

Salford City College Group Annual Accountability Statement

*Meeting Skills Needs and the Local Needs Duty
2026-2027 Academic Year*



TO BE A BEACON OF **EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE**,
TRANSFORMING THE LIVES OF THE **INDIVIDUALS**
AND **COMMUNITIES** WE SERVE.

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Section 1: Purpose

The Accountability Agreement sets out how the college aligns its curriculum offer and design to support learners and apprentices to access and progress into employment and HE pathways that align to local and national skills priorities.

The statement demonstrates strong alignment with key strategic priorities, including:

- The skills priorities for the Greater Manchester City Region, reflected through engagement with the Greater Manchester Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) and its Employer Representative Body (ERB);
- National skills priorities set by the Department for Education;
- The findings from the College's most recent Local Needs Duty review.
- The College's approach is underpinned by active employer engagement, robust labour market intelligence, and effective partnership working across the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and Salford Local Authority

Section 2: Context and Place: The Communities We Serve

At SCC Group we believe in the value of Education for a Successful Future. The College's overarching vision is to be a beacon of educational excellence transforming the lives of the individuals and communities we serve underpinned by three core values of Respect, Integrity, and Kindness.

The SCC Group Strategic Plan 2022-27 was developed in collaboration with key stakeholders, our students, staff, local and regional employers, civic community partners, and governors. The process of consultation allowed the senior leadership team to build a picture of what stakeholders want and need from the college. The information gathered through this process was used to agree five strategic objectives that set out what we want to achieve as a college and how we intend to get there.

SCC Group sets out the following objectives through the SCC Group Strategic Plan 2022-27:

- People: To be an exceptional employer where staff and students are developed and thrive because they feel valued, engaged, and challenged.
- External Presence: To develop a clear eco system with productive links to schools, universities, employers, and other key partners, whilst raising the external profile of the College.
- Resources & Business Operations: To manage the College's finances, estates, and resources effectively to provide an exceptional and sustainable learning environment. Sustainability To lead by

example on environmental sustainability, providing solutions through collaboration and engagement, underpinned by our commitment to the green agenda.

- Teaching and Learning: To inspire people in our city and region through the provision of an outstanding, inclusive, and ambitious curriculum that provides an engine for social mobility.
- Welfare: To safeguard and promote the health, safety, and positive well-being of all who study and work at the College

Salford City College Group: Information about the Provider

Salford City College Group is a large Further Education College in Salford, part of the Greater Manchester City Region and is home to 10,000 students and 620 staff. The College offers courses from Pre-Entry to Level 7 on A level, Vocational, Technical, T Level, Adult and Apprenticeship Learning Programmes.

Following feedback from stakeholders the college took the strategic decision to establish Centres of Excellence across the City. The 'devolved' college model has led to an improved clarity of offer for stakeholders, which has in turn led to a year-on-year increase in enrolments on all types of learning programmes. Each College retains a specialist skills focus whilst retaining a commitment to support students at all levels of prior attainment:

- City Skills is a Centre of Excellence for Construction and a Centre of Excellence for ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages)
- Eccles Sixth Form College is a Centre of Vocational and Technical Excellence
- FutureSkills at MediaCityUK is a Centre of Excellence for Creative and Digital
- Pendleton Sixth Form College is a Centre of Academic Excellence for young people.
- Worsley College is a Centre of Excellence for Industry Skills.
- Apprenticeship Learning Programmes are delivered across the city in a number of key sector areas.
- Tailored Learning planned as part Adult Education Curriculum offer is delivered with five community partners. The purpose of the College Community Education provision is to encourage Salford residents to engage in learning to improve their confidence and wellbeing, develop personal skills and support progress to further training, volunteering, and/or employment.

Travel to Learn

In 2025/26 67% of the 16-18, 75% of the adult cohort, and 34% apprenticeship cohort reside in Salford. Analysis of travel to learn patterns identify that the provision is predominately place based, particularly so for Community Provision and the highest proportion of school leavers come from Salford schools. However, the geographical location of Salford also means that a number of students also travel into Salford from surrounding boroughs. Apprentices are more likely to travel from outside of area; however, our focus remains on Salford and Northwest priority agenda. We do have a minority of apprentices who travel from locations such as Birmingham, Liverpool, and Leeds to access regionally recognised and specialist provision.

The Salford Economy and Labour Market

Salford's economy and labour market has seen unprecedented change in recent years. The city is now home to a vibrant economy that is leading growth in Greater Manchester. Census 2021 data show that the city's population grew by 15.4% between 2011 and 2021, to reach 269,900. The percentage increase in Salford's population was 2.5 times higher than the national average (6.6%) and three times higher than the Northwest average. No other local authority in northern England grew by more than 10%. Growth was fastest among people aged between 25 and 40, and the number of people aged between 30 and 34 living in Salford grew by a 42% between 2011 and 2021.

The proportion of Salford's population born outside the UK has also risen quickly, from 14% in 2011 (33,000 people) to 21% in 2021 (57,000 people). There is strong growth in demand for labour from employers in Salford and despite weak national economic growth and the impact of the pandemic, the number of employee jobs in Salford in the five years between 2016 and 2021 grew by 19%, more than four times faster than the national average. Almost 90% of these new jobs were full-time roles.

The highest volumes of jobs in Salford (and some of its fastest growing sectors) are found in areas such as health, information and communication, and professional/scientific/ technical services – sectors which tend to rely on well paid, highly skilled work. There has also been strong growth in employment within the city's increasingly vibrant cultural economy. A profound shift in the pattern of work among Salford residents has also taken place.

