



MidKent College

Annual Accountability Statement & Local Needs Duty

How MidKent College's provision meets local needs

July 2026

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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 operates across two main campus locations, as well as a satellite site at the Historic Dockyard. The Gillingham campus primarily serves the communities of the Medway towns, while the Maidstone campus supports the needs of Mid Kent.

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) in the borough of Maidstone is estimated to be around 110,600. Recent data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) shows that approximately 73.8% of this group are in employment, with an unemployment rate of around 3.1%. While this represents a slight increase compared with previous years, the rate remains broadly in line with regional and national levels. However, there are notable variations across the borough, with some communities experiencing higher levels of deprivation and unemployment than the average.

Data from the 2021 Census shows that the main industries in Maidstone, as classified by Standard Industrial Classification (SIC), include wholesale and retail trade (including motor vehicle repair), human health and social work, and construction. More recent evidence suggests these sectors continue to play a significant role in the local economy, alongside growth in professional, scientific and technical activities.



Medway

Medway has a working-age population (16–64) of approximately 180,000. Latest ONS estimates show an employment rate of 76.9%, with an unemployment rate of 3.5%, reflecting relatively low unemployment but a tight labour market. While unemployment has reduced over time, Medway's rate remains slightly higher than the South East average, mirroring national patterns of constrained labour supply and increasing economic inactivity.

Latest ONS business data (March 2024) highlights that Medway has a diverse business base, with around 9,000 VAT- and/or PAYE-registered enterprises operating across the local economy. The construction sector accounts for the largest share of registered businesses, while human health and social work activities represent the largest concentration of employment, reflecting the area's demographic profile and public-service infrastructure. Medway also has a growing creative and digital sector, with an increasing presence of arts, media and information-based micro-businesses and self-employment.

Across the wider Maidstone and Medway functional economic area, business activity remains strong. Recent data indicates a combined business base of approximately 25,000–26,000 enterprises, with Medway and Maidstone among the highest contributors to new business start-ups in Kent. In common with the rest of Kent, around 90–91% of businesses employ nine or fewer people, while fewer than 1% are classified as large employers, employing 250 or more staff.

Employment across Kent and Medway continues to be concentrated within a small number of key sectors. Health and social care, education, retail, and business administration and support services together account for around 40% of all jobs. The Kent & Medway Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) also recognises construction, manufacturing and engineering, fresh food, horticulture, agriculture & viticulture, adult social care, creative industries and the hospitality & visitor economy as significant contributors to employment, collectively accounting for a further quarter of all jobs and remaining priority areas for future skills and workforce development.

The resident profile for qualifications at the Census 2021 shows:

In Maidstone,

- Residents with qualifications 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 prolonged period of contraction in the population of 15–19 year olds, is now projected to increase significantly over the next five to seven years. ONS subnational population projections (2022 based) indicate a sustained rise in the secondary and post 16 age cohort across Kent and Medway from the mid 2020s onwards, driven by earlier increases in birth rates and continued population growth. By 2028, the number of 15–19 year olds across Kent and Medway is projected to increase by around 18–20% compared with current levels, resulting in a marked uplift in demand for 16–19 education, apprenticeships, and wider skills provision. This demographic shift will place increasing pressure on education and training capacity across the system and reinforces the importance of forward planning to ensure sufficient and appropriately aligned provision.

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. In line with ministerial direction, we have also already tried to align this document with our strategic transition planning statement to detail expectations around transition into the new reformed suite of qualifications at Level 2 and 3.

The Governing Body operates a sub-group to develop and validate the annual Accountability Statement. Progress against the objectives is reviewed by the full Governing Body at the mid-point of the academic year, with the statement approved annually.

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.

In the summer of 2026, the *Youth Hub* will be opening at our Medway campus in partnership with the Department of Work and Pensions where 16–24-year-olds can get Jobcentre Plus employment support plus wraparound help in one place. In addition, the intelligence gained through these interactions will inform our curriculum planning, providing insight into local youth employment needs (including NEET cohorts).

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

- [Kent & Medway Local Skills Improvement Plan Progress Report 2025](#)
- [Kent & Medway Local Skills Improvement Plan 2023](#)
- [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

Our contribution to regional priorities is further demonstrated through recent examples of continued collaboration across Kent Further Education (KFE) and the various DFE funded initiatives, such as 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. Our collaborative approach is contributing to providing access to new courses and resources to deliver a national skills priority.

The inclusion of Defence as an additional national skills priority allows the college to be well positioned to respond 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. <https://www.mkctraining.com/>

To ensure we consider the predicted occupational employment volumes both locally and nationally, we consult the Skills England – [Local Skills Dashboard](#). This provides insight on occupations that are predicted to be in demand and decline, allowing us to consider a supply vs demand curriculum.

