

Worcestershire's Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)

Progress Report, June 2024

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June 2024

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Who is this publication for?

The 2021 Skills for Jobs white paper set out the government's blueprint for reshaping the technical skills system to better meet the needs of employers and the wider economy. Central to this is the ambition to put employers at the heart of the post-16 skills landscape – working collaboratively with further education colleges, independent providers and local stakeholders to codesign technical skills provision which meets local labour market needs through Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs).

Co-designed with our employers, education and training providers, and wider skills stakeholders, the Worcestershire LSIP aims to better equip Worcestershire's workforce (both present and future) with the skills that employers really need, through increased collaboration between businesses and providers. As the Employer Representative Body (ERB) for the Worcestershire LSIP, it has therefore been our mission at Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce to ensure that we, our education and training providers and employers are more visible to each other in order to strengthen connections and unlock the potential of our local workforce.

This report is for all employers, partners and stakeholders within the county of Worcestershire. It highlights the progress we have made with our delivery plan to date, the early benefits of activity, as well as what we still hope to achieve.

This report is also a call for action. It is an invitation for employers who are yet to engage with the LSIP to get involved in shaping a skills system which better meets business needs, and a thanks to our education and training providers, whose continued willingness and support is so crucial to successfully delivering on our ambitions.

We have achieved a lot in the first year of the LSIP. We have set up new mechanisms for collaboration through the Industry Skills Councils, have created new ways to raise employer awareness of local provision and have promoted business voice in supporting partners with new workforce development initiatives aligned to LSIP priorities. This has led to more employers getting directly involved in helping to shape provision in Worcestershire, increased connections between businesses and providers, and some early evidence of curriculum modification based on LSIP insights.

The second year of the LSIP will build on the momentum of our learnings and partnerships as we launch a new business culture campaign, looking to get even more businesses engaged in the skills system, but also to start tackling engrained problems relating to skills development and the importance of continually developing the workforce.

We look forward to continuing to work with you on this.

Summary of the LSIP

Worcestershire's LSIP builds on pre-existing strong partnerships between training providers and clear leadership on skills development needs in the local economy from Worcestershire County Council (WCC) and Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). The [Worcestershire LSIP](#) was specifically designed to support the delivery of the recommendations in the [Worcestershire Skills Report](#) by focusing on our key sectors of Advanced Manufacturing and Agri-Tech, Construction, Business Services and Health and Social Care, which together account for half of employees and businesses.

Engagement with employers, education and training providers and wider skills stakeholders identified that:

- **Employers across Worcestershire feel that overall, the training they need is available, but they struggle to access it in a format that works for them:** Employers called for modifications, such as more modular training, the ability to mix disciplines, to be able to access training in a wider variety of places across the County, for clearer information about what training is available and, critically, what is possible – if an ‘off the shelf’ solution is not immediately available. These perspectives were reflected in the desire for stronger links and collaboration mechanisms with providers to support modification and ‘co-design’ to tailor requirements.
- **Employers struggle to diagnose skills issues and there is little strategic forward planning for skills in their businesses and organisations:** This means employers tend to frequently be in response mode when it comes to skills needs, tackling short-term pressing issues with quick fix solutions as they arise, rather than in planning mode, anticipating and mitigating risks with longer-term skills solutions and workforce plans. This is itself a skills issue related to leadership and management, which is reflected in the LEP's Skills Action Plan.
- **There isn't a common language to describe skills which can hold back finding solutions:** For example, employers are likely to focus on the common skills and behaviours they need from their staff, whereas training providers are more likely to focus on technical skills. These differences are understandable but need to be accounted for in the process of engagement and partnership working. This means thinking about solutions across different types of skills and what type of provision, provided when, and by who – including when that is best delivered by the employer – works best.
- **Current provision is only part of the answer. Our skills system must support employers to tackle their short-term challenges in ways that provide a step to long-term change:** This means balancing ‘cure’ – training to resolve immediate issues – with ‘prevention’ – actions that aim to reduce the number of issues that arise. For example, employers and providers can work together to pinpoint where changes to provision can help to meet current local skills needs, but most importantly stronger workforce planning and development by employers will allow for pro-active rather than re-active skills development.