In 2022 52% of working Salford residents were employed in highly skilled associate professional, professional or management roles – this is above the national average. The comparable figure for Salford in 2018 was 38%, well below the national average at the time. Meanwhile median incomes for working Salford residents in 2022 was £28,801 – level with the national average and 11% higher than the Greater Manchester average.

Improvement Priorities for Salford

Salford is ranked the 24th most deprived local authority area in England out of 317 in the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). Over a third (36.7%) of children in Salford started primary school without the literacy skills they need to thrive, compared with 3 in 10 (31.2%) children nationally. This trend of low literacy skills remains a key challenge, made evident at each of the key transition points in education – from primary to secondary school and beyond. It has a higher than national average number of pupils who leave school without achieving a Level 2 qualification, a higher than national average of adults claiming Universal Credit (6.3% compared to a national average of 4.6%) and a higher than national average of young people who are not in employment, education, and training is high at 7.5 % (NEET).

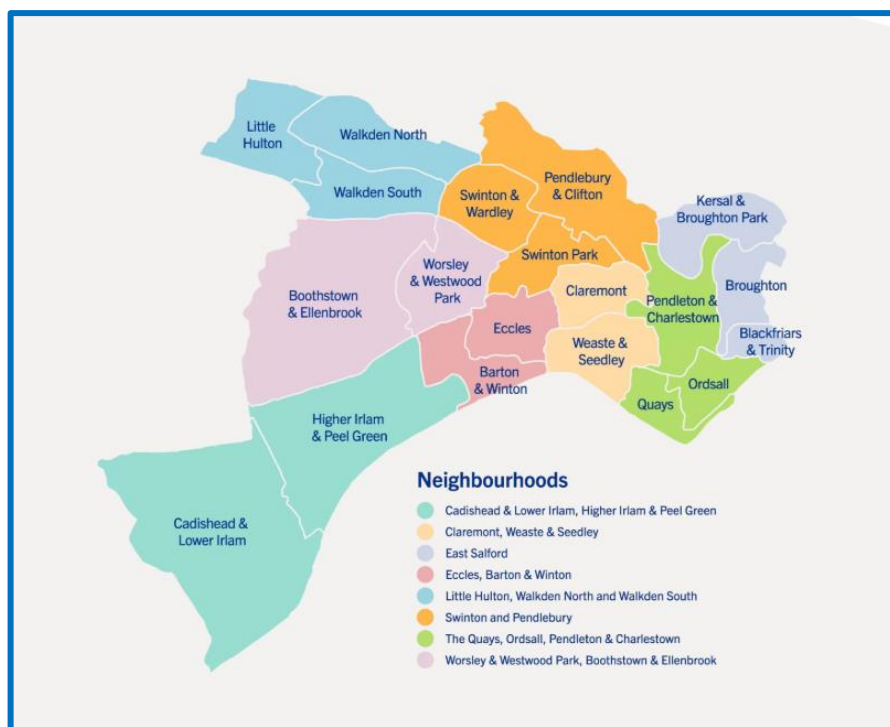
Improving the percentage of pupils achieving a 9-4 pass in English and maths is considered one of the key priorities for children in Salford. Currently Key Stage 4 (KS4) outcomes for the young people in Salford are in the bottom 10% of local authorities nationally and this has been the picture for the past three years. Salford success rates for GCSEs are amongst the lowest in the country and Salford has the third lowest average Attainment 8 score, and third lowest average Progress 8 score out of 150 local authorities in England. Overall performance at the end of Key Stage 4 in 2019 for Salford is 'well below average' at -0.54 compared to -0.03 national state-funded schools in England.

There are 2,000 individuals in Salford supported by high needs funding via Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). This is 3.4% of children in Salford (the national average is 2.9%). The number of children in the city with EHCPs has risen by 50% since 2016 and is projected to increase further over the next few years.

Of particular concern is the proportion of Salford Residents who are economically inactive; the number of people of working age who are not in work or not seeking work has risen sharply since the pandemic. Today 1 in 9 working aged people in Salford are not in work, not seeking work, and in receipt of DWP (Department for Work and Pensions) benefits (usually due to health conditions). The number of Salford residents claiming these benefits is at its highest level since comparable records began in 1999.

A higher-than-average proportion of these claimants in Salford are under 40. Those affected are concentrated in Salford's most deprived neighbourhoods. For example, residents of Little Hulton are seven times more likely to claim Universal Credit (no work requirements) than those living in Boothstown and Ellenbrook, a couple of miles away. Some areas in the city, notably Broughton, Langworthy and Little

Hulton, experience unemployment rates of 11% compared to the national average of 4.3%. The most deprived parts of the city are concentrated around Langworthy, Irwell Riverside, and Broughton in Central Salford, with smaller pockets in the East Locality, notably Little Hulton and Winton. Other long-standing problems such as relation to low levels of self-employment and high numbers of residents with low or no qualifications also remain.



Salford Education Context

Primary education outcomes in Salford are variable and broadly in line with or below national averages, with some recent improvement in reading and maths. Attainment gaps remain, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, and outcomes vary between schools. The key priority is to raise attainment and ensure more pupils are fully prepared for secondary education. Secondary education outcomes in Salford show improvement in GCSE attainment, particularly in English and maths and Attainment 8. However, overall progress remains below national averages and varies between schools, with ongoing gaps for disadvantaged pupils. This highlights a continued priority to raise achievement, improve progress, and ensure more learners secure the qualifications needed to progress successfully to post-16 pathways

Economic and Social Characteristics of the surrounding area

Greater Manchester is a major UK city region, home to approximately 2.8–3.0 million residents, with around 7 million people within a one-hour travel time. It has a diverse and dynamic economy supported by around 125,000 businesses, employing approximately 1.3–1.34 million people, and generating an economic output of around £75–78 billion GVA (2022). This scale and connectivity underpin the region's ambition for inclusive growth, ensuring that residents can access high-quality employment while supporting business productivity and long-term economic resilience.

