

Luton Adult Learning

Accountability Statement

2026/2027

Statement of purpose

The council's strategic aim is that by 2040 Luton will be a healthy, fair and sustainable town, where everyone can thrive and no-one has to live in poverty and this is underpinned by 5 strategic priorities.

Our priorities for Luton 2040:

Building an inclusive economy that delivers investment to support the growth of businesses, jobs and incomes.



Improving population wellbeing and tackling health inequalities to enable everyone to have a good quality of life and reach their full potential.



Becoming a child friendly town, where our children grow up happy, healthy and secure, with a voice that matters and the opportunities they need to thrive.



Tackling the climate emergency and becoming a net zero town with sustainable growth and a healthier environment.



Supporting a strong and empowered community, built on fairness, local pride and a powerful voice for all our residents.



The Employment and Skills Plan for Luton focusses on 4 strategic aims that underpin delivery within Luton Adult Learning.

- Skills driving economic recovery and growth
- Developing a pipeline of talented and resilient people
- Tackling long term inequality and economic inactivity
- Creating an adaptable and upskilled workforce

Luton Adult Learning Strategic Aims and Objectives

The priority areas of activity in 2026-27 are determined by national policy and local need. The strategic goal that the Service has been set by Luton Council is to contribute to its 2040 vision by:

- Ensuring that residents take advantage of their Level 2 and 3 entitlement.
- Better equipping residents of all ages to get jobs or further their careers.
- Working effectively with partner organisations to ensure that the town's most vulnerable residents are safe and supported.
- Working effectively with partner educational organisations to ensure that learners have a seamless skills pathway.
- Supporting resident's health and wellbeing.

Service vision

To deliver inclusive growth, where Luton's residents can access the education, skills and employment support they need to enable them to secure fulfilling, appropriate, sustainable careers throughout their lives, which supports the growth, diversity and prosperity of the local economy.

Context and place

Luton is a densely populated urban area, significantly more so than the national average, with an estimated population of just over 231,000. It is a highly diverse town, characterised by a vibrant mix of cultures, skills, and languages. Luton is also considerably more ethnically diverse than England as a whole, with well-established Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Indian, African and Caribbean communities.

Luton is currently ranked as the 29th most deprived local authority out of 359 and experiences higher-than-average levels of unemployment and child poverty. As a small unitary authority, Luton's limited housing stock places considerable pressure on residents—particularly families—resulting in increased overcrowding, housing instability, and a greater risk of out-of-borough placements.

Qualification levels are lower than national averages in Luton:

- 9.8% of the working age population in Luton have no qualifications, which is 3% higher than national averages.
- 72.5% of the working age population in Luton are qualified up to Level 2, which is 5.5% lower than national averages.
- 37% of the working age population have qualifications at level 4 or above, which is 6.5% lower than national averages.

The Service has developed a learner and employer responsive curriculum model, delivering a broad and inclusive range of learning and training programmes. This offer comprises Adult Skills provision, including ESOL, English, maths, IT, Apprenticeships, Vocational programmes, and Tailored Learning.

Local strengths

- Strong FE/HE base with wider levels of engagement.
- Provision geared around local employers and skills gaps.
- A strong strategic focus on inclusive growth and skills, with considerable momentum.
- Wider labour market catchment is broad and dynamic.
- A strong local economy with over £5bn of economic investment in progress.
- Inward investment remains strong with new businesses re-locating to Luton and speculative development continuing.
- Home to the fifth largest airport in the UK- supporting 27,000 jobs and adding around £1.1 billion to the regional economy with growth on the way.
- Received £20 million of Levelling Up funding to develop The Stage, a mixed-use development to provide over 400 new homes, 7,000sqm of high-quality workspace, 2,000sqm of community space and a cycle hub.
- Work on Power Court, a mixed-use development, which includes a new stadium for Luton Town's Football Club, is underway. The site will create new jobs, both in the building phase and thereafter at the completed site.
- Morton House, a new development on Kimpton Road in Luton, has been designed as an integrated hub for work, learning and innovation. The Council's Adult Learning Service is located on the lower ground floor, while the second floor is being actively positioned to attract start-up and high-growth businesses within the aviation, automotive, artificial intelligence and data-driven sectors. The lower ground floor also incorporates a café, shared seating areas and an external courtyard, deliberately designed to encourage interaction and collaboration. These shared spaces support the exchange of skills, knowledge and ideas between resident businesses and adult learners, helping to strengthen local talent pipelines, promote innovation, and align workforce development with key growth sectors.

