projects.

Economic Impact & Skills Boost: Thousands of jobs, up to £332m GVA annually, and local training geared toward green careers.

The devolution circumstances provide additional challenges for the regional economic leadership, however key stakeholders including GSW, ERB's, LA's and providers continue to work together proactively to bridge any functional gap these circumstances present.

West of England & North Somerset

West of England and North Somerset LSIP Progress Report - June 2024

The West of England and North Somerset LSIP Progress Report (2024) outlines the region's progress in aligning skills provision with employer needs, focusing on key growth sectors such as engineering and advanced manufacturing, construction, and digital. The report emphasises collaboration between employers, training providers, and local authorities to address skills shortages, improve curriculum relevance, and support economic growth.

Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing

Identified and continues as a priority sector due to its contribution to regional productivity and innovation. Employers report persistent skills shortages, particularly in mechanical, electrical, and precision engineering. The report notes a growing demand for higher-level technical skills, including CAD, CNC machining, and robotics.

Investment in specialist staff recruitment and CPD, training equipment and employer-designed curriculum is underway to meet these needs.

Construction

The sector is experiencing a resurgence in demand, driven by housing and infrastructure projects.

- There is a shortage of skilled tradespeople, including bricklayers, electricians, and site managers.
- The report highlights collaborative training hubs and on-site learning models as effective responses.
- Emphasis is placed on green construction skills, such as retrofitting and sustainable building practices.

Digital

- Digital skills are described as cross-cutting and essential across all sectors.
- There continues to be a significant gap in data analysis, cybersecurity, and software development capabilities.
- The report cites new digital bootcamps and employer-led short courses as key interventions.
- A regional push is underway to integrate AI and data literacy into broader training programs.

THE NEXT WAVE OF LSIPs

As the next generation of Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) for 2025–2028 move towards formal publication in summer 2026, Yeovil College is actively engaging with partners across Somerset, Dorset and the West of England to align with emerging priorities. These refreshed LSIPs represent a new three-year cycle, building on previous plans and existing labour market intelligence, with a stronger focus on employer need, delivery of technical education up to Level 8, and alignment with national industrial and skills strategies.

Draft findings across the West of England and North Somerset LSIP highlight a consistent set of cross-cutting skills priorities. These include strengthening foundational digital capability and AI adoption, improving work-readiness and employability skills among young people, addressing recruitment and retention challenges, and increasing employer understanding of, and engagement with, the skills system. Persistent gaps in communication, problem solving and workplace behaviours are identified as a key barrier to productivity, alongside widespread shortages in baseline digital skills required across all sectors.

Sector-specific insights further reinforce the need for integrated, future-focused provision. Advanced manufacturing and engineering requires hybrid technical and digital skills, while clean growth and construction demand new capability in low carbon technologies and retrofit. Digital and creative sectors highlight growing demand for AI, data and automation skills, and the need for stronger progression pathways. Across the “everyday economy” – including health, care, construction and education – workforce shortages, leadership capability and inclusive pathways remain critical challenges.

The developing Dorset LSIP identifies a similarly integrated skills ecosystem, shaped by an SME-dominated economy, an ageing workforce and strong interdependencies between sectors such as advanced manufacturing, defence, clean energy, construction, health and digital industries. It highlights the need for stronger progression pathways, particularly at technician and mid-level roles, alongside a continued shift towards higher-level skills, digital capability and cross-sector transferability. Workforce challenges are driven by demographic pressures, recruitment constraints and lower participation in higher-level learning compared to national averages.

Across both geographies, there is strong alignment on key themes: the need to embed digital and AI capability across all sectors, expand employer-led pathways into work, improve access to training, and support inclusive workforce participation. The emerging LSIPs also emphasise the importance of collaboration between employers, education providers and regional partners to deliver more responsive, flexible and accessible provision that meets both current and future labour market demand.

Taken together, these draft findings provide a clear direction of travel for skills development across Somerset, Dorset and the West of England. The College will continue to align its curriculum, capital investment and employer partnerships to these priorities, ensuring it remains responsive to emerging needs and plays a leading role in delivering the future workforce required to support regional economic growth.

KEY POINTS & ACTIONS FROM THE NEXT LSIPs

Somerset (Draft Direction of Travel)

Employer-led system alignment Strong focus on aligning provision to employer demand and simplifying collaboration across providers and stakeholders

Core, digital and green skills development

Emphasis on digital capability, sustainability and workforce development (upskilling/reskilling and new entrants)

Workforce pipeline challenges

Focus on attracting and developing new entrants, particularly younger people and career changers

Stronger collaboration

Bringing together employers, colleges and partners to deliver more responsive, place-based skills provision

West of England (Key Draft Findings)

Digital and AI capability (priority theme)

Gaps in both basic digital skills (Excel, systems, communication) and advanced AI adoption

Need for workforce-wide digital upskilling and safe AI integration

Work-readiness and employability

Persistent gaps in communication, problem-solving, resilience and workplace behaviours

Strong emphasis on improving transition from education into employment

Recruitment and retention pressures

Ongoing shortages in technical and entry-level roles across sectors

Need to strengthen early talent pipelines and career pathways

Sector-driven skills needs

Advanced manufacturing (hybrid digital/technical skills)

Clean energy and construction (retrofit, low carbon capability)

Professional services and creative sectors (AI, data, transferable skills)

System clarity and access

Employers report difficulty navigating training and funding

Priority to simplify the skills system and improve engagement

Everyday economy and inclusion

Strengthening workforce in health, care, construction and education

Focus on inclusive growth and widening participation

Dorset (Key Draft Findings)

Priority sectors aligned to growth and productivity

Advanced manufacturing, defence, clean energy, digital, construction and health & care

Strong interdependence between sectors and transferable skills across industries

Workforce and demographic pressures

Ageing workforce with significant replacement demand

Lower levels of higher-level (Level 4+) skills and graduate retention challenges

Skills gaps and qualification needs

Polarised labour market (entry-level vs high-level, with limited mid-level roles)

