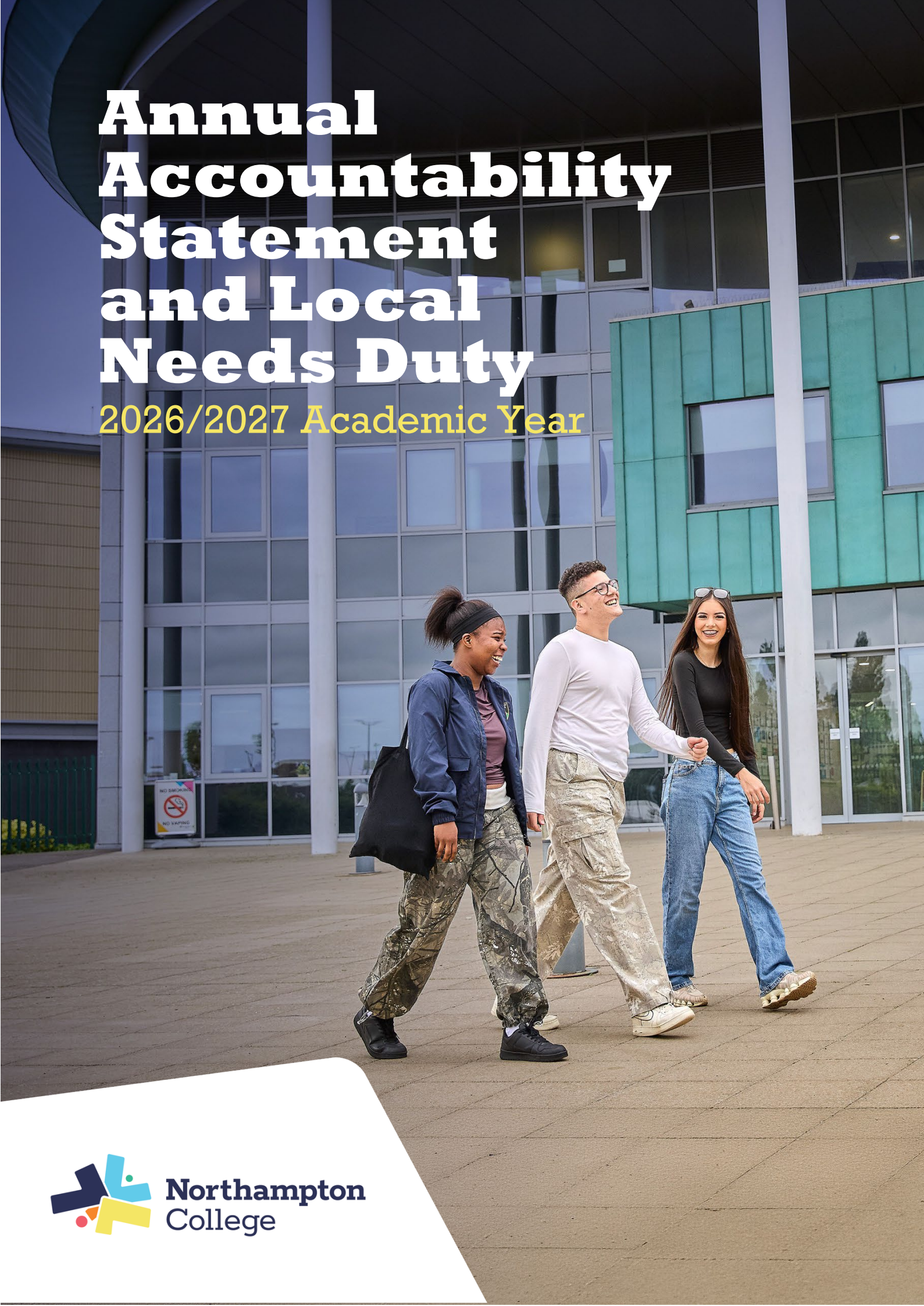
Annual Accountability Statement and Local Needs Duty

2026/2027 Academic Year



Northampton College

Northampton College



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1. Purpose

"Unleashing potential, unleashing Northamptonshire."

'Shaping the future together', is the College's new strategic plan for 2026-2031, which has been developed over the last 12 months through a range of engagement activities with internal and external stakeholders – ensuring students are at the heart of our mission, which is defined at the corporate level through our purpose and values:

Purpose

To strive to unlock the potential in every student who walks through our doors. In doing so, we help drive the growth, prosperity and ambition of Northamptonshire itself.
When our students succeed, our community succeeds.



Values

- Our students front and centre
- We make a difference together
- We try to be better every day
- We own it, we deal with it
- We do it with kindness and respect
- We have fun, we love what we do.



The strategic aims outlined below have been taken from the plan which was approved by the corporation in May 2026:

- Exceptional learning for everyone, every day
- Great people + great vibe = great performance
- Northamptonshire's college, Northamptonshire's success
- Future-ready: Digital, sustainable, innovative.



2. Context and place

Our economy:

Northamptonshire is part of the government's South Midlands Growth Area and is covered by the Northamptonshire and Milton Keynes Chamber of Commerce through the LSIP, and is part of the South Midlands 'Get Britain Working' programme.

