



College Development Plan 2025-2026

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1. Executive Summary

The South West College's 2025-2026 College Development Plan (CDP) outlines the College priorities for the year ahead, and details their alignment with Ministerial Priorities and the Department for the Economy's Business Plan for 2025-2026:

- Good Jobs
- Raise Productivity
- Regional Balance
- Decarbonisation

South West College's comprehensive industry aligned offering will attract 12,859 learners in 2025-26 yielding an increase of 474 or 3.8% on the number predicted in the 2024-2025 CDP. The rate of growth in 2025-2026 is constrained by the challenging budgetary environment. South West College continues to source additional resource funding to address the sub-regional challenges detailed in this CDP. DfE funded student recruitment in 2025-2026 will be augmented by funding secured through PEACEPLUS, UKSPF and LMPs contributing to the significant numbers of citizens availing of high quality Further and Higher education and contributing to the achievement of a regionally balanced economy. In the year ahead the College will continue with its focus on maintaining the number of Apprentices and Higher Level Apprentices employed locally in 'good jobs'. Whilst it is anticipated that Apprenticeship recruitment will remain solid, it is anticipated that the uplift in employer National Insurance and the increase in the Apprentice Minimum Wage will see a slight reduction in the number of Apprentices entering employment with local companies in 2025-2026.

Productivity and the drive for Net Zero remain challenges for industry within the region. Whilst the challenging budgetary environment will curtail the number of businesses supported via InnovateUS, the South West College led PEACEPLUS funded initiatives; Green Accelerator Skills Programme (GRASP) and Powering Research & Innovation for Sustainable Manufacturing (PRISM) will commence delivery during 2025-26, supporting local companies on the drive for Net Zero. The College's continuing commitment to decarbonisation is detailed in the newly developed Sustainability and Net Zero Action Plans which detail the road map to Net Zero by 2050.

South West College is one of six FE colleges in Northern Ireland (the FE sector), which are all Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs) and are a key delivery arm of the Department for the Economy (DfE). Under Article 20 of the Further Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1997, FE Colleges are required to produce and submit College Development Plans in line with DfE requirements. These College Development Plans reflect the sector's mandate to play a central role in supporting a strong and vibrant local economy through the development of professional and technical skills, increasingly at higher levels, by helping businesses to innovate; and supporting those with low or no qualifications, or who have other barriers to learning; through social inclusion programmes aimed at providing them with the skills and qualifications needed to find employment and to become economically active.

The College's footprint effectively covers the council districts of Fermanagh Omagh District Council (FODC) and a significant component of Mid Ulster District Council (MUDC), an extensively rural industrious region, highly successful in many respects.

Whilst there is some variation across the two District Council footprints, Economic Inactivity remains an ongoing issue for the region with a quarter of the working age population considered as economically inactive. In addition to this, the Fermanagh Omagh District Council District has consistently ranked high in terms of its percentage of working age residents having no formal qualifications, with above NI average rates. It is against this background that the College continues to prioritise targeted social inclusion and employability initiatives as the initial steps on a pathway where all learners can enter at their level and progress through a range of professional and technical education options leading to further and higher education. This is also in line with the Department's Review of Post School Education, Skills and Training Provision, and associated legislative protections for Young People with Special Educational Needs – Summary Report. Increasing Tertiary Educational attainment at Level 4 and above remains a key challenge and sees the College continuing to prioritise the delivery of a robust Higher Education offer across a range of modes full time/part time and Higher-level Apprenticeship.

Whilst the region continues to be challenged by pockets of low qualification attainment and economic inactivity, it is also home to a significant industrial base including the Mid Ulster Manufacturing cluster which employs almost twice as many people in this sector than any other Council region in Northern Ireland. Health and Social Care; Construction and Retail also remain economically important sectors of the regional economy.

The challenges which exist in this sub-region are multi-faceted and stubborn and whilst South West College has a key role in addressing these challenges, no one organisation acting alone will make a meaningful impact. In response to the challenges and indeed the opportunities which exist in the region the College has developed a three-year Strategic Plan to provide a framework for prioritising collaboration, resources and activity. The South West College Strategic Plan 2025-2028: Inspiring Learning and Shaping a Sustainable Future has been finalised, subject to Ministerial approval, and is aligned with the Department's focus on the fiscal horizon and longer-term planning. The priorities which underpin the Strategic Plan are detailed in Figure 1.

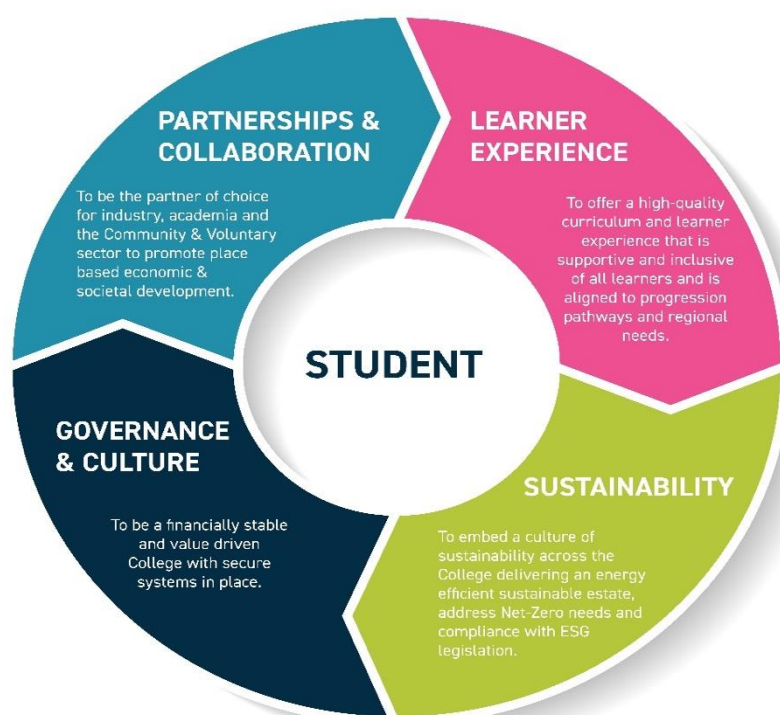


Figure 1:

*The South West College
Strategic Plan 2025-2028:
Inspiring Learning and Shaping a Sustainable Future*

Our plan will be implemented by an annual operating plan, aligned with our Quality Improvement Plan, and will focus on the key objectives under each of the four priorities – Learner Experience, Partnership & Collaboration, Sustainability and Governance & Culture. The priorities detailed in the Strategic Plan are informed by our vision, mission, and values which reflect the College’s commitment to inspire, promote and empower lifelong learning for the people of the region, working in partnership with our local employers and industry. (Figure 2).

Figure 2:
College Vision, Mission and Values



This College Development Plan sets out the aims, objectives and operational targets that the College has set for 2025-2026, aligned with the strategic priorities of the Department for the Economy (DfE) and endorsed by our Governing Body. Oversight of the delivery of the College Development Plan will be provided by the Governing Body, which will review performance against the deliverables at least quarterly via the Curriculum and Quality Assurance subcommittee meetings. The Department for the Economy will also monitor the College’s progress and performance of the deliverables under this College Development Plan, ensuring robust governance and accountability mechanisms are in place. The College will strive to deliver these priorities, working together with our staff and students, DfE, the wider FE sector, and our industry and community stakeholders.

1. Strategic Context

Programme for Government 2024-2027: Doing What Matters Most

Grow a Globally Competitive Economy

Proposed Action: Through a series of multi-million-pound committed investments, we will make this a more vibrant and inclusive place to live, work, invest and visit. Central to every part of our plan for a globally competitive and sustainable economy will be employers and workers. Supporting them to build the skills needed both now, and in the future, will be vital if we are to harness our economic potential.

Better Support for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs

Proposed Action: We will work to transform the Education system to provide high quality, efficient and sustainable services for children with SEN and disability. Systemic transformation will take time and will require significant investment but it is vital that we respond meaningfully to make sure our education system works for all learners.

Minister's Economic Vision

The College is a key delivery partner in taking forward the Minister's priorities set out in his Economic Vision to:

- Increase the proportion of working-age people in **Good Jobs**;
- Promote a more **Regionally Balanced** economy;
- **Raise Productivity** of businesses; and **Reduce Carbon Emissions** in the transition to a greener and more sustainable economy.

Strategies / Priorities

- [Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland](#)
- [Trade and Investment Strategic Priorities](#)
- [Climate Change Act \(NI\) 2022](#) and [The Climate Change \(Reporting Bodies\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2024](#)
- FE Transformation
- [Developing a More Strategic Approach to 14-19 Education and Training - a Framework to Transform 14-19 Education and Training Provision](#)
- [Skills Barometer 2023 - 2033](#)
- [DfE Sectoral Action Plans](#)
- [DfE Sub Regional Economic Plans](#)
- [DfE Digital Skills Action Plan 2024 - 2034](#)
- [Tourism Vision & Action Plan – 10 Year Plan](#)
- The Department's [Business Plan for 2025/26](#) in support of the Minister's Economic Vision

The Minister's [announcement](#) on new proposals to support school leavers with special educational needs and the publication of the [Review of Post School Education, Skills and Training Provision, and associated legislative protections, for Young People with Special Educational Needs – Summary Report](#)

3. Financial Performance / Position

2025/26 Forecast Position

The tables below set out the College **resource of £34,886 and capital requirements of £500k for 2025/26.**

	PROGRAMME / ACTIVITY					
	A	B	C	D	E	F
	Further Education	Higher Education	Apprenticeships / Traineeships	Business Development	Social Inclusion	Other
	EL - Level 3 (not under B – F)	Level 4+	Programmes up to Level 3 including AppsNI; Traineeships; Skills for Life and Work	InnovateUs; Skills Focus; Assured Skills Academies; Flexible Skills; International Programmes; Innovation Voucher Scheme	Access NI; Essential Skills; ESOL; College Connect; NI Prisons Service; VEP; Princes Trust; UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Step Up	Miscellaneous income including VAT reclaim and bank interest receivable
Direct Teaching Costs - Pay	5,743	3,423	6,241	75	2,118	-
Direct Teaching Costs - Non Pay	312	186	339	179	115	-
Non-Direct Costs*	9,551	5,693	10,379	3,498	3,523	-
Total Delivery Cost	15,605	9,302	16,958	3,751	5,756	-
Non-Grant in Aid Income	1,249	3,908	6,312	3,314	1,434	269
Net Requirement	14,356	5,394	10,646	437	4,322	- 269

* Includes total support service/non-front-line activity overheads apportioned based on delivery hours.

