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**Annual Accountability Agreement and the Local Needs Duty**

**Section A: Purpose**

St Brendan’s Catholic Sixth Form College is a diverse, inclusive and aspirational community in which each individual is valued and supported to achieve. We are the only Sixth Form College in the city and the largest provider of academic qualifications. We specialise in Sixth Form education, primarily A-levels and applied general courses for 16 to 19 year olds. We believe that we can help all students succeed, whatever their starting points or backgrounds, so we also offer courses at Level two for students who may need additional time with us before they progress to Level 3 education either at St Brendan’s or another educational provider in the city, apprenticeship or employment.

Our sole purpose is to promote social mobility and to significantly improve the life chances of all students by offering them an exceptional educational experience. This was acknowledged at our most recent Ofsted inspection, as well as our commitment to high standards. The profile of the College’s student body is distinct from that of many other Sixth Form Colleges: the prior attainment of students is lower than average, whilst levels of disadvantage are considerably higher. Developing our students’ skills, so that they may progress successfully to the next stage of their education and career, is therefore key to addressing social disadvantage. For our Sixth Form students, we focus on progression to HE and a smaller amount to higher level apprenticeships. Therefore, our Sixth Form curriculum is geared towards that objective and, as such, emphasises ambitious academic teaching, combined with a strong personal development and support programme that prepares students for both university and for adulthood.

To fulfil our purpose, Governors, the Principalship team, staff, students and key stakeholders have set out six strategic priorities:

**The College has 6 strategic ambitions which are as follows:**

* *Strategic Ambition 1:* The College’s environment and its ethos reflect Catholic values and gives support to students and staff so that they thrive and flourish;
* *Strategic Ambition 2*: The curriculum meets local and national needs and priorities, is expertly delivered and delivers outstanding outcomes;
* *Strategic Ambition 3*: Students benefit from high quality pastoral support, have a range of opportunities to develop their skills and progression outcomes are outstanding;
* *Strategic Ambition 4*: The College benefits from strong leadership, and fit for purpose staffing structures with innovative professional development opportunities, and where all members of staff are supported and valued;
* *Strategic Ambition 5*: Productive relationships are established with a range of stakeholders, and the College has a good local, regional and national reputation;
* *Strategic Ambition 6*: The College remains financially secure, and the estate meets curriculum and community needs and services are highly efficient.

**Section B: Context and Place**

* Population in the West of England is expected to increase by 4.5% between 2020 and 2025, adding an additional 42,397 people to the area.
* Within the region, 42% of adults hold a degree equivalent or above, which is 10% above national average. 4% of residents hold no formal qualifications, compared to 7% nationally
* Despite high average prosperity in the city and the region, areas of Bristol remain within the most deprived 10% in England. The 10 most deprived neighbourhoods are located in South Bristol. The College is situated in South Bristol and serves these communities.
* As of July 2022, according to statistics obtained from Bristol City Council, Bristol has 41 areas in the most deprived 10% in England, including 3 in the most deprived 1%. The greatest levels of deprivation are in Hartcliffe & Withywood, Filwood and Lawrence Hill.
* In Bristol, 15% of residents (70,800 people) live in the 10% most deprived areas in England, including 19,000 children and 7,800 older people.
* 6.8% of 16-17 year olds (2020/21) were “not in education, employment or training” (NEET), worse than national average (5.5%).
* 15,400 children under 16 (17.9%) live in relative low-income families in Bristol (2019/20), significantly below the national average of 19.1%.
* Our curriculum offer and entry criteria are highly inclusive, offering clear progression routes to success, regardless of student starting points and backgrounds. The vast majority of our work is with 16-18-year olds, who follow a range of study programmes from our Access to Level 3 programme to A-levels and Applied General qualifications. With a focus on individualised study programmes, some students also study a mixed programme of A Level courses together with applied general qualifications. At Level 2, we offer BTECs and GCSE re-sits in Maths and English to 16-18 year olds.
* Our wider curriculum, is rich and varied. Students benefit from a wide choice of sports, performing arts, fundraising activities, academic enrichment such as subject academies and grade boosters, student council and various other student-led clubs/societies. We also offer a comprehensive and effective Personal Development Curriculum of health, wellbeing, personal development and safeguarding. There are also Leadership opportunities through our work with the Bristol Educational Partnership and Bristol Future Talent.