It is home to a high number of small and micro businesses with 98% of businesses falling into this category. The county is also located within the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, with the opportunity to be a beneficiary of the continued investment and economic growth this brings to the region.

Northamptonshire has a diverse economy that continues to grow and attract new investment. It is a major hub for financial services, logistics and advanced manufacturing. The county continues to enjoy one of the fastest growing populations and highest employment rates in the country, reflecting the vibrancy of the local economy and its status as a highly desirable areas to live.

It is perfectly positioned at the heart of the country, acting as the crossroads of the rail and road network and providing a premier location for inward and local investors.

Our College:

Northampton College is a general further education (GFE) college in the South East Midlands. The College provides education programmes for over 8,000 students including, young people, adults, apprentices and students with high needs. In 2025/26 around 5,200 students were enrolled on 16-19 full time study programmes. Ofsted rated the College as Good in October 2024, with 'reasonable' for Skills.

Northampton College has an Outstanding financial health rating. As an anchor institution, who believes in collaboration and partnership we are part of the FutureSkills Northamptonshire initiative with Moulton College and University of Northampton, as well as an active 'spoke' in Construction Technical Excellence College's and other key central government initiatives.

Northampton College is an integral part of the local and regional community, equipping local people with the skills that employers need enabling students to progress to positive destinations. It operates from: a main campus on the outskirts of Northampton in a densely populated, predominantly working-class suburb; a town centre campus which includes an ESOL offer, with 16-18 and Adult provision, as they develop lines of sight to building careers in vocational provision; and a third, smaller campus in the more semi-rural town of Daventry.



Data released as part of the latest 2024/25 National Achievement Rates Tables (NART) confirms that Northampton College continues to be the leading provider of Further Education in the East Midlands. National Apprenticeship data has also revealed an overall achievement rate of 64.2% for 24/25, this was 1.2 percentage points below the national average. We are already on track to improve the apprenticeship achievement for 2025/26 with predictions to be c.68%

The College has significant strengths in construction and building services, health and social care, childcare, creative industries, automotive, engineering and manufacturing industries, hospitality and catering and computing and digital. Highly effective careers advice and guidance ensure the large majority of students (94%) progress to further study or employment.

The College has experienced significant growth in the number of students between 16 and 18, with enrolment increasing by 38% over the last three years. This reflects the College's strengthening position in delivering high-value, progression-focused programmes aligned to learner demand and regional priorities. As a result, the College has sustained impressive financial results, and its turnover has grown to around £45 million which has enabled it to continue investing in students, staff and resources.

The Wider Education Landscape:

The College's Schools Liaison team 'Futures' works closely with schools, sixth forms, academies and alternative education providers across Northamptonshire to provide students with careers education, information, advice and guidance to meet the eight requirements of the Gatsby benchmarks outlined below.

- A stable careers programme
- Learning from career and labour market information
- Addressing the needs of each young person
- Linking curriculum learning to careers
- Encounters with employers and employees
- Experiences of workplaces
- Encounters with further and higher education
- Personal guidance.

Students join the College from more than 180 different schools, travelling from as far as Market Harborough, Brackley and Corby to attend, although most live in the core areas of Northampton and Wellingborough.



Average Attainment 8 score in West Northamptonshire continues to decline to 44.6% and be below England – state funded average of 45.9%, with four mainstream secondary schools within Northampton below 40%.

Only seven schools within the town are above England – state funded average. Both secondary schools in Daventry are below 40%. Unfortunately, the average attainment 8 score in North Northamptonshire is even weaker at 42.8%, with only three of the feeder schools to the College with scores above England – state funded average.