TOTAL RESOURCE REQUIREMENT (£000's)	£34,886
Capital Expenditure – Major capital projects	£500k
Capital Expenditure – Minor Works	
Capital Expenditure – DfE Energy – Invest to Save	
Capital Receipts	
Net DfE Capital Requirement (£000's)	£500k
City Deals Capital Expenditure	£0

The total resource requirement included in the table above does not include the following:

UK Shared Prosperity Funding - £313k - funding confirmed but not yet added to budget

Pressures bid included with October monitoring - £635k

South West College – Reform to Save Monitoring

Staff Numbers FTE	Staff Type	FTE Average 31 July 2023	FTE Actual 31 July 2023	RtS Leavers 2024	FTE Actual 31 July 2025
	Teaching	305	326	-16.08	282
	Non-Teaching	315	299	-12.24	320
	Total	620	625	-28.32	602
External Funded Posts		-25	-25		-31
Vacant Posts		15	15		16
DfE Funded Posts		610	615		587

25/26 College Planned Delivery

The College accounts for the profile and Sub-regional Operating Context to prioritise resource utilisation to areas of greatest need, aligned to the Strategic Context.

a. College Profile for 2025/26

South West College operates across the four major towns in the region; Omagh, Dungannon, Cookstown and Enniskillen and falls within the Council Districts of Fermanagh and Omagh District Council and a significant component of Mid Ulster. Collectively, both councils have a population of approximately 268,000¹. The College's footprint covers a large rural area within those Council Districts servicing a population of 215,000 people approximately. Although encompassing a primarily rural area, our campuses are located within an industrial region which is home to key sectors including Manufacturing, Engineering and Construction. The College offers a broad spectrum of high quality professional and technical education aimed at meeting the needs of our students, the local community and industry in this region. The College staffing and student profiles are reflected in Figures 3 & 4.

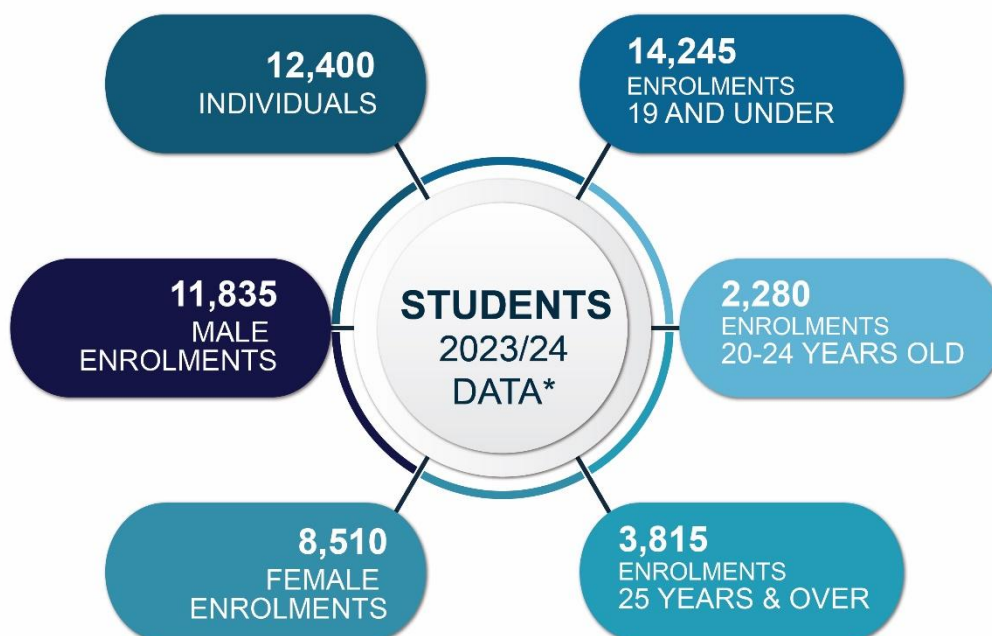
Figure 3:
*Staffing Profile*²

Group	31 July 2024			31 July 2023		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Principal & Chief Executive and Deputy Directors	1	1	2	1	2	3
College Management Team	7	5	12	5	4	9
Employees (excluding Part-Time Lecturers)	183	367	550	215	401	616

¹ Mid-Year Population Estimates by LGD, NISRA

² South West College Annual Report and Financial Statements For the Year Ended 31 July 2024

Figure 4:
Student Profile



CAMPUS PROFILE

South West College has a vibrant, contemporary estate which strives to contribute towards our ethos of being a greener, more sustainable organisation. The Erne Campus in Enniskillen is an exemplar of our commitment to a sustainable estate, having been awarded PassivHaus Premium energy certification and BREAAAM standard. Working in partnership with Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, the College has transformed an historic landmark former workhouse into a modern business entrepreneurship facility. Opened in 2023, adjacent to our Erne Campus, the Workhouse serves to support businesses and entrepreneurs by providing contemporary workspace, hosting networking events and offering a range of business support options including technical and innovation support. The Centre for Renewable Energy Sustainable Technologies (CREST) is located at our second Enniskillen base, the Technology and Skills Centre. The CREST Centre is central to the delivery of the College's sustainability curriculum which includes the PassivHaus Designer and Tradesperson qualifications.

Our sustainability agenda is underpinned by our Sustainability Action Plan and Net Zero Action Plan. Actions will be implemented across the college in support of these two key plans. Carbon baseline reports for 2021/22 have been completed for all campuses.

Figure 5:
College Campus Profile



At our Omagh Campus, we deliver a range of FE, HE and Work Based Learning (WBL) programmes aligned with the sub regional industrial base with a focus on sustainability and a significant number of apprenticeship programmes with a focus on automotive courses (i.e. agricultural machinery and heavy and light vehicle repairs). Delivery of the automotive provision takes place both on the main campus and at our satellite premises on the Gortin Road.

The College's main campus in Mid Ulster is based in Dungannon, where a broad spectrum of Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing programmes are delivered, servicing the needs of the Engineering industry cluster in the region. The College also retains two smaller facilities in Cookstown including an industrial training facility in Kilcronagh Industrial Estate which is focused on welding, increasingly on robotic welding.

Future proofing the College estate, equipment and resources and maintaining alignment between provision and industry need is resource intensive. Final capital allocation for 2024/25 was £1.13M which included spend direct support to the curriculum incorporating £230k spend on IT Infrastructure and £250k on Robotics & Automation Equipment. In support of our sustainability goals, the College invested £250k on PV Installation at the Dungannon Campus and £150k on other Estates Projects. The initial capital allocation for 2025/26 for the College is £500k which is significantly under the anticipated capital spend required to meet the College needs this year, estimated at over £2M, including investment in a new Biomass boiler.

College Strengths

According to the most recent Further Education Outcomes: Academic Year 2022/23, 94% of FE leavers from the College were satisfied with their FE experience. In the same survey, 41% of leavers indicated that they needed their FE qualifications to get their current job, 84% of College leavers felt they had good job security, 73% felt they had opportunities for career progression and 83% indicated that they had autonomy to make decisions on how they carry out tasks within their roles.

South West College had five nominations shortlisted at the NI Apprentice Awards 2025, two for the Higher-Level Apprentice of the Year Award, two for the Small to Medium Enterprise Award and one for the Mentor Award. JMG Systems in partnership with South West College ultimately being recognised as the winner in Small to Medium Enterprise Award category. Participating in skills competitions with the support of Lecturers and Skills Champions enhances the confidence and motivation of participants alongside building professional and technical skills. Past competitors have highlighted that competing was an enjoyable experience and had a beneficial impact on their overall attitude to learning or work. WorldSkills UK states “Over eight in ten said that competing made them feel more ambitious in pursuing their career. 85% of competitors stated that they had increased their technical skill level and 90% said that competing had given them a better understanding of their strengths and weaknesses within their skill area which they can work in when they get back to their college, training provider or employer.”

In 2024–2025, the embedding of a skills-focused culture across all professional and technical disciplines remained a central priority for South West College. In September 2024, the College was represented at the WorldSkills competition in Lyon, France, where an SWC apprentice distinguished themselves as the highest-scoring member of Team UK and was awarded a prestigious Medallion of Excellence.

At the UK Finals in November, College students secured one gold medal and two bronze medals. Between January and March 2025, the College hosted 21 internal skills competitions, engaging 437 students in competition activities, with 103 students advancing to registration for regional heats. The College have two students who are part of the UK Worldskills squad due to their previous success in regional and national competitions. One of those students has been selected to represent Team UK in Denmark at the EuroSkills Herning 2025 competition.

Reflecting the positive impact of competition participation and despite the challenges posed by budget constraints, the College remains committed to maximising student opportunities for involvement in skills competitions in 2025-2026.

During the academic year 2024/25, the College secured a Beacon Award in the category of Education for Sustainable Development, receiving the award in recognition for its Climate Action Campaign, a multi-faceted initiative which has been designed to integrate sustainability into every aspect of the college's operations.

b. Sub-regional Operating Context

Population Profile

The West, defined by the Local Government Districts of Mid Ulster Council (MUDC) and Fermanagh and Omagh District Council (FODC), is characterised as rural, industrious and highly successful in many elements. However, there are several sub-regional issues pertinent to the area that shape College priorities, community engagement and the skills and employability initiatives we offer to citizens. Relatively high levels of economic inactivity, people who are not in work nor looking for work, are a long-standing feature of the sub regional labour market.

Although there has been reduction over time, the proportion of the working age population in the region that are considered economically inactive remains a challenge with 26% in FODC and 23.3% in MUDC³ⁱ. Contributing factors include the educational attainment profile of the region alongside the disability and gender employment gap that exists among citizens. A detailed breakdown is provided in Tables 1 & 2.

Table 1:
Fermanagh and Omagh District Council Economic Indicators

Regional Balance			
Indicator	LGD Rank	Value (Latest Period)	NI Average
Employment Rate (people 16-64 in work 2023)	8	70.6%	73.6%
Economic Inactivity Rate (people 16-64 not working and not seeking or available to work, 2023)	8	26%	24.7%
Gross Domestic Household Income (per head, 2021)	9	£17,132	£17,636
Tertiary Education Attainment Rate LV4+ (working age population 16-64, 2023)	10	35.6%	39.7%

³ InvestNI Sub Regional Economic Plan Technical Annex

Table 2:
Mid Ulster District Council Economic Indicators

Regional Balance			
Indicator	LGD Rank	Value (Latest Period)	NI Average
Employment Rate (people 16-64 in work 2023)	7	74.9%	73.6%
Economic Inactivity Rate (people 16-64 not working and not seeking or available to work, 2023)	6	23.3%	24.7%
Gross Domestic Household Income (per head, 2021)	6	£17,495	£17,636
Tertiary Education Attainment Rate LV4+ (working age population 16-64, 2023)	5	40.1%	39.7%

Historically, the region has consistently ranked high in terms of its percentage of working age residents having no formal qualifications, a scenario which is particularly challenging in FODC where the proportion of the working age population with no qualifications at 14%⁴ⁱⁱ is above the NI average.