Manchester is highly dominated by micro and small businesses—especially within the creative, digital tech, and professional services sectors. The broader Greater Manchester area hosts over 230,000 businesses. The distribution across a few of the specific boroughs surrounding the city centre is as follows:

1. Manchester - 22,000 – 23,000 businesses

2. Salford: 11,075 businesses
3. Trafford: 11,595 businesses

Large businesses (250+ employees) make up a very small fraction of the total count, though the region acts as a major hub for large operations, including FTSE 100 companies like Auto Trader and large employers like The Co-operative Group, THG, and Amazon.

Salford Business Size Breakdown

The total Salford corporate ecosystem breaks down as follows:

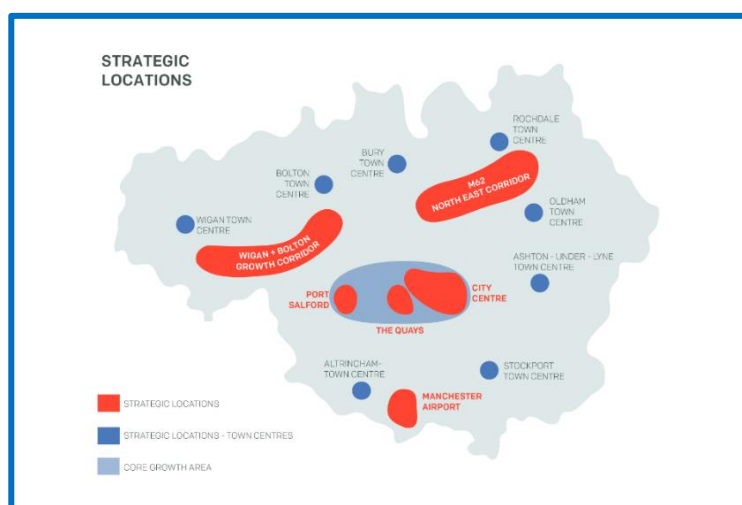
- Micro Businesses (0 to 9 employees): 89.5% of the business base (~10,020 companies). This is higher than the regional Greater Manchester average of 88.6%.
- Small Businesses (10 to 49 employees): 8.3% of the total (~935 companies).
- Medium-sized Businesses (50 to 249 employees): 1.7% of the total (190 companies), ranking Salford third in Greater Manchester for medium-sized employer presence.
- Large Businesses (250+ employees): 0.5% of the total (50 companies), representing critical regional employers.
- Together, this business base supports an estimated 159,000 local jobs.

Core Driving Sectors in Salford

- Salford's business structure is heavily shaped by two highly dense local clusters:
- Digital, Media & Creative Tech: Centred around MediaCityUK, this cluster employs over 32,000 people across more than 2,000 businesses, driven by major anchors like the BBC and ITV.
- Construction & Real Estate: Fuelled by an unprecedented local development boom, Salford boasts nearly 2,000 construction-related firms providing over 12,000 local jobs.
- Industrial & Logistics: Driven by upcoming infrastructure projects like the tri-modal Port Salford, the industrial economy features roughly 2,000 companies specializing in advanced manufacturing, robotics, and logistics.

Local Growth Corridors and Salford and Greater Manchester Priority Sectors areas

Six key growth locations have been identified as part of the Greater Manchester Growth Location Update. Salford can expect to benefit from growth in jobs in notably the Central Cluster and the Western Gateway, but it is also reasonable to expect that given proximity to notably Manchester, that Salford residents can benefit from opportunities across GM given its location.



Central Cluster

Located in Manchester and Salford with plans to create 90,000 new jobs in digital/creative/media and professional services with strong links to universities and Research and Development facilities to build on the innovation strategy. The plans also include 15,000 low carbon homes and a high, continued demand for jobs in construction, leisure and culture as this sector looks to expand further with new facilities.

Western Gateway

The ambition is to build on links with Liverpool Freeport with the establishment of a tri-modal freight hub – Port Salford. 25,000 new jobs will be created around logistics, distribution, advanced manufacturing, and a focus on low carbon technologies in Trafford Park. 21,000 new homes and supporting infrastructure to be built. The Western Gateway is a key development for Greater Manchester, developing connections with the Port of Liverpool, and the rest of the world. The Western Gateway also provides for the economic growth of the Central Growth Cluster core economic area through the development of a tri-modal freight hub at Port Salford.

Port Salford's further development will provide sustainable freight transport operations which will include rail and road links, on-site canal berths, rail spur, and container terminal. The Western Gateway has the potential to create 25,000 new jobs, capitalising on the unrivalled port connectivity and planned employment space at Carrington, Port Salford, Partington and Trafford Park, alongside the regional leisure, retail, and hospitality destination at Trafford City. Logistics and distribution sector employment will be created, with opportunities accessible to local communities with existing skills in this sector and further opportunities for development. Employment growth will also be created in the low carbon energy sector, linked to the development of a low carbon energy innovation park at Trafford Park.

Airport/Southern Growth Corridor

Manchester Airport is a vital link for international trade and tourism. Future growth plans will see the expansion of existing businesses in Airport City with a focus on distribution, warehousing and logistics whilst attracting more Head Offices to be based there. The growth plans also include developments in nearby Stockport town centre including GM's first Mayoral Development Corporation with significant new developments planned or currently underway. Transport infrastructure will be developed across the area with the building of a station for HS2 servicing the airport and surrounding area and the wider north.

