



MidKent College

Annual Accountability Statement & Local Needs Duty

How MidKent College's provision meets local needs

June 2025

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Purpose

Our vision is to provide an *Inclusive Environment that Creates Opportunities and Transforms Lives*.

Our mission is to drive the ambitions and prosperity of the communities of Maidstone, Medway, and the surrounding areas, while responding to national and regional skills priorities, and meeting local needs. We will be the destination of choice for students, staff, parents, employers, and the community.

Our education and training will be delivered by skilled, passionate, and inspiring industry practitioners, and we will build strong relationships with key partners to equip individuals who come to the College with skills to take their next steps in employment or entrepreneurship. Our programs will be designed to provide students with the flexibility and adaptability needed to succeed in a rapidly changing job market.

Our vision is supported by five strategic pillars that underpin our priorities that will help the leadership team to proactively make decisions about the future of the College and ensure that we act in the best interests of the students, staff, and local communities, including employers.

The five strategic pillars are:

- Inclusion** We will be a welcoming and supportive environment for our staff, students, and communities where people from different backgrounds can achieve their potential.
- Education** We will be the first choice locally for high-quality technical education and training delivered by industry practitioners and qualified educators.
- Community** We will contribute to the transformation of the communities of Medway, Maidstone, and surrounding areas through working collaboratively to raise aspirations.
- Experience** We will create a student experience that provides inclusive education, support and access to enrichment opportunities that develop students beyond their chosen curriculum pathway.
- Economy** We will contribute to the prosperity of the local economies of Medway, Maidstone and surrounding areas, and horizon-scan to ensure we operate in a way that is financially sustainable.

The Communities We Serve

The college has two campus locations. Our campus located in Gillingham primarily serves the communities for the Medway towns and our second campus located in Maidstone serves the needs of the Mid Kent area.

We work closely in partnership with key stakeholders to ensure that we meet the economic, skills and social needs of our communities. As the College serves a distinct geographic area, we deliver a co-ordinated curriculum provision, providing clear progression pathways, while specialising where appropriate to meet local needs in each location.

Maidstone

The working age population (16-64) for the borough of Maidstone at the last census (2021) was 109,100, with over 86% being economically active, and 2.3% unemployed. The latest Office for National Statistics (ONS) data shows a slight increase in residents that are unemployed to 3.5%, which remains lower than the national profile. However, there are significant variations across the borough with communities where deprivation is high and unemployment higher than the average.

The ONS 2021 census shows that the economy and main industries in Maidstone as classified by Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) are wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles, human health and social work activities, and construction. The borough also benefits from a site that forms part of the North Kent Enterprise Zone and the location of the Kent Medical Campus, which is where we have witnessed a growing medical and medtech business presence.



Medway

At the same census date, Medway had a working age population (16-64) of 176,400, with over 71% being economically active, and 4.9% unemployed. The latest ONS data shows a reduction in residents that are unemployed to 4%, which is equal to the national profile of reducing unemployment.

The latest ONS data (March 2024) highlights that Medway has a diverse blend of businesses operating in the area, with over 17,500 enterprises contributing to the local economy. The largest number of registered businesses represent the Construction sector (18%) and employees within human health and social work represent the largest employment concentration for the area. The area also has a growing creative sector with an increasing presence for arts, media, and digital businesses.

A total of 26,000 registered businesses operate in the Maidstone and Medway area and in common with the rest of Kent, 91% of these businesses employ nine or fewer people, while less than 1% are deemed large and employ 250 or more people.

Employment within the local area has a predominance of four sectors contributing up to 40% of the jobs in Kent and Medway: health & social care, education, retail, and business admin & support. The Kent & Medway Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) acknowledges that the sectors of accommodation and food, manufacturing, construction, and professional scientific & technical are also significant in terms of employment numbers, making up a further 27% of all jobs.

The resident profile for qualifications shows:

In Maidstone,

- Residents with qualifications only at Level 2 or below is 43.6% compared with 41.2% nationally and is further behind when compared to the southeast region generally.
- Residents with qualifications at level 3 (17.5%) is equal to the regional and national profile.
- Residents with qualifications at level 4 or above (29.9% compared with 33.8% nationally) is further behind when compared to the southeast region (35.8%).
- 17.4% of residents have no qualifications at all, which is more than the southeast region generally (15.4%).

In Medway too, the qualifications profile is consistently below national and the southeast comparators.