To address this, the College will continue to offer opportunities that support a culture of upskilling and reskilling locally and ensure pathways are available for all learners to enter at their level and progress through qualifications. In line with DfE's Business Plan for 2025/26, the College will work with DfE to deliver the skills which learners need to improve their life chances and contribute to the economic growth in our region. Furthermore, there is a significant issue with gender and disability employment gaps in the region. Economic inactivity rates are disproportionately higher for females and those with a disability, well above the NI average in both cases.

Whilst attainment levels in tertiary education presents a challenge across the region, rates are particularly concerning in FODC with 35.6% of the working age population attaining at Level 4 and above, whilst rates in MUDC were marginally better at 40.1%⁵. Given the link to productivity and labour market outcomes, the focus remains on increasing attainment at Level 4 and above. In broader terms, engagement in Lifelong Learning remains a challenge with MUDC the lowest of any LGD in terms of the proportion of males (aged 25-64) engaged in education or training at 6.8% compared to the NI average rate of 14.4%⁶, thus highlighting the importance of the College's part time upskilling opportunities at all levels.

Unemployment challenges remain including addressing the number of young claimants (16-24). The number of people claiming unemployment benefits has experienced a recent rise to almost 4,900 people, of which 12% of total claimants are aged 16-24^{Error! Bookmark not defined.iii}. Continued expansion of skills and employment interventions, complemented by our regional

⁴ InvestNI Sub-Regional Economic Plan Technical Annex

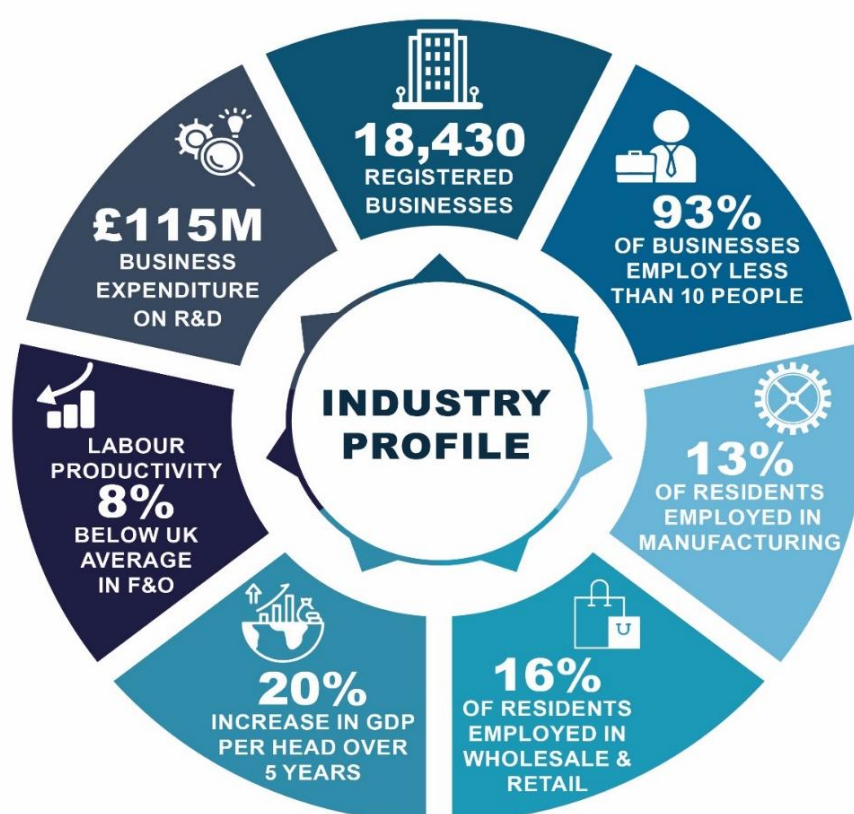
⁵ InvestNI Sub-Regional Economic Plan Technical Annex

⁶ InvestNI Sub-Regional Economic Plan Technical Annex

labour market partnerships, will be at the forefront of College delivery to ensure more citizens are in a position to access a 'good job'.

Industry Profile

Figure 6:
Sub-regional Industry Profile



The sub-region is dominated by micro businesses that account for 92% (FODC) and 94% (MUDC)^{iv} of the business population. There is a concentration of employment in Manufacturing, Construction and Retail, with Mid Ulster having the highest percentage of residents employed in Manufacturing of any council area in NI, a direct correlation to the significant industrial base in this area. Ensuring the College's business and industry services caters largely to the needs of smaller businesses and delivering a curriculum that is mindful of the region's more dominant employment sectors will remain at the forefront of College activity.

Productivity in NI is a widespread issue, consistently ranking below the UK average and labelled as one of the least productive regions of the UK. Issues translate to all areas of NI,

with Fermanagh and Omagh having relatively lower levels of labour productivity and GDP per head (economic growth) in comparison to NI as a whole. However, there has been significant improvement in recent years, whilst output per job remains 4% lower than the regional average, this is a significant improvement on the 16% deficit in 2013.^v

The sub-region continues to possess weaknesses in key areas that drive long-term growth in productivity including the skills profile of citizens, business characteristics and performance as well as the infrastructure and connectivity issues associated with a rural region. To support the drive for higher levels of productivity, the College will strive to ensure the foundations are in place for this in terms of investment in skills, research and development, and innovation.

Challenges remain across the region in relation to income, with median wage levels in FODC and MUDC remaining stubbornly low and below the NI average of £528.90 at £495.00 and £510.80 for FODC and MUDC respectively; jobs created through FDI (foreign direct investment) remain low with FODC and MUDC ranking 8 and 9 respectively out of the 11 LGDs^{vi}. Again, pointing to the importance of ensuring the full range of College provision and services are aligned with the needs of existing business.

The Net Zero challenge is particularly pronounced across the region the College serves with FODC and MUDC having the highest and second highest proportionate level of CO2 emissions per LGD, pointing to the importance of the additional support for industrial decarbonisation available via PRISM and CSIC.

Entrepreneurship levels and investment in Research and Development remain challenges across the district, whilst the investment in R&D is more pronounced in MUDC at 1.9% of output and marginally above the NI average of 1.5%, investment in FODC is significantly less at 0.8% of output. In respect of Business Birth rates, both councils perform well below the NI average with MUDC having the lowest rate and FODC the 3rd lowest, highlighting the importance of supporting the development of a culture of Entrepreneurship among students and supporting local businesses with close to market R&D support.

c. College Engagement/Collaboration

South West College engages with a wide range of employers, their sectoral representative bodies and the organisations within the community and voluntary sector, to co-design curriculum, the provision and services needed to meet the needs of our students, industry and regional stakeholders. During the 2024-25 year, the College collaborated with a range of industry representative bodies to co-design curriculum, including the MEGA (Manufacturing Engineering Growth Advancement) network to provide support for Engineering industry. This support included delivery of the Mentoring for Growth initiative to embed mentoring in local companies aiding retention, achievement and progression of Apprentices in Mid Ulster Manufacturing companies.

The College collaborates with local industry to ensure provision is aligned with need and to build talent pipelines for local companies. The annual Get Engineering and Apprentice Connect events provide opportunities for networking and engagement with companies, potential students/apprentices and their parents. During 2024-25, 90 companies, and in

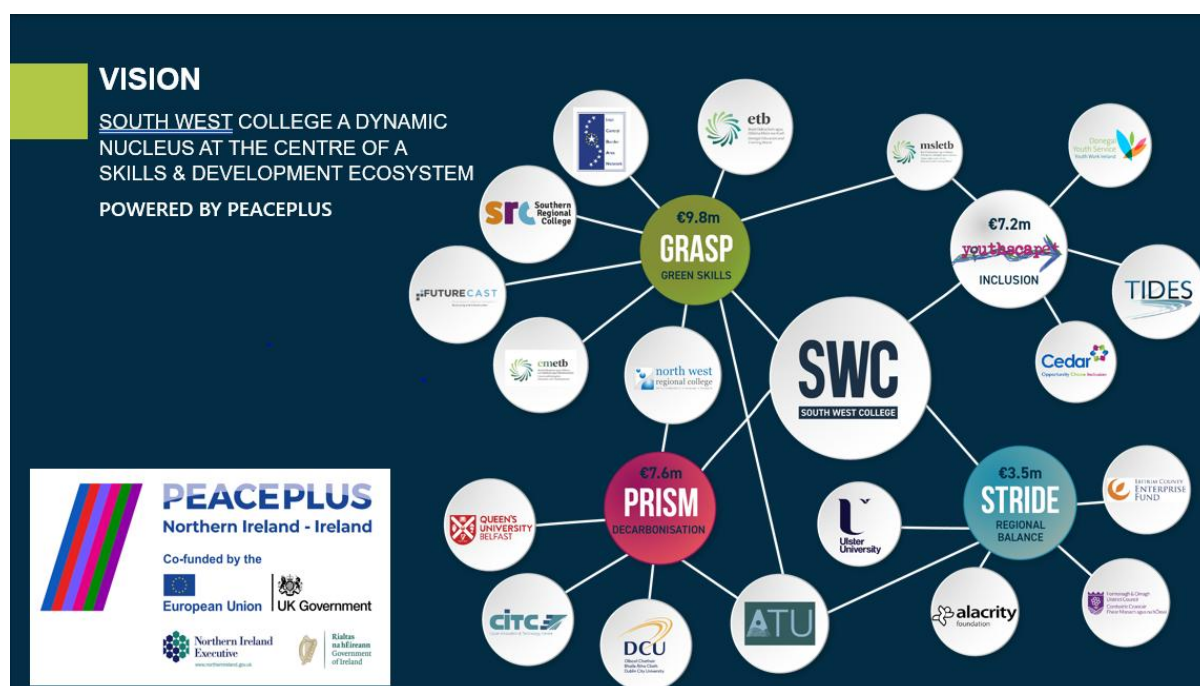
excess of 450 young people and their parents/guardians attended those events across the campuses.

The College delivers a vibrant Entitlement Framework provision with 694 school pupils participating in 2023-24 (318 at pre 16 and 376 at post 16). Participating pupils were drawn from 29 schools across four area learning communities. In 2024/25, Level 3 Construction was offered at our Dungannon Campus, and we are exploring the feasibility of offering Level 3 in Children's Care, Learning and Development for the first time at our Dungannon Campus. Students enrolling on the Entitlement Framework programme courses are anticipated to increase in this academic year.