These shape the five priorities across three themes in the LSIP:

Figure 1. Worcestershire’s LSIP priorities and outcomes

Themes	Resolving short-term priorities				Developing long-term plans		Building partnerships	
	Acting on short-term priorities to address employers’ current, pressing skills needs				Putting in place long-term plans which enable employers to actively plan skills needs for the future		Building effective skills partnerships and working together to identify and address skills needs	
Priorities	1 Equipping workers with technical skills & knowledge needed to alleviate employers’ skills shortfalls and enable individuals to progress in their career		2 Developing the common skills and workplace behaviours that will promote employability and progression opportunities		3 Promoting a culture where business leaders recognise the strategic importance of proactively developing people & talent to the productivity of their businesses	4 Developing the workforce planning capabilities of managers to enable businesses to identify their skills needs and providers to adapt training accordingly	5 Encouraging a collaborative skills system in which provision can be tailored to the needs of employers	
Outcomes	Employers can identify training solutions that meet their needs, both in terms of content and delivery format	Individuals can identify training opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge to meet current employer demand for skills	Employers no longer identify a lack of common skills and appropriate workplace behaviours as a problem amongst new recruits and education leavers	Individuals understand the common skills and behaviours they need to deploy alongside technical skills and knowledge to enable progression	Employers recognise the benefits to their business of developing the skills and knowledge of their workers	Employers can articulate the different skills they need currently and how this is likely to change over the coming years	Providers can develop curriculum content that will mean future workers have the relevant core skills	Employers actively participate in the skills system and there are clear mechanisms through which employers and providers engage to shape and co-design training provision
Actions	Support our FE, HE and IT providers in the modification of courses to open access to existing training, in preferred delivery formats		Support our employers to develop the skills of their employees Making available specific training courses/programmes to support the development of these skills Embedding development within educational pathways and/or as part of ‘transition’ support between education and work and job moves		Establish an awareness raising campaign to communicate the importance of training staff and workplace culture to business owners around the County	Link in with WCC’s workforce planning offering, referring as many as businesses as possible to this scheme	Put in place purposeful partnerships and collaboration mechanisms which enable the skills system to respond to and anticipate skills needs	

Strategic and economic context update

Worcestershire's economic and policy landscape remains largely unchanged since the publication of the LSIP. The priorities and actions contained within the LSIP are therefore still considered relevant and no changes are required to planned activity.

Economic and business context

The local economy has continued to perform well in relation to strategic targets set out in the LEP's 2020-2040 Plan for Growth.¹ The employment rate is strong at 81%, reflected by a 36,000 rise in the number of jobs between 2013 and 2022, exceeding the 25,000 target by 2025. Whilst unemployment has settled back to 3% post pandemic, targeted interventions are still required to remove barriers to work for key groups such as those aged 16 to 24, where unemployment remains higher than pre-pandemic figures.

However, like businesses across the country, wider economic turbulence is exacerbating existing challenges and creating new obstacles for growth for local employers. The legacies of Brexit and the pandemic, as well as inflationary pressures (noted as a key concern by 39% of respondents to Quarterly Economic Survey respondents in Q4 of 2023) are contributing to rising operating costs and are changing consumer demand for services and goods.² This in turn is contributing to lower business confidence, despite local businesses reporting a rise in consumer spend over the last three months of 2023.³

Businesses are responding to the continued economic uncertainty in different ways. Some employers have limited non-essential capital and revenue spend (including staff training) to keep running costs down, whereas others have invested in workforce development as a means of retaining quality employees and limiting the need for recruitment which can be a time and resource intensive process. Of those looking for training solutions locally, education and training providers report continued demand for short form and remote training courses – a trend which was accelerated by the pandemic, but is anticipated to continue as organisations look for cost effective options for investment in workforce development.

Promoting free skill development opportunities as well as funding available for training *and* supporting employers to improve their internal on-the-job and standard induction training, will therefore continue to be an important aspect of LSIP activity. It also reinforces the LSIP objective of pro-actively working with employers to help recognise and embed the strategic importance of people development. The planned business culture campaign will help encourage employers to invest in workforce training and development, and alongside the Industry Skills Councils, will be a useful mechanism to support co-design of training provision which meets business needs in terms of content, format and delivery options.

¹ Worcestershire LEP, Worcestershire's Plan for Growth 2020 – 2040 (2020).

² Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce, Quarterly Economic Survey Q4 2023 (2023).

