



OAKLANDS



OAKLANDS ACCOUNTABILITY AGREEMENT

2025-2026

EVOLVING

OAKLANDS

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PURPOSE & KEY PRIORITIES

For over 100 years, Oaklands has been a cornerstone of further education in Hertfordshire. Since its establishment in 1921, the College has had a proud heritage of providing responsive education.

We opened our doors to men and women in 1921 and have since built a rich history of delivering innovative and transformative education. As a leading provider of further education, Oaklands operates campuses in St Albans and Welwyn Garden City, along with training facilities in Borehamwood. Serving more than 8,000 students, it offers over 300 vocational and academic courses, including apprenticeships, online learning and higher education programmes.

Oaklands is a college driving the skills of the future. We are ambitious and continually seek to expand our reach and reputation, enabling more adults, young people, and apprentices to access outstanding learning opportunities; whether to enter new employment sectors, reskill, or upskill. This ambition underpins the College's commitment to maintaining high standards of education and support, ensuring that every student is well-prepared for success in their chosen field. Recently, the College received two excellent Ofsted judgements for both its study provision and residential provision. Whilst the operating environment for further education remains challenging, we are confident that our history of seizing opportunities and working closely with our partners puts us in a good position to ensure our continued success.

Oaklands is a rich and vibrant community, with teaching, learning and assessment at our heart and forming our core business. Education and skills unite individuals; they give all learners and teachers a shared purpose and a common goal. In the current employment landscape that changes so fast, Oaklands is committed to equipping our learners with flexible and transferable skills required for new emerging opportunities locally, prioritising those identified in the Hertfordshire Skills Framework as the skills most valued by employers and developing skills that are needed in the 4th and 5th Industrial Revolutions.

100+ YEARS

Oaklands has been the cornerstone of further education

300+

Vocational and academic courses

VISION, MISSION & VALUES

Oaklands has a robust and embedded Strategic Plan. The College's Vision is: **"To be a sustainable educational trailblazer, inspiring learners and the wider community to achieve their potential in a changing world."**

Oaklands nurtures ambition, providing tailored educational programmes and support to enable students of all ages to reach their full potential. By equipping students with the skills and knowledge needed to achieve their personal and career goals, the College positively impacts communities and the economy. The Mission is: **"To prepare every learner for work, a rewarding career, and life's opportunities."**

Oaklands has made significant progress towards being a respected and aspirational brand underpinned by its strong values:

- **Excellence and Innovation** – Delivering outstanding results, sustainable careers, and future leaders;
- **Collaborative Learning** – Developing knowledge and skills to prepare students for life and work;
- **Inclusion and Happiness** – Celebrating the achievements and successes of all communities;
- **Integrity and Accountability** – Striving for excellence in all endeavours;
- **Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion** – Ensuring fairness, accessibility, and an inclusive environment.

Throughout 2024-25, the College has made significant progress towards the strategic aims and objectives set out in the 2023-27 strategic plan which sets out to:

- Deliver continuous outstanding teaching, learning and assessment to all learners and employers
- Create mutually beneficial partnerships to deliver the highest quality educational offer to increase economic prosperity
- Create our estate so that it is recognised as world class in terms of quality, sustainability and the promotion and practice of evolving leading-edge technologies
- Create a caring, accessible, inclusive, and thriving college community, committed to fairness, health, and success
- Deliver good or outstanding long term sustainable financial health, through growth, that enables reinvestment in our students, staff, and estate to support our aspirational goals

Oaklands integrates its core themes - Sustainability and the Environment, SMART Digital, Happiness and Wellbeing and Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion - into all its developments, including new buildings, policies, and strategies. The College remains committed to placing students at the heart of everything it does, working closely with stakeholders, employers, and the community to create a collaborative learning environment.

Curriculum innovation and design is supported by members of our Corporation and regular reviews of the College's curriculum are undertaken by the Corporation and its committees, thus ensuring its currency and readiness for future skills needs as detailed within this accountability statement. In response to local needs and resulting from the Local Needs Duty to review key sectors including digital, health, sport, engineering and construction, these have been prioritised within our strategic objectives, annual operating plan, and future strategic investment plans.

As Oaklands embarks on its next century, it is ideally positioned to respond to current challenges and opportunities, particularly the need for a high quality, career-focused further education system. The College is recognised at local, regional, and national levels and is strengthening its international links to contribute to an outward-looking and globally connected Britain. It is also well aligned with the government's key missions, to grow the economy, have an NHS fit for the future, safer streets, opportunity for all, and making Britain a clean energy superpower.

Our Values

EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION
COLLABORATIVE LEARNING
INCLUSION AND HAPPINESS
INTEGRITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

CONTEXT & PLACE

Oaklands serves a large geographical area and has three Hertfordshire campuses in St Albans, Welwyn Garden City and Borehamwood.

Oaklands serves young students locally, as well as throughout Hertfordshire, and through good local transport links students travel to the College from the East of England region, including Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, and London. Due to our excellent sports provision, we have a national pull of students, resulting in on-site residential accommodation for student athletes which serves up to 80. For apprentices and those studying on programmes based in the workplace, Oaklands extends to a national reach due to the niche areas of provision such as Greenkeeping. We can support adults and those wishing to study online with us outside of our local geographic patch based on need.

The College, in 2022/23, was a £33 million organisation and in line with its strategic goals increased its income from £38 million in 2023/24 to £41 million in 2024/2025 with approximately 8,000 young people, adults and apprentices studying each year. It is expected to reach c£45 million in 2025/26.

Our curriculum spans 15 sector areas. The curriculum offer includes education programmes for young people aged 16-19, apprenticeships and work-based learning, adult education, employability programmes, skills bootcamps, sector-based work programmes, online learning, education for those who speak English as a second language, programmes for those with special educational needs and disabilities, T Level programmes, Professional Training, Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) and Higher Education.

Oaklands is ambitious and continues to further develop our centres of expertise, aligning these with the 5 Labour missions and areas of regional and local need including SEND provision, Engineering, Construction Trades, Health & Care Childcare and Education and Creative Industries including Film & TV and Sport. We are well-placed to continue to be a locally significant College as well as one which is recognised more widely, regionally, nationally and internationally. We are nationally renowned for our Sports Academies, where sporting and academic excellence are given equal importance, for our Greenkeeping provision focused on the maintenance, care, and management of turfgrass and landscapes and for our specialist engineering focus.

