

ONE

STOCKPORT

SKILLS PLAN

INTRODUCTION

Our One Future Plan is clear "Stockport is an ambitious place undergoing a spectacular transformation". However, we are "not immune from the big challenges of our times. The life chances of too many of our children are determined by where they live and Stockport is ageing more quickly than any other borough in Greater Manchester. It is also a borough that is becoming more diverse."

This Skills Plan is vital to achieving our **One Stockport Ambitions**, it sets out our overarching vision, ambition and priorities for our skills system for the next three years. It is a partnership plan with a shared borough-wide vision and shared ambitions which can only be achieved through harnessing the skills, knowledge and shared resources across services in the public, private and third sector.

The plan reflects the shared partnership priorities from our One Stockport Borough Plan and One Stockport: One Future; and is aligned with other key strategy documents including the Stockport Council Plan, Stockport Economic Plan and Stockport Schools Strategy. Our partnership wide commitment to a have a relentless focus on 'fair and inclusive' – making 'Stockport a great, diverse place to live, where everyone can thrive' runs through the plan. Moreover, the plan seeks to develop and implement Greater Manchester's ambitions through local delivery, putting Stockport at the forefront of their broader GM Skills Plan.

This Skills Plan is key to securing to a more productive, sustainable, inclusive, and diverse local economy that is growing and which benefits everyone.



What we're trying TO ACHIEVE

Our overarching vision is to create a local skills system that supports accessible, fair and inclusive opportunities for all our residents to learn the skills they need to achieve their ambitions and improve their life chances, whilst also ensuring businesses and other organisations have access to the skills and expertise they need to thrive.

5 big ambitions

1. **The Best Schools – to work in partnership to ensure we have the very best schools, colleges and training providers with everyone included in their success**
2. **Best post 16 offer – to ensure there is choice and high-quality opportunities available to all**
3. **Best support for businesses**
4. **Best place to work**
5. **Everyone skilled to work**

The role of the Skills Plan in bridging our ambitions for People and Place

- Our Skills Plan has a pivotal role in bridging our ambitions for People and Place
- The past decade has seen significant transformation and success across our borough from a reputation for leading edge regeneration to being at the forefront of public service reform. Our strong partnerships, robust economic growth and ambitious regeneration agenda, a fresh energy in our town centre and award winning digital innovation have been cornerstones of our work so far.
- We have been recognised regionally and nationally as ‘the feel good capital of Greater Manchester’ and Stockport appeared in the Times newspaper list of the best places to buy your first home.
- However not everyone is sharing in Stockport’s success. We know that times continue to be hard for many people and that our borough is a place of stark inequality. For too many people, work is unfairly rewarded, and a high number of children continue to live in poverty. Persistent inequality means that the life chances of many residents are caught in a cycle of multiple disadvantage.

Ambition One

The Best Schools with everyone included in their success

Why it's a priority

A fair, inclusive, and resilient Borough: Our ambition is closely tied to improving the quality of life for all residents. Education is a powerful tool for social mobility and plays a significant role in reducing inequalities within the community. Educational excellence supports our vision of creating a fair, inclusive, and resilient Borough where everyone has the opportunity to succeed.

What this means

Our ambition to have the best schools is intrinsically linked to Stockport's Schools Strategy which outlines:

- Every school working in partnership with others
- The best teachers and school leaders
- The best environments and provision that enable and facilitate learning
- A commitment to inclusivity and equality in educational achievement
- A broad base of education and learning options with strategic intent in all aspects of curriculum development

What will we do

Create the conditions excellent school leaders need to deliver the best schools

- Ensure all schools are in a formal partnership with a least one other school
- Restructure our delivery of our services
- Make a commitment to collaboration, working together and holding each other to account
- Strategic and proactive approach to fluctuations in pupil numbers
- Through Stockport Family, offering the earliest support to children and families

Success Measures

- Improved attendance, with specific focus on SEND and cared for pupils
- Sufficient capacity across our school estate for all pupils regardless of their needs or aspirations

Case Study

Marple Hall School

Marple Hall School, part of the Helix Academies Trust, is a shining example of Stockport's ambition for our Schools. This high-performing community secondary school serves over 1550 students aged 11 to 16 and is respected by its community and the wider school estate for its commitment to quality teaching, inclusivity, and excellent outcomes.

Broad curriculum and academic excellence

Marple Hall consistently achieves high standards in education, with outstanding GCSE results and a robust curriculum that prepares students for future academic and career success. The school's motto, "**Better Never Stops,**" reflects its commitment to continuous improvement and high expectations for all students.