³ Ibid.

A strong provider landscape

There have been no major changes to the provider base in Worcestershire. The withdrawal of core LEP funding from April 2024 has not impacted Worcestershire as Worcestershire County Council and wider partners across local government, business and education committed remain committed to maintaining the LEP until at least March 2025. This support has ensured continuity of local business support as well as the management of the Worcestershire Employment and Skills Board. Discussions are underway on the future beyond March 2025 to ensure Worcestershire has strong support and policy in place for businesses, innovation and in relation to training and skills provision.

Education and training providers have been successful in securing funding to deliver new skills interventions targeted to the priorities outlined in the LSIP. Kidderminster College, Heart of Worcestershire College and Warwickshire College Group in Worcestershire were awarded just under £2.5m Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF) funding which has been used to create new training facilities linked to priority industries and support leadership skills development. More broadly, WCC secured an additional £1m funding in June 2023 to extend the Skills Bootcamps programme to anyone in Worcestershire aged 19 and over. Across the local authorities in Worcestershire, £18m of UKSPF funds have been secured. Some of these funds have been allocated towards skills and business support, which directly relate to the LSIP priorities. This includes £150,000 to deliver professional skills and introductory digital skills courses in response to employer needs expressed in the LSIP, £200,000 towards Redditch Youth Hub which will provide a dedicated support service for 16-24 year olds, and SkillsBoost Worcestershire, a new funding programme to help organisations with the costs of upskilling and training their employees.

Employer skills demands

Delivery of the LSIP to date has served to reiterate local employer demand for both common and digital skills (including advanced technology application and basic computing). Following national trends, local employers expect the growth in AI applications to shape future skills needs.⁴ However in the interim, increased automation of technical processes is driving the need for professionals with transferable skills.

“Because of new technologies, the emphasis of our recruitment is now on the softer skills. Technical skills are of course still important, but some of those skills which we would have prioritised a few years ago are now automated through new software and technologies. Our clients now look to us more for advisory support, so things like good communication and interpersonal skills are only going to become more important.”

The importance of interpersonal skills was echoed by the National Foundation for Educational Research who forecast communication, collaboration, problem-solving, planning, creative thinking and information literacy to be the most essential skills in demand by 2035.⁵

⁴ Institute for the Future of Work, Old Skills, New Skills - what is changing in the UK labour market? (2024).

⁵ National Foundation for Education Research, The Skills Imperative 2035 (2023).

Priorities and actions

Progress against the priorities and actions contained in the LSIP is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of LSIP progress

Priority	Activity	Partners involved	Timescales	Method of implementation and outcomes expected	Monitoring arrangements	Progress Status
Equipping workers with technical skills & knowledge needed to alleviate employers' skills shortfalls and enable individuals to progress in their career	Establish Industry Skills Councils linked to key sectors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manufacturing; Construction; Health and Social Care; and, Business Services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ERB co-ordination External consultant facilitation Employer attendance Training Provider attendance Sector bodies (CITB, Skills for Care and Make UK) attendance 	<p>Original timescales: November – March 2025</p> <p>Revised timescales: January 2024 – March 2025</p>	<p>Implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Six-weekly sector specific meetings (alternating in person and online) Rolling agenda to inform other LSIP activities (i.e. mapping and Skills Innovation Labs) and respond to ad-hoc skills challenges <p>Core outcomes: Employers can identify training solutions that meet their needs, both in terms of content and delivery format; Employers actively participate in the skills system and there are clear mechanisms through which employers and providers engage to shape and co-design training provision; Providers can develop curriculum content that will mean future workers have the relevant core skills.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employer attendance at Industry Skills Council meetings Outcomes monitored as part of quarterly employer pulse survey 	<p>In progress but behind schedule:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four Councils formed and 3 meetings have been held per Council Slippage in timescales is due to recommendation from the LSIP Board to delay launching Councils until January 2024
	ifATE Skills Mapping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ERB co-ordination Employers to complete survey on skills needs Training providers to complete training audit External consultant analysis of skills gaps 	<p>Original timescales: January 2024 - March 2024</p> <p>Revised timescales: March 2024 – June 2024</p>	<p>Implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employers issued with a survey to report known skills gaps Training providers issued with form to audit training provision against key skills Analysis of findings according to the Deploy, Adapt, Import and Develop framework through Industry Skills Councils Changes to training pilot through Skills Innovation Lab where relevant <p>Core outcome: Employers can identify training solutions that meet their needs, both in terms of content and delivery format.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of skills adaption recommendations made Outcome monitored as part of quarterly employer pulse survey 	<p>In progress but behind schedule:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> July Industry Skills Council meeting used to consider findings ifATE mapping process more time intensive than initially anticipated Early findings suggest demand for business administration skills across sector groups
	Fund Colleges Worcestershire Portal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ERB to coordinate and fund portal Training providers to support development and collation of provision 	<p>March 2024 – March 2025</p>	<p>Implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of an online platform which brings together all information on available training in the County to help employers and prospective students navigate skills landscape and identify appropriate provision. <p>Core outcomes: employers can identify training solutions that meet their needs, both in terms of content and delivery format; Individuals can identify training opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge to meet current employer demand for skills.</p>	N/A	<p>Cancelled – replaced in part by the Colleges Worcestershire Resource Hub</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action no longer to be delivered due to viability constraints Collation of available provision addressed in part by the creation of the Colleges Worcestershire Resource Hub