Need to strengthen technician pathways and progression routes

Digital and cross-cutting skills

Digital, AI and data capability required across all sectors

Leadership, management and employability skills identified as critical gaps

Employer engagement and system challenges

Employers struggle to find suitable local training or navigate provision

Need for clearer, more accessible and employer-aligned skills offer

Net zero and clean energy opportunity

Major future growth driver (e.g. clean energy cluster, offshore wind, energy systems)

Requires early pipeline development in technical, construction and engineering skills

Somerset Economic Prosperity Strategy

2025-2045

The Somerset Economic Prosperity Strategy 2025–2045 provides the overarching framework for economic growth across the county, with a focus on delivering a flourishing, fair and green economy driven by high-value sectors including low-carbon energy, aerospace and defence, digital and advanced manufacturing. Central to the strategy is the development of an aspirational, highly skilled workforce aligned to employer needs, with a

particular emphasis on increasing higher-level skills, supporting lifelong learning, and enabling progression into high-value employment. The strategy also highlights the importance of strong employer collaboration, investment in innovation, and inclusive access to skills and opportunity, ensuring that economic growth translates into improved productivity, social mobility and prosperity across all communities.

Skills and Workforce Focus Strategy:

- Close the higher-level skills gap and outperform national levels by 2045
- Improve workforce participation and progression
- Align skills provision directly to employer demand and priority sectors
- Support lifelong learning, reskilling and in-work progression
- Enable workforce skills for digital transformation and net zero.

POTENTIAL WESSEX DEVOLUTION

The College is closely monitoring the potential development of a devolution deal across the emerging Wessex region, which could see greater regional control over skills, employment provision and funding. The proposed devolution would include Somerset, Wiltshire, Dorset (including Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole). While proposals are still evolving, such a deal is likely to strengthen the alignment between local economic priorities and post-16 education, with increased emphasis on employer-led skills planning, integrated funding streams and more place-based decision making. For Yeovil College, this presents a significant opportunity to further embed its role as a key delivery partner within a devolved skills system, shaping provision that directly supports regional growth sectors and workforce needs. The College is proactively engaging with partners and stakeholders across the Wessex geography to ensure it is well-positioned to respond to these changes, influence future priorities and maximise opportunities for investment, collaboration and innovation in skills delivery.



REGIONAL & LOCAL NEEDS

Aerospace, Advanced Manufacturing and the 'Home of British Helicopters'

The British Science Association (2022) identified South Somerset as one of the lowest areas nationally for STEM outreach provision; however, this does not reflect the scale and significance of employment opportunities within the region. The West of England Plus LSIP (WoE+ LSIP) Trailblazer, covering the West of England and parts of Somerset and Gloucestershire, identified over 2,000 businesses employing more than 36,000 people within aerospace and advanced engineering. This wider geography represents the largest aerospace cluster in the UK (and second largest in Europe), with an estimated pre-COVID value of £7bn and employing approximately 29,500 people in the West of England alone.

In April 2023, Yeovil was formally recognised as the 'Home of British Helicopters', reflecting nearly 80 years of heritage at Leonardo's Yeovil site. Leonardo Helicopters provides the UK's only end-to-end rotary wing capability, encompassing design, development, testing, manufacturing, support and training. The site employs over 3,100 staff, including a significant pipeline of graduates and apprentices, across engineering, research and innovation, aviation operations and manufacturing disciplines.



This strategic importance has been further strengthened following the award of the UK Ministry of Defence (MoD) New Medium Helicopter (NMH) programme to Leonardo. This investment, valued at approximately £1bn, secures Yeovil's long-term role at the centre of the UK's rotorcraft capability and reinforces the region's position as a nationally significant hub for aerospace, advanced manufacturing and defence. The contract provides long-term certainty for the local supply chain, safeguarding high-value employment while driving future demand for engineering, digital, manufacturing and technical skills.

In addition to Leonardo, the local ecosystem is supported by a strong cluster of advanced manufacturing employers, including Honeywell Aerospace (Yeovil, c.600 employees) and Numatic International (Chard, c.1,200 employees), alongside a wider network of specialist SMEs. Together, these organisations form a highly integrated supply chain, underpinning regional productivity, innovation and export-led growth, and creating sustained demand for a skilled and future-ready workforce.

Emerging underwater regional requirement

The demand for underwater technologies and systems in Somerset and Dorset—particularly from companies like TKMS Atlas and Thales—is experiencing significant growth, driven by both defence and commercial sectors. The South West of England, including Dorset and Somerset, is recognised as one of the UK's leading hubs for marine autonomy and underwater systems. The region supports a £103 billion global market for marine autonomous systems projected by 2030.

TKMS Atlas (Portland, c 400 employees) recently secured a £32 million contract to supply the Royal Navy with autonomous mine-hunting systems. This includes the development of Medium Autonomous Underwater Vessels (MAUVs), enhancing the UK's naval mine countermeasure capabilities. The contract created 50 high-skilled jobs in Dorset, highlighting the growing local demand for expertise in underwater systems. AEUK are expecting further growth to circa 600 employees in the next 5 years.



Thales UK (Templecombe c.600 employees)

Thales' site in Templecombe, Somerset is one of its primary strategic locations in the UK, with a strong focus on maritime underwater operations. The site is a key global hub for sonar systems, acoustic sensors, and underwater surveillance technologies, supporting the Royal Navy and other defence partners with multi-billion-pound contracts. Recent contracts have seen significant growth in the site's workforce and is expected to further grow in the next 15-20 years.



Norco Composites and GRP (Dorset Innovation Park c.120–180 employees)

Norco is a specialist engineering and manufacturing business with operations across the South West, supporting high-value sectors including aerospace, defence, clean energy and advanced manufacturing. The company provides precision fabrication, machining and engineering services that are critical to complex supply chains, working with major primes and Tier 1 organisations. Norco's capabilities in high-specification manufacturing, quality assurance and systems integration position it as a key enabler of regional industrial capacity. Ongoing growth in demand across defence, energy and infrastructure programmes is expected to drive continued expansion in workforce and technical capability over the coming years, increasing the need for skilled engineers, technicians and advanced manufacturing specialists across the region. Norco are doubling their footprint on the Dorset Innovation Park which will lead to further recruitment of engineering and composite specialists into the new facilities.