Inclusivity and Support

Marple Hall emphasises inclusivity, ensuring that every student, regardless of background, ability, or need, receives the support they require to succeed. The school have created environments within the school that make a seemingly large school feel smaller and nurturing, allowing their most vulnerable pupils to build positive relationships with fellow pupils and staff, to create areas of refuge, support, and understanding. The outstanding provision Marple Hall offer enables more pupils to stay in a mainstream school who would ordinarily have needed a more specialised setting.

Collaboration

The Helix Academies Trust, whilst still small, fosters our ambition of creating formal partnerships between schools, aimed at sharing best practices and resources to enhance educational outcomes. This partnership has enhanced the educational experience through better curriculum planning, shared resources and collaborative projects, reinforcing the vision within the trust.

Leadership and Governance

The leadership team at Marple Hall, led by Headteacher Joe Barker, focuses on creating a supportive and challenging environment that encourages both student and staff development. Strong governance from the Helix Academies Trust ensures accountability and strategic direction, aligning with the broader goals of Stockport's education and economic plans.



Ambition Two

The Best Offer Post-16

Why it's a priority

A Fair, Inclusive, and Resilient Borough: By providing a diverse range of educational and training pathways, we can cater to the varied interests and talents of our young people, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to succeed. This commitment to inclusivity helps reduce social inequalities and supports the Borough Plan's goal of creating a resilient community where all residents can thrive.

Workforce Preparedness and Skills Development: The Economic Plan highlights the necessity of a workforce equipped with the skills needed for high-demand sectors. A robust post-16 education system, offering both academic and vocational routes, ensures that students can pursue careers that align with their interests and the needs of the economy. This alignment is essential for developing a skilled workforce ready to meet current and future challenges.

Promoting Innovation and Entrepreneurship: By offering programs that support creative thinking and practical skills, we empower young people to develop new ideas and start their own businesses. This entrepreneurial spirit is vital for a dynamic and growing economy, aligning with the Economic Plan's goal of fostering a vibrant business environment.

What this means

- The best teachers, tutors, and leaders
- The best environments and provision that enable and facilitate learning at all levels
- The best careers advice and guidance
- A strategically aligned broad, comprehensive, and high-quality offer with sufficient capacity providing positive choice to all learners
- Strong links with industry and higher education
- Transport links which gives learners uninhibited access to any form of education, employment, or training

What will we do

As a strategic leader and facilitator

- Coordinate and collaborate with partners to grow and diversify their offerings
- Continue to enhance industry and stakeholder partnerships improving relationships, commissioning, and information and advice
- Facilitate improvements to access into post-16 education and training, prioritising care for children, children with SEND, and other vulnerable groups

Success Measures

- Alignment between Stockport's LSIP and the education and training offer Stockport offers
- Sufficient capacity in education and training opportunities for all learners with specific focus around entry level and functional skills

Case Study

Future skills through leading technology

Stockport College, a key institution within The Trafford College Group, illustrates the ambition of providing the best post-16 education offer through its innovative programs, strong industry links, and inclusive and cutting-edge learning environments.

- £27M New campus development in Cheadle opening September 2026. This will be the first sustainable campus expanding the Technical education offer including, T Levels, Health, Early Years.
- Over £1m has been invested in green and digital innovative learning environments. Delivering green accredited and non-accredited courses to support the Regional and National green skills gap and agenda, providing a critical skill boost that will benefit employers, individuals, and the wider economy.
- Immersive learning environments, providing students in active, hands-on education. This innovative approach transforms traditional learning by incorporating modern technology, real-world scenarios, and interactive teaching methods, ensuring that students are well-prepared for their future careers.
- The Cyber Lab at Stockport College is a cutting-edge facility dedicated to providing students with hands-on experience in cybersecurity and digital forensics. This specialised lab is designed to simulate real-world cyber environments, offering an immersive and practical learning experience for students pursuing careers in IT security. Focused on cyber security and software development. The Cyber Lab is equipped with state-of-the-art hardware and software.
- New clinical suite featuring The Atomarge Table, a cutting-edge anatomical visualisation tool that allows students to explore the human body in great detail. It provides 3D interactive models of human anatomy, enabling students to study complex structures and systems with precision. This technology supports interactive learning by allowing students to manipulate and dissect virtual anatomical models. This hands-on approach helps deepen their understanding of human anatomy and physiology



Ambition Three

Best Support for Business

Why it's a priority

- Skills investment is one of the biggest drivers in raising business productivity - Stronger, resilient and more enterprising & productive businesses generate quality jobs which are better paid, sustainable and accessible for the benefit of all our residents
- Not everyone is sharing in Stockport's success equally
- Businesses need support to respond positively to global issues, such as climate change and the growth of AI - harnessing the opportunities for economic growth in new ways