Technological advancements, geoeconomic fragmentation, economic uncertainty, demographic shifts, and the green transition - both individually and collectively - are key forces set to shape and transform the labour market by 2030 and Oaklands is well placed to proactively adapt to these emerging trends by revising curriculum, embracing technological advancements, and fostering a culture of continuous learning to effectively prepare students for the future workforce. The World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Report 2025 outlines several key trends that will significantly impact Colleges such as the emphasis on Technological Skills, the green transition and focus on green economy and sustainability, addressing skills gaps through reskilling and upskilling, noting that 63% of employers perceive skill gaps as a barrier to transformation, in line with the Local Skills Improvement Plan findings of both Hertfordshire and London.

Hertfordshire's economy generates over £46 billion annually. As of 2024, the number of enterprises registered in Hertfordshire grew from 60,785 in 2023 to 61,065 in 2024, indicating a 0.5% growth. The employment rate in Hertfordshire improved to 79.4% in early 2024, surpassing the Great Britain rate of 75.5%. In 2023, the average salary in Hertfordshire was £37,675, reflecting a 7.67% annual growth from the previous year. The unemployment rate in Hertfordshire was 2.7% in 2023. Hertfordshire is currently undergoing a process of devolution and local government reorganisation, initiated by the UK Government's English Devolution White Paper published in December 2024. This initiative aims to streamline the existing two-tier local government system, comprising Hertfordshire County Council and ten district and borough councils, into one or more unitary authorities that would handle all local services.

While Hertfordshire boasts a lower unemployment rate (2.5%) than London (5.4-5.6%), 9.8% of children live in low-income households. Skills gaps persist despite high qualification levels, with economic inactivity hovering around 18-19% for the county.



8,000

Approximately young people, adults and apprentices studying each year

15

Curriculum areas covering sector needs

£41m

Organisation in 2024/2025



APPROACH TO DEVELOPING THE ANNUAL ACCOUNTABILITY AGREEMENT

USING LOCAL MARKET INFORMATION

Oaklands uses 3 - 5-year labour market intelligence trends from specialist providers such as Lightcast and Vector to inform our curriculum innovation & curriculum planning activity and provide **directional insights** into workforce needs, educational alignment, and skill gaps.

We utilise this technology to **analyse job market trends** and show the trajectory of emerging skills and through course planning, **align curriculum** with the changing demands in industries like AI, healthcare, or green energy, supporting us to explore **reskilling initiatives** by showing which skills professionals need to pivot into emerging roles.

Using real time job demand data allows us to identify the gaps between education, skills and employment to inform the introduction of new or changes in curriculum delivery.



LOCAL SKILLS IMPROVEMENT PLANS

The Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIP) highlight essential, digital, and green skills as cross-sector priorities in Hertfordshire. In London themes of digital, green, and transferable skills and labour market inclusion are highlighted.

Specific sectors identified in both the Hertfordshire and London LSIPs for focused attention include:

- Property and Construction in Hertfordshire & Built Environment in London
- Creative Industries
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Health and Care

And unique to Hertfordshire:

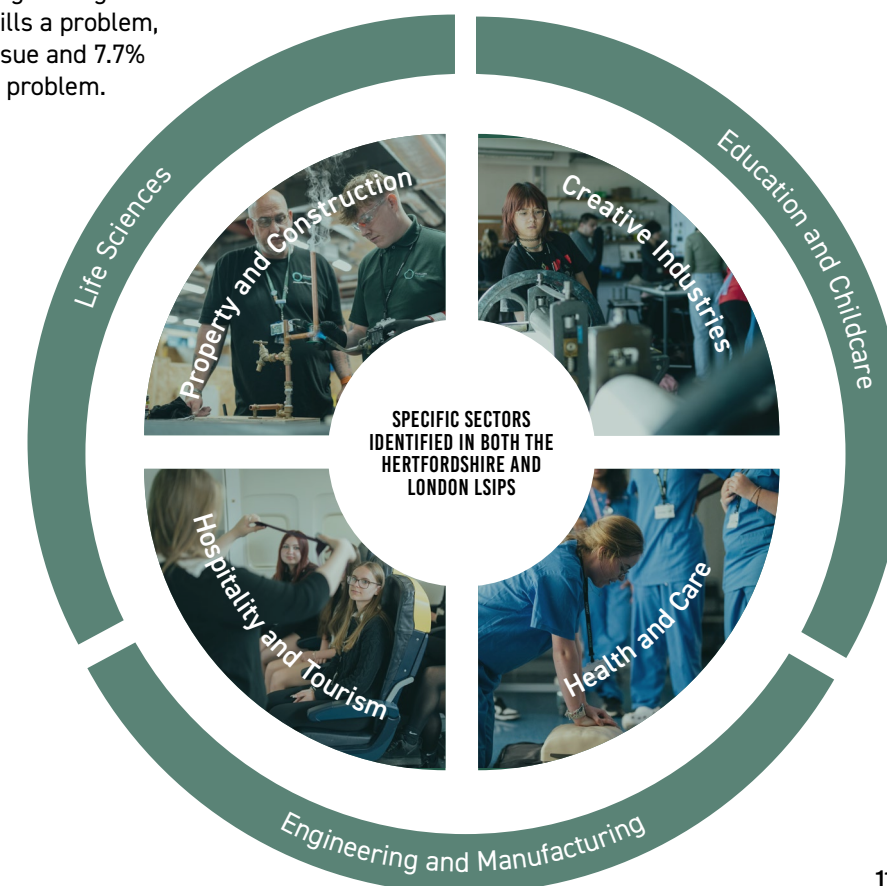
- Life Sciences
- Education and Childcare
- Engineering and Manufacturing

Additionally, the report acknowledges the unique skill needs of niche and specialised industries within specific sub-regions. In London, the LSIP's priority sectors and cross-cutting themes closely align to the priority sectors identified by the Mayor as part of the London Recovery Programme's Helping Londoners into Good Work mission.

Significant Skills Gaps: In Hertfordshire, the survey revealed 70% of employers were prepared to invest in skills. The priority demographics in Hertfordshire are 16-24s, 50+ career professionals and those with learning differences and disabilities. The LSIP highlights that 40% of Hertfordshire businesses were planning to recruit in the next 12 months with 45.5% reporting finding employees with the right employment skills a problem, 43.2% with the right technical skills an issue and 7.7% with sufficient Maths and English skills a problem.