Senior College staff engage with Councils via a range of forums, including Community Planning and Labour Market Partnerships, with the Director of Development and Support chairing the FODC Labour Market and Local Economic Partnerships and the College/FODC Partnership Board of the Enniskillen Workhouse. The College led Rural Economic Accelerator Programme (REAP) has been co-designed with statutory and Community and Voluntary delivery partners; FODC, First Step Women's Centre and Fermanagh Rural Community Initiatives to provide integrated social inclusion and employability programmes which meet the needs of economically inactive citizens across the region.

To complement existing provision and maximise the impact on sub-regional challenges the College has positioned itself at the centre of an education and development ecosystem – drawing expertise and funding into the region to address economic and societal challenges. The College is leading four separate signature projects, collaborating with 17 partners to use €28m investment secured from Special European Programmes Body (SEUPB) to promote social and economic development of the region during the period 2025-2029.

Figure 7:
PEACEPLUS Provision



Youthscape+: Supporting 1,200 young people to meet their full potential entering education, training and/or employment

GRASP: Providing opportunities for 2,000 local people to gain Green Construction Skills required to construct new PassivHaus standard buildings and retrofit existing building stock to near zero energy standards.

PRISM: Engaging with companies in the Agri Food, Polymer Processing and Mineral Processing sectors to support SMEs in decarbonisation their products and processes.

STRIDE: Will provide a jointly developed solution to address key societal challenges specific to rural areas through the application of digital technologies

The delivery schedule for all programmes reaches out to 2029, with citizens and companies engaged across Northern Ireland and the border counties by the College and partners.

The College has worked with the Mineral Processing Association Northern Ireland (MPANI) in the development of an outline funding application for a Concrete Sustainability Innovation Centre (CSIC) through the MSW Growth Deal. CSIC will be further support for the Mineral Processing sector to decarbonise their products and processes complementing the support flowing from PRISM. This initiative is progressing with the focus during 2025-2026 moving to the development of the Outline Business Case.

CURRICULUM HUB & SECTORAL PARTNERSHIPS

The SWC led Engineering Curriculum Hub ensures that curriculum is standardised across the sector and aligned with the needs of industry. Extensive development activities have been undertaken in 2024-25 by cross college working groups to ensure a standardised approach of the L2 OCNNI Engineering qualification and in addition, the successful completion of year 1 of the L5 Foundation Degree Consortium with Ulster University involving three of the six FE Colleges. College staff provide secretariat support to the Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering Sectoral Partnership (AMESP), supporting the review and development of industry aligned curriculum, including a review of the Level 3 Fabrication & Welding pathway and the development of the new L2 & L3 Food & Drink Engineering Maintenance qualifications (FDQ) in conjunction with the Agri Food Manufacturing Sectoral Partnership (led by CAFRE).

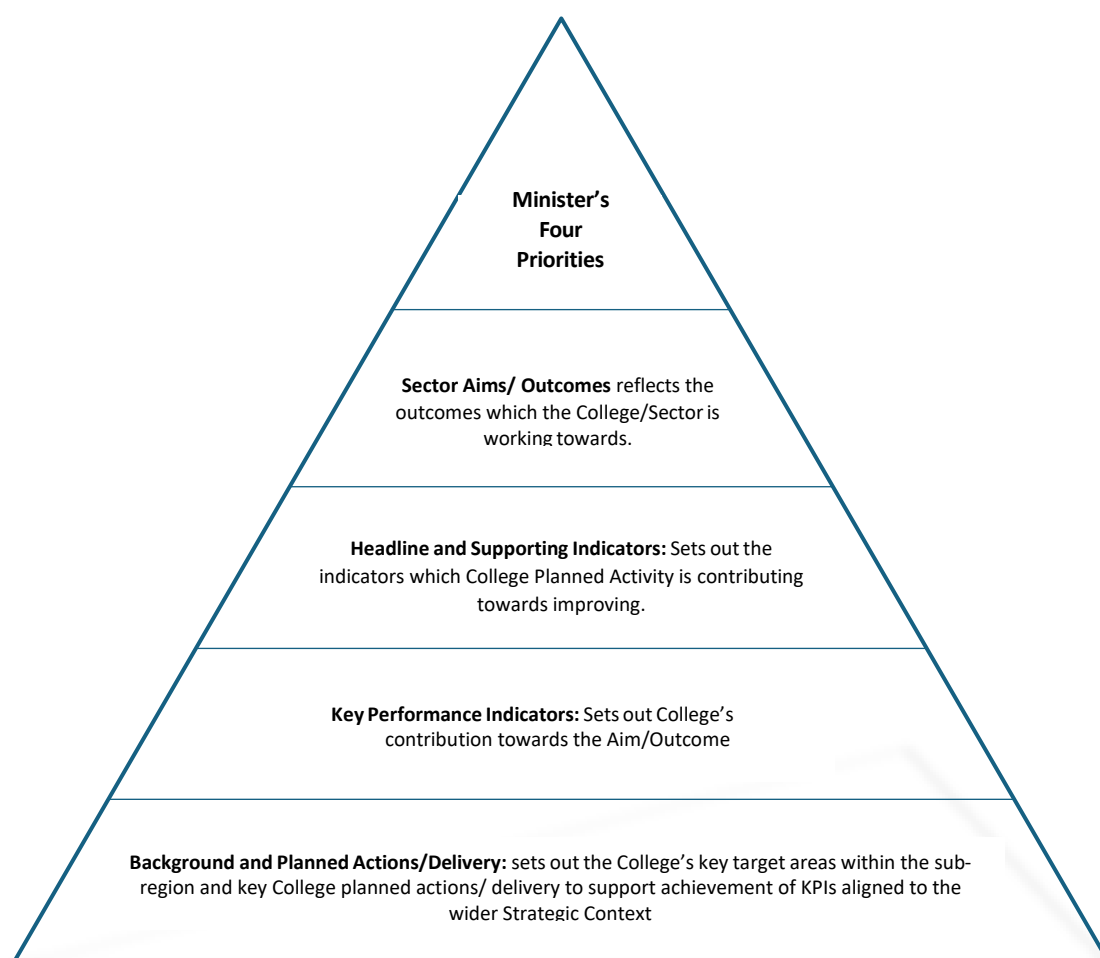
College leadership of the Engineering Hub and discharge of the secretariat function for AMESP enhances connections with industry and our sector counterparts; and has leveraged CPD opportunities for staff including a 2-day Study Visit to England focusing on Industry 4.0 technologies and CPD in Magnetic Particle Testing, with future activities set to focus on Industry 4.0 developments. During 2025, the Engineering Hub hosted the FE NI Industry 4.0 Conference, bringing together curriculum staff and industry experts to discuss the future of automation and robotics in the workplace along with the potential impact of AI in the manufacturing industry. Additionally, cross-sector collaboration efforts are continuing to develop Diversity in Industry through the 'Your Face Fits' campaign.

The Business and Professional Services Partnership, for which the College provides secretariat support, is this year focused on the review of Business Administration's Level 2

and Level 3 Apprenticeship frameworks to include a pathway in Business. Work includes developments in Higher Education with the introduction of a Business Administration HLA Level 4 by September 2026, and a Financial Services Level 5 in 2026.

d. 2025/26 Planned Activity

The College Planned Delivery has been set out to show the College contributes to the Minister's four priorities as follows:



In-year College Development Plan Progress Reports tracking **'how well'** the College is performing will be provided to the Department for the Economy. The Department for the Economy will publish reports on performance against Headline and Supporting Indicators to show if actions are 'moving the dial' on the Minister's priorities i.e. **'anyone is better off'**, along with progress reports on the Department's Delivery Plan 2025/26.

The below table provides a summary of the Aims/Outcomes and associated KPIs included in the proceeding tables.

Aim/Outcome		KPI	
1	To increase regional business productivity/growth through the delivery of tailored/bespoke training programmes.	1.1	To deliver 92 innovation-based projects in SMEs in 2025/26 financial year, plus delivery of 10 engagement workshops. 96 projects were delivered in 2024/25 financial year.
		1.2	To deliver 50 tailored training programmes in 2025/26 financial year. 96 delivered in 2024/25 financial year.
		1.3	To support 350 individuals via Skill Up in the 2025/26 financial year.
2	To upskill/reskill individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to secure employment, meet employer needs for today and the future and support economic growth of the region.	2.1	To increase the total number of individuals enrolled in the College from 12,400 individuals in 2023/24 to 12,859 individuals in 2025/26 academic year.
		2.2	To equip individuals participating in international programmes with key employability skills necessary through participation in Turing (30 individuals) in the 2025/26 academic year.
		2.3	To support 9,500 individuals who are furthest away from the labour market and with low or no formal qualifications in the 2025/26 academic year.
		2.4	To increase the retention rate within the College from 90% in 2023/24 to 91% in 2025/26 academic year.
		2.5	To increase the achievement rate within the College from 85% in 2023/24 to 86% in 2025/26 academic year.
		2.6	To enrol 2,285 individuals in the 2025/26 academic year, who are between 25 and 64 years old to participate in education and training.
3	To address the skills needs of the future workforce in green industries through upskilling and reskilling	3.1	To train 110 College staff in the delivery of green sustainable skills in the 2025/26 academic year.

	individuals in support of a net zero economy in Northern Ireland.	3.2	80 individuals participating on green/sustainable courses in the 2025/26 academic year.
4	To deliver against the Public Body reporting duties of the Climate Change legislation delivering an energy efficient and sustainable estate.	4.1	To deliver two key actions (PV installation - £285,000 and Biodiversity - £4,000) to improve / maintain energy efficiency in the College in the 2025/26 academic year.
5	City and Growth Deals	5.1	Complete and submit the Outline Business Case for Concrete Sustainability and Innovation Centre to Mid South West Growth Deal Project Management Office by 31 st March 2026

Raise Productivity/Promote Regional Balance	
Aim/Outcome - 1	To increase regional business productivity/growth through the delivery of tailored/bespoke training programmes.
Draft Headline Indicator	Output per hour worked Regional Employment Rate
Draft Supporting Indicators	Innovative active businesses (including number of Innovation Recognitions) Business Support offered by colleges to businesses
Background	More innovative businesses and a skilled workforce lay the foundations for regional balance and increased business productivity. The College harnesses a range of funded programmes to support the realisation of this aim. Supporting R&D and driving innovation across businesses is delivered through InnovateUs, Innovation Vouchers, Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs) and Innovation Boost. This is complemented by the delivery of upskilling and reskilling initiatives including Skills Focus, and the SME Productivity Booster Scheme. The delivery of business support programmes ensures the College has an active role in creating more innovative businesses and driving an increasingly skilled workforce, collectively shaping subregional economic performance and growth. Innovation activity in NI is however historically the lowest of all UK regions and remains concentrated in a few government districts. Of the £850m total Business Expenditure on R&D in 2022 (NI Research & Development Survey, 2022), only £115m was spent in this sub-region, with Mid Ulster accounting for the significant majority of this. During 2024-25, the College delivered business support seminars across a range of themes to connect businesses with College services; sectors engaged include Construction, Manufacturing, Creative Industries and Cyber Security. A similar schedule of events has been planned for 2025-26, with the focus on Product Design and Sustainable construction. Staff will continue to engage with participating employers to promote the suite of innovation support initiatives offered by the College. Sustaining engagement with businesses participating in the Assured Skills Academies will continue to be pivotal for the strategic innovation programmes and SME Productivity Booster Scheme. Collaboration with Universities in the Republic of Ireland and trade bodies will also be harnessed with the aim of maximizing Intertrade Ireland funding. The Connected NI programme supports the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics within the Manufacturing sector. These technologies are critical for optimising production, reducing waste and enhancing product quality; aligning with the Minister's objectives around increasing productivity and reducing carbon emissions.