Northeast Growth Corridor

Based around Rochdale, Oldham and Bury, the centrepiece is 'Atom Valley' with a focus on early-stage developments around advanced manufacturing, materials and other product development and research businesses. This area is already the site of the Advanced Machinery and Productivity Institute (AMPI), and developments here will offer a link with West Yorkshire and parts of East Lancashire.

Wigan and Bolton Growth Corridor

Focused on logistics, manufacturing (especially food), and health innovation/life sciences; 12,000 new homes to be built and significant upgrades to existing infrastructure including a new mainline station at Golborne.

Employment creation will be generated through the regional centre with direct opportunities through the Oxford Road Corridor, Manchester Piccadilly and Salford's Innovation Triangle comprising Media City and The Quays (including future growth at Wharfside), Salford Crescent and Salford Royal Foundation Trust.

Salford Crescent will be connected to the wider world with a new transport hub, enabling easier access to Manchester wide city region and beyond. This will include improved cycling and walking routes and the

transformation of Salford Crescent Train Station to include a Metrolink Stop. Salford Royal is a large University teaching hospital, within walking distance of two of our colleges and is one of the ‘Top 100 Hospitals in the World.’

Based on the priority areas identified through the LSIP, GM and Regionally Salford City College Group has worked hard to establish learning programmes of learning in all priority areas.

Section 3: Progress Made against Annual Accountability Statement 25/26

Salford City College Group has reviewed how effectively its provision meets local need in line with the Local Needs Duty against targets set in 2025/26.

In summary:

- The curriculum has strong alignment with local and Greater Manchester priority sectors
- The offer has grown in local and regionally significant sector areas, exceeding targets set on the 25/26 statement, notably in Construction.
- The Curriculum offer and investment have been prioritised in areas with clear employer demand and strong progression outcomes.
- Employer informed and enhanced curriculum prepare young people and adults with the skills employers say they need.

The overview below shows how the college has supported growth in provision aligned to skills priorities in 25/26 by provision type. It also includes planned new provision for 26/27 following the culmination of ongoing work with employers and stakeholders.

16-18
• 16–18 Study Programmes have experienced growth in academic, technical, and vocational pathways aligned to priority sectors in Construction, Health, Digital, Creative, and Business, Hospitality, and the Visitor Economy. • Working with Asda, the college has secured the opportunity for learners to access The Asda Store Internship, planned for 26/27. This will give learners hands-on experience in the retail sector. Learners will work in a real supermarket environment, carrying out tasks such as customer service, stocking shelves, and supporting store operations, while building confidence and practical workplace skills. This Internships is focused on supported learners with Educational Health Care Plans. • New T Levels in Business Management and Administration, Digital Support and Security, Health: Supporting the Therapy Teams are being rolled out in 26/27 in addition to T Levels that were already delivered in 26/27.
NEET Reengagement
• The College, working in partnership with stakeholders such as The Virtual School, the Find Your Future Careers Service, Salford Employment Hub, and employers, has introduced a number of Entry level programmes to support learners on Construction, Digital, Creative, Business, and Hospitality learning programmes. • <i>Build Salford</i> developed in partnership with employers and the local authority helps 16–24-year-olds gain skills and move into construction careers. It offers training, site experience, and work placements, supporting learners to progress into apprenticeships or employment with local employers. • The King’s Trust programme at Salford City College helps build confidence, skills, and employability through activities like team projects, work placements, and CV preparation, supporting progression into education, training, or employment • Through tailored support, guidance, and flexible pathways, these programmes have enabled learners to develop skills, improve wellbeing, and progress into education, training, or employment, enhancing their future opportunities.

Provision for Young People with High Needs

- The college has supported a significant number of learners with High Needs in discreet and academic and technical study programmes across the group.
- It has also delivered supported internships through partnerships with local employers, Pure Innovations, the NHS, the University of Salford, and Salford Council, giving learners valuable real-world work experience in the following areas;
- Salford Royal (NHS) Internship -placements within hospital departments such as administration, catering, and portering.
- University of Salford Internship - roles across university services and facilities
- Salford City Council Internship - placements within local authority services.
- Salford City College Internship -placements in catering, and estates.
- The College was also pleased to secure a new internship programme with the Premier Inn hotel in 25/26 that has had good outcomes for learners. This will give learners experience in the hospitality sector, including roles such as housekeeping, customer service, and basic hotel operations and is due to commence in 26/27.
- These internships include placements at Salford Royal NHS, the University of Salford, Salford City Council, the College, and other local businesses across sectors such as healthcare, administration, retail, and hospitality. Learners complete multiple placements over a year while also taking part in classroom learning and working towards qualifications. They are supported by job coaches to develop skills, confidence, and independence, helping them progress into employment.

Adult Skills

- Provision to support in English, Maths, Digital and ESOL have supported learners to make progress in Essential Skills at scale reflecting the needs of the local community.
- The College's adult curriculum has further evolved in in direct response to employer demand and in alignment to local and regional priorities and accredited qualifications in Carpentry and Joinery Plastering, Plumbing and Welding have recruited well with high levels of engagement and achievement.
- Accredited Programmes in British Sign Language, Digital, Interpreting, Education and Health and Social Care and Textiles have supported learners in pathways aligned to key priority areas and in response to stakeholder identified need.
- Tailored Learning programmes in English and Maths, ESOL, Construction, Digital, Creative, Health and Social Care and Hospitality in place-based community venues and in college settings have provided individuals with learning experiences in which they have developed knowledge, skills and confidence to support them in their next steps.

