

Governors' Review of Meeting Local Need

MidKent College

April 2026

Purpose of the Review

This review is presented to fulfil the Governing Body's duty to ensure that MidKent College is effectively meeting local, regional and national needs, in line with Department for Education (DfE) expectations for Further Education (FE) corporations. The review considers how the College aligns its curriculum, employer engagement, and strategic planning with the skills and economic priorities of the areas it serves.

Context and Local Profile

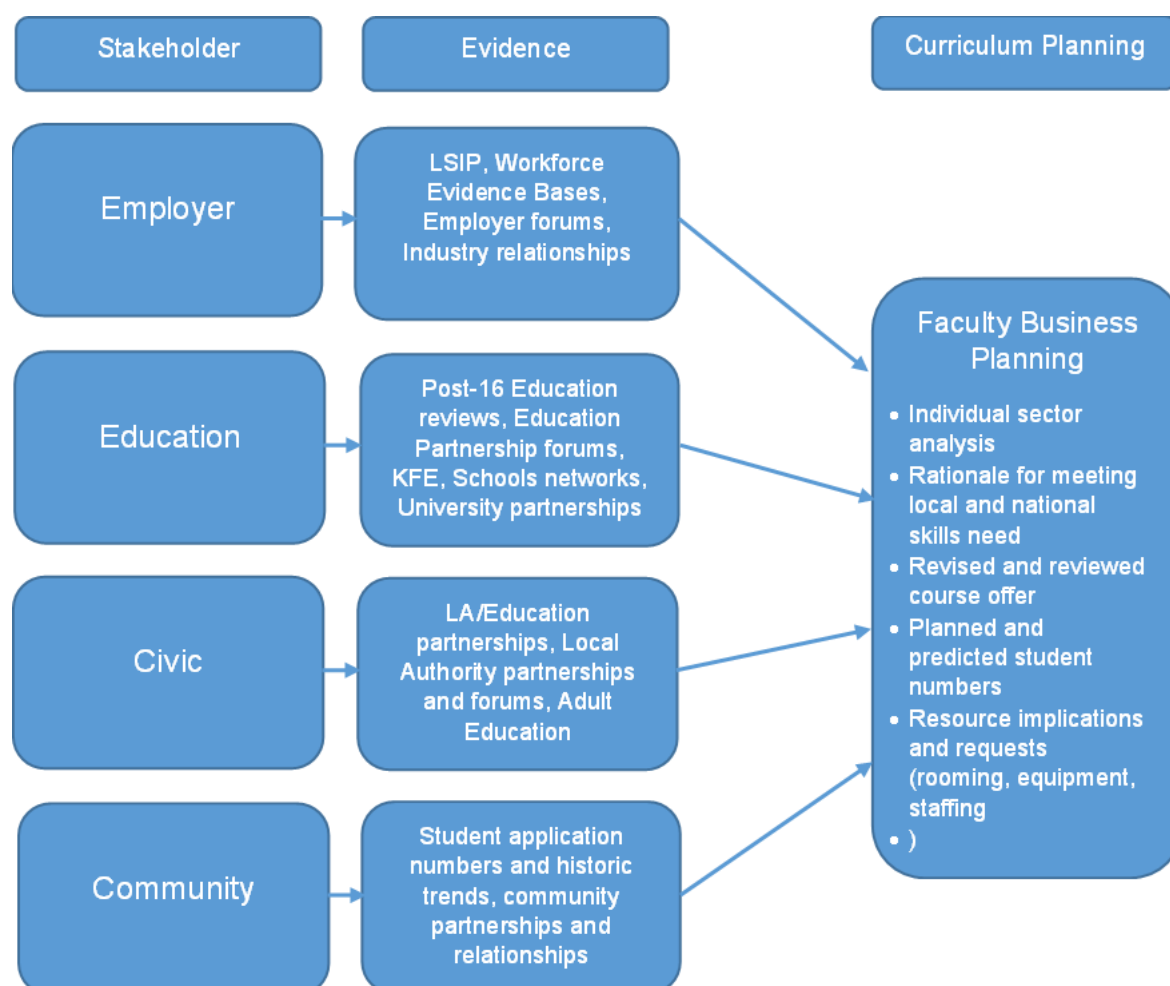
MidKent College operates across Medway and Maidstone, serving communities with diverse socio-economic characteristics, skills requirements and employment opportunities. The region includes sectors of strategic importance such as construction, engineering, health and social care, education, hospitality, creative industries, digital technologies, logistics, and the public sector.

The Governing Body recognises the importance of the College's role in:

- Supporting local economic growth and regeneration
- Addressing skills shortages identified by employers
- Improving social mobility and life chances
- Supporting progression into employment, higher education and apprenticeships

Curriculum planning and development

The College attempts to support and engage with local needs across a wide range of external stakeholders, from the skills needs (both current and emergent) and growth demands of local employers and industry sectors, to educational needs and gaps within the local education landscape, to supporting civic initiatives and priorities within the local authority agendas, to working closely with local community groups and charities.



As well as engaging regularly with stakeholders in each of these categories, the College relies upon a number of key research documents to gain an understanding of the wider pictures, particularly where the stakeholder groups are so large (e.g. Employers and Education), and to rationalise its planned offer every year. The key documents referenced that should be consulted alongside this report;

[Kent & Medway Workforce Skills Evidence Base](#)

[Kent County Council Post-16 review: Pathways for All](#)

[Medway Skills and Employability Plan for Medway 2035](#)

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

[Kent & Medway Local Skills Improvement Plan 2023](#)

Local Skills Improvement plan analysis

The Local Skills Improvement Plan for Kent and Medway outlines five key sectors of higher need in the local area: Construction, Manufacturing & Engineering, Fresh Food & Food Production, Health & Social Care, and Education; alongside these, the plan also acknowledges the significant future and rising needs in Transport & Logistics and the Creative Industries sector.