	Through the Connected NI programme, the College will establish partnerships with industry and educational institutions to facilitate knowledge transfer and deliver four projects. These projects are: AI and Robotics Integration: The integration of AI and robotics in manufacturing to optimize production and enhance sustainability. Workshops and mentoring will focus on practical applications of these technologies. Tourism and Agri-Food Research: A project will research local tourism and agri-food industries, identifying collaboration opportunities and culminating in a conference for knowledge sharing and networking. Digital Transformation: This project aims to develop capabilities in AI, data science, and cybersecurity through support initiatives like Innovation Vouchers and South West College plans to conduct workshops focused on cybersecurity and digital innovations, targeting key sectors such as tourism and manufacturing to enhance their competitive edge. Green Skills and Sustainable Construction: This project includes initiatives for training in green skills and sustainable construction, aiming to help the construction industry meet net-zero carbon targets and improve building practices. The College will deliver a number of industrially focused workshops focusing on the practical application of AI in manufacturing and the development of AI-driven robotics solutions. The College will continue to play a pivotal role in helping to foster a culture of innovation and strengthen local business capacity to undertake RD&I activities. Enniskillen Workhouse will continue to play a pivotal role in the innovative landscape. The Workhouse is a dedicated business entrepreneurship hub where the College collaborates with key stakeholders to support business growth and development. During 2025-2026 the College will deliver an increased number of workshops at the Enniskillen Workhouse to connect businesses with innovation support, skills and funding opportunities. Enniskillen Workhouse will host 10 engagement workshops during 2025-2026 focused on embedding a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in our students, the local community and businesses including start-ups. The College's Innotech Team successfully delivered 96 innovation projects in 2024-25 and is committed to delivering 92 projects in 2025-2026 in line with the challenging budgetary position. In addition to projects delivered through existing funding the College will commence the delivery of eight substantial four-year Research
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	and Innovation programmes with local SMEs, four of which will commence in 2025-2026⁷. These programmes will be focused on promoting product and process innovation in eight mineral processing companies on both sides of the border. This activity is funded under PEACEPLUS Measure 2.2 Innovation Challenge Fund; the College having led a consortium to secure €7.8m funding for the Powering Research & Innovation for Sustainable Manufacturing (PRISM) programme. It is anticipated that the College will receive a Letter of Offer for the PRISM programme, funded under Measure 2.2 Innovation Challenge Fund on 1st September 2025. During 2025-2026 it is planned there will be 24 Decarbonisation Plans commenced by the project partners, one for each of the participating companies. Each Decarbonisation plan details the decarbonisation projects which will be undertaken by each company and the timebound milestones for the period 2025-2029. Innovation support, in 2025-2026, will continue to be aligned to priority growth sectors including Agri-Tech, Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering and Low Carbon, underpinned by support to embed Digital Technology. As the Innovation accreditation is now mandatory for the Innovation Voucher Scheme and InnovateUs, it is intended that the College will support 61 businesses through this accreditation. The College will continue to support the advancement of a highly qualified skilled workforce locally, equipping the labour market with the skills needed by industry. With an available budget of £200,000 for Skills Focus, the College will deliver Level 2 and above qualifications to 250 individuals in 2025-26, through 40 projects, supporting 100 businesses. There is optimism that with a revised curriculum offer and the increase in funding support from 75% - 90% that the College will realise agreed targets. Delivery will be targeted in key areas such as Advanced Manufacturing, Construction, Sustainability/Green Technologies, and Leadership & Management and Digital programmes. The College Skills Focus offer has been revised ahead of the 2025-2026 year with new programmes including the Level 3 in Carbon Accounting added to what will be an attractive offer to industry. The College Skill Up offer will be complemented by a structured Green Skills Offer through the Green Accelerator Skills Programme (GRASP). South West College led a consortium (including NWRC and SRC) of educational providers in a successful application for €9.8m to PEACEPLUS Measure 2.3 Area Skills Development. During 2025-2026 South West College will provide 80 students with access to fully funded Green Skills programmes.
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	The SME Productivity Booster scheme is a targeted skills initiative aligned to DfE's Business Plan for 2025/26 and will be harnessed to boost productivity, focusing on innovation/creativity and skills including leadership, project planning, communication, reducing Carbon Emissions, entrepreneurship and automation. South West College plans to deliver 5 projects with businesses this year under this programme, subject to funding. The College has a very well developed and long-standing relationship with the Manufacturing industry in Mid Ulster and engages proactively with MEGA to meet the skills needs of local companies. The College continues to collaborate with MEGA to deliver ILM Level 3 Mentoring via Skills Focus. This qualification is delivered through teaching and a series of workshops across the Manufacturing sector to support those staff who will be inducting and managing apprentices within their organisations. There are two cohorts scheduled for 2025-26. The Industrial Training Facility in Cookstown provides an industry aligned space for the delivery of welding programmes and staff will continue to collaborate with MEGA to organise welding programmes to address the need for training welders in the Mid Ulster Region. Three Assured Skills Academies in Welding took place in 2024-25 financial year and five are also scheduled to complete in the 2025-26 academic year. A welding academy is scheduled to commence in August 2025, and we have applied for funding for an additional 4 welding academies between September 2025 and August 2026. These academies will support 60 students. It is planned that an Industry 4.0 (Robotics and Automation) Assured Skills Academies in 2025-26 will run to enhance the competitiveness of Manufacturing and Engineering companies in the area by supporting them to develop a workforce with expertise in automated technologies. Two academies were delivered in the 2024-25 financial year. The third has been rescheduled to the beginning of the 2025-26 academic year. Due to low engagement from industry from the previous two academies it may not proceed. A revised industry campaign with a new cluster of companies will be developed to ensure adequate support of the academy and the content and timescales may be revised to meet industry need, if required.
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KPI 1.1	To deliver 92 innovation-based projects in SMEs in 2025/26 financial year, plus delivery of 10 engagement workshops. 96 projects were delivered in 2024/25 financial year.		
Planned Activity:			
With an available budget of £277,000 for InnovateUs		Complete 69 projects ⁸ .	
Innovation Vouchers		8	
KTPs		1	
Innovation Boost (Fusion)		2	
Business Explorer		4	
PRISM		4 - the College will commence the delivery of 4 substantial four-year Research and Innovation programmes with local SMEs	
Connected NI programme		4	
Enniskillen Workhouse workshops		10 engagement workshops ⁹	
KPI 1.2	To deliver 50 tailored training programmes in 2025/26 financial year. 96 delivered in 2024/25 financial year.		
Planned Activity:			
With an available budget of £200k for Skills Focus		South West College will support 40 projects and 250 individuals during 2025-26 ¹⁰	
SME Productivity Booster		5 projects will be completed in 2025-26 (subject to funding)	
Assured Skills Welding Academies (September 2025-August 2026)		5 Welding Academies ¹¹	
KPI 1.3	To support 350 individuals via Skill Up in the 2025/26 financial year.		

¹⁰ Supporting 100 businesses.

¹¹ Delivered between September 2025 and end of August 2026, the academic year and not the financial year.

Good Jobs/Promote Regional Balance/Raise Productivity	
Aim/Outcome - 2	To upskill/reskill individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to secure employment, meet employer needs for today and the future and support economic growth of the region.
Headline Indicators	• Good jobs measure based on earning, permanent contracts and guaranteed hours. • Regional Employment Rate • Output per hour worked
Supporting Indicators	• Work Quality Indicators • Proportion leaving NI HEIs with narrow STEM qualifications • Qualifications by Level of Study • Economic Inactivity Rate
Background	The College delivers programmes ranging from entry level – level 6 and is focused on strengthening and enhancing the skills profile of the region. This will support citizens to access ‘good jobs’ in the area, ensure industry needs are being met and laying the foundations for addressing productivity and regional balance issues, identified by the Minister as key priorities. In 2025-26, the College is seeking to increase our overall student numbers from the planned 12,385 in 2024-25 to 12,859 in 2025-26, supporting the development of our students through the delivery of a range of industry relevant programmes. As traditional Level 2 FE FT programmes have now all moved to a traineeship model, the numbers of FE FT students have decreased accordingly, as the number of traineeships increase. Traineeships have now mainstreamed across all Level 2 provision as it continues to embed. The strength of the industrial base and desire for local companies to secure talent is key to the College’s aspiration to sustain student numbers. Consistent recruitment to our ApprenticeshipNI and Higher Level Apprenticeship (HLA) programmes is an outcome of strong college-industry relations and the codesign of provision to align with industry need. Get Engineering Careers, Apprentice Connect, and industry outreach initiatives were attended by approximately 90 local companies and in excess of 450 young people and their parents in 2024-25. The focus in 2025-26 is to further enhance alignment between the College provision and the evolving needs of industry, building on the progress made to date and the solid foundations that exist. However, we are mindful that apprenticeship recruitment in 2025-2026 will potentially be negatively impacted by the increase in Apprenticeship minimum