- Fewer residents have qualifications at level 3 or above (43.5% compared with 53.2% regionally).
- Fewer residents have qualifications at level 4 or above (25.6% compared with 33.8% nationally).
- 19.4% of residents have no qualifications at all, which is greater compared to Maidstone (17.4%) and regionally (15.4%)

The demand for education and skills following a period of contraction in the number of 15–19-year-olds in the population is expected now to significantly increase over the next 5-7 years. By 2028 there will be around 20% more 15–19-year-olds across Kent & Medway than now.

Our inclusive curriculum is designed to reflect these needs in our communities, including development of our offer for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), English as a Second Language (ESOL) and students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Approach to developing our annual accountability statement

In creating this document, we engaged our strategic and key partners from across the region including our local Employer Representative Body (ERB) Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce which oversees the Kent & Medway Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), Local Authority (LA) bodies and our key strategic employers as well as our neighbouring Colleges.

Contribution to National, Regional and Local Priorities

The College strives to support and engage in national, regional, and local skills needs across a wide range of external stakeholders. This includes demand from employers for both current or emerging skills, the educational needs and gaps within the local education landscape and supporting civic initiatives and the socioeconomic priorities within our local authority areas and its communities.

In October 2024, the College underwent a full OFSTED inspection, which judged that the College made a Strong contribution to meeting local skills needs. In summary, the report found: “The college makes a strong contribution to meeting skills needs. Governors, leaders and staff work very closely and productively with a wide range of relevant stakeholders to understand and respond to skills needs highly effectively. Leaders have developed an extensive stakeholder network that provides an in-depth picture of skills needs in the communities that the college serves. Stakeholders see the college as a trusted partner that is relied upon to offer learning programmes that support economic and social development in the area very well.” [Read the full report here.](#)

As well as engaging regularly with stakeholders in each of these categories, the College relies upon several key secondary research documents to gain a holistic understanding of the wider skills challenges, particularly where the stakeholder groups are so large (e.g. Employers and Education), and to rationalise our planned offer every year.

The most recent research used to support our curriculum planning and compiling this statement includes:

- [Kent & Medway Local Skills Improvement Plan 2023](#)
- [Kent & Medway Local Skills Improvement Plan Progress Report 2024](#)
- [Kent & Medway Workforce Skills Evidence Base](#)
- [Kent County Council Post-16 review: Pathways for All](#)
- [Medway Skills and Employability Plan for Medway 2035](#)

We also recognise and consider the government's national skills priorities when planning the curriculum, which are typically common with the local and regional skills needs identified by our local stakeholders. The national skills priorities are shown below and the curriculum review section starting on page 13 provides further analysis:

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Creative Industries
- Defence
- Digital and Technologies
- Financial Services
- Life Sciences
- Professional and Business Services
- Clean Energy Industries
- Construction
- Health

The Governing Body have recently restated their priority to increase the commitment for sustained growth of high-quality provision for Apprenticeships and consider investment in a purpose build Apprenticeship Academy at our Maidstone campus. A business case for investment is currently under development and if approved the facility will open in 2027/28.

Our contribution to regional priorities is further demonstrated through a recent example of continued collaboration across Kent Further Education (KFE) and the Strategic Development Fund (SDF) and the Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF) which focused on addressing cross-sector themed skills gaps identified in the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP). With a combined investment of £15m, these funds have enabled the KFE colleges to establish new resources, including market leading equipment and enhanced curricula content. This collaborative approach is contributing to providing access to new courses in the areas of Clean Energy Industries, a new national skills priority.

In 2025 we also saw the inclusion of Defence as an additional national skills priority and the college is well positioned to respond to this through its wholly owned subsidiary, MKC Training. MKC Training is a well-established training provider that delivers skills development to serving personnel at the Royal School of Military Engineering based in Chatham, Kent. We deliver engineering and construction training to over 1500+ Royal Engineers every year, up to degree level.

In addition, and to complement our planning, we regularly consult with the [Unit for Future Skills - Local Skills Dashboard](#) to assess the local employment and skills landscape.

The college has a well-respected approach to collaboration, and we contribute to regional priorities through our long-established partnership with our neighbouring Kent based Colleges (known as Kent Further Education – KFE) and our wider network that forms the South East Institute of Technology (IoT) where we specifically serve the needs for Engineering and Construction sector in Kent & Medway.

This strategic level engagement is supported through direct consultation with employers through our sector aligned Industry Advisory Forums, attendance at local business sector events and through ongoing analysis via our current employer engagement work with local business. To ensure our full-time students are prepared for their occupational pathways, we actively co-design curricula with employers, allowing for locally bespoke delivery mapped to current and emerging need, fully embedded within the delivery of qualification specifications.