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 the Engineering and Construction sector in Kent & Medway. Furthermore, the introduction of the South East Construction Excellence College (SECTEC) in 2025, led by our partners North Kent College demonstrates our strength and legacy of collaboration. In this example, we actively participate and support the project in delivering its objectives, that are aligned to our collective needs to respond to current and future needs of the construction industry.

This strategic level engagement is supplemented 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. In 2026 we have further enhanced our understanding of employer needs by introducing a candidate matching service to introduce graduating students to employers, recognising the predominance of small businesses that don't have the capacity for recruitment and therefore may not consider apprenticeships. This service allows for a deeper understanding of the specific employment competences that employers are seeking, which provides a rich source of feedback to inform study programme content and ensure that students are employment ready.

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
- School Networks (Pathways for All)

To support the priority actions of the [Get Kent and Medway Working Plan](#) we continue to align our provision to tackle skills gaps, reduce economic inactivity and strengthen pathways into employment through close partnership working with employers, Jobcentre Plus, local authorities and health services. This includes expanding flexible, employer-led training and apprenticeship pathways in priority sectors, delivering targeted support for those facing barriers to work (including young people, the unemployed and those with health conditions), and embedding personalised progression routes that link education, skills and job outcomes. Through this integrated approach, the College would help deliver improved access to training, stronger employer engagement and more inclusive employment opportunities, directly contributing to the Plan's ambition to build a skilled, resilient and economically active workforce across Kent and Medway.

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.

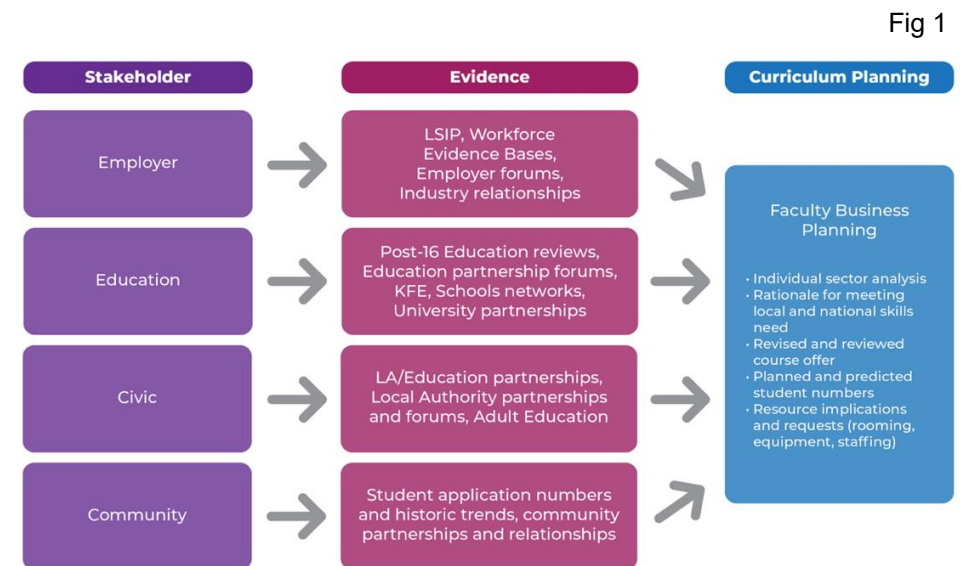
It incorporates and reflects upon both primary and secondary research as illustrated in fig 1. Our primary research includes “employer roundtables,” facilitated and chaired by Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce and the Kent & Medway ERB (Employer Representative Body) this series of events validate our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

More recently the Kent Hospitality Focus Group was introduced by the LSIP, in response to feedback from the sector and primarily focuses on employment and skills. Early engagement in this forum has informed our development of curriculum and introduced us to a network of sector advocates.

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 offering 5-degree pathways from September 2026. We continue to collaborate with an array of local stakeholders including the Universities at Medway, Medway Council and Adult Education, 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 delivers A-level provision at our Maidstone campus alongside 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.

We will use the Inclusive Mainstream Fund to embed inclusive practice within everyday delivery, creating sustainable improvement rather than short-term activity. This will involve investing in staff capability and capacity so that inclusion is designed into teaching, support services and the overall student experience from the outset, alongside a focus on practical training, shared tools and resources that can be used consistently across teams. Funding will prioritise approaches that can be embedded and sustained over time. We will monitor the impact of funded activity to demonstrate how it strengthens inclusive practice, including improvements in staff confidence, the quality of resources and access for students, and we will share effective approaches, learn from where impact is limited, and direct future investment towards models that can be scaled across the organisation.

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 our work with the unemployed. The college is well placed 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.

In preparing our inaugural Strategic Transition Planning Statement we have considered our high-level intentions for curriculum delivery from academic year 2027/28 onwards in respect of applied, technical or vocational qualifications at Level 2 and/or Level 3.