**Section C: Approach to developing the annual Accountability statement**

The following documents, which set out the various skills strategies and priorities for the region, have formed the basis of this position.

* Business West Local Skills Improvement Plan and Priority findings <https://www.businesswest.co.uk/business-west-local-skills-improvement-plan-priority-findings>
* West of England Plus Trailblazer Local Skills Improvement Plan. <https://www.businesswest.co.uk/sites/default/files/west_of_england_plus_lsip_trailblazer_report_v8_1.pdf>
* WECA Horizon Scanning: Post-16 Education & Skills Infrastructure document. <https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Horizon-Scanning-Post-16-Education-and-Skills-Infrastructure.pdf>
* Meeting the skills needs: guidance of Annual Accountability Agreements 2024/25 and the Local Skills Duty.

Our Curriculum is driven by national and local intelligence about progression routes for 16-18 year olds, this is derived from interaction with the Sixth Form Colleges Association (SFCA), the Association of Colleges (AOC), the Wessex Group and also our engagement with the West of England Combined Authority (WECA). Members of the College Principalship are on the AOC Strategic Policy Group, SFCA’s Governance Group and ASCL National Sixth Form Advisory Group. The Principal is also involved in the creation of the Post 16 strategic plan for Bristol and Co-chairs the Wider Bristol Post-16 network. Our curriculum offer is also informed by our students and the work which we do with universities in the region.

The Local Skills Plan has been created by the West of England Combined Authority (WECA), this covers the three geographical areas of Bath & Northeast Somerset, Bristol and South Gloucestershire. Our College works with the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) in a variety of ways to support meeting skills needs in the region, including;

* Working with an appointed Enterprise Advisor
* Sharing labour market intelligence to inform our curriculum planning and careers guidance education
* Member of the Cornerstone Group which comprises of a group of employers who support and deliver careers outreach into schools
* Sharing resources for example, Green Skills Labour Market Intelligence (LMI), careers information adapted for SEND and English as an Additional Language (EAL) students
* STEM Ambassadors Hub
* Training for governors

Moving forward the College will be working with WECA through different working groups on how it can support emerging skills needs both locally and regionally.

**Section D: Contribution to National, Regional and Local Priorities**

At St Brendan’s we constantly keep our curriculum under review. Over the years, we have adopted and designed new curricula to better meet the identified skills in the region. In addition to the teaching of exam-board specifications, we incorporate skills-based teaching, both in an academic sense and in terms of wider skill development.

**Contribution to Meeting Skills Needs Through Our Curriculum Offer and Intent**

The following is a list of skills challenges identified through the West of England Annual Skills Report (January 2022) and inform our curriculum planning and intent;

* Employers struggling to recruit and facing skills gaps
* Educational attainment in schools, particularly for disadvantaged children
* NEET levels in parts of the areas and for SEND and Children in Care/Care Leavers
* Lower than average progression to higher level learning
* Low awareness of apprenticeships
* Geographical inequalities and deprivation

Through the teaching of the Sixth Form curriculum, we will continue to make a very positive contribution to the following identified local, regional and national skill sector priorities.

* Software, IT and Digital, Creative
* Health Care and Social Care
* Finance, Public Service Professionals and Business
* Engineering, and Aerospace
* Green Skills
* Science and Mathematics

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| **Identified Sector Area and/or skills priority** | **Local, Regional and National** | **St Brendan’s Curriculum Alignment** |
| Lower than average progression to higher level learning | Local, Regional and National | A broad programme of A-Levels and Applied General qualifications are on offer to support successful progression to HE for the significant majority of our students. In addition, our personal development curriculum, and our academic support, prepares students expertly for success at university. |
| IT, Digital and Creative | Local, Regional and National | We offer:   * A level Computing, BTEC IT * A Level Art, Design, Graphics, Photography and Media and Film |
| Sciences and Maths | Regional and National | We offer:   * Applied General in Human Biology * A level Biology, Chemistry, Physics * A level Maths and Core Maths * Science related subjects in terms of Psychology and Applied Sport. |
| Health Care | Local, Regional and National | We offer:   * Single applied general in Health and Social Care (for mixed L3 programmes) * Full-time level 2 in Health and Social Care * Diploma in Health and Social care |
| Finance, Business and  Professional Services | Regional | We offer:   * A-level Business Studies * (L3) in a Diploma in Business * Single applied general in Business (for   mixed L3 programmes)   * Full-time L2 package for Business * A-Level in Law * Single applied general in Law and   Legal Services (for mixed L3  programmes)   * A-level Maths, Core |