What does it mean

Businesses will have:

- Access to a greater talent pool of skilled people
- Stronger relationships with Colleges and other Skills providers to co-design curriculum and qualifications to meet the needs of their businesses and the local economy
- Skills commissioning reflects the needs of local businesses
- A skills system that is easy to access and navigate for businesses

What will we do

Work with partners such as Trafford & Stockport College Group to:

- Align AEB and other funded skills provision to increase pathways into growth sectors, particularly for more economically disadvantaged groups e.g Construction Hub in MDC area & Green Economy
- Support access to digital, management and leadership skills training for businesses
- Provide regular drop-in support for businesses, such as 'The Work Shop' to access skills and other business support
- Develop a Work & Skills Triage, as a Single Point of Contact for businesses, employees and residents for navigating skills support
- Regular business forums considering skills issues to influence commissioning and delivery
- Hold a Pledge Event to support links between Business & Education Providers
- Support In-Work Skills Progression through a dedicated team

Success Measures

- Growth in number of businesses and improved business survival rate
- Rising Employment rate

Case Study

Supporting growth in Apprenticeships

Stockport College, Placeholder [Apprenticeship recruitment is ongoing. We have worked with 91 Stockport registered businesses and placed 129 Stockport residents into apprenticeship employment. 30% are Construction apprenticeships, 15% are Teaching assistants, and 14% Are Gas and Plumbing.] – full case study being provided by Tracey Wood

GMACS: [Meet The Greater Manchester Careers and Apprenticeships Service | About GMACS](#) provides a wealth of information for young people on Careers options, sectors to work in and how to access Apprenticeships, including opportunities to apply for live Apprenticeship vacancies. GMACS helps young people explore and design their next steps before leaving school and after. The site brings together different stages of the career planning process. It helps students navigate the choices open to them and showcases what Greater Manchester can offer. The site also provides a direct way to find out about and apply for courses, jobs, and apprenticeships.

Stockport Post-16 Week & Digital Prospectus: Each October, Stockport Council commissions a digital online Post-16 Week. This includes an interactive Post-16 Prospectus [16+ Digital Prospectus 2023/4 \(stockport-jobsmatch.co.uk\)](#) designed to help students, teachers, parents and carers understand the qualification and training pathways available after finishing secondary school. Promoting Apprenticeships forms a key elements of that including online sessions with employers that have recruited Apprentices, and hearing from Apprentices themselves about their positive experiences of this as a Career Pathway.



Case Study

Supporting growth in Apprenticeships



Greater Manchester Apprenticeship Levy Matchmaking Service: Facilitates funding Levy transfers to create more apprenticeship opportunities across the city region

Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) commissioned the Growth Company to develop and deliver an online apprenticeship Levy Matchmaking Service that ensures as many levy payers (public and private sector) as possible transfer unspent funds to non-levy payers negating the need for them to pay the 5% co-investment costs.

With Levy paying organisations now able to transfer up to 50% of their funds to other employers there was a need to make this as simple a process as possible for both parties to ensure maximum levy investment is retained in GM.

Employers large and small can register on this website [About the Project | GM Levy Matchmaking Service \(levymatchfinder.co.uk\)](#) to transfer or receive funds from their apprenticeship digital accounts covering the training costs of a specified apprentice.

Ambition Four

Best Place to Work

Why it's a priority

Stockport is a growing economy, with exciting major regeneration projects. However, with the Borough being one of the most polarised LA areas in the country, it is crucial that all citizens feel they have economic opportunity locally, through good quality well paid employment or the support to start a business. **Fair and Inclusive is one of four priorities in Stockport Economic Plan, a Plan which provides the vision, ambition, ownership and leadership for the actions in the Skills Plan.**

What does it mean

Our ambition to be the best place to work is intrinsically linked to our Economic Plan priorities, in that we strive to achieve:

- Stockport to be recognised as a locality with many employers that are signed up to the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter and / or Real Living Wage Foundation accredited, and actively working to these principles
- Skills investment and progression in the workforce is seen as a key element of being a 'Good employer'
- Employers are committed to opportunities for groups facing greater economic disadvantage e.g. People with SEND, Care Experienced
- A rising employment rate and falling rate of workless households

What will we do

We will deliver key Economic Plan actions and new emerging priorities, including:

- Provide dedicated support to employers to become GM Good Employment Charter members or Real Living Wage accredited
- Ensure Employment & Skills Agreements are developed with Developers / Contractors for all major new developments
- Support 'Good Employment' principles to be in place in all significant procurement activity via Social Value clauses
- In-Work Progression Programme & WorkWell to support people to sustain and prosper in employment
- Single point of contact /triage for accessing Work & Skills support for residents and employers
- Provide a monthly 'one stop' drop in for business start up support at Merseyway Innovation Centre – 'The Work Shop'

Success Measures

- Major increase in the number of businesses signed up to the GM Good Employment Charter
- Average wage rates in Stockport workplaces is above GM average
- Case studies of employers utilising skills and employment programmes to support recruitment from priority groups

Case Study

One + All, Rowlinson Knitwear

We bring the best brands in schoolwear together under one meaningful name to become One+All Performa, One+All Woodbank and One+All Courtelle. And, introducing our sister brand The Making Of, for the supply of high quality adult workwear.