Tods Technology (Portland - d c.100–120 employees)

Tods Technology, based in Portland, is a specialist and rapidly growing provider of engineering manufacturing services to the aerospace and defence sectors. The company supports major programmes through precision machining, fabrication and assembly, forming an important part of the Leonardo supply chain and the wider regional defence ecosystem. Tods Defence contributes to the delivery of high-specification components and systems required for complex aerospace and military applications. With continued investment in UK defence capability and long-term programmes such as rotary and fixed-wing aircraft development, the business is well positioned for sustained growth, placing increasing demand on locally available skilled labour in engineering, machining, and advanced manufacturing disciplines.



TODS Technology

Here by design

Employment, unemployment and economic inactivity

In Somerset:		In Dorset:	
Employment rate 79.3% ages 16 to 64	Employment in Somerset has increased compared with the previous year. Somerset's employment rate was slightly higher than across the South West as a whole in the year ending September 2023.	Employment rate 80.3% ages 16 to 64	Employment in Dorset has increased compared with the previous year. Dorset's employment rate was higher than across the South West as a whole in the year ending December 2023.
Unemployment rate 2.6% ages 16+	The unemployment rate in Somerset was 2.6% in the year ending September 2023. Unemployed people are looking for work and able to start work.	Unemployment rate 2.5% ages 16+	Unemployment (people looking for work) has fallen slightly since a year earlier. The unemployment rate for Dorset was about the same as across the South West as a whole.
Claimant Count 2.5% ages 16 to 64	Claimant Count was slightly higher in December 2023 compared with a year earlier. The Claimant Count measures the number of people who are claiming unemployment-related benefits.	Claimant Count 2.5% ages 16 to 64	Claimant Count was slightly higher in March 2024 compared with a year earlier. The Claimant Count measures the number of people who are claiming unemployment-related benefits.
Economic inactivity 18.7% ages 16 to 64	Economic inactivity has decreased since the previous year. These are people who are neither employed nor seeking work.	Economic inactivity 17.9% ages 16 to 64	Economic inactivity has decreased since the previous year. These are people who are neither employed nor seeking work.

Somerset has a slightly higher employment rate than the South West average (78.9%) and significantly higher than the national rate (**75.0%**). Again, both Somerset's (2.6%) and Dorset's (2.5%) unemployment rate is lower than the regional average (3.1%) and significantly lower than the national rate (**5.0%**).

The low economic inactivity rate in Somerset (18.7%) and Dorset (17.9%) is also slightly lower than the South West average (19.0%). The UK economic inactivity rate for people aged 16 to 64 years was estimated at **20.9%** in January to March 2026.

Dorset had an average of 9,500 vacancies advertised per month in 2023 although concentrated to the lower end of the skills range (Healthcare / Hospitality / Retail / Social Care). In a similar case Somerset, high-demand jobs are concentrated in Healthcare, Social Care, and the Tech Sector. The data demonstrates a high employment / low unemployment and economically inactive workforce in the region, in turn causing challenges for the employment market within the lower end of the skills range and service led sectors.

ONS Published Data as of May 2026.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

At Yeovil College we recognise that we are a small but essential part of a much bigger picture. To provide the skills, resources, knowledge and opportunities we maximise every opportunity to engage with our wider community. This includes employers, local leaders, other educational providers and support services.

We seek to support our local businesses with a workforce at all levels that drives innovation, improved productivity, investment, collaboration adds value and is a clear element in our Strategic Plan for Yeovil College. This approach facilitates continuous growth and investment in emerging technologies and markets, minimises overlap, and ensures the availability and specialisation of resources as needed.

The College will continuously review the focus and aims of our Accountability Statement, ensuring it remains aligned to local demand. Stakeholders who will help continually develop our Accountability Statement in the future include:

- Place Leadership Group
- The Great South West pan-Regional Partnership
- Education institutions for all age groups and abilities (WEIoT, Schools, HotSW Collaboration)
- South Somerset 14-19 Partnership
- South-West Work Experience Partnership (SWEP)
- Local and national employers of all sizes and all sectors, both private and publicly funded (surveys, reviews and curriculum employer forums)
- Local authorities and other government bodies including Somerset Council
- Board and Governance positions across regional stakeholder, schools and local authority growth board.
- Jobcentre Plus / Seetec Pluss / Abri Employment
- Employer representative partners such as LEP / FSB / Chambers of Commerce / South West Business Council
- ERB LSIP leaders across Devon & Somerset, the West of England and Dorset
- Other Governing bodies and strategic stakeholders in the area

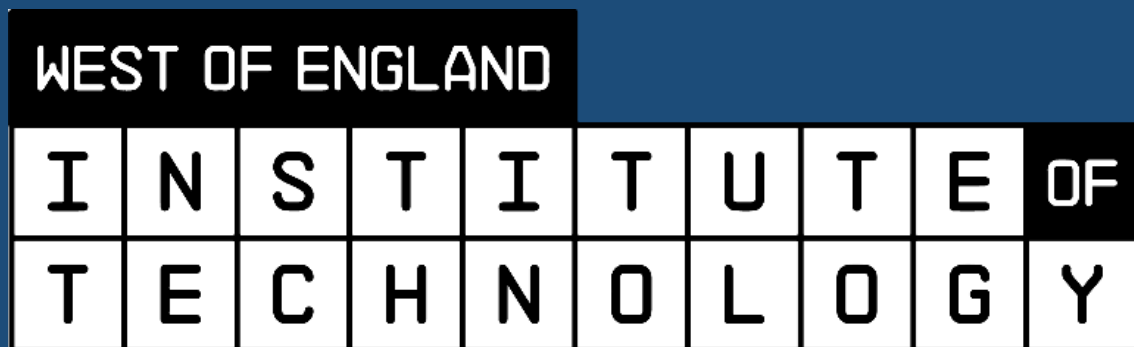
Our partnership with stakeholders supports the college curriculum to develop a range of opportunities to support the diverse levels of our learners' covering experiences such as:

- Supported Internships
- Apprenticeships
- T Level Industry Placements
- Work Experience
- Career Events such as:
 - Futures Fest
 - Time to Shine
 - Apprenticeship and Careers Fair
 - Guest Talks and Lectures
 - Employer Forums
 - Employer site visits



Somerset
Council

ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHER PROVIDERS IN THE AREA

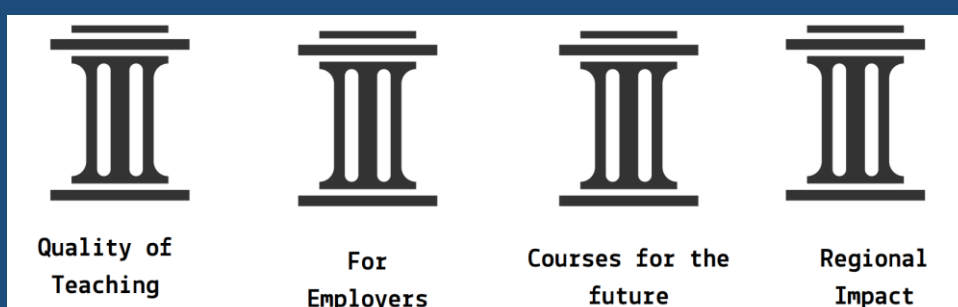


West of England Institute of Technology: Training Collaboration

Yeovil College is part of the West of England Institute of Technology (WEIoT). Institutes of Technology were the previous Government's flagship programme designed to spearhead the delivery of higher technical education in STEM subjects. The WEIoT has brought together key regional strategic employers with FE Colleges including Yeovil College, Bath College, Weston College, City of Bristol College, South Gloucestershire and Stroud College and the University of the West of England (UWE). Yeovil College has committed to the re-licensing and its continued support of the WEIoT in 2028.

The WEIoT has the ambition of levelling up skills across the country and the WEIoT has focus on providing accessible routes into high wage and high skilled employment. Yeovil College has strategically partnered with the WEIoT as it complements the Colleges deliberate focus on Advanced Manufacturing (Aerospace), Health, Science, Construction, Digital (& Design) and Electrical (& Cell) Technology much more closely than that of the South West Institute of Technology. Under its contract extension the WEIoT will also been focusing on the construction sector, aligned to emerging government requirements.

The WEIoT has a established a network of anchor and partner employers who continue to contribute towards the aim of designing and delivering high-quality, employer led, technical education and training to priority sectors across the West of England, including Leonardo Helicopters and the Jones Building Group (both Yeovil College strategic partners). Each College partner has their own regional and industry body employer networks that inform local skills needs and priorities, which work with education providers to co-design and co-deliver timely and relevant local provision. Below are the 4 key pillars of the IoT's objectives:



Other Key Provider Links

Yeovil College actively collaborates with other education and training providers across the South West. Recently, the College has contributed to the Skills Development Fund (SDF) and Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF) initiatives, delivering through its Institute of Technology (IoT) partnerships across the West of England (WoE), as well as through the Heart of the South West (HotSW) SDF/LSIF collaboration. This partnership includes Bridgwater and Taunton College, Strode College, South Devon College, Exeter College, Petroc, City College Plymouth, and the independent training provider SWATpro.

The College remains deeply committed to these partnerships, which are vital in addressing the region's evolving skills needs. Leveraging its strong regional collaborations and IoT status, Yeovil College continues to play a key role in meeting local, regional, and national workforce demands. It is dedicated to maintaining its position as a strategic and operational partner within the community, offering partnership-driven solutions to identified challenges.

The vision outlined in the Association of Colleges' *College of the Future* report—where colleges serve as anchor institutions providing systems leadership within their local and regional ecosystems—aligns closely with Yeovil College's mission. The College is fully committed to this forward-looking role.

Additionally, Yeovil College is an active member of the Dorset & Somerset Training Provider Network (DSTPN), which brings together training organisations, colleges, employers, and stakeholders in the post-16 education and training sector. The College's collaborative work with DSTPN, particularly through Skills Bootcamps across Somerset and Dorset, has already delivered significant outcomes for the region and will continue to be a focus moving forward.

South Somerset 14-19 Partnership

'Imagine the Possibilities'

The South Somerset 14-19 Partnership is a collaboration between the secondary schools, the special educational needs schools and Yeovil College, located in the South of the County. A main aim of the Partnership is to organise and promote aspirational career information events for our young people and these include the Year 8 'My Future' events, Year 10 'Experience days' and the 'Future Forward' event for Higher Education.

The South Somerset 14-19 Partnership undertakes work to help support the transition of its young people into Post 16 destinations by liaising with schools, colleges and support agencies to provide additional information and support. The Partnerships have worked across multiple projects to better the prospect of learners across the region, including directly engaging with schools (from Year 6) to drive consideration of STEM subjects and technical education, NEET Kick Start Programmes and innovative supportive internships with Yeovil District Hospital, Leonardo Helicopters and Thales





Technical Excellence Colleges (TECs) are a nationally designated programme focused on strengthening the UK's ability to deliver high-quality, employer-led skills provision in priority sectors. They aim to address workforce shortages by aligning education more closely with industry demand, improving teaching quality, and creating clearer pathways from education into employment and higher-level technical learning.

Yeovil College has been selected as one of a small number of providers to deliver this initiative through its Defence Technical Excellence College (DTEC), recognising the College's established strengths in engineering, employer engagement and delivery of defence-related skills. The announcement positions Yeovil College within a national network of providers focused on supporting the UK's Defence Industrial Strategy and wider high-value manufacturing sectors.