	wage and the rise in the rate of employers' National Insurance contributions. In addition, a reduction in Electrotechnical Apprentices (Electricians) is predicted in 2025-2026. Historically three cohorts per campus would have been recruited, however, current lecturing resources would indicate that the capacity for 2025-26 is two cohorts per campus with a resultant reduction in target of 48. The potential exists to recover some of this target with a recruitment drive for additional lecturing staff ongoing. The College's overall apprenticeship target for 2025-26 is 1350 under ApprenticeshipNI. In recognition of the financial commitments faced by older apprentices and the potential negative impact of the increase in the Apprenticeship Minimum Wage and employers' National Insurance contributions, a modest target of 50 new entrants aged 24–64 has been set under the Apprenticeships NI 2025 contract for the 2025/26 period. The College continues to grow its HLA programme having submitted HLA delivery proposals to DfE for three new HLAs to commence delivery in September 2025: Level 6 BSc Computing, Diploma in Childcare and a BTEC HNC in Healthcare. If approved these programmes will continue to drive an increase in HLA s. The College continues to refine its engagement with industry and potential HLAs enhancing engagement via the new HLA Connect Portal. The portal was launched in March 2025 and facilitates seamless engagement for companies and HLA applicants ensuring HLA vacancies are marketed widely, enhancing engagement and reach. Our students have been recognised externally with two HLAs in Construction and Engineering nominated at the Northern Ireland Apprenticeship Awards. Apprenticeships are a key priority for South West College in 2025-26. Such opportunities will continue to be extended to 24–64 year-olds, as All Age Apprentices to facilitate re-skilling. In addition to supporting in-work upskilling, the College will deliver a range of initiatives which will support career changers and those individuals furthest away from the labour market into employment. Funding for the Skills for Life and Work 2025 programme has been confirmed and will form a key component of the College's provision. However, changes to the funding arrangements for disability support present a significant challenge. It is therefore essential that the College carefully balances recruitment to this programme with the capacity to provide in-college specialist support, or alternatively, to procure
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	external support within the first four weeks of the programme's commencement. There will be a continued focus on Essential Skills outcomes again in 2025-2026, particularly on Numeracy. The overall achievement rate for Essential Skills was 64% in 2023-24, slightly down on the previous year (65%). A range of improvement initiatives have been introduced as the College continues to experience the disruptive legacy of the pandemic on learners including thematic reviews to identify good practice and areas for improvement via lesson observations and student focus groups. Through successful engagement with the Turing Scheme, the College has been able to offer the opportunity for our students to participate in study and work placements in Europe and North America. With the support from this scheme, the College aims to cultivate well-qualified, globally minded, and internationally experienced young individuals, preparing them holistically for their future educational pursuits and careers. The experiences gained by students during these work and study placements have proved invaluable in terms of gaining subject specialist knowledge, building confidence, developing transversal skills, building networks and providing the opportunity to interact with people from different cultures. The revised Turing Scheme funding model for 2025-2026 has reduced significantly the support available and enhanced the College contribution rate. The outworking of this has resulted in a reduced application. Subject to funding in 2025-26 a minimum of three mobilities are planned to three different countries - Iceland, Aruba and Canada supporting approximately 30 students in total. The College does however hope to offer other student mobilities, subject to funding, such as funding from other sources i.e. Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS). Embedding a skills-culture across all professional and technical areas remains a key focus for SWC. During 2024-2025, a total of 27 staff were appointed as Skills Champions, supporting the development and delivery of 21 internal skills competitions. A total of 437 students engaged in internal competition activity with 242 participating in cross campus competitions and 103 students progressed to regional heats. Participation in skills competitions, both internally and at a sectoral level, enhances the participants' vocational and transversal skills effectively equipping participants with key employability skills. Feedback outcomes include. • 87% of previous entrants stated that they improved their technical skills after taking part.
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	• 79% said they improved their personal and employability skills. • 83% said they can apply the skills they developed to their education, work or other parts of their life. • 60% of average earnings of those who have participated in WorldSkills UK's competition development programmes have higher earnings than those of a comparable peer group. Funding for Skills Competitions has not been earmarked by DfE which puts this opportunity for students at risk. Subject to funding being available, the College aims to maximise competitions with available budget to support individual students participating in Skills Build competitions including engagement in internal competitions, cross-campus events, regional heats, and UK Skills competitions. The College currently offers an extensive range of social inclusion and employability programmes which are specifically designed to support disengaged young people and those furthest from the labour market transition into education, training or employment through initiatives including STEP-Up, Rural Economic Accelerator Programme (REAP) and Youthscape+. Such programmes provide opportunity for the College to work with those furthest from the labour market for example, young people, women, ethnic minorities and individuals with a disability or health condition. They provide mentorship support, career guidance, opportunity to achieve qualifications and to complete basic skills. The Youthscape + project, supported by PEACEPLUS, aims to drive forward a pioneering Cross-Border Good Relations Programme that is dedicated to fostering positive relationships among young people across Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland and will support 315 students engage with the College during 2025-2026 In addition, the PEACEPLUS programmes; GRASP and STRIDE will commence delivery during 2025-2026, with 80 students engaging in Green Skills programmes funded by GRASP and a further 75 rural dwellers engaging with the Design Think programme via STRIDE. The College continues to actively engage with the opportunities presented by the LMPs having secured funding for the delivery of a Classroom Assistants Academy via the FODC academy which will support 20 learners in 2025-2026. In addition, a tender has been submitted for a Hospitality Academy, which, if successful, would support an additional 20 students.
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	Following a period of uncertainty, funding allocation for REAP has been allocated at a much-reduced level and will operate until March 2026. In addition, STEP UP funding has been allocated again at a significantly reduced level for the 2025/26 year. This will negatively impact those most disadvantaged and further from the labour market, reducing the College's capacity to support by over 250 individuals in the incoming year. In addition to providing in-work upskilling, the College will deliver a range of initiatives which will support career changers and those individuals furthest away from the labour market into work. Details regarding the replacement Skills for Life and Work (SfL&W) programme have now been released by the Department for the Economy (DfE), with the new Skills for Life and Work 2025 programme available for enrolment from September 2025. A target of 83 participants has been set, comprising both returning learners from the SfL&W 2021 programme and new entrants to SfL&W 2025. However, changes to the funding arrangements for disability support present a significant challenge. It is therefore essential that the College carefully balances recruitment to this programme with the capacity to provide in-college specialist support, or alternatively, to procure appropriate external support within the first four weeks of the programme's commencement. It is likely that during 2025-26 the College will deliver a 22-week part time Woman Returners programme subject to funding. This initiative will support women returning to the classroom and the workplace whilst undertaking a Level 3 Certificate in Business Administration. In addition to gaining a qualification and work experience, participants will be eligible for a training allowance and will undertake workshops in confidence building, interview skills and resilience. In addition, the delivery of Assured Skills Academies in Industry 4.0 and Welding will support skills development aligned with industry needs. The College is committed to supporting diversity and inclusion through its Widening Access and Participation Plan (WAPP) which will continue this academic year to support underrepresented groups in the region access HE opportunities. These groups include prospective students from disadvantaged backgrounds with lower household incomes. The focus is on ensuring access to Higher Education (HE) for all students and enabling comprehensive academic mentoring and pastoral support. To assist underrepresented groups, the College plans to utilise its annual WAPP budget to support outreach activities, which includes approx. £90,000 on bursary and Higher Education scholarship
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	schemes, tuition fee reductions, academic mentorship and health and well-being initiatives. Following the publication of the ETI evaluation of Traineeships, a College Action Plan will be developed by 26th August 2025. This will inform the development of a Sectoral Action Plan by 23rd September 2025. It is envisaged that the subsequent actions will have a positive impact on learner outcomes, including improved retention and achievement.	
KPI 2.1	To increase the total number of individuals enrolled in the College from 12,400 individuals in 2023/24 to 12,859 individuals in 2025/26 academic year.	
Plans to achieve in the 2025/26 academic year:		
Level 0 - 3	No. of individuals on PT FE	7726
	No. of individuals on FT FE (including Advanced Tech)	1,179
	No. of individuals on Skills for Life and Work programme (Subject to funding for Year 1 - a proposed revised programme model and delivery methodology for 2025/26)	83
	No. of individuals on Traineeships programme	555
	No. of individuals on Apprenticeships NI programme	1350
	No. of individuals on Essential Skills programme	229
Level 4+	No. of individuals on PT HE in FE (includes Skills Focus and Flexible Skills)	633
	No. of individuals on FT HE in FE	514
	No. of individuals on Higher Level Apprenticeship programme	590
KPI 2.2	To equip individuals participating in international programmes with key employability skills necessary through participation in Turing (30 individuals) in the 2025/26 academic year.	
Planned Activity:		
Student Mobilities	To deliver a minimum of 3 mobilities for 2025-26 to three different countries - Iceland, Aruba, and Canada supporting approximately 30 students in total across all mobilities (subject to funding).	
KPI 2.3	To support 9,500 individuals who are furthest away from the labour market and with low or no formal qualifications in the 2025/26 academic year.	
Planned Activity:		
No. of individuals Quintile 1 and 2		6100
No. of individuals declaring a disability/long term health problem		820
No. of individuals on ESOL programmes		178

Step Up (includes 22 women under the WRAP strand)		94
NEETS 36		
Disability - 36		
Skills for Life & Work		83
WAPP		£90,000
PEACEPLUS GRASP and STRIDE		155
Youthscape		315
REAP (Sept - end of March)		100
Going Places		120
Labour Market Partnership (Subject to funding)		40
KPI 2.4	To increase the retention rate within the College from 90% in 2023/24 to 91% in 2025/26 academic year.	
Planned Activity:		
Retention Rate		To increase the retention rate within the College to 91% in 2025/26 academic year
College Action Plan for Improvement (API) for Traineeships		Following publication of the ETI evaluation of the Traineeship Programme, College Action Plans for Improvement (API) for Traineeships to be submitted by 26 August 2025 and Whole Sector API to be provided by 23 September 2025. APIs to be submitted to ACVED. Regular implementation and impact updates against APIs to be provided to the Traineeship Project Board and progress checks sought as part of CDP updates.
College Action Plan for Improvement (API) for Essential Skills		Following publication of the ETI evaluation of the Traineeship Programme, College Action Plans for Improvement (API) for Essential Skills to be submitted by 26 August 2025 and Whole Sector API to be provided by 23 September 2025. APIs to be submitted to Quality Improvement Team. Regular implementation and impact updates against APIs to be provided to QIT against which updates will be provided to the Traineeship Project Board and progress checks sought as part of CDP updates.