Apprenticeships

- The College has continued to successfully deliver apprenticeships in key LSIP priority shortage areas including Bricklaying, Electrical Installation, Plumbing, and Carpentry and Joinery, Heating and Ventilation, Health and Social Care, Business Administration, Education at Levels 2 and 3 and 4. 97% of Apprentices work in the five sectors areas with the biggest skills shortages in Greater Manchester
- The Highways Academy at City Skills, developed in collaboration with LCRIG (The Local Council Roads Innovation Group) has supported 2 cohorts of Highway Maintenance Operative apprentices to acquire the knowledge skills and behaviours they need to work in this priority sector.
- Due to recent regulatory demand, placed on the Housing Sector, the college has launched the Level 4 Apprenticeship Standard: Senior housing and property management / Skills England. To ensure pathways are available for younger people in line with the pivot to youth strategy. Standards in Housing and Property Management Level 3, Housing and Property Management Assistant at Level 2 will be launched in 26/27.
- The Apprenticeship Delivery team work with key partners in Build Salford. *Build Salford* developed in partnership with employers and the local authority helps 16–24-year-olds gain skills and move into construction careers. It offers training, site experience, and work placements, supporting learners to progress into apprenticeships or employment with local employers.

Section 4: Approach to developing the Annual Accountability Statement 26/27

The college will meet the requirements of local skills priorities through a strategic, evidence-led approach to curriculum planning and delivery. This will include the regular review and design of programmes to align with labour market intelligence, ensuring that courses reflect current and emerging industry needs.

Resource and Capital will be used to support the curriculum offer as part of the overarching college wide strategic objective to provide an exceptional and sustainable learning environment that is aligned to local skills needs.

Ongoing stakeholder engagement, including advisory boards and employer forums (list below), will ensure that provision remains responsive, relevant, and strategic. The College uses intelligence provided by national government, the Greater Manchester Strategy, the Greater Manchester Industrial Strategy, the Greater Manchester Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), the Salford Employment and Skills Strategy and The Salford Local Plan to inform its approach to curriculum planning and design.

The college has well established mechanisms to access real time intelligence from employers and stakeholders through initiatives such as Employer Curriculum Boards, staff participation in Industry Days and the Industry Partner scheme as part of the Salford City College Curriculum Planning Cycle to ensure that its curriculum content is co-designed to ensure learners and apprentices are provided with the knowledge, skills and behaviours that will support them in their next steps to employment or higher education.

The college will monitor key performance indicators (KPIs), including learner achievement, progression and sustained destinations into employment or further study, to demonstrate impact in addressing skills gaps within the local economy and test the effectiveness of stakeholder engagement.

Work with Stakeholders

Collaboration with key stakeholders using economic and social purpose as the drivers for college activity is clearly understood by stakeholders and Salford City College Group can now confidently identify itself as a key partner of a city-wide eco-system that supports members of the community to access learning programmes that meet local needs, and support progression to employment and/or further study.

Leaders and managers have developed very productive and positive working relationships with an extensive range of stakeholders. They play a prominent role as members of local and regional skills forums and participate in a wide-ranging number of city wide and regional partnerships to ensure the College has a voice and informs policy making at a strategic level. This participation and engagement can be seen through membership of key strategic boards across the city ensure engagement with employers, civic, community and education stakeholders.

- The Salford Skills and Work Board
- The Widening Participation Steering Group,
- The NEET Reduction Strategy Group
- The Salford Key Stakeholders Communications Cell
- The 0-25
- The CHANNEL and PREVENT Oversight Panel
- Salford City Attendance Alliance Group
- The National Literacy Trust as part of the new Literacy for Life: New ten-year plan to boost Salford's reading skills strategy

- Connections
- Job Centre Plus,
- The Citizens Volunteer Service,
- Greater Manchester Learner Provider Network Advisory Board (GMLPN)
- The Greater Manchester Colleges Deputies' Group,
- Greater Manchester College Principals' Group
- Salford Heads and Principals' Association (SHAPAS)
- University of Salford
- Chamber of Commerce

The College is part of the Salford city wide approach to developing literacy schools in association with The Literacy Trust and is a key stakeholder in the delivery of the Salford Employment and Skills Strategy 2023-28. The Salford City College Industry Partners programme engages with partner employers through a range of initiatives, including Employer Curriculum Boards, work placement opportunities, and reciprocal training for employer colleagues.

The College Group collaborates with over 1,000 employers, including 120 strategic industry partners, 630 apprentice employers, and almost 200 others supporting work experience, live briefs, community projects, specialist workshops with guest speakers, resource allocation, and sponsorship. College Industry Partners include: AE Yates, Argyle NW, Bethell, Bolton Council, City Electric Factors, Dasa, First Central, Great Places Housing Group, H&S Electrical Wholesalers, J Fletcher Engineers Ltd, Keepmoat Homes Ltd, Kidz R Us Private Day Nursery, Lovell Partnerships Ltd, Marriot Worsley Park Hotel & Country Club, Oakfield Nursery School Ltd, PLF Ltd, PLP Construction Ltd, RRG Group, Salford City Council, Salford Royal Hospital (Northern Care Alliance), Seddon Construction Ltd, Tameside Council, The Casey Group Ltd, Wates Group Ltd, Wigan Council.

In March 2024, the College work with employers and stakeholders was recognised by an Association of College's Beacon Award, the City & Guilds Award for College Engagement with Employers. This award acknowledges the College's approach forging strong and sustainable partnerships with employers ensuring students receive valuable real-world experiences and enhanced career prospects.

The College is a proactive member of the Greater Manchester College Principals' Group, the Greater Manchester Colleges Deputies' Group and Principals' Association (SHAPAS), and Salford Secondary Deputy Heads' Group. It also works with providers such as The Growth Company, the local authority, and third sector organisations to ensure a triangulated approach to its delivery.