Our business was started by the Rowlinson family in 1935. Since then, we've seen many changes to become who we are today.

We began our employee ownership journey in 2015, becoming 100% employee owned in 2020. Every colleague wants us to improve and we're working together to be the best business we can be.

We became a Certified B Corporation in 2020. At every step of our products' journeys, we aim to do the right thing - for our team, our partners, the planet, and for our customers. Because we believe we can help change the world with schoolwear and workwear.

2017 and signed the Good employment charter in 2018. We pay the Real Living Wage, a minimum rate of pay that people can actually live on.

We're committed to ensure that everyone who works for us, including contractors, benefits from fair rates of pay to meet the rising cost of living.

This means that we don't just pay the Real Living Wage, but we also offer:

- A full 8% pension contribution
- An annual tax-free profit share (we are 100% Employee Owned)
- 4 x death-in-service benefit
- Interest-free loans and help with budgeting



Ambition Five

Everyone ready to work

Why it's a priority

Community Empowerment and Social Mobility: Ensuring everyone is ready for work promotes social mobility by providing residents with the means to improve their economic status. This is particularly important for marginalised groups, including those with SEND, Care Experienced, young people, and the long-term unemployed. By removing barriers to employment and offering tailored support, Stockport can create a more inclusive and empowered community.

Economic Resilience: This means that Stockport can better withstand economic fluctuations and changes in industry demands. By continuously developing the skills of its workforce, and developing the talents of all, the Borough can adapt to new economic challenges and opportunities, ensuring long-term economic stability.

What does it mean

- The best careers advice and guidance with tailored support and guidance for vulnerable groups
- Our residents to possess core skills that support and enable a lifelong learning mindset
- Capacity, breadth, and choice within supported employment/internships that lead to careers
- The best entry level and occupational entry education and training offer
- Local adoption of the Manchester Baccalaureate pathways
- Alignment with industry needs and expectations, strategic alignment to Local Skills Improvement Plan

What will we do

As a strategic leader and employer

- Exemplify values that underpin equality, diversity, and inclusion
- Exemplify best practice and provide supported employment opportunities that can lead to careers for vulnerable groups
- Leverage influence over partners to grow capacity and choice in supported employment opportunities
- Support our vulnerable young people into education, training or work placements

Success Measures

- Reduction in the number of young people not in education, training, or employment
- Increase in the number of supported employment placements across Stockport

Case Study

Supported Employment

Within the council we are running several new early careers schemes, including:

Work experience

21 placements over the last few weeks, with a new comprehensive induction programme and guidance for managers on safeguarding, health & safety and more. Insight from 2024 will support us to grow this further in 2025.

Jumpstart

for care leavers providing paid opportunities in work as well as guidance in developing their CV and applying for jobs. Recognised by PPMA as the 2024 winner of Best Inclusion & Diversity Initiative.

Supported Internships

in partnership with Pure Innovations, providing work placement opportunities within the council and in partner organisations including TfGM. 6 interns graduated at an event on 11th July and the next cohort of 11 will start in September.



ONE
STOCKPORT

Winn

er
Best Inclusion & Diversity
Programme / Initiative

CASE STUDY

Our work placements schemes are leading to long-term opportunities:

Emily

- Care leaver, started on a Jumpstart placement
- Joined our Estates team on level 3 apprenticeship
- Team have coached and nurtured her in her role
- Provided with work wear, PPE and support
- Just turned 21 – flourishing in work and at home



Next STEPS

Whilst the Council has a vital role in shaping, defining and driving forward this Skills Plan, its delivery will be led by our strong network of colleges and training providers.

The Council is committed to act as a Borough wide strategic leader to enable and drive systemic improvements, provide constructive challenge, and to hold partners to account

Our Priorities

- Creation of a detailed annual delivery plan that sets targets, actions and milestones for delivery of the plan.
- Creation of an index of the indicators identified in this plan to track progress and act accordingly.
- Maintain a productive partnership of stakeholders.
- Working to align Skills Plan priorities to emerging funding opportunities created by central government and other funding agencies.