Priority	Activity	Partners involved	Timescales	Method of implementation and outcomes expected	Monitoring arrangements	Progress Status
Developing the common skills and workplace behaviours that will promote employability and progression opportunities	Reinvigorate the Young Professionals Forum to support transitions between education and work and job moves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ERB to coordinate and deliver events • FE colleges to promote events • Employers to promote events 	March 2024 – March 2025	<p>Implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restarting the Chambers existing Young Professionals Forum • Quarterly meet ups to practice networking and presentations on key common skills <p>Core outcome: Individuals understand the common skills and behaviours they need to deploy alongside technical skills and knowledge to enable progression.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative feedback from event attendees 	<p>In progress and likely to complete as planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New activity which has been prompted by LSIP insights • First meeting to be held on 25 July 2024
	Win and deliver UKSPF: An Introduction to Basic Digital Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ERB to submit bid and oversee programme delivery • External teachers to deliver training courses 	April 2024 – April 2025	<p>Implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UKSPF funding to deliver a two-day course targeted to employees living in Wychavon, Worcester City and Wyre Forst. Courses delivered every two weeks • The course covers assertiveness and confidence, work ethics and professionalism, interview and presentation skills, time management and communication skills <p>Core outcome: Individuals understand the common skills and behaviours they need to deploy alongside technical skills and knowledge to enable progression.</p> <p>Additional outcome: Employers no longer identify a lack of common skills and appropriate workplace behaviours as a problem amongst new recruits and education leavers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course feedback forms issued and reviewed by ERB • Qualitative engagement with linked employers • Employer outcome monitored as part of quarterly employer pulse survey 	<p>In progress and likely to complete as planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courses in delivery, bookable on the Chamber website. • Evaluation approach to be implemented and lessons shared
	Win and deliver UKSPF: An Introduction to Professional Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ERB to submit bid and oversee programme delivery • External teachers to deliver training courses 	April 2024 – April 2025	<p>Implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UKSPF funding to deliver a two-day course targeted to employees living in Wychavon, Worcester City and Wyre Forst. Courses delivered every two weeks • The course covers basic IT administration, internet safety and security, Microsoft packages and an introduction to social media <p>Core outcome: Individuals understand the common skills and behaviours they need to deploy alongside technical skills and knowledge to enable progression.</p> <p>Additional outcome: Employers no longer identify a lack of common skills and appropriate workplace behaviours as a problem amongst new recruits and education leavers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course feedback forms issued and reviewed by ERB • Qualitative engagement with linked employers • Outcome monitored as part of quarterly employer pulse survey 	<p>In progress and likely to complete as planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courses in delivery, bookable on the Chamber website. • Evaluation approach to be implemented and lessons shared
	Work with the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) to develop an Employer Standards pilot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC to create tool kit • ERB to support piloting through connections to businesses 	January 2024 – March 2024	<p>Implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC to produce set of standards framed around inspiring young people for the next step, preparing young people to be career ready and collaborating for success • ERB recruitment of local businesses to pilot standards self-assessment tool 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC to monitor take up of self-assessment tool • Outcome monitored as part of quarterly employer pulse survey 	<p>Complete:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer Standards and self-assessment tool available on CEC website