Yeovil College's Defence Technical Excellence College (DTEC) is a nationally designed to develop a sovereign, highly skilled workforce to meet the needs of the UK's Defence Industrial Strategy and wider high-value manufacturing sectors. It builds on the College's established strengths in engineering and defence, delivering a clear skills pipeline from early engagement (Year 6) through to higher technical education (Level 6).

The DTEC model is centred on high-value manufacturing and engineering, supported by significant capital investment in new, industry-standard facilities and strong partnerships with major defence employers such as Leonardo, Thales, BAE Systems, and the wider regional supply chain.

A key feature is the "hub and spoke" delivery model, enabling Yeovil College to scale its proven approach across a regional and national network of FE partners through the National Defence College Network. This supports collaboration, innovation and the sharing of best practice to meet national skills priorities.

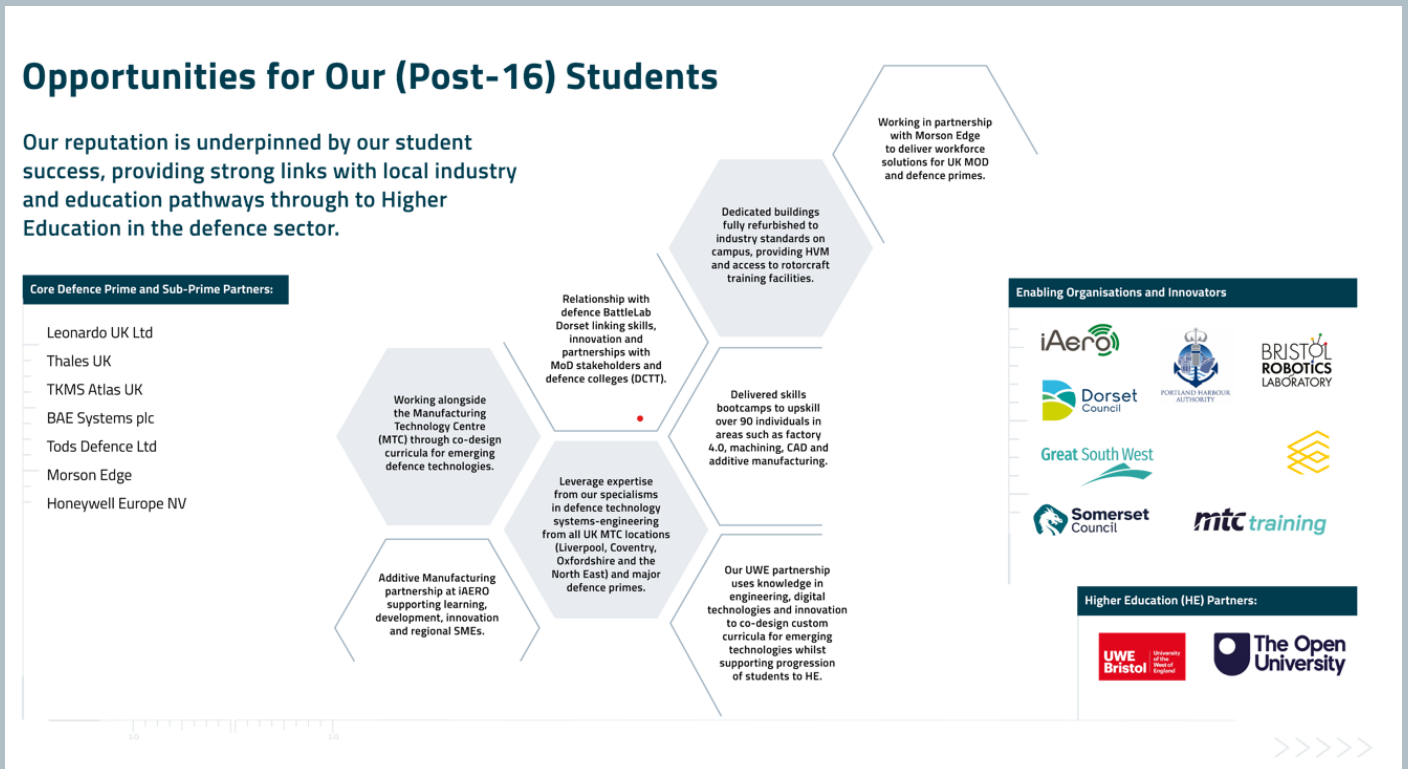
The DTEC programme is underpinned by five core objectives:

- Respond to employer demand: Co-create a sustainable pipeline of skilled learners aligned to industry and defence workforce needs.
- Deliver high-quality provision: Strengthen curriculum design, teaching quality and continuous professional development for staff.
- Deepen employer engagement: Increase employer involvement in curriculum design, delivery and investment.