Curriculum Review

Sector Subject Area	National Priority	Regional & Local Priority	Market Analysis	Employment	Development Required by College
1. Health, Public Services and Care - Health and social care - Public services - Child development and well being	✓	✓	High priority to meet workforce shortages and skills development in the Health and Care sector. 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 within health & social care will change by +2.2% and public services -1% for the same period. This compares to +5% predicted employment growth for the same period across all sectors.	Work with NHS to develop visuals of 16-Employment pathways in clinical and non-clinical roles. Develop existing models and collaboration at L3 to L2 pathways
2. Science and Mathematics Science	✓	✓	High priority to develop progression routes for lower attaining students. Science key to industry sector development.	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.	Re-establish higher education pathways for HNC/HND options
3. Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care Animal care and veterinary science		✓		This compares to +5% predicted employment	

Sector Subject Area	National Priority	Regional & Local Priority	Market Analysis	Employment	Development Required by College
				growth for the same period across all sectors.	
4. Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies • Engineering • Manufacturing technologies	✓	✓	High priority for skills in Engineering and Manufacturing for local business (see LSIP and Workforce Skills Evidence Base). High priority to raise attainment level of level 4 and above qualifications across Kent and Medway. The proportion of people qualified at Level 3 or above is highest in Maidstone and lowest in Tonbridge and Malling.	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 same period across all sectors. 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.	Plan for introduction of T-level in Engineering alongside existing Built Environment/Civil Engineering pathway.
5. Construction, Planning, and the Built Environment • Building and construction	✓	✓	High priority for skills in Construction Trades for local business (see LSIP and Workforce Skills Evidence Base). High priority to raise attainment level of level 4 and above qualifications across Kent and Medway. The proportion of people qualified at Level 3 or above is highest in	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.	Develop L4 offer and access to e.g. virtual teaching. Work with LTC to establish clear employment links direct from College courses to Skills Hub.

Sector Subject Area	National Priority	Regional & Local Priority	Market Analysis	Employment	Development Required by College
			Maidstone and lowest in Tonbridge and Malling. Source: Unit for Future Skills In addition, we have a number of significant infrastructure projects in the pipeline for the region including the Lower Thames Crossing.		
6. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) 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.	Develop and implement L4-5 Foundation degree offer in partnership with HEI. Prepare for introduction of L2 Digital Foundation certificate.
7. Retail and Commercial Enterprise - 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.	Prepare for L2 Occupational pathway in Catering and Hospitality.
8. Leisure, Travel and Tourism - 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	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	

Sector Subject Area	National Priority	Regional & Local Priority	Market Analysis	Employment	Development Required by College
			destination data also supports the transferable nature of the skills gained through study programmes.	growth for the same period across all sectors.	
9. Arts, Media and Publishing • Performing arts • Crafts, creative arts, and design • Media and communication	✓	✓	Significant growth in the Creative sector across Kent and (particularly) 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.	It is predicted that by 2035 the Kent & Medway employment volume for Arts & Entertainment industries will change by +11.5%. This compares to +5% predicted employment growth for the same period across all sectors.	Continue to grow the number of students enrolled on Creative Arts degree programmes at the Medway School of Arts, and introduce progression and short skills courses
10. History, Philosophy and Theology • 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.	
11. Social Sciences • Geography • Sociology and social policy • Politics					
12. Languages, Literature and Culture					

Sector Subject Area	National Priority	Regional & Local Priority	Market Analysis	Employment	Development Required by College
13. Education and Training Teaching and lecturing		✓	Teacher shortages remain a challenge both locally and nationally, 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.	It is predicted that by 2035 the Kent & Medway employment volume for education will change by +3.4%. This compares to +5% predicted employment growth for the same period across all sectors.	Develop and implement a Foundation Degree pathway alongside existing apprenticeship routes.
14. Preparation for Life and Work - Foundations for learning and life - Preparation for work		✓	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.	Increased awareness of the benefits a business can gain from providing supported employment opportunities. Increased awareness of programmes such as supported internships that encourage employers to engage through a fully supported job coach model.	Continue to support and grow Supported Internship programmes.
15. Business, Administration and Law - 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	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	Implement Business T-level pathway for 2026-27

Sector Subject Area	National Priority	Regional & Local Priority	Market Analysis	Employment	Development Required by College
			opportunities for developing remote learning pathways. Growth in SEN and EHCP learners, high Local Authority priority to improve outcomes and progression for SEN learners.	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 2026/27