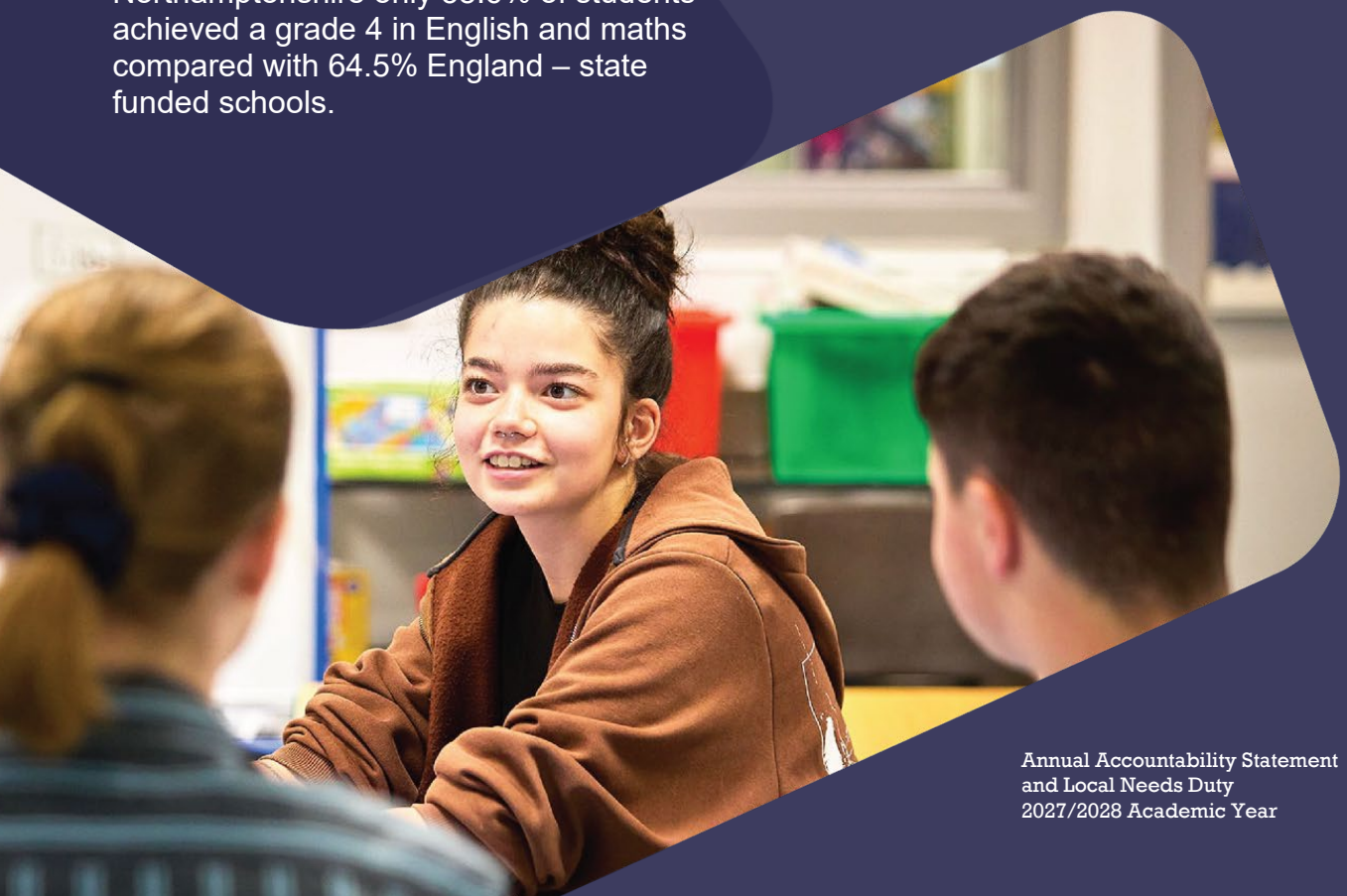
Persistent absence rates are also a concern in comparison with England – state funded schools 8.9% in West Northamptonshire overall is 8.4% and North Northamptonshire 9.3%, but this increases to over 10% in Daventry and the majority of the schools within the town, rising to 10.9% at the closest school to the College.

The number of students who are joining the College who have not yet achieved a grade 4 in either English or maths continues to grow in greater proportions than the growing number of 16-18 students. In West Northamptonshire 64% and in North Northamptonshire only 58.6% of students achieved a grade 4 in English and maths compared with 64.5% England – state funded schools.

Students joining our study programmes continue to present with prior attainment profiles in English and mathematics that are broadly in line with the national picture, based on the latest available funding and sector performance data (source: ESFA ILR data returns and national benchmarking for 2024/25).

In the 2025/26 academic year, approximately 30% of students enrolled at the College without achieving a grade 4 or above in both English and mathematics GCSEs, comparable to the profile seen across General Further Education (GFE) colleges nationally. At the same time, around 47% of students joined the College having already achieved grade 4 or above in both subjects, again broadly consistent with national sector averages.

These trends continue to highlight the importance of strong English and mathematics support within study programmes to enable students to progress successfully into higher levels of study, apprenticeships, and employment.



Our Economy:

Local context and deprivation
Our primary catchment area includes communities experiencing significant socio-economic deprivation. This is reflected in the extensive support the College provides to ensure learners can overcome barriers and succeed in their studies, lives and future careers.

Northampton and the surrounding area of Northamptonshire has high variations of deprivation. Based on the 2025 Indices of Multiple Deprivation, out of 237 lower layers super output areas (LSOAs) areas in West Northamptonshire, 55 are in the least deprived areas (23%) and 45 are in the most deprived areas (19%) nationally. In North Northamptonshire, 47 out of 205 are in the least deprived areas (23%) and 27 are in the most deprived areas (13%) nationally.

Regarding deprivation affecting children, West Northamptonshire is less deprived than 64% of local authority districts and North Northamptonshire is more deprived than 52% of local authority districts.

For education and skills, West Northamptonshire is more deprived than 53% of local authority districts and North Northamptonshire is more deprived than 70% of local authority districts.



Areas of higher deprivation are particularly concentrated in the towns of Corby, Kettering, Wellingborough and Northampton. Education, skills and training deprivation remains a key challenge locally, reinforcing the need for targeted intervention and learner support. These factors are reflected in the high level of student financial support, with a significant proportion of learners accessing College bursary support and having prior eligibility for free school meals, indicating elevated levels of disadvantage within the student population.

The College has developed a robust plan to utilise the Inclusion Mainstream Fund to support young people with disadvantage and barriers to learning to achieve ambitious outcomes, investing in specialist staff, teacher upskilling programmes, resources and accommodation changes and transition and inclusion projects.