To achieve a stronger alignment between our education provision and local employment needs, each area of curriculum is held accountable for its annual curriculum footprint, ensuring we take an evidenced-based approach that is collaborative, focused on improvement and is monitored with scrutiny and challenge throughout. This is further supported through annual sector round table meetings, hosted and facilitated by the ERB to validate our current and future offer.

We benefit from a wide variety of dialogue between local stakeholders and strategic partners to drive our planning process, and include:

- Industry Advisory Forum (employer roundtable events)
- Students of all ages; through our student voice activities
- KFE partner colleges
- Jobcentre Plus
- Chambers of Commerce/CBI/FSB (ERB)
- Sector specific networks
- Employees of the College
- Local authorities and other government bodies
- Local community groups

Planning our curriculum

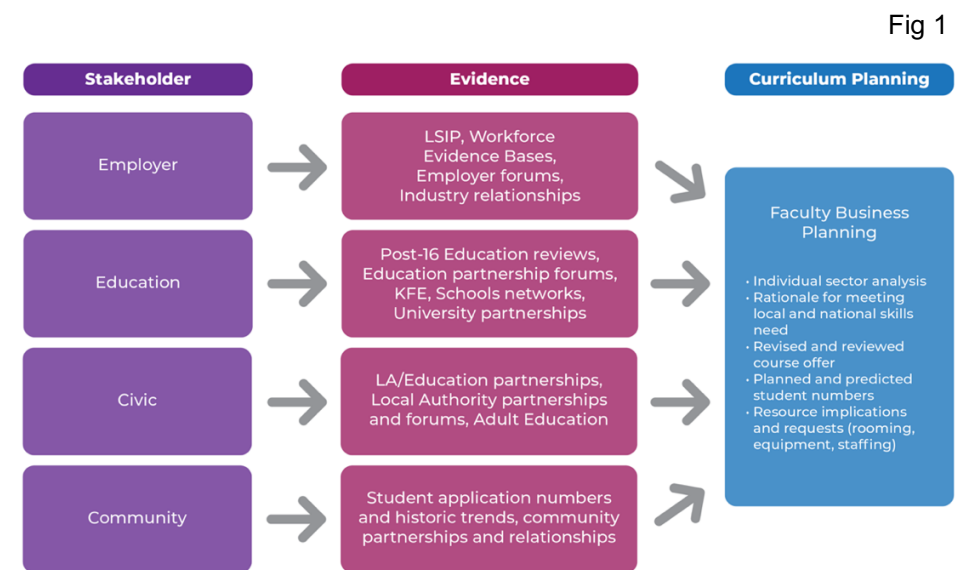
Our curriculum planning cycle is rigorous and robust. The process is intended to not only provide financial predictions and meet the demands of students but also ensure that the curriculum is both reactive to changes in national initiatives, incentives, and educational reform, as well as responsive to changes in the local needs and employment demographic. It is designed to ensure students attain the best possible destinations and support the local economy effectively when they graduate from College.

It incorporates and reflects upon both primary and secondary research as illustrated in fig 1. Our primary research includes “employer roundtables,” facilitated and chaired by Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce and the Kent & Medway ERB (Employer Representative Body) this series of events validate our current and planned curriculum offer.

We acknowledge that the Local Skills Improvement Plan for Kent and Medway outlines several key sectors of higher need in the local area: construction, land-based & food production, manufacturing & engineering, professional services, visitor economy, and the wider health and care sectors. It also identifies that in terms of employment within the local region, four sectors make up 40% of the jobs in Kent and Medway: health & social care, education, retail, and business admin & support. Technical is also significant in terms of employment numbers, making up a further 27% of all jobs.

With the exception of land-based & food production, the College engages well in all of these sectors, with the bulk of them falling within the faculties of construction & engineering (supported by the College’s subsidiary company, MKC

Training, who offer high quality professional training to the Royal Engineers in Medway), fitness & professional, and digital & care; but with all faculties having some involvement in developing employability skills and transferable skills applicable to all sectors. The land-based & food production sector is well-served across the county by Hadlow College (part of North Kent College), although the College does provide a popular animal management provision in Medway, with positive destinations for students and a particular focus on development of students with lower academic starting points and/or additional learning needs.



We actively participate in the sector representative groups, where skills are a standing item for discussion and debate. The Kent Construction Focus Group is long-established and provides a key voice for local employers to discuss the skills challenges facing their sector, and we jointly look to identify solutions to resolve challenges.