Priority	Activity	Partners involved	Timescales	Method of implementation and outcomes expected	Monitoring arrangements	Progress Status
				<p>Core outcome: Employers no longer identify a lack of common skills and appropriate workplace behaviours as a problem amongst new recruits and education leavers.</p> <p>Additional outcome: Employers recognise the benefits to their business of developing the skills and knowledge of their workers</p>		
Promoting a culture where business leaders recognise the strategic importance of proactively developing people & talent to the productivity of their businesses	Undertake research into the incentives and benefits of staff training and workforce planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ERB co-ordination • External consultants to undertake research • Employer engagement 	<p>Original timescales: January 2024 - March 2024</p> <p>Revised timescales: March 2024 – June 2024</p>	<p>Implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk-based review of existing research on incentives and benefits of investing in skills training • Engagement with local employers to gain local insights • Use emerging findings to inform Business Culture Campaign • Sharing report findings with LSIP stakeholders and upload to website <p>Core outcome: Employers recognise the benefits to their business of developing the skills and knowledge of their workers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of report outputs • Outcome monitored as part of quarterly employer pulse survey 	<p>In progress but behind schedule:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk-based research completed • Employer engagement underway • Slippages in timescales due to LSIP delivery team capacity constraints
	Develop and launch Business Culture Campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ERB to coordinate campaign • External comms agency to lead on campaign branding • Employers and training providers to engage with campaign events 	<p>Original timescales: January 2024 - March 2024</p> <p>Revised timescales: March 2024 – June 2024</p>	<p>Implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of campaign branding and resources based on incentives and benefits research findings • Events to launch campaign • Ongoing marketing and promotion of campaign resources and events <p>Core outcome: Employers recognise the benefits to their business of developing the skills and knowledge of their workers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campaign tracking analytics: attendance at events, engagement with resources • Outcome monitored as part of quarterly employer pulse survey 	<p>In progress but behind schedule:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications agency contracted in principle • Campaign branding under development • Slippages in timescales due to LSIP delivery team capacity constraints, lag in incentives and benefits research and delays to submitting funding variance requests
Developing the workforce planning capabilities of managers to enable businesses to identify their skills needs and providers to adapt training accordingly	Refer employers to Worcestershire Growth Hub (WGH) Workforce Planning tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worcestershire Growth Hub to create workforce planning tool • ERB to make referrals 	December 2023 - March 2025	<p>Implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worcestershire Growth Hub development of tool, including hosting two workshops with employers to inform tool design as supported by the Chamber of Commerce • Tool launch (expected June 2024) • Referral of employers to tool and any associated events <p>Core outcome: Employers can articulate the different skills they need currently and how this is likely to change over the coming years.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of referrals made by the ERB • Outcome monitored as part of quarterly employer pulse survey 	<p>Not yet started:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slippages in timescales due to capacity constraints at WGH in developing and launching the workforce planning tool
	Share learnings from incentives and benefits research to help shape Worcester County Council's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ERB to share findings of research • WCC delivery and oversight of CDF 	<p>Original timescales: March 2024 – March 2025</p> <p>Revised timescales:</p>	<p>Implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing LSIP insights through monthly meetings between ERB and WCC • WCC delivery of CDF – provision of capital and revenue funding to support training providers to meet employer skills demands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WCC monitoring of CDF outcomes • Feedback from providers to understand how provision has been adapted/developed 	<p>In progress but behind schedule:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fourth round of CDF in delivery. Fund targets for the number of residents supported through upskilling and the number of Worcestershire businesses actively shaping curriculum development exceeded.