KPI 2.5	To increase the achievement rate within the College from 85% in 2023/24 to 86% in 2025/26 academic year.	
Planned Activity:		
Achievement Rate	To increase the achievement rate within the College to 86% in 2025/26 academic year. To increase the achievement rate in Essential Skills Numeracy by 4% from 38% in 23/24 to 42% in 25/26	
KPI 2.6	To enrol 2,285 individuals in the 2025/26 academic year, who are between 25 and 64 years old to participate in education and training.	
Planned Activity:		
All Aged Apprenticeships	50 Individuals as all age apprentices.	
Woman returners	10 Individuals	

Decarbonisation	
Aim/Outcome - 3	To address the skills needs of the future workforce in green industries through upskilling and reskilling individuals in support of a net zero economy in Northern Ireland.
Headline Indicator	CO² Emissions per Capita
Supporting Indicators	• Proportion of electricity consumption generated from renewable sources • Energy Intensity • Energy Efficiency • Circular economy material and carbon footprint
Background	The College has an integrated sustainability offer, which has as its foundations in five distinct initiatives: 1. Schools outreach programme which will engage 1,500 school children in 2025-26, focusing on Biodiversity / Renewable Technology and Water Conservation 2. Online sustainability module which will be completed by 500 staff 2025-26 3. Carbon Literacy completed by 100 staff in 2025-26 4. Delivery of the GRASP initiative 5. Delivery of 11 signature sustainability and Net Zero projects South West College is lead partner of a consortium of education and training providers spanning the Irish Central Border Region (ICBAN) which has secured almost €10m for the delivery of the transformational Green Accelerator Skills Programme (GRASP) funded by PEACEPLUS Measure 2.3 Programme Area Skills Development. GRASP funding enables eight further education & training organisations to collaborate with Construction Sector partners to develop and deliver a suite of Green Skills qualifications designed to meet increasing demand. Green Skills are those required to construct/retrofit buildings to near zero energy standards. The consortium partners include South West College, Education and Training Boards in Donegal, Mayo, Sligo, Leitrim, Cavan and Monaghan and North West and Southern Regional Colleges along with the Irish Central Border Region Network (ICBAN) and Atlantic Technical University. A collaborative offer of almost 50 courses spanning the consortium has been developed with marketing of the offer to commence in June 2025 and delivery in September. The SWC offer contains 11 separate courses: OCN NI Level 3 Award Green Skills OCN NI Level 3 Award & Certificate in Carbon Accounting

	OCN NI Design, Installation and Commissioning of Small Electrical Energy Storage Systems OCN NI Level 2 Retrofitting OCN NI Level 3 Award in Photovoltaic Systems OCN NI Level 3 Award in Heat Pump Systems OCN NI Level 3 Award in Heating, Ventilation & Air Conditioning Systems OCN NI Level 3 Award & Certificate in Sustainable Construction OCN NI Level 3 Certificate Green Skills PHI Level 4 Passive House - Trades PHI Level 4 Passive House -Designer During 2025-2026 GRASP will generate 80 additional students' enrolments for the College and support 10 staff to undertake CPD, thus increasing the College capacity to undertake additional delivery in this area in the future.	
KPI 3.1	To train 110 of College staff in delivery of green sustainable skills in the 2025/26 academic year.	
Planned Activity:		
In the 2025/26 academic year, improve baseline position for completion of the College Sustainability induction module	To increase the staff completion rate of the online Sustainability Induction module from 76% in 24/25 to 80% in 25/26.	
Training College staff in the delivery of green sustainable skills	To support 10 College staff to undertake CPD accessing programmes from the SWC GRASP offer: OCN NI Level 3 Award Green Skills, OCN NI Level 3 Award & Certificate in Carbon Accounting, OCN NI Design, Installation and Commissioning of Small Electrical Energy Storage Systems, OCN NI Level 2 Retrofitting, OCN NI Level 3 Award in Photovoltaic Systems, OCN NI Level 3 Award in Heat Pump Systems, OCN NI Level 3 Award in Heating, Ventilation & Air Conditioning Systems, OCN NI Level 3 Award & Certificate in Sustainable Construction, OCN NI Level 3 Certificate Green Skills, PHI Level 4 Passive House – Trades, PHI Level 4 Passive House -Designer To train 100 College staff in SWC Carbon Literacy.	

KPI 3.2	80 individuals participating on green/sustainable courses in the 2025/26 academic year.
Planned Activity:	
Delivery of the GRASP Green Skills Offer	To provide opportunities for 80 individuals to undertake re-skilling or up-skilling in Green Skills from the SWC GRASP offer: OCN NI Level 3 Award Green Skills, OCN NI Level 3 Award & Certificate in Carbon Accounting, OCN NI Design, Installation and Commissioning of Small Electrical Energy Storage Systems, OCN NI Level 2 Retrofitting, OCN NI Level 3 Award in Photovoltaic Systems, OCN NI Level 3 Award in Heat Pump Systems, OCN NI Level 3 Award in Heating, Ventilation & Air Conditioning Systems, OCN NI Level 3 Award & Certificate in Sustainable Construction, OCN NI Level 3 Certificate Green Skills, PHI Level 4 Passive House – Trades, PHI Level 4 Passive House -Designer

Decarbonisation	
Aim/Outcome - 4	To deliver against the Public Body reporting duties of the Climate Change legislation delivering an energy efficient and sustainable estate.
Headline Indicator	CO ² Emissions per Capita
Supporting Indicators	• Proportion of electricity consumption generated from renewable sources • Energy Intensity • Energy Efficiency • Circular economy material and carbon footprint
Background	Reflecting on the DAERA regulations of 3rd May 2024, which mark a significant milestone in Northern Ireland's climate policy, delivering on the commitments set forth in section 42 of the Climate Change Act (NI) 2022. While challenges persist, the regulations provide a structured pathway for addressing climate risks and fostering a sustainable future. It is imperative for us as a college to collectively embrace these measures and contribute to the global fight against climate change. Preparedness for climate change reporting at South West College incorporates Education and Training, Access to Reliable Data (Scope 1, 2 & 3), Collaborative Networks including local councils, DFE & SIB and most importantly Adaptability. We have to date completed our 2023–2024 climate change reporting as an integral part of our College Sustainability Action Plan and our pathway to Net Zero and are on target to have our first Mitigation Report completed by 31st October 2025. The Climate Adaptation Plan is currently being prepared, and we are on target to have the Adaptation Report completed by 31st March 2026. It is our responsibility to ensure Accuracy and Clarity when presenting all findings avoiding exaggeration and oversimplification. In keeping with this it is also vital that solutions are highlighted with transparency and inclusivity focusing on our young people and the real-world implications for their communities and the economy. The College's focus on sustainability continued to attract external recognition during 2024-2025: South West College was awarded the prestigious Beacon Award in the category of Education for Sustainable Development in March 2025. The award illustrates the relationships between colleges, businesses and professional and voluntary bodies and promote the far-reaching impact of colleges on their students and the communities they serve. South West College was commended on its Climate Action Campaign, a multi-faceted initiative which has been designed to integrate sustainability into every aspect of the college's operations. This included the publication of a comprehensive Net

	Zero Action Plan and Sustainability Action Plan and providing Carbon Literacy training to all staff and students. The College is delighted to have achieved Carbon Literacy Educator status. A Carbon Literate Educator (CLE) is an educational institution which has been accredited by The Carbon Literacy Project (CLP) as having substantial understanding of, commitment to, and experience with Carbon Literacy. This accreditation demonstrates our commitment to Carbon Literacy, having a substantial number of Carbon Literate staff and students and positively utilising our influence in the community and wider world. South West College has recently achieved a Gold Level certification in the Northern Ireland Environmental Benchmarking Survey. The survey created by Business in the Community helps businesses across the region to examine, review, compare and improve their environmental performance, and champions organisations who are demonstrating action for real change. The survey is open to all organisations in Northern Ireland and the college had previously been categorised at the Silver Level. More than 130 organisations of all sizes and from a range of industry sectors took part, including, construction, engineering, education and food and drink. The survey can help organisations to identify their individual impacts on the environment, measure progress to drive improvement and raise awareness of the environment as an important, strategic and competitive issue at board level. Currently 9.1% of the College's electricity consumption is generated from renewable sources for whole estate. Electricity generated from photovoltaic (PV) systems can often be used to offset other emissions, thereby reducing the overall carbon footprint of SWC. The electricity from SWC's renewables systems has been used to offset its overall emissions. During the Academic year of 21/22, our campuses generated a substantial amount of electricity—177085 kWh (kilowatt hours) —through their PV system. Utilising the conversion factor for 2021/2022, this renewable energy output translates into a meaningful offset of 34.24 mtCO₂e (metric tonnes of carbon equivalent). When deducted from Scope 1,2 and 3 emissions – SWC is left with an overall carbon footprint for 21/22 of 1771.45 mtCO₂e. South West College's electric production has increased year on year, and the introduction of the Erne Campus's PVs production in 21/22 has significantly impacted the college's scope 3 emissions – primarily reducing its scope 2 emissions and reliance on grid energy. Moving forward, it is expected that PV will continue to offset emissions and further decrease dependence on grid energy. To
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	facilitate this, a bid for £285,000.00 has been made to install PV at the Dungannon Campus, which currently relies solely on fossil fuels. South West College aims to achieve excellence in Sustainability and Climate Action, with an objective of reaching net-zero status by 2050. During the baseline assessment in the Academic Year 21/22, SWC calculated its carbon baseline emissions to be 1807.9 mtCO₂e, reduced to 1773.66 mtCO₂e after carbon offsetting. The College has made significant progress towards carbon neutrality through sustainable practices, particularly the adoption of PV production methods which have successfully offset a portion of its carbon emissions. The College's PV production has offset 34.24 mtCO₂e, demonstrating SWC's commitment to renewable energy solutions. The College has a strong focus on carbon neutrality, showcased in its Sustainability Action Plan. Benchmarking shows commendable performance across all campuses, with buildings outperforming 'typical' benchmarks for both electricity and fossil fuel consumption. Moving towards 2050, South West College plans to remain proactive in reducing indirect emissions, even those excluded from the net-zero target. Additionally, South West College will produce a Net Zero Action Plan outlining decarbonisation projects. The College will set achievable targets and offset any remaining emissions to achieve true 'net-zero' status. Energy-efficient measures and exploration of renewable energy sources are part of the strategy to meet energy efficiency targets, including the large-scale PV installation at the Dungannon Campus, planned for completion in 2025. Additional activities include educating the campus community about climate change impacts and mitigation strategies through awareness campaigns and dissemination of metrics, such as promoting energy conservation awareness through specialised weekly campaigns for all staff and students.
KPI 4.1	To deliver two key actions (PV installation - £285,000 and Biodiversity - £4,000) to improve/maintain energy efficiency in the College in the 2025/26 academic year.
Planned Activity:	
In 2025/26 financial year, two Minor Works projects¹², pending funding allocation, that contribute towards a sustainable College estate.	1. £285,000.00 Dungannon Campus PV installation 2. £4,000.00 Biodiversity

¹² Includes Energy Branch Invest to Save Funded projects.