The Kent Manufacturing Focus Group is another good example and is similarly following the same format and is well respected for bringing employers together to discuss shared challenges including skills and recruitment.

We have also seen significant growth and demand (particularly in Medway) from the local creative industries sector, along with a range of emergent technical and creative skills needed to support this work. To address this, in mid-2023 the College opened the Medway School of Arts, commencing delivery at this new and specialised location within the historic dockyard in Medway which is set to offer 5-degree pathways from 2025 on. We continue to collaborate with an array of local stakeholders including the University of Kent at Medway, Medway Council and Adult Education, the Institute of Creative and Cultural Industries, and community groups such as Creative Medway to ensure our provision is also complementary to the existing local offer.

In terms of Education need, the KCC (Kent County Council) Post-16 review identified the need for a wider sixth form choice for students in Kent, and the need to develop digital skills and adopt blended or remote learning models to widen participation for harder to reach students, as well as develop clear pathways from level 2 and below and support aspiration for young people from all backgrounds. To support this identified need, the College commenced delivery of A-level provision at our Maidstone campus with approximately 50 students in 2023-4, approximately 110 in 2024-25, and with 180 planned (based on applications) for 2025-6. In addition, the College has successfully developed and implemented a dedicated Elective Home educated programme of fully live lessons delivered remotely which allows students to access GCSE Maths, English, and science qualifications.

We are committed to ensuring that our curriculum and support offer is broad, inclusive, and responsive to the diverse needs of students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), including those with more complex needs. Our provision effectively supports learners working at Entry Level 2 and above. However, there is currently a limited offer for students working at pre-entry and Entry Level 1. We are actively working to address this gap.

Our ambition is to develop and expand our provision to better meet the needs of all learners. However, we recognise that this development must proceed with the pace and priorities of our Local Authority partners. To ensure that any new provision is both viable and fit for purpose, it must be co-designed with Local Authorities. This collaborative approach will help us to better understand the needs of local students and to shape a curriculum that is both responsive and sustainable.

We remain committed to ongoing dialogue and partnership with Local Authorities to ensure that all learners, regardless of their starting point, have access to meaningful pathways and the support they need to thrive.

Throughout the planning of our curriculum offer we always consider the strengths of the college and where we are best served to meet the needs of the area, and where it is appropriate, identify other providers who are better placed to respond to these needs. A good example of this is the area is our work with the unemployed. The college is well place with a strong track record to deliver Sector Work based Academy Programmes (SWAPs) for this market, but not the governments flagship Skills Bootcamp model. In this case we have identified that Kent Adult Education delivers an existing local Skills Bootcamp programme.

Curriculum Review

Sector Subject Area	National Priority	Regional & Local Priority	Market Analysis	Employment	Development Required by College
<p>1. Health, Public Services and Care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and social care • Public services • Child development and well being 	✓	✓	<p>High priority to meet workforce shortages and skills development in the Health and Care sector.</p> <p>High priority for development of Digitalisation skills across many sectors (see LSIP), and workforce shortages in technical roles across local industry.</p>	<p>It is predicted that by 2035 the Kent & Medway employment volume within health & social care will change by +2.2% and public services -1% for the same period.</p> <p>This compares to +5% predicted employment growth for the same period across all sectors.</p>	To continue to work with NHS and local agencies as well as local universities to develop clear and easier pathways into employment at all levels and enable continued placement opportunities for students. Building on success of T-level collaboration.
<p>2. Science and Mathematics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science 	✓	✓	<p>High priority to develop progression routes for lower attaining students. Science key to industry sector development.</p>	<p>It is predicted that by 2035 the Kent & Medway employment volume within food manufacturing will change by +15.2% and agriculture +3.9% for the same period.</p> <p>This compares to +5% predicted employment growth for the same period across all sectors.</p>	To review established Science and Animal Management pathways to ensure employer collaboration and involvement.
<p>3. Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animal care and veterinary science 		✓			
<p>4. Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engineering • Manufacturing technologies 	✓	✓	<p>High priority for skills in Engineering and Manufacturing for local business (see LSIP and Workforce Skills Evidence Base).</p>	<p>It is predicted that by 2035 the Kent & Medway employment volume for engineering will change by -24.4%. This compares to +5% predicated employment growth for the</p>	Increase the number of students accessing higher technical skills through Institute of Technology (IoT) which specialises in Engineering and Manufacturing. Review