**Action Plan**

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| **Strategic Development Plan Link (SO)** | **Local, Regional and National** | **Update** |
| **SO: 2**  Expand the curriculum to include an AAQ in Engineering and Sustainability, ensuring that the course align with current industry standards and sustainability practices. The expansion should cover new emerging technologies, sustainability practices, and methodologies that are in demand in the workforce. | Local, Regional and National | Achieved  New AAQ in Engineering being introduced as well as key links with an Engineering firm to confirm co-curriculum construction |
| **SO: 2**  Conduct a comprehensive review of alternative qualifications for key courses to ensure our curriculum remains current, relevant, and aligned with applied general reforms. The courses for review include:  Extended Certificate in Applied Human Biology  Cambridge Technical Diploma in Health and Social Care (VRQ)  BTEC National Extended Certificate in Applied Law  BTEC National Diploma in Business | Local, Regional and National | Achieved  New AAQs in IT, Human Biology and Health and Social Care being introduced from September 2025  Other qualifications mentioned like Law and Business have been extended for review in 2027 |
| **SO: 4**  Continue to develop our employer engagement programme to foster deeper collaborations with industry partners across curriculum areas and key identified skills areas in the Southwest. This will include creating increased CPD opportunities for college staff to ensure they remain updated with the latest developments in their respective fields. | Local, Regional and National | Achieved  Employer engagement and curriculum links being developed and industry placements for staff are also taking place. Links now with Health and Social Care Pathways, Engineering, IT, and Digital. |
| **SO: 5**  Ensure our Careers, work experience and employability programmes meet the local, regional and national skills needs | Local, Regional and National | Partially achieved.  Preparation for HE, Careers event and engagement of employers remains high as well as bespoke programmes like Bristol future Talent. A range of work experience placements are in place and this needs to be further built upon next year |

Future Priorities

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| **Strategic Development Plan Link (SO)** | **Local, Regional and National** | **Outcome** |
| **SO1:**  Continue to conduct a comprehensive review of alternative qualifications for key courses to ensure our curriculum remains current, relevant, and aligned with applied general reforms. The courses for review include:  Diploma in Cambridge Technical Health and Social Care (  BTEC National Extended Certificate in Applied Law  BTEC National Diploma in Business | Local, Regional and National | New AAQs Diploma in HSC, Business and Law from 2027 |
| **SO2**: Continue to develop our employer engagement programme to foster deeper collaborations with industry partners across curriculum areas and key identified skills areas in the Southwest. This will include creating increased CPD opportunities for college staff to ensure they remain updated with the latest developments in their respective fields. | Local, Regional and National | Continue to engage with local and regional employers to identify opportunities for collaboration on staff development and curriculum relevance  A high proportion of staff will have worked with an external specialist in their area by 2026 and implemented findings into their curriculum in 2027  Develop a careers champion in each curriculum cluster to ensure speakers from industry/university enhance the delivery of the curriculum 2026 |
| **SO3:** Continue to ensure our Careers, work experience and employability programmes meet the local, regional and national skills needs | Local, Regional and National | Experience of Work: short and medium-term placements for a number of student cohorts  Work-Related Projects and Employer Encounters: a range of shorter, innovative projects that introduce students to employers and the world of work |

**Cooperation Statement**

On behalf of St Brendan’s Sixth Form College corporation, it is hereby confirmed that the College plan, as set out above reflects an agreed statement of purpose, aims and objectives as approved by the Corporation on the meeting of 03/07/2025.

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: [Faith in Learning | St Brendan's Sixth Form College (stbrn.ac.uk)](https://www.stbrn.ac.uk/)