In 2025/26 academic year, to establish key actions to improve / maintain energy efficiency of College campuses.	Action 1 To increase biodiversity by 10% across all campuses Action 2 To offset carbon emissions by 10% from 466.65 mtCO₂e to 419.99 mtCO₂e Action 3 A 15% reduction in energy related carbon emissions from 19/20 baseline of 535.65 mtCO₂e to 455.30 mtCO₂e
In 2025/26 academic year, improve baseline position for each College campus.	1. 15% reduction campus wide in scope 2 emissions from 535.65 mtCO₂e to 455.30 mtCO₂e 2. 10% reduction in carbon emissions campus wide from 466.65 mtCO₂e to 419.99 mtCO₂e

Decarbonisation	
Aim/Outcome - 5	City and Growth Deals: Establishment of Concrete Sustainability and Innovation Centre (CSIC) at SWC Enniskillen Technology and Skills Centre Campus
Headline Indicator	CO² Emissions per Capita
Supporting Indicators	• Size of low carbon and renewable energy economy • Energy Intensity • Energy Efficiency • Circular economy Material Footprint • Circular economy Carbon Footprint
Background	The Net Zero challenge is particularly pronounced across the region the College serves with FODC and MUDC having the highest and second highest proportionate level of CO2 emissions per LGD 1, pointing to the importance of the additional support for industrial decarbonisation available via PRISM and CSIC. Entrepreneurship levels and investment in Research and Development remain challenges across the district, whilst the investment in R&D is more pronounced in MUDC at 1.9% of output and marginally above the NI average of 1.5%, investment in FODC is significantly less at 0.8% of output. In respect of Business Birth rates both councils perform well below the NI average with MUDC having the lowest rate and FODC the 3rd lowest, highlighting the importance of supporting the development of a culture of Entrepreneurship among students and supporting local businesses with close to market R&D support. Northern Ireland is facing a pressing need to address climate change and reduce carbon emissions. Concrete production, being a significant contributor to carbon emissions globally requires innovative solutions to meet decarbonisation targets. South West College is leading a project requesting funding in the region of £7m from the MSW Growth Deal. This project advocates for the establishment of a Regional Concrete Centre of Excellence – Concrete Sustainability and Innovation Centre (CSIC) to be developed at the Technology and Skills Centre Campus of South West College. The vision is to repurpose an existing building to become a centre dedicated to advancing decarbonisation and circularity within the concrete products sector. The proposal is to establish a CSIC that ensures that the concrete industry and their supply chain are at the cutting-edge of developments by utilising the strengths of a network of government, industry, and academia. The Centre will facilitate material testing;

	process and product innovation; workforce upskilling and developing company capacity to decarbonisation. To support the concrete supply chain the application of Hydrogen technologies will also form a major consideration in the Centre. The CSIC facility, staff and equipment will be one element of a larger support network provided by the PRISM academic partners ensuring local companies in the MSW region have access to expertise and equipment in QUB/AMIC, ATU and DCU to support decarbonisation. It is envisaged that additional academic partners will be added to the CSIC network including Ulster University and University of Galway - facilitating access to the ROI based Construct Innovate network of academic partners. Such an arrangement will ensure availability of specialist staff to support decarbonisation within the region and moreover this collaborative model will also inform the equipment housed within CSIC ensuring complementarity with that available across the network and avoiding duplication and displacement. SWC will retain a core management team with responsibility for managing the facility and supporting companies to develop Decarbonisation Plans detailing initiatives to be discharged to support their decarbonisation journey. The external support required to discharge each of the initiatives detailed in the plan will be quantified e.g. 60hr, 100hr or 250hr projects and support sought in the form of Decarbonisation Vouchers from a range of funders; (Invest/PRISM/etc) these vouchers will be exchanged for support from the most appropriate academic partner in the SWC academic network. Additional Provision and Services: In addition to the Technical Support for Decarbonisation detailed above, CSIC will also support companies to discharge their Decarbonisation plans via a range of additional collaborative support services provided by academic partners: Securing funding for Large Scale Sectoral Research Programmes, Focused Training Programmes, Knowledge Dissemination Events, Collaboration and Networking and Policy Advocacy. Industry Support: The initial CSIC concept has been co-designed with the Mineral Processing Association Northern Ireland (MPANI) – the trade federation for the sector and member companies thus ensuring industry buy-in. MPANI will sit on the CSIC advisory committee informing the continued development and delivery of the proposal ensuring that it meets industry needs at inception and maintains alignment.
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	The College is in the process of engaging a consultant to support the development of the Outline Business Case
KPI 5.1	
Planned Activity:	
Complete Outline Business Case	Complete and submit the Outline Business Case for Concrete Sustainability and Innovation Centre to Mid-South West Growth Deal Project Management Office by 31 st March 2026

5. Key Challenges/Constraints

The below table sets out the top five corporate challenges / constraints towards achievement of planned delivery set out in section 4 above.

Challenge	Potential Impact	Mitigating Actions
Industrial Relations Landscape – Comparisons to teaching profession for parity in respect of pay aligned to contractual arrangements	- Action short of strike, withholding of grades impacting on students' ability to complete qualifications and progress - Continuous negative impact on FE activities which acts as a potential recruitment drive for post primary schools - Uncertainty leads to parents and students taking alternative pathways not within FE	- Two year pay deal accepted by lecturing trade unions - Employer commitment to workload review in 2024/25 - Employer commitment to pay parity review in 2025/26 - Employer commitment to take forward FE transformation
Economic Planning Complexity – Pace of change of the key drivers for education and skills in FE Sector with new economic priorities and target actions	- Challenges in aligning College Development Plans to evolving indicators. - Staff resources committed to existing curriculum delivery with limited flexibility. - Work underway with Councils to integrate local College curriculum plans with regional LEP plans.	- Ongoing engagement to refine performance indicators from FE programmes to link to Minister economic priorities. - More clarity required on the approach to regional planning and LEPs and alignment with Council and InvestNI roles. - Formal re-engagement with InvestNI commenced and ongoing via representations at LSPs
Uncertainty and Complexity Around Funding Streams and Delays in LOOs – impacts on ability of Colleges to include planned delivery in curriculum build and associated targets	- Uncertainty on budgets, downward pressures coupled with a 3 year budget settlement with further savings anticipated. - Late approval or visibility of additional	- More visibility through NIFON and Curriculum Directors on scale of opportunities. - Holding back on recruitment and utilising full-time staff whilst supplementing with part-time lecturers as required

	funding streams becoming available can make it difficult to build into delivery planning which starts at different time-frames compared to the commencement of the academic year in September whilst requiring full-spend by March. • Range and variety of funding pots and compliance and eligibility issues takes time to put in place and test learner eligibility.	• Explore the opportunity to pull a number of separate programmes in over a central theme: Business and Innovation, Support for Inclusion • Wider consideration of the funding model requires NIFON input in terms of different rates to ensure consistency and viability. • Work with funders for release of LoOs earlier in the year to enable full integration into curriculum planning and delivery • Identification earlier from funders of new or additional in-year allocations to enable building of capacity
Recruitment challenges Impacting on Enrolment – Colleges not being able to attract lecturers/trainers in traditional trade and STEM areas.	• Trend for last 5 years of significant interest in trade and STEM areas which cannot be accommodated due to recruitment challenges. • Aging profile of the workforce may have longer term impact in key sectors with significant critical skills gaps. • Negative impact on curriculum offer, quality of service provision and learner success.	• Initiate review through HR sector working group of trends in applications and enrolments in last 3 years • Implement pay parity to increase salary levels and consideration of specialist lecture grades • Understand the opportunity for more flexible approach in terms of recruitment premium for agreed occupational areas • Secure pay remit approval to progress towards salary expectations • Industrial Relations review to commence, focusing on pay parity and terms and conditions
Investment in facilities (including IT and AI) and infrastructure to ensure competitiveness and to support action towards net zero targets in	• Inability to be at the forefront of new advances in technology developments.	• Further in-year bids to be placed to DfE to secure funding to deliver new initiatives • Progress commenced with establishment of baselines and initial progress towards targets

context of one year budgetary landscape	• Failure to implement full obligations under the Climate Change Act and impact on net/zero/sustainability targets	
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The College has a Risk Management Framework in place including Corporate and Operational Risk Registers from which key risks are reflected.

Annex 1

College Data Analysis

DATA SOURCES

College Profile for 2024/25

DfE (2024) Further education sector activity in Northern Ireland: 2018/19 to 2022/23

DfE (2024) FE Outcomes 2022-23

Sub-Regional Profile

^[1] NISRA (2023) 2022 Mid-Year Population Estimates for Northern Ireland.

^[1] NISRA (2024) Labour Market Status 2023, Table 1.1d: Labour market structure by council area, aged 16 to 64, rate, 2023.

^[1] NISRA (2024) Labour Market Status 2023, Table 1.1c: Labour market structure by council area, aged 16 to 64, number, 2023.

^[1] Mid Ulster (2023), LMP 2022-23.

^[1] NISRA (2024) Labour Market Status 2023, Table 1.3d: Labour market structure by council area, female, aged 16 to 64, rate, 2022. A

^[1] NISRA (2024) Labour Market Status 2023, Table 1.11a: Employment estimate and rate by disability status, ages 16 to 64, local government districts, number and rate, 2023.

^[1] NISRA (2024) Labour Market Status 2023, Table 1.11b: Economically inactive estimate and rate by disability status, ages 16 to 64, local government districts, number and rate, 2023.

^[1] NISRA (2024) Labour Market Status by LGD 2009 to 2023, Table 3g: Fermanagh and Omagh and Table 3j: Mid Ulster.

^[1] NISRA (2024) Claimant Count Monthly Data.

^[10] NOMIS (2024) Claimant count by sex and age, NI LGD.

^[1] NISRA (2024) Labour Market Status by LGD, Table 1.15b: Labour market structure and qualification level by district council area, ages 16 to 64, 2023.

^[1] DfE (2024) Further education sector activity in Northern Ireland: 2018/19 to 2022/23, Table A22: Regulated enrolments of Northern Ireland domiciled students by relative multiple deprivation quintile and FE College (2018/19 to 2022/23).

^[1] NISRA (2024) Inter Departmental Business Survey, Worksheet 3.1-3.4 LGD breakdown.

^[1] NISRA (2023) Industry of employment by sex, MS-H06Aa,

ⁱ InvestNI Sub Regional Economic Plan Technical Annex

ⁱⁱ InvestNI Sub-Regional Economic Plan Technical Annex

ⁱⁱⁱ ^[1] NOMIS (2024) Claimant count by sex and age, NI LGD.

^{iv} InvestNI Sub-Regional Economic Plan Technical Annex

^v InvestNI Sub-Regional Economic Plan Technical Annex

^{vi} InvestNI Sub-Regional Economic Plan Technical Annex



Cookstown
Dungannon
Enniskillen
Omagh