Sector Subject Area	National Priority	Regional & Local Priority	Market Analysis	Employment	Development Required by College
			<p>High priority to raise attainment level of level 4 and above qualifications across Kent and Medway.</p> <p>The proportion of people qualified at Level 3 or above is highest in Maidstone and lowest in Tonbridge and Malling.</p>	<p>same period across all sectors.</p> <p>Conversely, the Kent Manufacturing Focus Group reports the need for pipeline talent to replace an ageing workforce and those operating on a global export market which continue to see significant growth.</p>	<p>higher (level 4-6) offer to meet local employment needs.</p>
<p>5. Construction, Planning, and the Built Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building and construction 	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>High priority for skills in Construction Trades for local business (see LSIP and Workforce Skills Evidence Base).</p> <p>High priority to raise attainment level of level 4 and above qualifications across Kent and Medway.</p> <p>The proportion of people qualified at Level 3 or above is highest in Maidstone and lowest in Tonbridge and Malling. Source: Unit for Future Skills</p> <p>In addition, we have a number of significant infrastructure projects in the pipeline for the region including the Lower Thames Crossing.</p>	<p>It is predicted that by 2035 the Kent & Medway employment volume for construction will change by +10.9%. This compares to +5% predicted employment growth for the same period across all sectors.</p>	<p>Increase the number of students accessing higher technical skills through Institute of Technology (IoT) which specialises in Construction.</p> <p>In response to LSIP priority, continue to embed and develop net zero awareness and technical skills into all programmes</p>

Sector Subject Area	National Priority	Regional & Local Priority	Market Analysis	Employment	Development Required by College
6. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICT practitioners 	✓	✓	High priority for development of Digitalisation skills across many sectors (see LSIP), and workforce shortages in technical roles across local industry.	It is predicted that by 2035 the Kent & Medway employment volume for IT (Information Technology) will change by +13.7%. This compares to +5% predicted employment growth for the same period across all sectors in the region.	
7. Retail and Commercial Enterprise <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hospitality and catering • Hair • Beauty 		✓	Increased priority in maintaining and developing service industries to support economic growth and cultural developments in local regions. High level of SMEs (Small or Medium Enterprise) and Enterprise across Kent and Medway.	It is predicted that by 2035 the Kent & Medway employment volume for hospitality will change by +20.2%. This compares to +5% predicted employment growth for the same period across all sectors.	
8. Leisure, Travel and Tourism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sport, leisure, and recreation • Travel and tourism 		✓	Whilst employers report that leisure related roles remain hard to recruit, applications remain strong, demonstrating the popularity from 16–18-year-olds. Student destination data also supports the transferable nature of the skills gained through study programmes.	It is predicted that by 2035 the Kent & Medway employment volume for the entertainment and arts sector will change by +11.5%. This compares to +5% predicted employment growth for the same period across all sectors.	
9. Arts, Media and Publishing	✓	✓	Significant growth in the Creative sector across Kent and (particularly)	It is predicted that by 2035 the Kent & Medway employment volume for Arts	To increase the number of students enrolled on Arts and Creative Digital

Sector Subject Area	National Priority	Regional & Local Priority	Market Analysis	Employment	Development Required by College
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performing arts Crafts, creative arts, and design Media and communication 			Medway, with rise in employment and workforce need coupled with skills shortages in terms of emergent technologies. Civic drive for creative and cultural development in local areas.	& Entertainment industries will change by +11.5%. This compares to +5% predicted employment growth for the same period across all sectors.	programmes at the Medway School of Arts and launch degree programmes in Graphic Design, Fine Art, and Photography.
10. History, Philosophy and Theology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> History Philosophy 		✓	The need to create a broader choice for post-16 was the spotlight and outcome of the KCC post-16. The review identified the need for a wider sixth form choice for students in Kent, and the need to develop digital skills and adopt blended or remote learning models to widen participation for harder to reach students, as well as develop clear pathways from level 2 and below and support aspiration for young people from all backgrounds.	Employers routinely express a general concern that young people are not necessarily well enough prepared for employment: lacking in work skills, not appreciating the responsibilities of being an employee rather than a student. However, employers also value the currency of a structured qualification framework such as A levels or the equivalent, with many professions recognising this well as the benchmark for entry to employment.	Increasing the work experience element for A level students, with a focus on preparation for behaviours and attitudes to employment.
11. Social Sciences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geography Sociology and social policy Politics 					
12. Languages, Literature and Culture					
13. Education and Training		✓	Teacher shortages remain a challenge both locally and nationally,	It is predicted that by 2035 the Kent & Medway employment volume for education will change by	Continue the commitment for the Trade to Teach