Local challenges

- Luton faces entrenched inequalities, with economic inactivity and poverty concentrated in specific demographics and neighbourhoods.
- There are gender and ethnic inequalities in skills and employment outcomes. Less of Luton's residents have a level four or above qualification than national averages. As the demand for higher-level skills increases, those with lower qualifications find it increasingly difficult to progress.
- There are persistently high levels of economic inactivity that are higher than comparators and the national average, particularly for those from ethnic and migrant backgrounds, women and those physically or mentally impaired.
- Residents are not accessing the best paid jobs versus those commuting into the borough and there is also a pronounced gender pay gap.
- Currently more than a quarter of employees in Luton earn below the Real Living Wage.
- Skilled talent is drawn outside of Luton to neighbouring areas.
- A projected decline in overall population and working age population could tighten labour supply.
- Life expectancy and healthy life expectancy in Luton is below the national average.
- Small business owners are indicating an increase in poor quality applicants, with challenges around the lack of literacy, numeracy and digital skills, as well as difficulty securing people with good communication, team working and general employability skills.

The planning approach

When determining our curriculum strategy, we pay heed to four key drivers:

1. Our strategic aims.
2. The national and regional economic context.
3. Emerging government national and regional policy ambition.
4. Local skills requirements and stakeholder needs.

Critical to the success of our strategic aims is effective stakeholder engagement. Our main stakeholders are:

- Department for Education
- Ofsted
- Matrix
- Department of Work and Pensions

- Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce
- Federation of Small Businesses
- Local employers
- VCS and third sector organisations
- Local further education and sixth form colleges
- University of Bedfordshire
- Connect2Luton
- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
- Adult Learning Governing Board
- Employment and Skills Partnership Board
- Inclusive Economy Board
- Fairness Taskforce
- Population Wellbeing Board
- Employer Representative body

Contribution to national, regional and local priorities

Making the connections – Strategic alignment

Key National Strategies

Skills and Post 16 Education Act 2022

Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper 2025

Careers guidance and access for education and training providers

Digital Development Strategy 2024-2030

Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009

UK's Modern Industrial Strategy

Plan for Change

Key Regional Strategies

Local Skills Improvement Plan

South Midlands Get Britain Working Plan

Key Local Strategies

Luton 2040 – A place to thrive

Luton Employment and Skills Strategy

Luton Economic Growth Strategy

Luton Inclusive Economy Strategy

Luton Population Wellbeing Strategy

Luton Education Strategy for Children and Young People

Luton Fairness Strategy

Luton's collaborative all age mental health strategic plan

Luton Objectives and Key Results

The employment and skills strategy was co-created with direct engagement with more than 300 organisations, communities and individuals to ensure that national, local and regional priorities were fundamental to its development.

The employment and skills four strategic priorities are expanded upon below:

Strategic priority 1:

Skills driving economic recovery and growth

- Decrease in the number of hard to fill vacancies
- Increase in the proportion of residents in higher level occupations
- Increase in the number of jobs and job density
- Increase per Job Average Productivity (GVA)

Strategic Priority 2:

Developing a pipeline of talented and resilient people

- Increase in the proportion of residents with 5+GCSEs
- Increase in the number of apprenticeship and traineeship completions
- Increase in the levels of FE and HE participation
- Increase in the levels of FE and HE progression

Strategic priority 3:

Tackling long-term inequality and economic inactivity

- Decrease in the proportion of benefit claimants

- Decrease in the proportion of unemployed and economically inactive
- Increase in the proportion of jobs paying the Real Living Wage/wage equality
- Decrease in the proportion of total population registered as NEET

Strategic priority 4:

Creating an adaptable, upskilled workforce

- Decrease the level of reported business skills gaps and shortages
- Increase in the Adult and lifelong learning participation levels
- Increase in the proportion of businesses investing in CPD and training
- Decrease in the proportion of residents with no qualifications or Level 1

Objectives and Key Results:

- Deliver Luton Adult Learning Programmes so the number of Luton residents per academic year who achieve any qualifications increases 5% year on year from the 2025 baseline.

Adult Learning's strategic aims come directly from the Employment and Skills priorities and the Adult Learning Objectives and Key Results

Strategic aims and objectives for Adult Learning	Impact and/or Contribution towards National, Regional and Local Priorities for Learning and Skills
Ensure that the number of Luton Residents who achieve any qualification increases by 5% year on year from the 2025 baseline	By 31 st July 2027 we will have increased the amount of Luton residents who have achieved a qualification by a minimum of 5% from the 2025 baseline.
Ensuring that residents take advantage of their Level 2 and 3 entitlements	By 30th September 2026 we will recruit two Engagement Officers to ensure that we reach residents who are eligible to take advantage of their level 2 and 3 entitlements. By 31st July 2027 we will recruit to fill teaching workforce gaps in ESOL and Digital Skills, currently 2 FTE. To help facilitate this we will Work in partnership with the University of Bedfordshire's Teacher Training team to advertise teaching vacancies to their PGCE students.