Population profile
West Northamptonshire is a growing local authority with a total population of 439,811 (2024) having a 4.2% increase since 2019, which is higher than the national average. The employment rate at 77.9% is slightly higher than UK average. Income per household and productivity rates are comparable to the rest of the UK.

There are a high number of active businesses compared to the rest of the country, and these are a mix of SMEs and some national/international companies, particularly in logistics and finance.

Labour market and employment
In the year ending December 2023, labour market conditions across Northamptonshire showed mixed performance. The employment rate was 77.9% in West Northamptonshire and 80.5% in North Northamptonshire, both higher than the East Midlands average. Over the same period, employment fell slightly in West Northants but increased significantly in North Northants.

Unemployment rates remained relatively low, at 2.9% in West Northamptonshire and 3.6% in North Northamptonshire, though both areas saw some upward movement compared to the previous year. Economic inactivity increased marginally in West Northamptonshire to 18.0%, while falling in North Northamptonshire to 18.5%, suggesting differing local labour market dynamics.

The proportion of working-age residents claiming unemployment-related benefits was lower than the England average, at 3.32% in West Northamptonshire and 3.41% in North Northamptonshire in 2024, compared with 3.96% nationally.



Skills and qualification levels
Qualification attainment across North and West Northamptonshire remains below national averages, particularly at Level 4 and above, indicating a persistent skills gap at higher levels. While attainment at Level 3 is broadly comparable with national levels, the lower proportion of residents holding higher-level qualifications reinforces the importance of accessible progression routes, technical education and higher-level skills development aligned to local employment needs.

Further education and skills achievements are higher than the national average, but the number of adults who have level 3 qualifications at 63.1%, is lower than the national average of 67.6%. This pattern is reflected at level 4, with 44.8% of adults holding L4+ qualifications (national 47.2%).

3. Background

The College has a curriculum offer that spans a wide range of subjects from Entry Level to Level 5, including programmes for students with high needs, which is a growing cohort. The College also offers a wide range of training programmes and apprenticeships for small and large employers.

The Corporation challenges leaders to ensure that the College curriculum offered is carefully considered, researched and delivered to meet the needs and requirements of the community, national and regional skills priorities, and the specific requirements of local students, employers, and stakeholders.

The College produced a new strategic plan in May 2026. Progress against the College's strategic plan will be reviewed annually and KPIs are measured and refreshed on a regular basis as part of the business planning process. The College's strategic intent is tested regularly with local partners and periodically through Ofsted Inspection. Governors evaluate the accountability statement annually in line with the strategic plan which enables the College to work to meet the priorities identified in the LSIP.

The College's curriculum offer is reviewed annually and we utilise Local Market Intelligence data along with employer feedback to ensure it matches the ambitions and demands of the region. The curriculum offer will further develop to reflect the national drive for skills development through technical and professional qualifications,
T Levels and V levels, Level 2 occupational and foundation programmes in sectors of regional importance, with a focus on apprenticeship opportunities for young people, particularly in subject areas which enable them to develop the skills needed for sustained employment.

Digital Skills form an integral part of the curriculum and students are supported well to realise the powerful effect that using technology can have on their learning and readiness for the rapidly changing workplace, in line with the findings of the LSIP and national research. Within their core qualification, students develop vital skills in maths and English as the foundation for other skills to be built upon. All students that do not have a grade 4 or higher in these subjects at GCSE level are supported until they achieve these important qualifications.

In analysing the Southeast Midlands job vacancies posted in the previous year in comparison to the curriculum offer, there continues to be a close correlation with the provision that the College offers. Examples of recent initiatives to help meet local, regional, and national skills needs include investment in Construction, Engineering and Creative provision of over £1 million, through external funding from the OfS, matched by the College. Development of increased provision in A Levels through STEM subjects, further T Levels, increased E3 offer to support those at risk of NEET and a revised strategy to further develop the performance of GCSE maths and English.

This document sets out our priorities for development in line with the LSIP for 2026/27 in the context of the continuing work of the Local Skills Improvement Plan, developing local/regional need and national skills priorities.

4. Approach to developing the plan

Northampton College is continuing to work closely with a range of key stakeholders to develop the annual accountability statement and achieve its strategic objectives.

These include:

West Northamptonshire Council (WNC)

North Northamptonshire Council (NNC)

Northamptonshire Chamber of Commerce

The University of Northampton

Strategically important employers such as:

- Dr Martens
- Church's Shoes
- Taylor Wimpey
- GXO (Logistics)
- DSV (Logistics)
- Carmac
- Northants Saints Rugby Club
- Northamptonshire NHS Trust
- Wincanton
- Three Shires Hospital
- Whittlebury Hall
- Digital Northampton
- WINVIC
- Royal and Derngate Theatre

Business representative groups and networks

Schools

Southeast Midlands Colleges and wider college groups

Local MPs and councillors

South Midlands Careers Hub

Jobcentre Plus







The College continues to contribute significantly to the local and regional skills agenda through joint work with key stakeholders as part of the regional LSIP project, the South Midlands Growth Hub and other groups promoting collaboration and prioritising employment and skills to drive regional economic recovery and growth. This enables the sharing of good practice in careers education and ensures that the College is up to date with economic developments in the region.