Industry Group Discussions: In early 2023 Oaklands took part in several sector-specific focus groups to delve into the unique skills challenges faced by various industries. These sessions facilitated direct dialogue between businesses and the College, fostering collaborative solutions to skills. Oaklands has continued the delivery of industry boards which help inform our curriculum design and the engagement of employers and partners with the College. Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF) Project: The LSIF had a significant impact at Oaklands, utilising the fund we secured of c£770k. Working in close partnership with the other three colleges with West Herts College leading the bid.

Growth Strategy: Complementing the LSIP, Hertfordshire Futures has published a draft Apprenticeship Growth Strategy to 2025 and released its Adult Learning Strategy in April 2025 supported by Oaklands. Strategies articulate a county-wide vision to raise awareness and uptake of apprenticeships and adults wanting to train, retrain or upskill, aiming to increase economic prosperity and wealth creation. These efforts collectively demonstrate Hertfordshire's commitment to addressing skills shortages and ensuring that education and training provision is responsive to the evolving demands of the local economy.



KEY SECTORS FOR OAKLANDS:

- **Film & TV:** Home to Warner Bros, Elstree, and Sky Studios, Hertfordshire's creative sector is booming, employing 20,000 people with 10.6% annual growth since 2010
- **Engineering & Aerospace:** Major firms like MBDA, Airbus, and Hensoldt make Hertfordshire a hub for aerospace, satellite, and electrical engineering. Identified as a priority sector, the demand for specialist engineering skills is critical
- **Space Technology & Logistics:** The county's strategic location near London and key transport networks makes it a key player in logistics and space technology. Companies in satellite development and space innovation contribute to the region's high-tech growth
- **Construction:** With 7,235 businesses employing 43,500 people and £3 billion in planned investment, this sector needs 6,000 new workers annually
- **Sports & Physical Activity:** The sector has expanded significantly, contributing to physical and mental well-being, with a net value of c42 billion for mental health alone
- **Tourism & Hospitality:** The visitor economy supports 38,936 jobs, accounting for 6% of Hertfordshire's employment
- **Digital, IT & Sustainability:** Essential across sectors, government-led net-zero initiatives are driving green skill investments
- **Health & Social Care:** A significant need exists for skilled professionals at all levels, with ongoing workforce upskilling initiatives



RESPONDING TO THESE PRIORITIES & THE LABOUR MISSIONS

In response to these priorities Oaklands is focused on several strategic projects.

CONSTRUCTION & BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

- Oaklands has now delivered a state-of-the-art Construction Centre as part of our extensive campus redevelopment. Officially opened in November 2024, the 3,000m² facility offers modern workshops for plumbing, electrical, and renewable installation trades, a construction lab, a virtual reality learning suite, and various classrooms equipped with advanced IT resources. Notably, the construction incorporated sustainable practices, including the use of K-Briq; a low-carbon recycled brick with exposed m&e allowing for learning throughout the student experience. Demand for places on our construction programmes for both young people and adults has increased and apprenticeships in Electrical will be available from September 2025.
- Oaklands is actively advancing its commitment to retrofit and renewable energy training through a series of strategic initiatives to support the Labour missions to make Britain a clean energy superpower through delivering clean power by 2030 and accelerating to net zero. In March 2024, the College co-hosted the 'Driving Greener Homes – Retrofit Breakfast Summit' in collaboration with Hertfordshire Futures.

This event aimed to inform local businesses and tradespeople about available training and grant funding opportunities in the retrofit sector. The College also partnered with the Construction Industry Training Board to host a Retrofit Skills Summit, providing insights into free training and grant funding available to local businesses and tradespeople. Through these efforts, Oaklands College is playing a pivotal role in equipping individuals and businesses with the skills and knowledge necessary to meet the challenges of retrofit and renewable energy and will continue to develop its work and training provision in this area to meet local and regional skills needs.

SEND

- To support the Labour mission of breaking down barriers to opportunity, the College is working with Hertfordshire County Council and other SEND providers on increasing accessibility through development of our local provision delivered through the construction of a bespoke High Needs facility on our campus, should funding allow.
- Through our industry boards, the College is also working on initiatives to develop the work readiness of learners with SEND and to further enhance and expand our Supported Internship programme.
- Oaklands is leading strategies to identify need and support the development of appropriate courses and pathways for young people post 16 with SEND, to ensure young people with SEND receive the most effective support in a local further education setting. Thus ensuring adherence to the raising of the participation age including reviewing of current provisions and identify gaps, proposing collaborations or implementation of appropriate support, local to the Hertfordshire provision.

ENGINEERING, AERONAUTICAL & SPACE

- Oaklands has relaunched its apprenticeship provision in engineering and is working with some of the country's leading engineering companies on skills training and development and apprenticeships.
- With close proximity to London Luton Airport and some strong strategic relationships in this area, the College is committing to review its wider engineering offer with employers to ensure the range of opportunities is available to meet local and emerging skills need.

HEALTHCARE & NHS

- In response to skills demand for the Health Care sector, the College has opened an industry standard hospital ward facility on the Welwyn Garden City campus, so learners can develop skills in a real-world working environment. Our new health care centre has been developed with our employers and partners and will allow us to grow the courses offered to extend to professional upskilling of NHS and other health related workers.
- Bootcamp programmes linked to skills shortages and live vacancies in the NHS and NHS Professionals will be developed throughout early 2025 to meet local and regional skills needs.



CREATIVE & SCREEN INDUSTRIES

- Oaklands is at the forefront of skills development for the screen industries locally. Working with the Hertfordshire Film Office, the College is now established as a film set and has been home to several productions on our campuses grounds, involving our students in various elements of the production to support their work experience in the sector. The College is committed, through our estates masterplan, to deliver a Creative Gateway building and film studio, encompassing the latest technology for training for the screen sector.

SPORT

- Oaklands continues to develop its sports offering through the diversification of curriculum designed to upskill those already working in the leisure industry, while empowering students within our sport academies to strive for excellence when they leave, whether that's progressing into future coaching roles or competing on the global stage.

Our sports academies provide an elite training and education environment for over 650 athletes aged 16–19. Through the introduction of three new academies in 2024, we have expanded the number of specialist pathways available, supporting students to balance their academic studies with high-level performance programmes.

In addition, our youth programme now supports over 1000 local children with our professional teams coaching throughout all levels to inspire pathways to professional sport.