	By 31st July 2027 we will have provided a minimum of 4 Community Events where we will promote the level 2 & 3 entitlement to residents. By 31st July 2027 we will recruit a volunteer team who can support with events where we advertise the level 2 & 3 entitlement. This will also help to support active citizenship amongst learners. Relevant Local, Regional & National Priorities This supports local, regional and national priorities by giving people the opportunity to gain basic skills and the skills aligned with future growth priorities, so that they can improve their job prospects and wage outcomes: Luton 2040; Employment & Skills Strategy 2022-2027; Local Skills Improvement Plan; Skills & Post 16 Education Act 2022.
Better equipping residents of all ages to get jobs.	Throughout 26/27 we will continue to reflect termly on local LMI data and intel from the LSIP to inform curriculum planning. Adapting the curriculum as needed to ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of residents and local employers. By 31st July 2027 we will have provided integrated CV support at all Community Job Fairs. By 1st August 2026 we will have offered the Curriculum Support team the opportunity for one member to enrol on a Career Development Professional L6 apprenticeship to further enhance our IAG offer. By 31st July 2027 we will have worked in partnership with the Economic Growth team to develop <i>Passport to Employment</i> courses aligned to sectors expected to locate in Luton through inward investment. This will ensure that Luton residents are appropriately skilled and job-ready as opportunities become available, while also strengthening Luton's offer to prospective employers by demonstrating access to a skilled local workforce. Relevant Local, Regional & National Priorities This supports local, regional and national priorities by supporting people of all ages, particularly those who are

	NEET, unemployed and economically inactive into employment: Luton 2040; Employment & Skills Strategy; Local Skills Improvement Plan; Skills & Post 16 Education Act 202; Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper 2025, Careers guidance and access for education and training providers.
Working effectively with partner organisations to ensure that the town's most vulnerable residents are safe and supported.	By 31st August 2026 we will have recruited a new team to support the delivery of the Pathway to Devolution funding, and we will also subcontract as necessary. By 31st December 2026 we will have developed an Introduction to Aviation course in partnership with Luton Rising. By 1st August 2026 we will have recruited a Volunteer Coordinator who will develop a systems-wide volunteering infrastructure with partners across the town, including the VCFSE, Anchor Institutions and employers to create a diverse volunteering marketplace. By 1st August we will have developed a Passport to Volunteering workshop that will create structured pathways into skills, learning, apprenticeships, and employment. This partnership and asset-based approach will also support wellbeing, social capital, civic participation and community resilience. Relevant Local, Regional & National Priorities This will help to ensure our offer reaches residents with multiple barriers to learning, which will support the Population Wellbeing Strategy's aim to improve the quality of life for our residents by supporting everyone to reach their full potential. It also feeds directly into one of their five priority targets, which is to ensure there is better support for mental wellbeing and reduced social isolation for people of all ages: Luton 2040; Population Wellbeing Strategy; Luton Fairness Strategy.
Working effectively with partner educational organisations to ensure that learners have a seamless skills pathway.	Work carried out by the ERB, the South Midlands Authority and the Employment and Skills Partnership Board, which includes Adult Learning, Senior Leaders from the local FE and Sixth Form Colleges and the University of Bedfordshire, shows that lack of English is a barrier to learning in Luton. By recruiting two Engagement Officer posts, we will further support the integration of ethnic minority communities by ensuring they have access to skills pathways in other learning providers via our English

	for Speakers of other Languages courses and our Passport to Employment and Wellbeing courses. <u>Relevant Local, Regional & National Priorities</u> This will support residents to formulate specific, achievable career goals and to understand and follow the most effective pathway to success, which will support more Luton residents to gain the higher paid roles in the town that currently go to those living outside the borough: Luton 2040; Employment & Skills Strategy 2022-2027; Local Skills Improvement Plan; Skills & Post 16 Education Act 2022; Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper 2025; Careers guidance and access for education and training providers.
Supporting resident's health and wellbeing.	By 31st July 2027 we will have supported the Connect to Work programme by providing ESOL, English, maths and IT courses for participants as necessary. <u>Relevant Local, Regional & National Priorities</u> This will support the council's Population Wellbeing Strategy's priority outcome 4: greater support for mental wellbeing and reduced social isolation for people of all ages: Population Wellbeing Strategy; Luton 2040; Local Skills Improvement Plan, Employment and Skills Strategy.

Confirmation of governance sign off: 29th April 2026

Signed off by Luton Borough Council Executive Committee: 20th July 2026

Supporting documentation:

<https://northants-chamber.co.uk/support/local-skills-improvement-plans-lsip/>

<https://www.chamber-business.com/hubfs/LSIP%20Progress%20Report%202024%20-%20SEM%20region.pdf>

<https://www.chamber-business.com/hubfs/LSIP%20Progress%20Report%202025%20-%20FINAL.pdf>

https://www.luton.gov.uk/Council_government_and_democracy/Lists/LutonDocuments/PDF/Luton2020-2040/Luton-2040-strategic-vision.pdf

<https://www.luton.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2026-02/fairness-strategy.pdf>

https://www.luton.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2026-02/lutons-population-wellbeing-strategy-2023-2028_0.pdf

<https://invest.stepforwardluton.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2026/04/Economic-Growth-Strategy-for-Luton.pdf>

<https://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/resources-reports/reducing-health-inequalities-in-luton-a-marmot-town>

https://www.luton.gov.uk/Council_government_and_democracy/Lists/LutonDocuments/PDF/luton-employment-and-skills-strategy-2022-2027.pdf