Priority	Activity	Partners involved	Timescales	Method of implementation and outcomes expected	Monitoring arrangements	Progress Status
	Curriculum Development Fund (CDF)		September 2024 – March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CDF funding to be used to support Skills Innovation Labs to support LSIP activity <p>Core outcome: Providers can develop curriculum content that will mean future workers have the relevant core skills.</p>	(Training Provider Steering Group)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CDF-supported LSIP projects delayed due to delays in skills mapping and implementation of Skills Innovation Labs
Encouraging a collaborative skills system in which provision can be tailored to the needs of employers	LSIP mobilisation and promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ERB to create LSIP Board and co-ordinate meetings LSIP Board members to attend quarterly meetings 	September 2023 – March 2025	<p>Implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly meetings to review LSIP progress and seek stakeholder input into activities. Board members composed of employer, training providers and wider stakeholder representatives <p>Core outcome: Employers actively participate in the skills system and there are clear mechanisms through which employers and providers engage to shape and co-design training provision.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board member attendance at meetings Outcome monitored as part of quarterly employer pulse survey 	<p>In progress and likely to complete as planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly meetings launched in September 2023 Strong engagement from Board members to date
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ERB to deliver 2 launch events 	October 2023	<p>Implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two events to introduce the LSIP and promote broad employer engagement. Events held in the North and South of the county. A local MP attended the launch to encourage take up. <p>Core outcome: Employers actively participate in the skills system and there are clear mechanisms through which employers and providers engage to shape and co-design training provision.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance at launch events Outcome monitored as part of quarterly employer pulse survey 	<p>Complete:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two events held Events well attended by employers and training providers. Qualitative evidence indicates events were a useful mechanism for supporting early connections between skills stakeholders
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ERB to produce LSIP Newsletter 	December 2023 - March 2025	<p>Implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly Newsletter to communicate progress and upcoming opportunities linked to LSIP priorities and activities <p>Core outcome: Employers actively participate in the skills system and there are clear mechanisms through which employers and providers engage to shape and co-design training provision.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of newsletter recipients Total opens of newsletters Outcome monitored as part of quarterly employer pulse survey 	<p>In progress and likely to complete as planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly newsletters produced. Increased engagement with content
	Establish Training Provider Steering Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ERB co-ordination Training provider attendance 	September 2023 – March 2025	<p>Implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly meetings with training providers to share insights from employer engagement and explore skills challenges <p>Core outcome: Employers actively participate in the skills system and there are clear mechanisms through which employers and providers engage to shape and co-design training provision.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance at steering group meetings 	<p>In progress and likely to complete as planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly meetings progressing as planned. New connections between providers reported

Priority	Activity	Partners involved	Timescales	Method of implementation and outcomes expected	Monitoring arrangements	Progress Status
	Support the submission of the LSIF and signpost to projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kidderminster College to lead application submission and overall delivery of LSIF ERB to feedback on LSIP progress to encourage project linkages 	September 2023 – March 2025	<p>Implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LSIF application submitted in September 2023 linked to LSIP priorities. Kidderminster College to deliver Leadership and Sustainability Hub Heart of Worcestershire College to deliver Digital Leadership Hub Warwickshire College Group to deliver Agri-Food Sector Sustainability Hub Creation of the Colleges Worcestershire Resource Hub in response to LSIP priorities <p>Core outcome: Employers actively participate in the skills system and there are clear mechanisms through which employers and providers engage to shape and co-design training provision.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kidderminster College responsible for LSIF monitoring and evaluation ERB and Kidderminster due to meet monthly to report on progress 	<p>Completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worcestershire Colleges awarded just under £2.5m of LSIF funding in November 2023. Capital projects underway, with substantial outputs expected in second year of LSIF delivery: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capital build of the Leadership and Sustainability Hub at Kidderminster College is due to be complete in July 2024, with the opening of the new facility planned for September 2024. Equipment has been purchased to support delivery. Kidderminster College has delivered over 30 tours with local and stakeholder to raise awareness of the new facility and create opportunities for curriculum co-design. The Digital Leadership Hub capital project at Heart of Worcestershire is underway Refurbishment work has been completed for Warwickshire College Group’s Sustainable Agri-Tech Hub. Equipment has been purchased ready for the facility to open in September 2024
	Develop Skills Innovation Lab	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ERB co-ordination External consultant to support facilitation Providers to participate in pilots Employers to engage with relevant pilots WCC to provide funding to support pilots 	<p>Original timescales: March 2024 – March 2025</p> <p>Revised timescales: September 2024 – March 2025</p>	<p>Implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review results of ifATE mapping and broader skills insight and prioritise skills needs to be addressed WCC and LSIP funding to pilot new training formats Employer and training provider co-design of solution, collective review of impacts and decision regarding longer term implementation <p>Core outcome: Employers actively participate in the skills system and there are clear mechanisms through which employers and providers engage to shape and co-design training provision.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of adaptations made to provision Qualitative feedback Outcome monitored as part of quarterly employer pulse survey 	<p>Not yet started:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timescale slippages due to late start to the Skills Councils and ifATE mapping process. Early review of ifATE mapping outcomes suggest that focus on Skills Innovation Labs will be pilot small-scale changes to training delivery and content