Sector Subject Area	National Priority	Regional & Local Priority	Market Analysis	Employment	Development Required by College
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching and lecturing 			<p>and particularly in technical disciplines. Greater market opportunity for the Learning & Skills Teacher Apprenticeship Standard with employers prioritising their levy spend to develop existing staff or new entrants to the profession.</p>	<p>+3.4%. This compares to +5% predicted employment growth for the same period across all sectors.</p>	<p>programme we have developed to equip new entrants to the profession with the essential skills to start teaching. This is further supported by a commitment to continue their ongoing CPD (Continuous Professional Development) through the Learning & Skills Apprenticeship programme.</p>
<p>14. Preparation for Life and Work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foundations for learning and life Preparation for work 		✓	<p>The need to create a broader choice for post-16 was the spotlight and outcome of the KCC post-16. The review identified the need increased SEND choice for students in Kent, and the need to develop skills for sustained employment as well as develop clear pathways from level 2 and below and support aspiration for young people from all backgrounds and abilities.</p>	<p>Increased awareness of the benefits a business can gain from providing supported employment opportunities.</p> <p>Increased awareness of programmes such as supported internships that encourage employers to engage through a fully supported job coach model.</p>	<p>To increase the number of students participating in Supported Internships study programmes.</p>

Sector Subject Area	National Priority	Regional & Local Priority	Market Analysis	Employment	Development Required by College
15. Business, Administration and Law <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accounting and finance • Administration • Law 	✓	✓	Strong educational need for wider choice for sixth form students across county (see post-16 review). Increase in Home Educated students following pandemic and opportunities for developing remote learning pathways. Growth in SEN and EHCP learners, high Local Authority priority to improve outcomes and progression for SEN learners.	It is predicted that by 2025 the Kent & Medway employment volume for professional services will change by +10.8%. This compares to +5% predicted employment growth for the same period across all sectors.	

Source: Projected employment volumes for Kent & Medway LSIP area <https://department-for-education.shinyapps.io/local-skills-dashboard/>

Actions for 2025/26

Aims and Objectives	Contribution towards National, Regional and Local Priorities for Learning and Skills	Response to Learning & Skills		
		Local	Regional	National
1. Ensure that over 90% of study programme students achieve a positive destination in 2024/25.	<p>Enable our students to succeed in their chosen technical and vocational programme and contribute to meeting the skills needs of Kent & Medway.</p> <p>Supports employer workforce targets and the wider community benefit in driving aspiration.</p>	✓	✓	
2. Sustain delivery volume of Sector Work-based Academy Programmes for 2024/25 (900) and widen sector engagement to national skills priority areas such as transport and logistics	<p>Meets local and regional agendas in terms of work ready employability skills.</p> <p>The LSIP and JCP identify a need for soft transferrable skills to increase employment prospects.</p> <p>Increase sector engagement to include national skills priority areas.</p>	✓	✓	✓
3. Increase the number of students enrolled on Arts and Creative Digital programmes at the Medway School of Arts by 100% (60) and launch degree programmes in Graphic Design, Fine Art, and Photography in 2025/26.	<p>Contributes to meeting specific sector and occupational needs that have been identified by stakeholders, locally and regionally, in addition to supporting a specific sector that is seeing resurgence with significant economic growth within Medway.</p>	✓	✓	✓

Aims and Objectives	Contribution towards National, Regional and Local Priorities for Learning and Skills	Response to Learning & Skills		
		Local	Regional	National
4. Continue to grow Elected Home Educated provision to approx. 150 students in 2025/26.	Reducing NEETS and providing greater progression opportunities for students who have previously struggled to evidence qualifications for entry requirements.	✓	✓	
5. Invest and deliver innovation projects in 2025/26 to support our students in reaching their potential <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising aspirations through the introduction of MKC Alumni network • Raising confidence through enhanced student engagement activities 	Contributes to meeting the “soft skills” needs identified though the LSIP and prepares students for their first steps into employment.	✓	✓	
6. Continue to grow the number of students with SEND participating in Supported Internships and pre internship study programmes in 2025/26 by introducing a supported internship programme at the Medway Campus.	Contribute to social and economic inclusivity by supporting SEND students into fulfilling careers, whilst meeting local skills needs. Meets post-16 review targets to improve offer and progression into employment for students with a range of SEN and EHCPs.	✓	✓	✓

Aims and Objectives	Contribution towards National, Regional and Local Priorities for Learning and Skills	Response to Learning & Skills		
		Local	Regional	National
7. Support the development of maths & English provision at College by the introduction of Contextualised, employability skills lessons in literacy and numeracy for all study programme students, and the introduction of an employer endorsed certificate for students studying GCSE.	Contribute to key employability skills development for students, raising opportunities for education and career progression.	✓	✓	✓

Key Stakeholders

The College recognises the importance of strong stakeholder engagement and the benefits this brings to our students and the wider community. Our culture is built on a foundation of collaboration, evident in the numerous strategic partnerships we have developed and continue to support.