Our outstanding coaching programmes service the local and national demand for such skills. We are shaping not just athletes, but future leaders who will inspire, lead, and represent their communities locally and globally.

DELIVERING APPRENTICESHIPS & PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

- In early 2025 Oaklands launched Oaklands Training and Development as a direct result of feedback from the LSIP, to provide a service that is dedicated to assisting businesses local, regionally and across the UK in attracting, developing, and retaining talent through various initiatives, including employability schemes, training programmes, and apprenticeships. We provide expert advice on apprenticeship funding and helping companies maximise returns on their Apprenticeship Levy contributions and support their corporate social responsibility utilising the levy transfer service. Oaklands connects businesses with enthusiastic learners, offering a cost-effective talent pipeline tailored to specific industries.
- Oaklands offers tailored advice to meet the unique needs of businesses and their workforce, ensuring alignment with industry demands. In late 2025, a range of Professional Development Courses and pathways will launch, providing opportunities to enhance individual career growth and skill development, contributing to a more competent workforce.





KEY STAKEHOLDERS

The work we do with our employer partners and stakeholders is embedded into the DNA of Oaklands, our approach is collaborative, and we develop long-lasting relationships with employers and partners that share the same intent for supporting and developing talent.

Oaklands has established employment and skills boards across our local areas, co-chaired in partnership with the district or borough councils. Skills boards meet four times per year with the objective of shaping and sharing skills demands within the districts and boroughs, allowing colleagues at the highest level of the organisations to support horizon scanning for skills and curriculum innovation at the College.

Members of the College management team are active in the local, regional and national skills landscape including our Principal and CEO, representing the College on multiple boards: Hertfordshire Futures Board, Hertfordshire Film & TV Board, Strategic Partnership for St Albans, SEND Partnership & Assurance Board, Hertfordshire Skills and Employment Board, Consortium Strategy Group, University of Hertfordshire and the Higher Education Consortium. He regularly meets with the leaders of the councils in St Albans, Welwyn Garden City, Hertsmeire and Hertfordshire County Council, West Herts College, Hertford Regional College, North Hertfordshire College along with other key stakeholders.

Many Oaklands staff are leaders in education or in their respective fields. Senior managers make valuable contributions at local, regional and national levels, advocating for the sector and contributing to national policy such as in SEND. Members of our management team are represented on the Hertfordshire Innovation Quarter (IQ) Board, The Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce Board, The WGC & St Albans Business Improvement District (BID) Boards, the St Albans Visitor Partnership, the Super League Basketball and English Karate Federation boards, the Hertfordshire Growth Board, the British Institute of Greenkeepers, the Hertfordshire SEND partnerships and assurance board and the 16+ SEND Sufficiency working group for Hertfordshire.

The College works very closely with Hertfordshire County Council and the skills division, Hertfordshire Futures, on initiatives such as Skills Bootcamps and have recently completed a Wave Five Contract with outcomes far exceeding the national average, targeting some of those who are the most disadvantaged in society to gain work in the rail track industry. The College's Wave Six Contract will allow us to support even more individuals through the plethora of Bootcamp routes into work over the next eighteen months.

Oaklands is a key enabler in the local and regional business community, hosting several employer networking and awards events. Oaklands has secured strategic partnerships with local and national organisations such as CAE Technology Services and MIND in Mid Hertfordshire, and we have active and engaged relationships with over 1,600 employers ranging from large corporate organisations such as Airbus, Sky, Morgan Sindall and Rothamsted Enterprises to smaller SME's which make up the large proportion of Hertfordshire businesses. Employers engage with us to recruit, train, and develop their staff through both accredited and non-accredited training, including apprenticeships and many engage with us to support their corporate and social responsibilities.

Our employer engagement is coordinated through our Get Career Ready and Industry Advantage Framework within which employers and partners join Industry Boards to support the strategic direction of the College, the estates masterplan & curriculum innovation as well as supporting students through industry insight events, careers events, work experience and in every area, the collaboration of employers in the delivery of technical and specialist aspects of our curriculum. Our frameworks support the celebration of employers who participate and reward students with industry leading skills certification over and above their programmes of study.

1,600

Employer relationships built



STRATEGIC STAKEHOLDER WORK

SPORT & WELLBEING

Oaklands College plays a pivotal role in shaping the future of sport in the UK through its high-performance sports academies and strategic partnerships with National Governing Bodies (NGBs), Sport England, UK Sport, the Association of Colleges (AOC), The Hertfordshire Sports and Physical Activity Partnership, professional clubs such as Saracens, and key stakeholders.

Our influence extends across multiple sectors of sport, education, and workforce development.

TASS Accreditation: Oaklands College is a TASS (Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme) accredited institution, supporting student-athletes in balancing academic and athletic commitments, aligning with national strategies for dual-career pathways

• **National Representation:** Athletes from our academies consistently represent Great Britain and home nations at National, European, World, and Olympic competitions across sports such as athletics, hockey, cycling, rugby, women's football and basketball

• **Pathways to Professional Sport & Talent Development:** Our academies provide direct pathways to professional and semi-professional contracts, with links to clubs such as Saracens Rugby, Oaklands Wolves Women's Super League Basketball and other national teams

We maintain strategic partnerships across national and regional levels to support talent development, participation, and career pathways in sport such as:

• **ECB & Hertfordshire Cricket Collaboration:** Developing high-performance cricket opportunities and align with national participation growth strategies

• **Football Association (FA), RFU, England Netball, England Hockey, British Cycling & UK Athletics:** Contributing to talent development and elite pathways

• **Basketball England, British Basketball Federation & Hertfordshire Basketball:** Supporting player pathways and coaching development

• **British Cycling & UK Athletics:** Providing high-performance pathways and supporting athlete education

• **English Karate Federation:** We are the High Performance Centre for the English Karate Federation, developing coaching education and hosting national team's pathway programmes

• **Rugby Football Union (RFU) & Saracens Rugby:** Delivering elite rugby academy programmes aligned with national frameworks

We are also proud to offer multi-generational sport and wellbeing opportunities for children and people of all ages and we are committed to fostering athletic talent and excellence at all levels. The College launched a new sporting high-performance centre in early 2025 to further enhance our ability to meet current and future sporting needs for the county and the region.