Aims and Objectives	Contribution towards National, Regional and Local Priorities for Learning and Skills	Response to Learning & Skills		
		Local	Regional	National
1. Continue to grow Sector Work-based Academy Programmes for 2026/27. Support NEET reduction with the introduction of 16-18 short employability courses.	Meets local and regional agendas in terms of work ready employability skills. Addresses key issues around growing local numbers of NEETs in the 16-25 age range. The LSIP and JCP identify a need for soft transferrable skills to increase employment prospects. Increase sector engagement to include national skills priority areas.	✓	✓	✓
2. Plan for the Introduction of L2 pathways in Early Years and Catering for first delivery in September 2027	Meets national agenda for qualification reform at L2 with simpler and clear pathways for Employment and Progression. Supports L2 Learners into positive destinations.	✓	✓	✓
3. Continue to grow Elected Home Educated provision to approx. 200 students in 2026/27. Explore opportunities to reach new cohorts of students (e.g. those supported by LA home tuition programmes)	Reducing NEETS and providing greater progression opportunities for students who have previously struggled to evidence qualifications for entry requirements. Supporting local authority agendas around providing cost-effective and high-quality engaging provision for students with complex needs	✓	✓	
4. Design and deliver an accelerator pilot in 2026/27 to trial and enhanced student employability offer that strengthens their competitiveness in the job market.	Contributes to meeting the “soft skills” needs identified though the LSIP and prepares students for their first steps into employment. Equipping students with additional occupationally related qualifications that increases their readiness to enter the workforce.	✓	✓	✓

Aims and Objectives	Contribution towards National, Regional and Local Priorities for Learning and Skills	Response to Learning & Skills		
		Local	Regional	National
5. Pilot an accelerator project in 2026/27 to define, track and improve student destination outcomes, with the intent to increase the proportion of learners securing positive, sustained destinations.	This will support skills priorities by increasing progression into employment and apprenticeships in key shortage sectors, strengthening job readiness through employer-led activity and industry-recognised skills, and using real destination data to align curriculum with labour market demand and reduce economic inactivity.	✓	✓	✓
6. Develop and recruit for the commencement of V-levels in Accounting and Finance, and Digital for Sept 2027	Meets national agenda for qualification reform at L3 offering greater vocational choice and wider skills development Broadens subject combination choice for students on A-level + programmes Contributes to local and national skills priority agendas	✓	✓	✓
7. Build on the development of maths & English provision at College via contextualised, employability skills lessons in literacy and numeracy for all study programme students, raising attendance and attainment. Further develop an employer endorsed certificate for students studying GCSE.	Contribute to key employability skills development for students, raising opportunities for reducing NEETS and providing greater progression opportunities for students who have previously struggled to evidence qualifications for entry requirements. or education and career progression.	✓	✓	✓
8. Increase T-level provision in line with and in preparation for reinvigorated T-level rollout until 2031. Introduce T-level Business in Sept 2026 and prepare to commence and	Meets national agenda for qualification reform at L3 offering clear technical routes for students wanting to progress into skilled roles. Supports a wider progression opportunity for students wanting to progress to L3 study at College.	✓	✓	✓

Aims and Objectives	Contribution towards National, Regional and Local Priorities for Learning and Skills	Response to Learning & Skills		
		Local	Regional	National
recruit to T-level in Engineering for Sept 2027.				
9. Expand the Higher Education portfolio across the College. Implement Foundation Degrees in e-Sports, Teacher Training, and Early Years. Increase L4 offer in Construction and explore alternative delivery methods (e.g. virtual teaching) to widen reach.	Improve reach and capacity for higher level skills development. Offers clear progression routes within the College for students wishing to continue to study past Level 3 with us. Widens participation access for students unable to access traditional HE routes.	✓	✓	✓
10. Expand our Apprenticeship portfolio and grow the number of starts in 2026/27 by 20%	This objective supports the skills needs and demand identified by the Kent & Medway Local Skills Improvement Plan. In addition, this will increase the portfolio within a local, regional and national skills priority area, and contribute to local and regional infrastructure projects.	✓	✓	✓

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.

In the past 3 years, the relationship with our local Job Centre Plus has thrived, with the College supporting over 2000 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, Call Handlers and Healthcare 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 events has seen our relationship with the DWP strengthen and additional jobs fair events are planned for the future.

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 also acknowledge the merger between University of Greenwich and University of Kent to create the London and South East University Group in 2026 will build on existing relationships and potentially open future collaboration opportunities.

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. We work with the Kent Association of Training Organisations (KATO) as necessary and to identify collaboration opportunities.

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 Estates Strategy, our board has approved a number of investment programmes of capital expenditure, with the largest in excess of £17m 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 9 July 2026.

The plan will be published on the college's website within three months of the start of the new academic year and can be accessed from the following link:

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

Peter Fleming

Peter Fleming

Chair of Governors

Simon Cook

Simon Cook

Principal & Chief Executive

Dated: 9 July 2026

Supporting Documentation

Kent & Medway Local Skills Improvement Plan	https://kentemployersskillsplan.org/
Kent & Medway Workforce Skills Evidence Base	https://kentemployersskillsplan.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/
Get Kent & Medway Working Plan	https://www.kent.gov.uk/