Some areas are behind schedule due to **delivery team capacity** and a **focus on co-design**. Building a system which is employer-led takes time to raise awareness and build trust, despite our strong links to local employers. As such, **focus has been on mobilising the programme and driving quality employer engagement, resulting in limited capacity** to deliver all planned activity. Ensuring a collaborative approach has also resulted in slippages. For example, the first Industry Skills Council meeting in January 2024 was postponed to ensure there was enough time for stakeholders to feed into the design of the councils.

As the programme has been mobilised and crucial supporting structures such as the LSIP board and Industry Skills Councils are underway, focus has shifted to delivering other elements of the programme. To support us with this and **ensure that remaining LSIP activities are successfully delivered within the remaining timeframe**, we are **working with partner organisations on the incentives and benefits research and the business culture campaign**.

What has been achieved so far?

The activities contained within the LSIP are focused on both addressing immediate skills needs by undertaking pilot projects, and putting in place the pre-conditions for longer term change, enhancing our understanding of what works to inform future training delivery. We have been ambitious about the outcomes we hope to deliver from activity but are realistic in recognising that meaningful systems change is achieved by high quality, sustained engagement by all core stakeholder groups.

The desired outcomes of the LSIP are longer term and qualitative in nature. This means the successful delivery of the LSIP will not be determined by the achievement of high volume, quantitative outputs. Our focus is on capturing early benefits of activity through predominantly qualitative methods, to understand direction of travel and build a helpful evidence base of what works. Going forwards, we will run a quarter employer pulse survey to monitor our progress and identify new issues which could be addressed through the LSIP, and undertake qualitative engagement to understand the likely trajectory of impacts.

The first year of the LSIP has focused on establishing the structures and undertaking the additional research required to tackle immediate skills challenges and collectively prepare the skills system for longer term change. The most progress, therefore, has been made under objective 5: encouraging a collaborative skills system. We are beginning to see the benefits of our activity, notably an increased awareness of provision and providers, improved relationships between skills stakeholders, as well as early evidence of changes to curriculum in response to employer demands.

Encouraging a collaborative skills system

Mobilisation and driving employer engagement

Early stages of LSIP delivery have focused on communicating the purpose and content of the LSIP, emphasising the importance of employers taking a more active role in the skills system and providing accessible mechanisms to engage with the programme.

Two networking events in October 2023 officially launched the LSIP: one covering the south of the county at the University of Worcester, and one covering the north hosted at local business FAUN Zoeller. The launch events were well attended, bringing together employers, training providers and wider stakeholders (including attendance by Redditch MP Rachel Maclean) to communicate the purpose and content of the LSIP and promote broad-based stakeholder engagement.

As part of mobilisation, we have also developed additional forums for skills stakeholder to share insights and provide opportunities to shape LSIP activities and delivery. This includes:

- **LSIP Board:** The Board is made up of a mix of employers, providers and strategic stakeholders, each bringing their experience and expertise to input on the design of the LSIP. Bringing together a range of stakeholders means that the LSIP is designed to build on existing work of the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (WLEP), Skills Advisory Panel (SAP), and Employment and Skills Board (ESB), and work towards a more collaborative skills system, with employers at its centre. Board members are

champions for the programme, and play a key role in communicating progress and upcoming opportunities.

- **Training Provider Steering Group:** a quarterly meeting of our FE colleges and Independent Training Providers (ITPs) designed as a forum to feedback insights from employer engagement and enable collaborative discussion of potential solutions.

Early qualitative evidence suggests that these structures are performing effectively. A number of education and training providers have noted that the Steering Group has been a helpful mechanism for reviewing the range of current provision in the round, and for supporting collaborative relationships between different provider types. This is particularly the case for links between ITPs and FE colleges, which have historically been less strong than relationships amongst our FE colleges.