With the exception of Land-Based (Food Production), the College engages well in all of these sectors, with the bulk of them falling with 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. The College is also developing its Education offer with further pathways and higher level options for teacher training.

In addition to the key sectors, provision at the College has also responded to the significant growth, opportunities and demand (particularly in Medway) in the local Creative industries sector, along with a range of emergent technical and creative skills needed to support. As well as the work being done within the existing Faculties involving our creative departments the College has also introduced a suite of higher education and Foundation qualifications through the installation of the Medway School of Arts in partnership with the University of Kent, and fully supported by Medway Council and local Adult Education. The School is in its third year of operation, and will have its first cohort of third year full degree students from September.

The College has also developed and embedded a range of Sector Work-based Academy Programmes (SWAPs) for adult students, linked to employers across all key sector areas, supporting adults back into employment with high success rates.

Wider Stakeholder developments

In terms of Education need, the KCC post-16 review identified in particular 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.

From a Civic perspective, both KCC and Medway Council have acknowledged a significant growth in demand to cater for students with Special Educational Needs (SEN), and Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP). There is also a significant rise in the 16-18 population for local areas supported by the College, leading to a rise in

NEET numbers despite the rapid increase in available provision across KFE Colleges over the last few years. There is therefore a continued need to have a focus on reducing NEET numbers locally, and on focusing on collaborative solutions.

Curriculum Offer and Responsiveness

The College has a rigorous and robust business planning cycle designed to ensure that it meets the local needs well. This 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 to ensure students attain the best possible destinations and support the local economy effectively when they graduate from College.

Faculty specialisms	Key Local Needs identified.
Faculty of Construction and Engineering Industries • Bricklaying, Carpentry and Multi-trade • Engineering, Motor Vehicle and the Institute of Technology • Maidstone Creative Arts	High priority for skills in Engineering (including Manufacturing and Science) and Construction Trades in local employment sector (see LSIP, WFEB). High priority to raise attainment level of level 4 and above qualifications across Kent and Medway.
Faculty of Care and Digital Industries • Health and Social Care • Childcare and Education • Information Technology	High priority to meet workforce shortages and skills development in the Health and Care sector (see also K&M Integrated Care Strategy) Rise in Education employment needs. High priority for development of Digitalisation skills across many sectors (see LSIP), and workforce shortages in technical roles across local industry.
Medway School of Arts (including Medway Creative Arts) • Art and Design • Media and Graphic Design • Fashion	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.
Faculty of Adult Education • Adult Employability	Rise in numbers of 16-25 year olds Not in Education, Employment or Training. Employment gaps in many key sectors,

• Sector Work-based Academy Programmes • Teacher Training and Assessor	including in Health and Education as the largest local employment areas.
Faculty of Academic Studies • A-levels • Elective Home Educated • Access to Higher Education • (Adult) Finance and Professional • Progression Curriculum	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.
Faculty of Fitness and Professional Studies • Sport and Public Services • Hospitality and Catering • Plumbing and Electrical	Significant recruitment and workforce challenges for the armed forces and the police. Increase in lifestyle and wellbeing support industries. Significant population growth predicted for Medway. Recovering hospitality and catering sector post-pandemic. High Priority for Construction Trades skills development and meeting workforce demands.
Faculty of Sciences and Development Studies • Animal Management • Science • ESOL	High priority to develop progression routes for lower attaining students. Science key to industry sector development. Growth in numbers of refugees and asylum seekers needing language development, work skills, and progression opportunities as a result of Kent's geographical placement.
Faculty of Business and Service Industries • Hair • Beauty • Business • Performing Arts, Media and Music	Increased priority in maintaining and developing service industries to support economic growth and cultural developments in local regions. High level of SMEs and Enterprise across Kent and Medway.
Supported Learning • Foundation Curriculum • Enhance Provision	Rise in demand for students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP).

Supported Internships and Learn to Earn	
Apprenticeships - Business Administration, HR, Customer Service and Accountancy - Civil Engineering and Quantity Surveying - Bricklaying, Carpentry, Painting and Decorating - Engineering and Motor Vehicle - Teacher Training	In identified sectors, the College offers an alternative route for both students and employers to undertake apprenticeships to support businesses with their workforce development plans, and also to offer cross-cutting business occupations to support the wider local employer base. Identified the need to reinstate Plumbing and Groundworks apprenticeships in the future.

Learner Access, Inclusion and Community Impact

Meeting local need includes ensuring accessibility and inclusion. The College also remains committed to widening participation, reducing inequalities and supporting learners to overcome barriers to success. This includes in all aspects of curriculum design ensuring that Students from disadvantaged backgrounds and areas of lower participation receive appropriate levels of support, that tailored support for Students with SEND and high needs is provided, and that the College works collaboratively with schools, local authorities and community partners to ensure effective transition for students with a range of needs, both in accessing the College provision and in establishing meaningful next steps after their course of study.

Conclusion and Governor Assurance

Following review of the available evidence, the Governing Body is satisfied that MidKent College is meeting its duty to address local need and is:

- Strategically aligned with local and regional skills priorities
- Responsive to employer and community demand
- Focused on positive learner and economic outcomes
- Committed to continuous improvement and future responsiveness

The Governing Body will continue to monitor performance, challenge leaders appropriately, and ensure that meeting local need remains central to the College's mission and strategic direction.