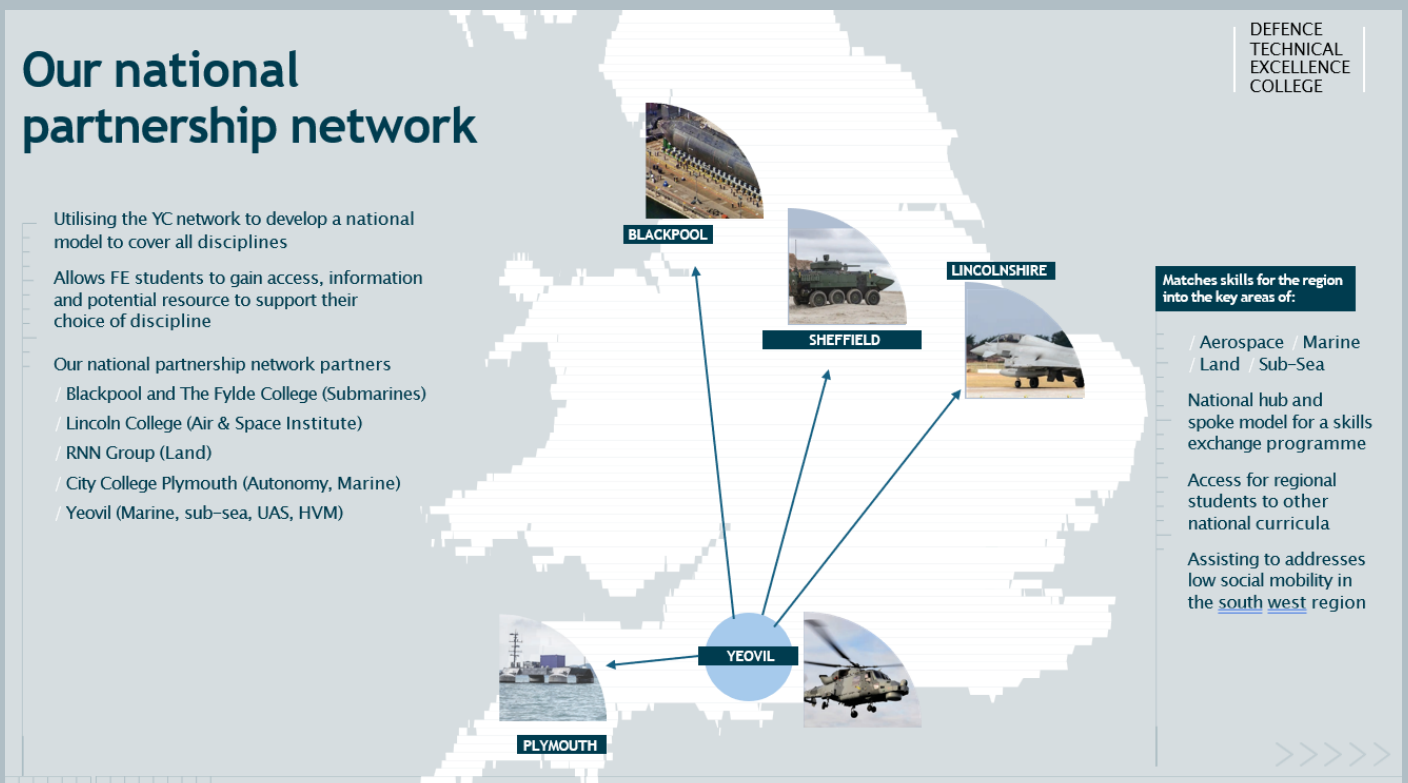
- Enable collaborative delivery: Scale provision through a hub and spoke network of providers locally and nationally - particularly in the opportunity of Autonomy.
- Strengthen progression pathways: Create clear routes into employment and higher-level technical education (Level 4+), aligned to priority sectors.

DTEC positions Yeovil College as a regional and national leader in defence and advanced manufacturing skills, supporting economic growth, innovation and the development of future workforce capability across the South West and beyond.

DTEC will deliver connectivity across Industry and Technical Specialist.



The National Defence College Network through our DTEC Hub partners:



PLACE LEADERSHIP GROUP & NEXT GEN

Yeovil College is committed to supporting our community. The Place Leadership Group (PLG) was formed in March 2020 by Yeovil College, to leverage strengths and opportunities in Yeovil and across South Somerset, North & West Dorset. Its objective is to describe a vision for the next 30 years and incrementally implement that change. With representatives from Somerset and Dorset Council, and the assistance of external consultants, the PLG now consists of Senior Management figures from key Innovation, Aerospace, Manufacturing, and Healthcare sectors.

Yeovil College is also a central participant, acting as an anchor for the group, via its employer hub, aligning vocational and academic curriculums with employment requirements across the PLG area of influence. The PLG partners with County and District Councils as well as Yeovil Town Council and now consists of over 30 key CEOs and lead decision makers from local businesses (Leonardo's, Honeywell, Thales, Numatic etc) as well as leaders from civic institutions (Somerset Council, South West Business Council, Somerset Chamber, Yeovil Chamber etc.) and community leaders (DWP, Yeovil College etc.). It's 8-point plan has clear intent and has delivered impact to the region.

The College is also committed to its future generation as we are already aware that attainment and aspirations within the local community are behind regional and national averages, and that talent attraction and retention is the key business challenge throughout the region. Yeovil College, in partnership with the South Somerset /Mid & West Dorset Place Leadership Group (PLG), formally launched the Next Generation network on the Thursday September 8th, 2022, following 12 months of development work. The Next Generation provides a space for 'young professionals' to network with their peers while also facilitating their participation and engagement in regular workshops, guest speaker events, training, personal and professional development sessions and social events.

The brainchild of the South Somerset / Mid & West Dorset Place Leadership Group (PLG), the intent is to encourage young people from across an array of businesses in South and Somerset and mid/west Dorset to meet monthly, becoming part of a network who learn from one another, share experiences, build friendships, and contribute thoughts and ideas to the PLG who, amongst other things, look to develop the area as a preferred 'destination' location for young professionals – creating community.

An underlying objective for the Place Leadership Group is to develop a greater insight as to what key issues influence this generation in their career decision making and with input from this group the PLG is better understanding how to attract and retain talented young professionals and the next generation of leaders to businesses across this region. It is believed that developing a 'community' of young people, mainly in the early stages of their careers, and providing them with opportunities to grow their networks, knowledge and skills, is a great place to start. The group is being supported and sponsored by Yeovil College and is free of charge to attendees.



LOCAL NEEDS DUTY – SELF ASSESSMENT

The Corporation body of Yeovil College completed a strategic review of how the education and training provided, meets the local, regional and national needs in 2025 and will next be reviewed fully in 2028.

The College's curriculum is significantly aligned to LSIP priorities, with close working relationships with Somerset Chamber, the Dorset / Somerset Local Authority, Business West (through its trailblazer work and WEIoT relationship) other education providers and many different stakeholders. The Corporation is still assured of this position giving the Colleges reputation within its community and continued financial growth. The College meets the local skills needs from our scrutiny of the curriculum offer, employer and learner feedback, sustained growth in key sectors and national priorities, continued high metrics in the apprenticeship accountability framework and continued strong outcomes and progressions for our learners.