FILM & TV

Oaklands is playing a vital role in the shaping of skills provision to service the rapidly expanding Film & TV job demand across Hertfordshire & regionally. This growth is attributed to substantial investments, the presence of major studios and a pipeline of growing opportunity such as the upcoming Universal development just outside of the county and plans for further Sky Studios Elstree expansion, adding additional sound stages and creating thousands of jobs, reinforcing Hertfordshire's status as a leading production centre.

The creative industries in Hertfordshire have seen significant growth, with the number of firms increasing by 6.5% annually since 2010. As of 2016, there were 4,550 firms involved in activities ranging from filmmaking to digital content production, employing approximately 17,600 people.

In response, Oaklands are committed to the growth and diversification of our curriculum and have been well informed by Sky Studios, Warner Brothers and Elstree Studios, to meet this demand including introducing areas such as craft carpentry for set design and will prioritise the development of a creative gateway building and Propeller stage for Film and TV studios is the next phase of capital projects.

The College is working with the Hertfordshire Film Office on several key projects including the installation of a Propeller stage at the St Albans Campus. Additionally, the Oaklands estate is now operating as a commercial production location with several Film & TV bookings which all include opportunities for students to engage in all aspects of production from hair and make-up to extra work and set design.

ENGINEERING & AEROSPACE & SPACE:

Oaklands College is actively addressing the engineering, aerospace, and space sector's skills and training needs in Hertfordshire through several strategic initiatives:

SPECIALISED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMMES:

- The College offers apprenticeships for space technicians and across several engineering standards and is working collaboratively with both national & local employers to scope a wider training suite of engineering pathways to meet skills demand. The College is proud to work with Airbus and has committed to a continued partnership with them to meet the significant growth in numbers of skilled workers required for the space industry including a diversification of workers, encouraging those from underrepresented groups, to a sector that requires 130 thousand more engineers to be trained by 2040 in an area that will contribute more than £9 billion to the economy.

COLLABORATIVE EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS

- The College has a full pathway of engineering programmes for young people from level 2 - 5 and in partnership with the University of Hertfordshire, Oaklands College provides an Engineering with Foundation Year programme. This course prepares students for progression into various BEng engineering degrees, fostering a seamless transition into higher education and advanced engineering roles. Furthermore, the College is committed to developing foundation apprenticeship routes, Bootcamps, shorter, professional and more employer responsive provision and higher technical qualifications to meet the real demands of this industry.

ENHANCED STEM FACILITIES:

- With support from the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), the College has begun to upgrade STEM teaching facilities at the Welwyn Garden City campus. Whilst significantly more investment is required into engineering facilities to meet the growing skills demand, these enhancements have enabled the delivery of curriculum in areas such as cyber security, science, and the built environment, aligning with the skill requirements of local employers.

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS:

- Oaklands College collaborates with over 230 employers in this sector and our extensive employer network ensures that training programmes are closely aligned with industry needs. In partnership with Hertfordshire Futures, Oaklands Training & Development held the county's first engineering employer summit, utilising the latest VR & AI technology to explore skills demand and shortages.



CONSTRUCTION, LOGISTICS & RENEWABLES:

Oaklands College is proactively addressing the skills and training needs in construction, renewables, and logistics within Hertfordshire through several key initiatives:

- **State-of-the-Art Construction Centre:** In November 2024, Oaklands College unveiled a 3,000m² Construction Centre at its St Albans campus, featuring modern workshops for trades such as plumbing and electrical installation, a construction lab, and a virtual reality learning suite. The centre supports students of all ages, including those already working in the industry to gain trade essential qualifications such as ACS and 18th Edition and those working and studying higher level qualifications in this field.

- **Collaborations with Industry Leaders:** The College is extensively connected to partners across the construction landscape including RG Carter Construction, DLA Architecture, Fusion Project Management, Morgan Sindall and organisations such as Hertfordshire Constructing Excellence Group and RDT Architects have been fantastic advocates for work placements for T Level students, ensuring practical industry experience and opportunities for employer engagement into curriculum design and delivery.

- Collaborating with organisations and leaders including Herts Go Green & Grow, Hertfordshire Climate Change & Sustainability partnership and Hertfordshire Local Area Retrofit Accelerator Governance subgroup, to introduce renewable energy training initiatives to meet current and future skills demand and have recently obtained funding for the upskilling of our staff in this area. As one of our key themes, **sustainability** is embedded into the fabric of the organisation, through the buildings we have recently built & through curriculum design across multiple subject areas.

Co-designed with employers and councils, we have introduced skills Bootcamps in renewable technology and a suite of online courses.

- An **emerging skills need** in Hertfordshire is Logistics Development, particularly to support both the immediate and future skills need in relation to the Radlett Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI), also known as SEGRO Logistics Park Radlett. This significant infrastructure project under development near the College, will establish a state-of-the-art logistics hub featuring a rail freight terminal connected to the Midland Main Line (MML). The development encompasses approximately 335,000 square meters of sustainable logistics space and will require skilled workers across various fields through the two major phases of development. In the construction phase; civil engineering, surveying and planning, project management and environmental management and in the operational phase; logistics and supply chain management, rail operations, maintenance and facilities management and technology-based roles. The College is working with SEGRO on a **skills strategy**, including the development of a CSCS and logistics training hub on the St Albans campus, the development of training pathways including specialist Bootcamps and aligned apprenticeship standards and for young learners, the project's prime contractor, VolkerFitzpatrick, has collaborated with the College to offer T-Level industry placements for students studying Design, Surveying, and Planning throughout 2025.



EDUCATION, HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE

Hertfordshire's education sector, encompassing teaching, children's services, and teacher training, exhibits a dynamic employment landscape with significant gaps in skilled workers reported. This sector in Hertfordshire reports over 10,000 vacancies annually across 700 local education settings, approximately 4,000 positions related to children's services are currently available (April 2025) and c500 job vacancies across teaching, education and childcare roles.

To meet this sector's demand, the College have invested in a childcare teaching facility at Welwyn Garden City, have introduced the T Level pathway in Childcare, introduced two bespoke Bootcamps linked to the childminding and early years sector and have increased our online learning offer of short courses which span courses for the existing workforce, new entrants to the workforce and courses to support parents such as autism awareness and challenging behaviour. Furthermore, the College are committed to growing the teacher and assessor training pathways further, to support more individuals to qualify for the sectors.

Hertfordshire's health and social care sector is experiencing a pronounced demand for skilled professionals with over 31,000 unfilled nursing positions nationally, driven by factors such as an ageing population and evolving healthcare needs.