The increasing partnerships with Northamptonshire employers can be seen in the expanding range of visits and speakers that are increasingly embedded across our curriculum areas and the new employer forum events that have been introduced.

The College continues to be an active member of the Association of Colleges (AoC), with the Principal continuing to participate in the AoC National Curriculum and SEND Policy Groups. Other senior leaders regularly participate in national AoC and other policy forums to shape and respond to government priorities and regional and national skills needs. The College is part of a proactive group of colleges that acts as a voice for the County's Further Education sector.

Outreach projects such as 'Ignite the Spark' have engaged local secondary schools and electively home educated students, helping to raise awareness about careers and jobs in priority areas such as construction, logistics, engineering, science, inspiring potential students to move into high quality training in priority sectors.



5. Contribution to national, regional and local priorities

The College plays a key role in helping to support employers and learners by providing high-quality professional and technical training that supports local, regional and national labour market needs and skills gaps. Assessment of priority skills to 2030 - GOV.UK

The table below summarises the current provision of Northampton College, setting out its alignment with the local priorities set out by the LSIP for Northamptonshire and the region and the national priorities set out in the DfE guidance.

	Priority Sectors		College Provision			
Sector	**Local/ Regional**	**National**	**Study Programme (including T Levels and Free Courses for jobs)**	**Adult (Including Free Courses for jobs and Skills Bootcamps)**	**Apprenticeship (including HTQs and Apprenticeship Units)**	**University Level Education (including HTQs)**
Construction	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	**Planned for 27/28**
Advanced manufacturing/ engineering	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Professional and business services	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Financial services	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Life sciences	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Health and care services	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Food, drink and hospitality	✓		✓	✓		
Creative Industries		✓	✓	✓		✓
Digital, AI and technologies	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Transport & logistics	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Clean energy/ Net zero/Green skills	✓	✓		✓		
Defence/ Aerospace		✓	✓			

Over the course of the 2026/27 academic year, the College will continue to work with the Chamber of Commerce, employers, our education partners and other stakeholders to implement the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) and the South Midlands Get Britain Working Plan to ensure: more businesses are engaged; there is more shared strategic thinking; and local provision is reflective of emerging skills needs.

To date the development of the most recent LSIP has identified five overarching system changes:

A **Curriculum Re-alignment**	FE and HE providers across the South Midlands will reshape curricula in priority sectors, expanding Level 3-5 technical provision and integrating digital and green competencies. Annual employer-informed curriculum reviews will be conducted by all provider partners.
B **Employer Co-Design**	Collaborative engagement leading to structured co-design: relationships with employers through consultative and in depth dialogue, employer facing forums and regular curriculum workshops, expanded placements, and targeted SME engagement through simplified, plain-English communications.
C **Teaching Workforce Capacity**	Improving staff retention and addressing recruitment challenges in engineering, construction and digital by developing industry-to-teaching pathways, expanding fractional teaching models and enabling cross-institution staff sharing.
D **Driving Learner Demand**	Co-ordinated regional careers campaigns aligned to priority sectors; stronger employer ambassador programmes in schools; improved visibility of T Levels, HQs and apprenticeships as routes into real careers.
E **Systemic Barriers**	Tackling transport, English language, digital exclusion, health-related barriers through escalation to local authority commissioning and funding alignment of skills need to employer demand in areas such: the Adult Skills Budget (which now contains Adult Skills Core (Accredited, Tailored Learning (Non-Accredited) and Free Courses for Jobs) and wraparound support.

Northampton College demonstrates strong alignment with all five South Midlands LSIP priorities through employer-led curriculum development, investment in technical education, extensive stakeholder engagement, targeted workforce development and a commitment to removing barriers to participation. The College's strategic focus on priority sectors, social mobility, employability and progression ensures it plays a leading role in addressing current and future skills needs across Northamptonshire and the wider South Midlands region.

How Northampton College Meets the Priority

LSIP Priority	
A **Curriculum Re-alignment**	Northampton College continually reviews its curriculum offer in response to employer demand, labour market intelligence and LSIP priorities. The College has expanded technical and professional pathways at all levels, including A levels, T Levels and industry-focused programmes in construction, engineering, digital, health and social care, and green technologies. Employer engagement informs annual curriculum planning and ensures programmes remain aligned to regional skills needs. Digital skills and sustainability are embedded across curriculum areas to prepare learners for future employment. The College will be implementing Skills Bootcamps in 2026/27 based on employer feedback for short programmes which support with the development of skills needed for talent pipeline.
B **Employer Co-Design**	The College has established strong partnerships with local, regional and national employers through curriculum advisory boards, employer forums, industry consultations and stakeholder events. Employers contribute to curriculum design, guest lectures, live projects, work experience, industry placements and apprenticeship provision. The College works closely with organisations including Northampton Saints Foundation, local authorities, NHS partners, engineering and construction employers, and the South East Midlands Growth Hub to ensure programmes reflect current industry requirements.
C **Teaching Workforce Capacity**	Northampton College invests in staff development through industry updating, professional qualifications and continuing professional development (CPD) including inclusion/SEND training. The College recruits industry specialists into teaching roles and supports flexible pathways from industry into education, developing them into 'triple' professionals. Collaboration with employers and regional education partners enables staff to maintain current occupational competence, particularly in priority sectors such as engineering, construction, science, digital technologies and health care.
D **Driving Learner Demand**	The College promotes technical and vocational education through extensive school engagement, careers events, open days, employer encounters and outreach programmes. Learners benefit from meaningful careers education aligned to Gatsby Benchmarks, exposure to industry role models and clear progression pathways into apprenticeships, T Levels, technical qualifications, employment and higher education. The College actively raises awareness of skills shortages and career opportunities within priority growth sectors across Northamptonshire.
E **Systemic Barriers**	Northampton College provides a broad range of support services designed to remove barriers to participation and achievement. This includes financial support, travel assistance, digital access schemes, English and maths support, SEND provision, mental health and wellbeing services, and targeted support for at risk groups including care-experienced learners and those at risk of becoming NEET. Through partnerships with organisations such as the Shaw Trust, local authorities and community organisations, the College helps learners overcome barriers to education, training and employment while supporting social mobility and inclusion.