Section 5: SCC contribution to national, regional, and local skills needs.

Regional and National Strategic Context

To ensure that Salford City college is meeting the diverse needs of the local, regional national agendas we are informed by 4 key strategies;

National Industrial Strategy - *The UK's Modern Industrial Strategy*

The UK National Industrial Strategy (2025-35) is a long-term, 10-year plan to boost economic growth by increasing business investment, productivity and innovation across the country. It focuses on supporting eight high-growth sectors—including advanced manufacturing, clean energy, digital and technology, life sciences, and financial services—where the UK has the greatest potential to compete globally. The strategy aims to make the UK a more attractive place to invest by improving the business environment (e.g., reducing energy costs, cutting regulatory barriers, and increasing access to finance and skills), while taking a more active government role in shaping markets and supporting industry. It also emphasises regional

growth, innovation, and skills development, alongside stronger partnerships between government and business. Overall, the strategy is designed to drive sustainable growth, create high-quality jobs, and strengthen the UK's global competitiveness.

Skills England

The Skills England report sets out a national plan to tackle the UK's skills gaps and support economic growth by creating a more responsive, joined up skills system. It highlights major challenges, including widespread skills shortages, low employer investment in training, mismatches between education and labour market needs, and regional inequalities in opportunity. The report emphasises the need to better align training with employer demand—particularly in key growth sectors such as digital, green industries, healthcare, and construction—while responding to technological change, including AI. It proposes a more data-driven, locally informed system, bringing together government, employers and training providers to design clearer pathways into skilled work, improve access to lifelong learning, and support young people and adults to progress. Overall, the report positions skills as central to driving productivity, reducing inequality, and widening access to better jobs across England.

The Greater Manchester Strategy - *Together We are Greater Manchester*

The Greater Manchester Strategy is built on a set of core principles that aim to ensure the city region develops in a way that benefits all residents. Central to the strategy is the idea of inclusive growth, where economic success goes hand in hand with social progress so that no community is left behind. It prioritises a people-first approach, focusing on improving wellbeing, life chances, and quality of life, while actively tackling inequality between places and groups. The strategy also emphasises strengthening the foundations of everyday life—including housing, safety, transport, jobs, and local support—and delivering this through strong partnership working across public, private and community sectors. Alongside this, it adopts a place-based approach, tailoring solutions to local needs, and maintains a commitment to sustainability and greener growth. Overall, it is underpinned by the belief that Greater Manchester can only succeed when all people and all communities succeed together

Success in the Greater Manchester strategy is measured through a performance and outcomes framework that tracks whether people's lives are improving across the city region. This includes clear indicators, targets and data trends linked to each priority area (such as housing, jobs, transport, and health), alongside delivery plans with measurable outputs.

Importantly, it goes beyond traditional economic metrics by also using:

- Outcome indicators (e.g. employment rates, housing quality, carbon reduction)
- Progress against targets and trajectories over time
- Resident perception measures (how people feel about their lives and local areas)
- Equality data to show whether different communities are benefiting fairly [democracy]
- Overall, success is judged not just by growth, but by whether wellbeing improves and inequalities reduce for all parts of Greater Manchester.

The Salford Employment and Skills Strategy 2023-28

The Salford Employment and Skills Strategy focuses on ensuring local residents benefit from the city's rapid economic growth by improving access to jobs, skills, and progression opportunities. It has four core objectives: to help young people achieve and progress into careers, support more adults to enter and stay in good work, enable working residents to progress and increase their earnings, and ensure employers can access and develop the skilled workforce they need for growth.

Overall, the strategy aims to connect local people to employment opportunities, reduce poverty and inequality, and build a more inclusive local economy where the benefits of growth are shared more fairly across Salford

The national skills strategy provides the overarching framework that shapes both the Greater Manchester Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) and the Salford Employment and Skills Strategy by identifying the sectors and capabilities critical to economic growth. Nationally, priority sectors such as digital, construction, health, and advanced manufacturing, alongside cross-cutting skills like English, maths and digital literacy, establish a clear direction for investment and workforce development.

This national direction is translated regionally through the Greater Manchester LSIP, which refines these priorities based on employer demand, highlighting specific skills shortages such as retrofit in construction, workforce gaps in health and social care, and advanced digital and engineering skills. It also places additional emphasis on green skills, employability, and leadership to support the region's economic ambitions and net zero targets.

At a local level, the Salford Employment and Skills Strategy aligns with both national and GM priorities but focuses more explicitly on tackling inequality and improving access to opportunity. It translates sector priorities into targeted actions to increase participation, reduce NEET levels, and support progression for young people and adults into sustained employment.

Local, Regional and National Skills Priorities

National Skills Priorities

National skills priorities in England are set by government through Skills England and the Industrial Strategy, focusing on sectors where there is the greatest demand for workforce growth and economic impact. The current priority sectors include:

1. Digital and technologies (including AI and data)
2. Construction and the built environment (including retrofit and infrastructure)
3. Health and adult social care
4. Advanced manufacturing and engineering
5. Clean energy and green industries
6. Life sciences
7. Professional and business services / financial services
8. Creative industries
9. Defence and security-related industries

These sectors have been identified because they are expected to drive future economic growth and face significant skills shortages, with demand for skilled workers projected to increase by 2030.

Alongside sector priorities, there is also a strong national focus on cross-cutting skills, particularly:

- English and maths
- Digital skills
- Higher technical skills (Levels 4–5)
- Employability and transferable skills

Overall, the national skills agenda aims to ensure the workforce has the skills needed to support economic growth, reduce reliance on overseas labour, and improve progression into high-quality jobs.