The review also confirms that meeting local need is not solely about responding to strategic growth sectors. It is equally important that the College supports learners into positive destinations, including entry-level employment, apprenticeships, supported internships, further study and higher-level technical education. Emerging Local Skills Improvement Plans consistently identify employability skills, communication, teamwork, resilience, problem-solving and digital confidence as critical workforce requirements across all sectors. The College therefore remains committed to embedding these skills throughout the learner journey regardless of sector or level of study.

Our duty to review has identified the following considerations which will further enhance and strengthen what the College does for our learners and economy, locally, regionally and nationally:

- Further understand the need for productivity across the region and how these skills can be then implemented across all programmes of study.
- Collate the top wider soft and professional skills identified to demonstrate these across the whole college.
- Identify the top Digital skills (including AI) needed for all learners on all programmes to ensure these are embedded in all programmes of study.
- For the College to explore opportunities within Accelerated and Knowledge Transfer Projects (AKTPs / KTPs) with Innovate UK in relation to digital capabilities, AI and advanced manufacturing requirements.
- For the College to continue its focus on SEND learners and aspire that their achievements and opportunities are equal to those learners without these needs and disabilities.
- To gather information and intelligence regarding the speed of AI integration and how best the College responds with its curriculum outside of Skills Bootcamps in the future.
- Further strengthen employability, work-readiness and professional behaviours across all curriculum areas, ensuring learners are equipped with the communication, resilience, teamwork and problem-solving skills required within the workplace.
- Increase engagement with SMEs, community organisations and local employers to ensure curriculum planning reflects the breadth of employment opportunities available across the regional economy and improves access to meaningful work-related experiences.

Yeovil College are continuing to meet the needs of local learners and preparing them to maximise their potential and contribute to both the local and national economy. Clear pathways of progress are clear for our learners. Our commitment to Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) with the College successfully in achieving whole organisational accreditation to the Matrix Standard in February 2024 and revalidation in February of 2026.

As the only college in South Somerset and the tertiary provider for Yeovil, we are the largest and most diverse post-16 option for our local community across South Somerset, North and West Dorset and therefore have a responsibility to offer a curriculum that empowers our learners to develop the knowledge and skills demanded by our diverse economy. The College is committed to involving employers in the effective design and implementation of the curriculum areas as evidenced through our Employer Forums, Place Leadership Group, Stakeholder Engagement and Self-Assessment Reports and Action Plan processes.

Wider Community Provision

The College offers a range of evening language, maths and English classes, aimed at adults over 19. These make an important contribution to local needs in terms of community-based provision which is focused on supporting the visitor economy, as well as hospitality and cultural industries.

ESOL (English as a Second or Other Language) programmes are delivered on site. These programmes contribute to the local needs by offering essential skills development (including English, maths, digital literacy and employability) to progress young people, including refugees and asylum seekers.

Yeovil College continues to demonstrate its commitment to inclusivity within its community. The College has been recognised by the National Centre for Diversity (NCFD), achieving a place in the Top 50 Most Inclusive Workplaces Index for two consecutive years (2023 and 2024) and maintaining a strong position within the Top 100 nationally in 2025.

The College was also shortlisted for the prestigious Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Heroes Awards, supported by the Skills and Education Group. These awards celebrate organisations leading the way in championing diversity and inclusion across the education sector and reinforce the College's ongoing commitment to creating an inclusive environment.

This commitment is further evidenced in the College's most recent Ofsted inspection (2026), where inspectors highlighted a "highly welcoming culture" and an environment in which learners and apprentices feel included, valued, and well supported regardless of their background or needs. The report recognised that staff create a supportive and inclusive setting where individuals thrive and benefit from personalised approaches to learning and development.

Alongside this inclusive ethos, the College continues to demonstrate a strong and improving skills position. Ofsted identified that learners benefit from a curriculum closely aligned to industry, including employer engagement, work experience, and sector-focused projects that develop valuable technical skills and professional behaviours. Achievement rates are improving across provision, with particularly strong performance in adult learning and apprenticeships, where success rates are high and in some areas exceed national benchmarks, and learners are well prepared for progression into employment, further study, or apprenticeships.

The College continues to expand opportunities for learners with SEND through supported internships, employer-based learning and inclusive progression pathways. Working alongside employers such as Leonardo, Thales and local public-sector partners, the College is creating meaningful opportunities for learners to gain valuable workplace experience, improve independence and progress into sustained employment. This approach supports both learners and employers, helping businesses build more diverse and inclusive workforces while creating life-changing opportunities for individuals with additional needs.



**EXTRAORDINARY
FUTURE**

**Yeovil
College**

Inclusive Mainstream Fund

Yeovil College is committed to maximising the impact of increased investment through the Inclusive Mainstream Funding model, ensuring that learners with SEND are supported effectively within high-quality, inclusive mainstream provision. The College is strengthening its approach through targeted investment in specialist staffing, including learning support practitioners, SEND coordinators and access to wider professional expertise, enabling timely identification of need and delivery of evidence-based interventions. Alongside this, the College will continue to expand supported internships and employer-based programmes, working in partnership with key regional employers to provide meaningful, real-world pathways into sustained employment and independence. This approach ensures that learners with SEND benefit from inclusive, aspirational education experiences, aligned to workforce needs, while reducing reliance on specialist placements and supporting the development of a more integrated, locally responsive skills system. One significant step will be the College-wide implementation of Cognassist, providing a consistent and evidence-informed approach to the identification and support of learners with additional learning needs. Cognassist will enable earlier identification of cognitive learning needs through screening and assessment, allowing staff to better understand how learners process information and engage with learning. This will support the timely implementation of personalised strategies, reasonable adjustments and targeted interventions, helping learners to access the curriculum more effectively from the outset of their programme. The College will use the insights generated through Cognassist to enhance teaching practice, strengthen learner support planning and improve collaboration between curriculum and support teams. Through this proactive approach, Yeovil College aims to improve learner confidence, achievement, retention and progression, ensuring that all learners have the opportunity to reach their full potential within an inclusive learning environment.