Those Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) – Northamptonshire and National

In North Northamptonshire the rate of 16 to 17-year-olds who are NEET sits at approximately 5.2%. In West Northamptonshire the figure is lower at 2.9%. Care leavers and young people with additional needs are disproportionately represented within these statistics. According to the Learning and Work Institute, young people who have been in care are significantly more likely to live in poverty and 84% leave school without five GCSEs graded 4–9. The Learning and Work Institute recommends that learning providers offer consistent and high-quality pathway planning focused on individual needs, aspirations and circumstances, including those with care experience.

The importance of strengthening our NEET provision is reinforced by Alan Milburn's Young People and Work: Interim Report, which highlights a growing national crisis affecting "one million lives" and warns that the number of young people who are NEET could rise from one in eight to one in six young people within five years, equating to approximately 1.25 million young people if no action is taken.

The report identifies a significant shift in the nature of youth disengagement, noting that nearly 60% of young people who are NEET are now economically inactive, meaning they are not actively seeking work. It also reports that six in ten young people who are NEET have never had a job, compared with four in ten twenty years ago, suggesting that labour market detachment is becoming increasingly entrenched.

Furthermore, Milburn highlights the decline in opportunities available to young people, with 1.6 million fewer low- and medium-skilled jobs in the economy than in previous decades, starts among young people falling by 35% over the last decade, and vacancies in sectors that traditionally provided entry-level employment, such as hospitality, having reduced significantly.

Despite these challenges, the report found that 84% of young people who are NEET want a job or training opportunity, demonstrating that the issue is not a lack of aspiration but a system that is failing to provide appropriate support and pathways into employment. Milburn concludes that "we are at risk of a lost generation" unless education, employment, health and welfare systems work together more effectively to support at risk young people.

6. College annual objectives

Progress made since the 2025/26 Accountability Agreement

Based on last year's plan as set out in the Accountability Agreement, the College has:

1. **Reviewed and strengthened the curriculum in engineering, advanced manufacturing, automotive and specialist and cross-cutting green skills.**

    1.1. Secured £1.9 million funding, some of which has been used to extend and improve Engineering, Automotive, and Construction facilities and resources and enhance the current Green Skills provision

    1.2. Reviewed the engineering accommodation and facilities and implementing changes to both extend and modernise the physical area and improving resources for students

    1.3. Consulted with engineering stakeholders and employers through employer forums and wider discussion to ensure our curriculum offer maintains industrial relevance and fully explores the latest advances in technology and development, reviewing our curriculum offer particularly in apprenticeships

    1.4. Reviewed the entire current engineering curriculum offer to ensure it is in line with local and national priorities, industry requirements providing students with the skills needed for progression. Included in this we have introduced our popular T Level in Mechanical Engineering

    1.5. Strengthened leadership across the engineering provision with a much sharper focus on delivering high quality provision closely aligned with current and future industrial needs.

2. **Further developed the curriculum to address local/regional and national priorities.**

    2.1. Successfully extended the T Level provision introducing five new programmes in Accounting and Finance; Digital Production Design and Development (ICT); Health (Paediatric Nursing); Education and Childcare (Assisting Teaching); Engineering Design and Development (Mechanical). These include an even more extensive range of stakeholder placements and further increases our employer and industry connections

    2.2. Introduced new STEM A Levels subjects to widen the current curriculum offer including Maths, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Geography and Environmental Science. This has increased the number of A Level subjects to 18 and the student enrolments for 2025/26 to 214. The first cohort of second year A Level students will sit their final exams and complete their A Level course in summer 2026.

3. **Updated, refreshed and reconfigured the College to inspire students and ensure it meets local and national needs**.

   The College has developed an Estates and Accommodation strategy to better consider long term growth and resource provision to ensure the College is on track to meet the training and skills needs of Northamptonshire for the foreseeable future.

   A dedicated A Level Centre has been completed and accommodating our expanding A Level provision in a bespoke space. This has enabled a sense of community and belonging for A Level students and ensured that the resources provided are relevant and contextualised (such as around progression to university). The College has continued to invest in specialist training facilities and equipment using both external funding and our own investment and renewal plans.

4. **Continued our development of delivery and use of digital technologies.**

   The College has continued to evolve and implement our digital strategy at pace to enhance the digital literacy and specialised digital skills of both students and staff. This work will continue given the rapidly changing technological landscape.