The College will continue to work closely with a range of key stakeholders to achieve its strategic objectives. These include:

- Medway Council
- Kent County Council
- Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce
- Local MPs
- Maidstone Borough Council
- Job Centre Plus
- Strategically important employers
- Other employer representative groups and networks

We are a key signatory for the Medway Civic Charter, along with our local authority, universities, the NHS Trust, and the Dockyard Trust. This recognises and solidifies our position as an anchor institution that is committed to work in partnership to address Medway's challenges and priorities.

We supported the establishment of a Place Board for Medway to help raise the aspirations of the area for its residents, businesses, and visitors. The Principal and CEO Chairs the Community Interest Company (CIC) set up to lead this partnership work. In 2021 Creative Medway was established to bring together the growing number of Creative Sole Traders and Businesses. In 2023 Medway saw 7 organisations receive NPO (National Portfolio Organisation) status. These have helped galvanise and co-ordinate the Creative Sector across Medway helping to provide students with the aspirations locally to contribute, experience and work in the Creative Sector.

The College is a founding member of the Maidstone Anchor Institution network hosted by the Borough Council which has been instrumental in bringing together local stakeholders to tackle shared challenges, such as employee recruitment, cost of living and social deprivation. The network enables the college to forge relationships with local stakeholders and to start to solve these challenges with a collaborative approach.

The Kent and Medway Economic Partnership (KMEP) is the Economic Growth Board for the region of Kent and Medway. KMEP aims to drive forward economic growth and prosperity throughout the region and brings together regional stakeholders and influencers from the private sector, local government, and further and higher education. The Principal and CEO represents the College and our FE (Further Education) partners from the region and chairs the Skills sub-group for KMEP.

The Employer Representative Body (ERB) for Kent & Medway is Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce and the College enjoys a longstanding strategic relationship with the chamber and is a founding member of their patron scheme since 2015, which affords us the opportunity to gain valuable insight with notable employers from the region. Our Deputy CEO is the current chair of the chamber which extends our relationship beyond that of membership and provides additional strategic oversight of the key developments across the region.

In the past year, the relationship with our local Job Centre Plus has thrived, with the College supporting over 1100 job seekers gain valuable work ready skills through the sector-based work academies programme (SWAP). As a primary delivery partner, the College has hosted multiple job fairs by using our extensive reach to local employers and then developing SWAPs in specific occupations, such as Teaching Assistants, Train Conductors and Call Handlers where vacancies exist.

To boost employability, the college creates mechanisms and professional networking opportunities to connect students directly with potential employers in a safe environment. One such example, was our collaboration with Medway and Maidstone Job Centre Plus (JCP) where we hosted multiple jobs fairs that provided over 500 unemployed adults in our community direct access to employers from the construction, rail, health, civil service, and catering industries. The success of these event has seen our relationship with the DWP strengthen and an additional jobs fair events are planned to take place by the end of 2025.

Engagement with Other Providers in the Area:

Further Education Providers

MidKent College collaborates closely with the other two General Further Education College groups in Kent and Medway, EKC Group and North Kent College. All three institutions form Kent Further Education (KFE), a pro-active partnership of FE Colleges that acts as a voice for the county's Further Education sector and to ensure it delivers the skills and training required.

The Principal and CEO is the current chair of KFE and is supported by the Strategic Director, who supports the development of strategic relationships across the region and enables a collaborative response to regional skills requirements.

We have also enjoyed a long-standing series of county-wide collaborative activities to support our students and workforce development, which include projects and events such as our annual CPD conference and student skills competitions.

Schools

A selective education system operates in Kent and most schools have a sixth form which has created a highly competitive environment. This results in the significant majority of young people studying an academic A level pathway. The Kent and Medway area has a much lower proportion of Year 11 students moving away from school and as a result fewer than the England average of young people take pathways that help improve their technical skills. The College has helped in supporting our Local Authorities to engage in a review of Post-16 education across the county (Pathways for all). Following this, the College is actively engaged in leading the collaborative work with schools on behalf of the Pathways for All initiative with Kent County Council for the Maidstone and Malling areas to address any gaps in post-16 provision and develop clear pathways. We also collaborate with schools in supporting careers events, and technical and vocational taster experiences days.