This demand also encompasses a variety of roles including healthcare assistants, care home managers, nurses and social workers.

The College has responded to these workforce challenges and the associated Labour mission by investing significantly in our training facilities which now host practical hospital and maternity wards and robotic technology. We have introduced a suite of short professional courses for adults available to those who are looking to enter the sector or those working in the sector looking to upskill and developed a partnership with West & North Hertfordshire NHS Trust and the DWP to deliver basic skills, including Maths and English to those looking to enter the sector. Through Wave 6 Bootcamp funding we have co-designed and will co-deliver health carers' Bootcamps with the NHS ICB and NHS Professionals. Our suite of courses for young people range from entry level to level 3 and the T level in Health and the Higher Technical Qualification in Health (HTQ) has been introduced. The College are exploring pathways into access provision, routes from the HTQ into higher levels of study and apprenticeships in this sector to meet the full range of job demand.



TOURISM, AVIATION & HOSPITALITY

Hertfordshire benefits from the proximity of two major airports - London Stansted Airport and London Luton Airport - which significantly influence the regional economy and employment landscape for Aviation & associated services. These airports create a demand for a diverse set of skills across various sectors from customer service to security, engineering and cabin crew.

The College is ambitious in its goal to provide tailored aviation training programmes, including apprenticeships, that meet both the current and future needs of the aviation industry — particularly in emerging niches such as vertical take-off — and works in partnership with employers like TUI and easyJet to develop the sector's talent pipelines.

The hospitality, tourism, and events sectors are vital components of Hertfordshire's economy; collectively contributing over £2.2 billion and supporting approximately 2% of all jobs in the county. The College has partnered with local establishments such as Sopwell House and The Grove who offer industry insight events, student tours, support the design of our curriculum and deliver technical specialist workshops to our students across catering, hospitality, hair and beauty.

There is a plethora of tourism and event venues across Hertfordshire including sporting venues which generates skills demand across culinary art, food service, marketing and digital skills and operational management. In response the College has grown and diversified its programmes for young people associated to these areas of study and has introduced T Level pathways in Business to align to this demand, introduced a suite of shorter online courses and developed our apprenticeship and skills Bootcamp offer aligned to these areas of skill. This will be a continued area of focus as Universal is developed out within a commutable distance from the College.

PARTNERSHIP WORK FOR ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED INDIVIDUALS

We work closely with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Job Centre Plus (JCP) to support people from disadvantaged backgrounds to enter the job market and support individuals who have recently become unemployed to positively engage.

Key initiatives include the Borehamwood Job Club, the Pathway to Progression programme, and the expansion of our Skills Bootcamp, which helps job seekers re-enter the workforce in fields like rail track operations, arboriculture, and early years education.

The College also works closely with The Mount Prison in Bovingdon, Hertfordshire, a category C prison on retraining and rehabilitation, in preparation for preparing inmates to return to society.

Our partnership in rail track operative skills bootcamps, sees those close to release undertake a training programme inside the prison with guaranteed job interviews for live vacancies upon release. Throughout wave 5 of skills bootcamps these programmes have seen fantastic outcomes with 100% of those released, all gaining employment.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH SCHOOLS AND THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE

Oaklands is dedicated to strengthening engagement with parents, local residents, and the wider community to create meaningful social impact. In addition to our extensive community and for leisure training programmes, we have expanded our outreach efforts, offering social activities that promote well-being and cohesion.

Through our estate's masterplan, our ambition is to serve as a dynamic hub, fostering local partnerships and community engagement to build a stronger, more united community and throughout the last year we have engaged with many of our neighbours, residents' associations and local community groups to help us inform our exciting future.

Oaklands' Mission Statement is dedicated to working with local schools to support their careers programmes. In line with the Oaklands mission statement to create mutually beneficial partnerships, the College framework of events and activities is aligned with the new Provider Access Legislation enabling student encounters with the College. The encounters improve students' knowledge of educational pathways and are designed to promote the breadth of courses Oaklands College has to offer through careers fairs and parents' evenings, school events and school explorer afternoons.

The College also supports several county-led initiatives such as the 'generation events' in association with Hertfordshire Futures. Oaklands College also engages with future students through school news bulletins, newsletters and via Our Google Classroom. Our sports academy offer starts from age 6 years across Basketball and Football and the College also works with other targeted organisations such as Services for Young People to build a thriving College community. Furthermore, in early 2025 the College relaunched provision in partnership with schools which will see us welcoming students from age 14-16 onto our campuses for vocational skills sessions.



The workshops you delivered were engaging, inspiring, and motivating, and the feedback we've received from students has been excellent—they were buzzing with excitement after the sessions today!

We look forward to working with you again in the future!

FEEDBACK FROM ONSLOW ST AUDREY'S SCHOOL, HATFIELD

Presenting for Year 11 Futures Day





ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHER PROVIDERS

We actively work with the Hertfordshire Principals, CEO's and executive leaders from every FE college in the region to discuss opportunities for collaboration and partnership working. We have a Principal of a London College and University Deputy and Pro Vice Chancellors on our Governing body. We work collaboratively with our FE colleagues across the region to secure inward investment to the area. Examples of this include the LSIF & Strategic Development Fund which brought together the four Hertfordshire based Colleges and secured almost £1.6m of capital and revenue investment into our HE, health care, green and digital curriculums.

Through this investment, enhancements have been made including immersive virtual reality (VR) spaces at both campuses, a digital lecture space, augmented reality equipment, collaborate working on the meta college and upskilling for staff on VR, AR, RFID and AI. Further funding has been secured to deliver training in energy efficiency, sustainability and renewable energy technologies in our new 3,000 sqm construction and renewables facility. Significant investment has been made to our Health and Care facilities including the development of specialist and simulation equipment and a new training ward, curriculum development with NHS trusts and sector work on the employer led board for the NHS and this work can continue with funding from the NHS Hertfordshire & West Essex Integrated Care Board (ICB) fund and the NHS Bootcamp provision that will launch in 2025.

As a patron of the Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce we collaborate on employer and stakeholder engagement, which has enabled us to quickly respond to employer feedback and develop accessible training to meet local skills need, including the launch of Oaklands Training and Development in early 2025.