   The College has embraced the use of AI and AR/VR technology to support teaching and learning and enrich the student's learning experience such as through real life experience simulations in the ever-popular iLAB or through streamlining student assessments and feedback.

   New technologies have enabled better efficiency in the professional services functions. Following on from the successful implementation of the Digiskills programme for lower level courses the College is ensuring digital skills are fully integrated more holistically in all other study programme courses and apprenticeships in a vocationally relevant, impactful and measurable way.

   Additionally, the College is continuing to invest significantly in software and digital resources, working collaboratively with digital partners (such as in our EdTech work) and digitally advanced colleges to ensure the College's provision is market-leading and fully equips students with the digital skills for the future.

5. **Further developed our delivery of core transferrable skills, including numeracy and literacy.**

   Young people must have opportunities to develop essential foundational competencies to be able to contribute to society and thrive in life and work.

   To ensure all students at the College develop the crucial transferrable skills employers need for their future workforce, the College has launched the 6 NC Core Skills which are Communication, Curiosity, Resilience, Collaboration, Ambition and Problem Solving. These are incorporated throughout the curriculum, and identified as essential for success in students' courses, life, work and progression.

   Additionally, the College has further strengthened the mathematics and English offer recognising that students who do not have these essential qualifications are disadvantaged. The curriculum design has been strengthened, increased delivery hours and better equipped students to use these skills to further their lives and support their knowledge, skills and progress in their technical and vocational curriculum.

6. **Further strengthened progression pathways and curriculum linked to University Level education**.

   This has included a stronger partnership with the local HE institution with a progression agreement now in place, partnership planning of curriculum and development to ensure it is complementary and facilitates student progression opportunity. The College has also worked collaboratively to align and strengthen progression in national priority sectors. The College is now working to extend their HE partners to those that are further afield.

The College continues to work with key local education partners to review and refine the curriculum offer. This includes working with stakeholders and employers to analyse the needs and provision across the county and how to collectively meet the needs of the region. The College is also working together to address the rising number of young people in the region who are NEET (or at risk of) and how collectively this can be reduced.

In 2025/2026 the College has worked with many local and regional colleges and educational institutions, including Moulton College and the University of Northampton, to continue to align the curriculum offers to better meet the needs of Northamptonshire. As part of this collaborative work an exciting and innovative new Futureskills partnership between the three anchor institutions was introduced in November 2025. This new strategy aimed to take a unified and future focused approach to skills development across the county - responding directly to employer needs and supporting individual aspirations.

Since the launch of this strategy, much work has been done to drive a new model of inclusive growth, productivity and social mobility, integrating the local growth strategies and partnerships as well as the Government's Modern Industrial Strategy.

The intention was that with this partnership Northamptonshire leads the way in collaborative, responsive skills planning that is rooted in place, driven by employers and focused on outcomes that matter.

Through the Futureskills partnership, the College's relationship with Moulton College has grown from strength to strength through shared professional development, joint student activity and opportunity and collaborative projects. In March 2026, Northampton College and Moulton College announced exploring a merger between the two institutions. This would enable the creation of a stronger, more resilient college that can better support students, employers and communities across Northamptonshire long into the future. A merged College would offer students greater choice, clearer progression routes, greater capacity and improved access to specialist facilities across both organisations. The proposal to explore a merger has been approved by the Boards of Governors at both colleges and is currently in the due diligence exploration phase.

Northampton College will continue to act as a key contributor to educational partnership working across the region, sharing best practice, resources and skills. The collaborative approach continues to build on the excellent work across the region to date, strengthening relationships to develop collaborative models and solutions to meet local skills needs.

Priorities for the 2026/27 accountability agreement

Building on this success and continuing the College's work to meet the local and national skills priorities, the College will:

1. **Fully explore the potential merger with Moulton College to ensure a more resilient organisation which is stronger together.** Both colleges coming together would enable the College to create a stronger, more resilient college that is better able to respond to changes in policy, funding and the needs of local communities. Over the coming months, both colleges will undertake detailed due diligence work. This will help to understand the full implications of the proposal. Should the merger go ahead as planned, merging both organisations will be a considerable amount of work especially given that the proposed timelines are ambitious aiming for completion in January 2027.

2. **Adapt for and accommodate a greater NEET provision within the college (Not in Education, Employment or Training).** In collaboration with other education institutions and stakeholders, the College will review how to reduce NEET numbers across Northamptonshire. We currently work closely with the Northampton Saints Foundation and have recently strengthened the partnership with the Shaw Trust. However, the provision requires a comprehensive review and enhancement to ensure that young people who are disengaged from education, employment or training receive the coordinated support, guidance and progression opportunities needed to achieve sustainable destinations and positive outcomes.

3. **Continue to develop the curriculum not only to address changing local, regional and national priorities but in response to ongoing government curriculum reforms.** This is likely to include introducing V Levels and adapting our current T Level and A Level offer at Level 3. Further exploration of the proposed Level 2 reforms with the occupational and foundation study pathway options to be introduced. Identify curriculum areas and courses that will need amendment and adapting in line with government policy and change.