Universities

We have an established partnership with each of the three universities in the county, University of Greenwich, University of Kent, and Canterbury Christ Church University. Our Higher Education programmes are complimentary to the universities' existing offers and build upon the strengths of the college to provide increased progression opportunities for students.

We participate in the Kent and Medway Collaborative Outreach Programme (KaMCOP), a partnership between our local universities, Kent County Council, KFE colleges and over 50 schools in Kent and Medway to widen participation in Higher Education.

Independent Training Providers (ITP)

Although national subcontracting policy has discouraged a supply chain of partnership provision, we are always open to collaborating with private providers where we are unable to meet a specific local need. An example of this is our long-standing partnership with JTL, who currently reside at our Maidstone campus where they act as a referral delivery partner for any employer looking for an Apprenticeship Standard in Plumbing or Electrical. A further example was our collaboration with Runway Training, an ITP operating across the region that we engaged to extend our geographical reach and raise the profile of the LSIP and associated LSIF projects.

Local Skills Duty

In response to The Skills Act (2022), the Board of Governors has conducted a review of our approach, determining how well our curriculum meets local skills needs and prepares for those that will emerge in the future, through oversight, challenge, and discussion, with employers and leaders of the college.

Our governors utilise their extensive network of local and regional stakeholder relationships to great effect, bringing a wealth of market intelligence that assists in validating the needs of local businesses and the wider community. Governors represent a wide spectrum of industries, including public sector, construction, healthcare, finance, and professional services, which provides an additional layer of scrutiny when defining our curriculum.

Our collaboration with the Kent colleges also extends to the boardroom too, where we have benefited from constructive dialogue between respective board members on tackling regional skills challenges identified by the LSIP.

We are committed to being a mindful and considerate organisation that assesses and manages the impact of our work on the local and global environment. Climate change and ecological impact are some of the biggest challenges of our time, and the UK Government's target to reach net-zero emissions by 2050 is ambitious. We are ambitious too. That is why we have put plans in place under our 'MidKent College ZERO' initiative to make our campuses in Maidstone and Medway net-zero by 2030.

Through the college's new Estates Strategy, our board has approved a number of investment programmes of capital expenditure, with the largest in excess of £13m to transform our estate and realise our net-zero ambition.

We recognise the significant role we play in shaping the values and behaviours of future generations. By demonstrating our own commitment to environmental sustainability, we believe we can instil a sense of responsibility and awareness among our students and staff to help create a culture of environmental awareness that extends beyond our campuses and into the broader community.

We have and will continue to demonstrate our desire to collaborate with local and regional education partners and business to review and refine our collective offer to meet local need.

We will continue to act as a key contributor to KFE including initiatives across the region, sharing best practice, resources and skills, and our collaborative approach will build on our historic work across the sub-region to date, strengthening our relationships and community of practice to develop collaborative models and agree solutions to meet local need.

As a pivotal strategic partner, we will act with integrity, in the true spirit of collaboration, for the good of our region and our communities.

Corporate statement

On behalf of the MidKent College corporation, it is hereby confirmed that the plan as set out above reflects an agreed statement of purpose, aims and objectives as approved by the corporation at their meeting on 22 May 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:

<https://www.midkent.ac.uk/about-us/strategic-priorities>

Peter Fleming

Peter Fleming

Chair of Governors

Simon Cook

Simon Cook

Principal & Chief Executive

Dated: 22nd May 2025

Supporting Documentation

Kent & Medway Local Skills Improvement Plan

<https://kentemployerskillsplan.org/>

Kent & Medway Workforce Skills Evidence Base

<https://kentemployerskillsplan.org/>

Greater North Kent Workforce Skills Evidence Base

<https://swale.gov.uk/>

Medway Skills & Employability Plan

<https://www.medway.gov.uk/>

Kent County Council Post-16 review: Pathways for All

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/>

Kent and Medway Economic Partnership

<https://www.kmep.org.uk/>

MidKent College Strategic Plan

<https://www.midkent.ac.uk/>

MidKent College Ofsted Inspection Reports

<https://ofsted.gov.uk/>

MidKent College Financial Statement

<https://www.midkent.ac.uk/>

Office for National Statistics

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>

Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce

<https://www.kentinvictachamber.co.uk/>

Kent & Medway Economic Framework

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/>