Oaklands also works with many other providers in the national educational arena including representation on the Association of Colleges (AOC) Curriculum & Quality meeting, AOC Sport, AOC International Forum and Hertfordshire & Bedfordshire Provider network. Our Governors' Chair Group is the Deputy Chair of the South of England Governors chairs group, and we are delighted to work in partnership with awarding organisations, hosting VTCT awards, NCFE and supporting the City & Guilds Leadership conference with panel participation.

Our work on skills Bootcamps is extensive; we are proactively adapting to the new funding landscape for adults and are currently partnering with Hertfordshire Futures to deliver substantial volumes throughout 2025-26 across many local skill priority sector areas. Our ambition is to support other local authority areas where there is demand for this provision leading to job opportunities, including apprenticeships, with employers we are working with. Our Bootcamps are co-designed and delivered with employers leading to real job opportunities, such as:

- Morson Group and Elite Project Services for our Construction & Rail Labourer pathways, including those that are delivered in partnership with HMP The Mount which provides swift intervention to those leaving prison into employment



- Evertrain, Nexus Plant, Elite Project Services and Elite Civil Services for our Construction, Civils Groundworker & Site Supervisor courses
- Maydencroft for our land management, arboriculture, tree planning & aftercare, de-vegetation and ground & estates Bootcamp
- NHS ICB Academy & NHS Professionals for our Pathways into Health & Social Care Careers Bootcamp
- Affinity Water for our pathways into customer services operations Bootcamp
- Digital Futures for our digital engineers Bootcamp
- And our childminder, early years and heat pump Bootcamps supported by Hertfordshire County Council include business start-up skills

Our Strategic Alliance with the University of Hertfordshire has built a close mutually beneficial, supportive, and wide-ranging partnership between the two institutions and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University is a member of the Oaklands Board of Governors. The alliance is founded on a friendly co-operational basis where mutual respect and benefit allow for shared growth and enhancement, with benefits realised that are greater than the sum of its parts. This allows both organisations to work individually and collaboratively to gain an advantage in serving and supporting the communities and stakeholders we serve. Together, we will deliver products and services that 1) benefit our communities that otherwise would not have existed and/or 2) enhance either institution's current offers to ensure we meet the demands of the Skills White Paper. Working collaboratively together will create further strategic opportunities in the HE and FE marketplace, whether this be learner progression, joint bids, joint events, or other innovative areas which emerge.

Additionally, to this, our respective organisations have concluded a curriculum mapping activity which has culminated in a shared collective understanding of where Oaklands and UH Higher Education curriculum, including degree level apprenticeships, will be delivered with each organisation taking the lead in areas which lend to our strengths. Furthermore, Oaklands and the other Hertfordshire Colleges share a consortium with the University of Hertfordshire. The College will explore further strategic relationships with universities, particularly in relation to sports high performance as a key enabler for positive progression.

CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL, REGIONAL & LOCAL PRIORITIES

| SECTOR AREA | LOCAL | REGIONAL | NATIONAL | EMERGENT |
|----------------------------------|---|---|--|---|
| Construction & Built Environment |  |  |  |  |
| Creative Industries |  |  | |  |
| Hospitality |  | | | |
| Tourism |  |  | | |
| Life Science |  | | | |
| Health & Care |  |  |  | |
| Education & Childcare |  |  |  |  |
| Engineering & Manufacturing |  |  |  |  |
| Aeronautical & Space |  |  |  |  |
| Agritech |  |  | | |
| Digital & Technology |  |  |  | |
| Low Carbon Tech / Retrofit |  |  |  | |
| Corporate services |  |  | |  |
| Greenkeeping & Land Based |  |  |  | |

 Skills needs  Oaklands meeting skills needs



OAKLANDS AIMS & TARGET OUTCOMES

The table below sets out Oaklands aims and target outcomes for the year ahead that contribute to National, Regional & Local Priorities.

| NO. | TARGETED OUTCOMES | LINKS TO OAKLANDS STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES | HOW OUTCOME LINKS TO NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND LOCAL PRIORITIES | CURRENT POSITION | TARGET | DEADLINE |
|-----|---|--|---|---------------------------------|---|----------------|
| 1 | Develop the apprenticeship and work-based learning offer rapidly and flexibly to meet employer needs, using strategic industry specialists in key areas, LMI and employer input from industry boards. | S01, S02, S04, S05 | Alignment with UK Government Skills Strategy as a key route to employment, productivity and growth. Flexibility and responsiveness to employer need (Skills for Jobs White Paper 2021) and Hertfordshire LSIP and locally by providing flexible solutions in areas such as construction, engineering, early years and green. | c70 legacy apprentices & 40 new | Planned 250 apprentices and work-based learners in 2025 - 26. | July 2026 |
| 2 | Grow provision for 16–18-year-olds in key priority sectors such as Construction & Engineering, Creative, Sport & Business. | S01, S02, S04, S05 | National priority sectors such as construction, engineering and creative, to meet the regional and local skills pipelines required in these areas, to service the major developments in the creative sector, our local major engineering and space employers and the significant building plans regionally. | 3534 16–18-year-olds | 7% increase in 2025-26 with target number of 3721 16-18s. | September 2025 |
| 3 | Deliver a green skills curriculum with a focus on domestic retrofit. | S01, S02, S05 | Net Zero Strategy, Green Jobs workforce strategy and Construction are all National Priorities. Green Skills is a GLA and Hertfordshire Priority - Regional LMI shows a shortage of qualified retrofit professionals and limited training provision. This curriculum directly fills that gap. Local demand for retrofitting old housing stock and addressing fuel poverty and local district and borough councils have set ambitious carbon reduction targets. | Limited | Train school leavers in the skills for the installation of green technologies in construction, to support their transition to this sector's workforce. Provide upskilling courses for those working in construction trades in electrical installation and plumbing to enable them to gain the qualifications they need to install green technologies. Increase number of learners studying these subjects. | January 2026 |
| 4 | Further develop short courses to help remove the barriers to accessing education for all. Supporting those with low prior attainment or those from disadvantaged backgrounds. | S01, S02, S04, S05 | Meets labour priority for breaking barriers down to learning & opportunity, boosting lifelong learning and local skills for local jobs and tackling inequalities. Delivers the national levelling up agenda, the regional participation issues in areas such as Hatfield and WGC and locally in targeted communities including communities with high levels of refugees. | Limited | Provide accessible local education spaces — reducing barriers such as cost, travel, and digital exclusion. Expand and introduce new flexible learning routes, including short courses, to support people who are retraining or returning to education later in life. | July 2026 |
| 5 | Introduce niche provision for 14–16-year-olds in partnership with local schools to offer vocational alternatives. | S01, S02, S04, S05 | Meets local needs, ensuring those who have barriers to retaining in more traditional schooling methods can succeed in a more active, vocational environment. | No 14 - 16 provision | To launch a provision in September 2025 in partnerships with the local (St Albans) school network. | September 2025 |
| 6 | Deliver more pathways for higher levels of study and professional training. | S01, S02, S03, S04, S05 | National priorities for reducing barriers for underrepresented and disadvantaged groups to have access to higher levels of study ensuring everyone has the digital literacy to do so, including those in areas of Hertfordshire with lower educational attainment (Hatfield, Hemel & Stevenage). Hertfordshire & London LSIPs identify the need for accessible, tailored and short professional level training to upskill the workforce and higher-level skill requirements for industries such as advanced engineering. | 617 students in 2024 - 25 | To support 991 students across professional & higher levels of study in 2025-26 with increases shown across HTQ provision, Renewables, Gas & Retrofit, international provision and higher apprenticeships. | July 2026 |