Regional and Local Skills Priorities

The Greater Manchester Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) sets out priorities based on employer demand and regional economic growth. Its key focus is on strengthening skills provision in priority sectors, particularly construction (including retrofit and green skills), digital and technology, health and social care, engineering and advanced manufacturing, and the education workforce where labour shortages are significant.

The GM LSIP aims to align education and training with employer needs, address critical skills shortages, and ensure residents can access good jobs, supporting inclusive economic growth across the city region.

The Greater Manchester Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) provides a clear, employer-led picture of what skills are needed, where shortages exist, and how the education and training system should respond.

Greater Manchester LSIP – Priority Jobs by Sector

Sector Area	Priority Jobs / Roles	Key Skills Focus
Construction & Built Environment	Retrofit installers and assessors; Electricians (low-carbon systems); Plumbers and heating engineers; General construction trades; Site managers/project managers	Net-zero construction; Retrofitting skills; Modern methods of construction; Digital construction (BIM)
Manufacturing & Advanced Engineering	Industrial electricians; Maintenance engineers; Robotics and automation technicians; Production operatives; Mechanical/design engineers	Automation and robotics; Lean manufacturing; Sustainability and energy efficiency; Digital manufacturing
Digital & Technology	Software developers; Cybersecurity specialists; Data analysts/data scientists; IT support technicians; Network engineers	Coding and programming; Cybersecurity; Data analytics/AI; Digital literacy across roles
Health & Social Care	Registered nurses (incl. mental health); Care workers; Healthcare assistants; Allied health professionals; Social workers	Clinical care skills; Mental health specialisms; Workforce retention and progression
Education & Training	STEM teachers; Digital subject teachers; FE lecturers; Teaching assistants; Learning support staff	STEM expertise; Digital teaching skills; SEND support skills
Logistics, Warehousing & Transport	Warehouse operatives (automated systems); HGV drivers; Logistics coordinators; Supply chain managers	Automation and robotics operation; Digital logistics systems; Planning and coordination
Green Economy (Cross-sector)	Renewable energy technicians; Low-carbon heating engineers;	Carbon reduction; Environmental management; Sustainable technologies

	Sustainability officers; Energy efficiency specialists	
Cross-cutting (All Sectors)	Leadership and management roles; Entry-level roles requiring core skills	Literacy and numeracy; Leadership and management; Communication and teamwork; Digital baseline skills

Local skills priorities in Salford are closely aligned to both Greater Manchester and national priorities, with a strong focus on sectors that support economic growth and address local labour market demand.

1. Construction and the built environment (including retrofit, housing, and infrastructure)
2. Health and social care
3. Digital and technology
4. Engineering and manufacturing
5. Retail, hospitality, and service sectors (reflecting local employment demand)
6. Education and childcare workforce

Alongside sector priorities, Salford places significant importance on essential skills in English and maths, employability skills, and progression pathways, particularly for disadvantaged residents and those at risk of becoming NEET. Overall, the priority is to ensure that skills provision is responsive to employer need, supports inclusive growth, and enables more residents to access sustainable employment and career progression opportunities.

As part of the Accountability Agreement the College must consider how it is meeting local skills priorities. The table below identifies local, regional, and national priorities, and how the College is meeting them through its curriculum offer.

Skills Priority	National	Regional	Salford	Delivered Through
Digital and technologies (including AI and data)	Y	Y	Y	16-18 Adult Programmes
Construction and the built environment (including retrofit and infrastructure)	Y	Y	Y	16-18 Adult Programmes Apprenticeships
Health and adult social care	Y	Y	Y	16-18 Adult Programmes Apprenticeships
Advanced manufacturing and engineering	Y	Y	Y	16-18 Adult Programmes Apprenticeships
Clean energy and green industries	Y	Y	Y	16-18 Adult Programmes Apprenticeships
Life sciences	Y	Y	Y	16-18 Adult Programmes Apprenticeships
Professional and business services / financial services	Y	Y	Y	16-18 Adult Programmes Apprenticeships
Creative Industries	Y	Y	Y	16-18 Adult Programmes

Defence and security-related industries	Y	Y	Y	16-18 Apprenticeships
Retail, Hospitality and Service Sectors		Y	Y	16-18 Adult Programmes Apprenticeships
Education and childcare workforce		Y	Y	16-18 Adult Programmes Apprenticeships
Cross Cutting Essential Skills in English, Maths, Digital, Employability.	Y	Y	Y	16-18 Adult Programmes Apprenticeships

A Level Programmes

The College delivers A Levels that are aligned to national skills priorities, and the A Level curriculum offer is planned to support students to progress into priority sectors albeit following undergraduate programmes of study.

Essential Skills

The College remains committed to supporting the development of essential skills in English, Maths up to and including Level 2 in English and Mathematics and up to and including Level 1 for Digital. All students on Education for Young People Study Programmes undertake GCSE English and/or Maths if they have not achieved a Level 2 in these subjects by the time, they have left school. The Adult Education Curriculum is planned to provide pathways in English, Maths and Digital Courses and learners can access English, Maths and Digital skills from pre-entry to Level 2. Tailored Learning provide first steps place-based engagement for adult learners furthest away from employment and education.

Pathways to priority areas for those not immediately ready to access priority areas.

The college recognises that not all students will be able to access priority vocationally relevant programmes immediately, and the college curriculum offer (including its adult community and tailored learning offer) provides first steps education to support, upskill and prepare students for transition into progression routes that will provide for longer-term uptake and success of skills priorities.