4. **Review and refresh of apprenticeship provision.** There remain inconsistencies around the quality of provision including apprentice onboarding, teaching and learning, assessment, curriculum planning/design and apprentice timely completion which will need to be carefully reviewed. This review will include ensuring the content is further aligned to the appropriate sector area and employers/ stakeholders are fully involved in the co-design of the curriculum and overall progress of the apprentice. The approach to designing, delivering and continuously improving the College's industry-facing provision, including ensuring a highly tailored suite of programmes to meet the region's current and future skills needs, will be strengthened.

5. Start to implement the findings of the accommodation and facilities review.
Having conducted a strategic review of the accommodation and facilities across Northampton College, the College will now begin implementing its findings to ensure that curriculum areas are aligned effectively with the spaces available and that facilities support both current and future delivery needs. The review assessed the suitability, utilisation, and capacity of teaching and specialist environments, with particular focus on ensuring there is sufficient practical space for vocational and technical provision. Curriculum requirements, learner numbers, industry standards, and planned growth areas were mapped against existing accommodation to identify gaps, opportunities for co-location, and options for more efficient use of space. The College will utilise available funding streams (where available) to start to adapt the estate to meet the future needs of students. The implementation of these findings will inform a phased accommodation strategy that supports high-quality teaching and learning, enhances the student experience, and ensures the College estate remains fit for purpose and responsive to evolving curriculum demands.

6. Further strengthen our whole college, strategic approach to inclusion.
Northampton College will implement an updated whole-college, strategic approach to inclusion, aligning with the government's SEND reform consultation, *'Putting Children and Young People First'*, which places inclusive practice at the centre of mainstream education. The College's ambition is to ensure that every learner benefits from high-quality, adaptive teaching alongside timely, targeted support where required. Through the Inclusive Mainstream Fund allocation, The College will strengthen the capacity to design, plan and embed evidence-informed approaches that extend the current curriculum offer and better meet the needs of learners with SEND.

This investment will enable a more proactive and systematic approach to inclusion across all provision areas.

To achieve this, the College will:

- Develop a more sophisticated understanding of the profile and evolving needs of both new and existing learners with SEND, underpinned by enhanced data collection and analysis
- Undertake a strategic review of policies, systems and curriculum planning to ensure alignment with inclusive principles and best practice
- Strengthen partnerships with specialist services and local agencies to inform provision and improve outcomes
- Review staffing structures, deployment and CPD to ensure they are fully aligned to learner need and deliver maximum impact.

Recognising that the most effective provision for learners with SEND is high-quality, teacher-led practice, the College will prioritise the further strengthening of inclusive pedagogy across the College. This will include:

- Removing systemic and predictable barriers to learning through a critical review teaching practices
- Embedding adaptive teaching as a universal expectation
- Delivering targeted, evidence-informed CPD to ensure all staff are confident and skilled in meeting a diverse range of needs.

Through this strategic, data-informed and workforce-focused approach, Northampton College will enhance its inclusive offer, ensuring equitable access, improved learner experience, and stronger outcomes for all students with SEND.

7. Local Needs Duty

As required by The Skills Act (2022), Northampton College's Corporation has reviewed how well our education and training meets local, regional and national skills needs and prepares for those that will emerge in the future.

To do this, the Corporation has considered: the ongoing close collaboration with employers, stakeholders and education leaders; sources of information about local, regional and national skills needs provided through the LSIP; a range of labour market information and projections; internal data and information related to business planning and recruitment aligned to labour market needs; College and local curriculum maps; data and information related to destinations and progression; feedback from students, parents and employers on students' experience and readiness for their next steps; the College's self-assessment report accurately articulating the college's current performance, impact and areas to further develop; and progress against the College's ambitious three-year strategic plan "Putting Skills in Focus" to ensure the College remains at the forefront of meeting changing skills needs.

It has also considered in detail the progress made, and impact seen in implementing the actions set out in the 2025/26 Annual Accountability Statement, summarised above.

In order to further the work of the College in meeting the local, regional and national skills priorities, the Board has confirmed that the College will undertake over the next year to: fully explore the potential merger with Moulton College; adapt for and accommodate a greater NEET provision within the college; review and refresh our apprenticeship provision; develop a whole college strategic approach to inclusion; continue to develop and align our curriculum to address local and national priorities and in line with government reform; conduct a review of the accommodation and facilities to ensure aligned to need.

Further details on these actions are described in Section 6 above.

Northampton College remains committed to meet the ever-changing needs of Northamptonshire, the wider region and our nation by remaining financially stable, ensuring our students achieve and grow through exceptional standards of training, being an excellent learning organisation and being the college in the community.

Through the actions set out in this annual accountability agreement, the College will further its strategic plan and deliver the training and education our students, community and economy require.



8. Corporation statement

The Northampton College Corporation hereby confirms that the plan as set out above reflects an agreed statement of purpose, aims and objectives and that this document fulfils the statutory Local Needs Duty.

This document was approved by the Corporation at their meeting on 25 June 2026 and will be published on the College's website.

Chair of Governors:	Anne-Marie Kilday.
CEO and Principal /Accounting Officer:	
Dated:	**30 July 2026**

9. Other supporting information

Ofsted report
LSIP report
Annual financial statements
College Self-Assessment report

Northampton College