OAKLANDS AIMS & TARGET OUTCOMES (CONTINUED)

| NO. | TARGETED OUTCOMES | LINKS TO OAKLANDS STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES | HOW OUTCOME LINKS TO NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND LOCAL PRIORITIES | CURRENT POSITION | TARGET | DEADLINE |
|-----|---|--|---|--|--|------------------|
| 7 | Working with employers with job opportunities, deliver skills Bootcamps in priority sectors which result in very good progression into employment. | S01, S02, S04, S05 | Funding bids are typically regionally and tailored to meet regional or local need. Bootcamps in Hertfordshire will meet regional and local priorities in construction and retrofit, rail & logistics, health, early years digital and land management. Bootcamps are a UK National priority to address urgent skills shortages. Skills Bootcamps respond quickly by training people in real-world, job-ready skills in just 12–16 weeks. Employer designed and backed, increasing the chances of employment outcomes or job betterment. | Completed Wave 5, Starting Wave 6 with a target of 400 learners spanning 25-26/26-27 | To deliver the full contract of Wave 6 Bootcamps in Hertfordshire ensuring excellent, and above National average progression rates to positive destinations. To bid for additional Bootcamp funding where we meet skills need through our extended regional or National networks. | September 2026 |
| 8 | Obtain planning permission to deliver the Oaklands estates masterplan which once developed out will bring significant improvements to the College's meeting of local and regional needs. | S02, S03, S05 | The masterplan delivers on areas of National priority for skills such as Construction, Creative including Digital and Logistics, and areas of regional significance such as SEND, Sport and Animal Management. | Phase 3 of the master-plan has been completed (April 2025) | To have planning permission secured within the 2025-26 with the release of capital from the associated land sale available towards the end of the year for works to commence. | July 2026 for PP |
| 9 | Further embed technological enhancements to our curriculum delivery including the use of virtual and immersive technology in all areas of study. | S01, S03, S04 | Central to the UK's ambition to be a global tech leader with growth sectors like AI, cyber, digital health & fintech, with jobs growing 25x faster than non-digital roles (UK, DCMS, 203). | Most learners engage with the use of VR | Improve retention by up to 75% compared to programmes taught with more digital methods. | July 2026 |
| 10 | Engage in bidding for wider funding programmes to further meet skills need in priority sectors such as Logistics, Rail, Health & Social Care, Digital, Green Skills including land management and Construction & The Built Environment. | S01, S02, S03, S05 | UK National priority sectors, National funding picture for FE remains constricted. Regionally through Hertfordshire County Council funding may be available for priority projects such as Film & TV and those significant local employer investments including the rail freight terminal coming forward by SEGRO. | Some additional funding opportunities secured | Secure a further £250k in additional funding for targeted and tailored work in priority sectors. | July 2026 |

LOCAL NEEDS DUTY

The Corporation has reviewed the curriculum offered by the College and has participated in curriculum innovation workshops for the 2025-26 curriculum and considers that it meets local needs.

Oaklands offers a broad range of academic, vocational, and professional training from foundation level to level 5, including apprenticeships and non-accredited provision. The College continues to develop courses identified by the DfE as priority including T Levels HTQs, Skills Bootcamps and the reintroduction of apprenticeship programmes and has expanded its A Level offering for those who form part of the academy programme.

Oaklands works extensively with its civic and employer networks to deliver provision, covers the skills required for national priority sectors and local needs, working with other providers to avoid overlapping curriculum offers.

The College has been responsive to employer feedback, including through the LSIP consultation, as detailed in this Statement, and works with a range of stakeholders on other local needs, some of which arise quickly and require a rapid response, such as provision for refugees.

CORPORATION STATEMENT

On behalf of the Oaklands College Corporation, it is hereby confirmed that the Corporation conducts reviews in line with the local needs duty, as such resulting in this plan. The Annual Accountability Agreement sets out an agreed statement of purpose, aims and objectives as approved by the Corporation.

The plan will be published on the College's website within three months of the start of the new academic year and can be accessed by the following link: www.oaklands.ac.uk/about-us/oaklands-policies-procedures-and-reports/



ANDREW SLADE
Principal &
Chief Executive



PETER THOMPSON
Chair of
the Corporation

APPENDICES & REFERENCE SOURCES

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/skills-england-report-driving-growth-and-widening-opportunities>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/invest-2035-the-uks-modern-industrial-strategy/invest-2035-the-uks-modern-industrial-strategy>
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- <https://www.hertfordshirefutures.co.uk/media/lz4lru24/hertfordshiremonthlyeconomyreport-october-24.pdf>
- <https://www.hertfordshirefutures.co.uk/media/s3xa5eye/hertfordshire-lep-sep-report-interactive-2017.pdf>
- <https://www.hertfordshirefutures.co.uk/media/f4yfed3x/hertfordshire-lis-consultation-draft-2019.pdf>
- <https://tbshs.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Hertfordshire-Skills-Framework.pdf>



A dramatic, low-key photograph of a person in profile, reaching their hand up towards a bright, circular light source in the upper left. The person's face and hand are silhouetted against a dark background, with the light source creating a strong lens flare. Another person is visible in the background, out of focus.

LEARN.GROW.LIVE

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