Inclusion Mainstream Fund 2026-27

The college will use the Inclusive Mainstream Fund in 2026–27 to strengthen its inclusive mainstream provision and support transition to the reformed SEND system. Funding will be deployed strategically based on cohort need to enhance the universal offer through our 'Small Changes BIG Impact' strategy focusing on high-quality adaptive teaching, inclusive curriculum design, and accessible learning environments. It will also support targeted, evidence-based interventions for learners requiring additional support. Investment in workforce development will ensure all staff are equipped to deliver inclusive practice. We will develop systems for early identification, Individual Support Plans, and robust impact monitoring. This approach aligns with the SEND reform principles of early intervention, inclusivity, and evidence-informed practice, and will contribute to improved participation, attainment, and progression outcomes for learners with SEND.

Section 6: Accountability Agreement Targets 2026–27

Objective	Success Measures
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AA1: Ensure curriculum planning and delivery are aligned with local, regional, and national skills priorities, responding to employer demand, labour market intelligence, and the Greater Manchester LSIP.	• Increased participation of learners and apprentices within key priority sectors in line with LSIP priorities. • Effective college-wide implementation of qualification pathway reforms at Levels 2 and 3. • Provision fully mapped to Greater Manchester and Salford growth industries and identified skills gaps. • Continue to prioritise learner destinations, demonstrating the impact of provision against LSIP priorities. • Stronger progression outcomes, with more learners moving into skilled employment, apprenticeships, and higher-level study.
AA2: Ensure Curriculum is shaped and strengthened through active engagement with industry specialists and sector partners	• Maintain enhanced employer and stakeholder partnerships to ensure ongoing input into curriculum planning and delivery • Maintain and grow new opportunities for co-designed programmes with industry to ensure provision meets current and future workforce needs • Increased number and quality of industry placements, apprenticeships, and work-based learning opportunities • Maintain employer engagement consistently across all curriculum areas to enhance relevance and real-world application • Maintained and enhanced feedback mechanisms with partners to continuously improve curriculum content and delivery • Improved learner progression into employment by aligning learning experiences with employer expectations and sector requirement • Ensure specialist equipment is maintained in line with industry standards and developments.
AA3: Promote inclusive access to priority skills	• Continued identification and removal of barriers to participation for vulnerable groups through work with key stakeholders. • Continued and enhanced specialist and bespoke careers and advice and guidance to learners with SEND. • Maintained support of city-wide NEET Reduction Strategy through provision of stakeholder influenced and supported curriculum offer. • Positive progression and destinations of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. • Increase the number of pathways and accredited qualifications in sector priority areas.
AA4: Recruit and retain high-quality staff, with a strong focus on addressing skills shortages in priority areas.	• Strengthened staffing capacity and capability in priority sectors to meet regional skills demands and support economic growth. • Recruitment and retention strategies that are aligned to GM LSIP priorities, addressing workforce gaps in high-demand sectors such as health, construction, digital, and engineering. • Enhanced promotion and recognition of teaching staff and the impact they are having on learners and apprentices in skills priorities areas. • Specialist CPD schedule and Industry Days to prioritise and support specialist skills and sector links.
AA5: Use Data to Demonstrate Local Impact	• Skills priority need included as part of Curriculum Planning Process including justification and rationale aligned to skills priorities. • Positive learner outcomes, employer engagement, and destination data to demonstrate impact on local skills priorities and inform continuous improvement as part of quality cycle.

	• Use of qualitative data such as learner and apprentice voice, stakeholder and employer feedback and case studies to support continuous improvement.
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Section 7: Supporting Information

Strategic Plan - Salford City College: Strategic Plan - <https://www.salfordcc.ac.uk/strategic-plan/>

The UK Modern Industrial Strategy: [The UK's Modern Industrial Strategy](#)

Skills England Annual report 2026: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/skills-england-annual-skills-report-and-sectoral-skills-needs-assessments-2026/skills-england-annual-skills-report-2026>

Young People and Work: Interim Report: [Young people and work: interim report - GOV.UK](#)

Greater Manchester Strategy 2025-2035 *Together We are Greater Manchester*: [Greater Manchester Strategy 2025–35](#)

Greater Manchester Strategy 2025-35 Summary: [greater-manchester-strategy-2025-summary.pdf](#)

The Greater Manchester Local Skills Improvement Plan: - <https://www.gmchamber.co.uk/media/3852782/gm-lsip-updated-08aug2023.pdf>

The Greater Manchester Local Skills Progress Update Report: - <https://www.gmchamber.co.uk/media/3854265/gm-lsip-progress-report-june-2024-final-version-for-lsip-site.pdf>

Salford Employment and Skills Strategy: <https://www.partnersinsalford.org/media/mu3ko4i5/salford-employment-and-skills-strategy-2023-to-2028.pdf>

Salford Local Plan: <https://www.salford.gov.uk/planning-building-and-regeneration/planning-policies/local-planning-policy/salfords-development-plan/salford-local-plan/>

Salford City College Annual Reports <https://www.salfordcc.ac.uk/about-us/college-annual-reports-accounts/>

Salford City College Find an Inspection Report – Ofsted: <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/31/130509>

Section 8 – Corporation/ Governing Body Statement

On behalf of the Salford City College Group Corporation, it is hereby confirmed that the college complies with their duty under section 52B of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 to review provision in relation to local needs, as introduced in the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022 (as defined under section 91(3) of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992).

The Corporation has given due regard to this guidance as part of its duty to review how well the education or training provided by the Salford City College meets national, regional and local needs and can confirm that the plan as set out above reflects an agreed statement of purpose, aims and objectives approved by the corporation on 30 June 2026.

The plan will be published on the college's website within three months of the start of the new academic year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adam Fidler', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Adam Fidler

Chair of Governors

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rebecca Parks', with a stylized, cursive script.

Rebecca Parks

Group Principal / Chief Executive and Accounting Officer