ANNUAL OBJECTIVES

After conducting thorough analysis of the skills requirements and reviewing the major factors influencing the skills demands of the region, Yeovil College are committing to the following annual objectives for the Academic Year 26/27. The following objectives respond directly to the Local Needs Duty review, employer engagement activity, Local Skills Improvement Plans and wider economic intelligence. Collectively they are designed to support specialist growth within priority sectors while also strengthening employability, social mobility, inclusion and workforce development across the wider economy.

Our targets for 26/27 are as follows:

□ **Deliver high-impact Skills Bootcamps aligned to priority sectors**

Continue to deliver innovative, employer-led Skills Bootcamps in Generative AI for Business, Electrical Engineering Manufacturing, Leadership & Management, and Factory of the Future (4.0). These programmes will directly respond to LSIP priorities around digital, AI, and advanced manufacturing skills, supporting workforce upskilling and business productivity. Delivery will continue to be reviewed against employer demand, learner outcomes and progression measures to ensure long-term sustainability and maximum impact following changes to national Skills Bootcamp funding arrangements.

□ **Open and operationalise the new Advanced Engineering & Defence facility**

Successfully launch and embed delivery within the new OfS-funded Advanced Engineering and Defence facilities. This will provide industry-standard learning environments aligned to regional employer demand, particularly within aerospace, defence and high-value manufacturing, strengthening the College's position as a key technical skills provider.

□ **Launch Apprenticeship Units to expand employer access**

Introduce a range of Apprenticeship Units to enable more flexible, employer-responsive delivery models. These units will support growth in apprenticeship starts across priority sectors including engineering, construction, business and emerging defence-related pathways. These will include the AI Leadership (Level 5), Electric Vehicle Charging Point Installation (Level 3), Mechanical Fitting & Assembly (Level 2) and Solar PV installation & Maintenance (Level 3) units. The College has funding to deliver to 48 learners across 5 cohorts.

□ **Develop and implement the Defence Technical Excellence College (DTEC) model**

Progress the DTEC programme as part of the national Defence Technical Excellence network, establishing Yeovil College as a regional hub. This will include scaling the "hub and spoke" delivery model, deepening employer partnerships (e.g. Leonardo, Thales and wider supply chain).

□ **Strengthen pathways for learners with SEND and effectively deploy additional funding**

Utilise the additional funding secured through the DfE Inclusive Mainstream Fund to enhance provision for learners with SEND. This will include investment in specialist staffing, targeted learning support, assistive technologies, and employer-based progression opportunities, with a continued focus on improving outcomes into employment, supported internships and independence.

□ **Expand supported internships and inclusive employment pathways**

Build on Foundation Learning success by extending supported internship programme uptake, this will further strengthen progression routes into sustained employment for learners with high needs.

□ **Grow apprenticeship provision in priority growth sectors**

Continue the expansion of apprenticeship starts and on-programme numbers, with a particular focus on engineering, construction, business and emerging defence/maritime opportunities, supporting regional workforce pipeline challenges. We will launch new apprenticeships in Digital and Technology Solutions Professional (DTSP – Lv.6), AI and Automation (Lv.4) and Social Work (Lv.6).

CONFIRMATION OF GOVERNANCE SIGN OFF

On behalf of the Yeovil College Corporation, it is hereby confirmed that the plan as set out above reflects an agreed statement of purpose, aims and objectives as approved by the corporation at their meeting on 16th July 2026. The plan will be published on the college's website within three months of the start of the new academic year and can be accessed from the following link: <https://www.yeovil.ac.uk/about/corporation/>

Chair of Governors

Dated: 16th July 2026



Principal/ Chief Executive and Accounting Officer

Dated: 16th July 2026



Monitor and Review

Progress against the objectives set out within this Accountability Statement will be monitored through curriculum planning processes, learner destination data, apprenticeship performance measures, employer feedback, Self-Assessment Reports and Quality Improvement Plans. Regular updates will be reviewed through College governance structures to ensure provision remains responsive to changing local, regional and national skills priorities and that agreed actions continue to deliver measurable impact for learners, employers and the wider community.

APPENDICES & REFERENCE SOURCES

National Policy & Strategy

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/skills-for-jobs-lifelong-learning-for-opportunity-and-growth>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-strategy-making-the-most-of-everyones-skills-and-talents>
- <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/how-much-does-the-defence-industry-contribute-to-uk-regions/>

Regional & Economic Strategy

- <https://greatsouthwest.co.uk/independent-economic-review-2024/>
- <https://greatsouthwest.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/GSW-HVM-Technical-Report.pdf>
- <http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/social-mobility.htm>
- <https://heartofswlep.co.uk/growing-our-economy/productivity-strategy/strategic-economic-plan/>
- <https://heartofswlep.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/2023-24-Heart-of-the-SW-LEP-Workplan.pdf>

Skills & LSIP Evidence

- <https://devonandsomersetlsip.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/LSIP-Progress-report-Summer-2024-v4-August-2024.pdf>
- https://dorsetchamber.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Dorset-LSIP-Progress-Report_June-2024.pdf
- https://www.businesswest.co.uk/sites/default/files/west_of_england_and_north_somerset_2024_lsip_progress_report.pdf
- <https://skillslaunchpad.org.uk/skills-strategy/>

Research & Insight

- https://www.exeter.ac.uk/media/universityofexeter/centreforsocialmobility/images/Social_Mobility_in_the_South_West_Report.pdf
- <https://www.britishtscienceassociation.org/news/new-report-inequity-science-engagement-uk>
- <https://www.productivity.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/FEC-Summary-Report-FINAL-150323.pdf>

College & Regulatory

- <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/31/130805>
- <https://www.yeovil.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Yeovil-Accounts-FY25-signed.pdf>
- <https://www.yeovil.ac.uk/about/vision-mission-values/>