Driving business engagement

Much of the focus of our delivery has been on securing early business engagement in the LSIP to help move towards an employer driven skills system. We have promoted the LSIP widely across all events and business engagement undertaken by the Chamber of Commerce to encourage employers of different sizes and sectors to get involved with the relevant opportunities.

A key part of our approach to employer engagement has been the creation of a monthly LSIP newsletter which provides a progress update on delivery, highlights upcoming opportunities, and communicates new training and funding pots which businesses may wish to access. Analysis of Mail Chimp data shows an increasing number of people accessing the LSIP newsletter, indicating that it is an important tool for increasing the reach of the LSIP and driving new employer engagement.

Engagement with local businesses suggest that the newsletter is effective in **increasing businesses awareness of local provision**, by providing a digestible summary of upcoming opportunities:

“Running a business I do not routinely have the time to look out for new training and funding opportunities, so having it all in once place in an accessible format delivered straight to my inbox has been really helpful [...] I definitely feel more aware of what is available.” – Employer

Developing Industry Skills Councils

The LSIP committed to the development of county-wide skills councils - composed of industry leaders, education and training providers, and where possible, sector representative bodies – to provide regular forums for discussion which can be used both for strategic direction and to provide the opportunity for ‘skills surgeries’ to help address current issues.

Four Skills Councils have been created, linked to the LSIP priority sectors (Manufacturing & Agri-Tech; Construction; Health and Social Care; and, Business Services). The Industry Skills Councils were launched in January 2024, and meet on a six-weekly basis. Meetings were initially designed to be in person only, however in response to business feedback, sessions now alternate between in person and remote delivery to increase accessibility and

encourage participation from a range of employers (including micro business owners and sole traders).

Overall, employer engagement with the Industry Skills Councils has been strong, with wider stakeholders praising the quality of conversation and insights generated through the meetings. The meetings have proved to be an effective forum for drawing out new insights into employer skills needs as well as an important vehicle for progressing other LSIP activities (such as the ifATE mapping). Whilst other business-to-business and employer-provider networking opportunities exist outside of the LSIP, these are often ad-hoc and do not have the same remit or mixture of stakeholders in attendance. The Industry Skills Councils are therefore considered a valuable addition to the skills landscape which enables a different approach to sustained collaboration which would not have occurred without LSIP intervention.

A number of early benefits have been identified from the delivery of the Industry Skills Councils:

Improved professional networks: Employers value the opportunity to expand their professional and peer networks through the Skills Council meetings. The meetings have given attendees exposure to a broader range of stakeholders (such as sector representative bodies) than they would routinely engage with, and have facilitated the creation of supportive relationships between different skills stakeholders.

“I have really valued the opportunity to meet other businesses through the Skills Councils. It can be quite lonely running a business at times and you feel like your challenges are unique to you and your organisation. Having a friendly forum to talk about these issues makes you realise that actually, we’re all facing similar challenges and there are solutions available. Everyone is eager to help, and have been so generous in sharing their knowledge and signposting to other support.” – Employer

As well as improved peer networks, the Skills Councils are supporting the development of new collaborative relationships between employers and training providers. As seen in the case study below, these new relationships are benefiting both providers and businesses.

Fostering collaborative relationships between employers and providers

There has been strong engagement with the Industry Skills Councils from local education and training providers, who are seeing early benefits of activity.

Heart of Worcestershire College has gained numerous new contacts with employers through the Skills Councils and is now actively working with employers to create opportunities for industry engagement for current students. This includes agreeing new work experience opportunities and site visits for current learners to support early skills development.

The College is also working with new connections to support workforce planning through the creation of bespoke employment and skills plans. This includes helping businesses identify appropriate provision for Continuous Professional Development as well as technical training.

“The Skills Councils have been helpful in connecting us to businesses we haven’t previously engaged with. We already have a range of ways we engage with local employers, but the LSIP is creating different opportunities for us to meet and work with businesses who are unlikely to come to us via our other channels.”

Enhanced awareness of the skills system: Alongside mechanisms such as one-to-one business engagement and the LSIP newsletter, the Skills Councils offer another forum to increase employer awareness of available training. Providers have valued the opportunity to connect with new businesses to promote available provision, but also increase employer awareness of how they operate, including the supply-side barriers to creating and adapting training. Stakeholders anticipate that this increased understanding of supply constraints and skills demand needs will contribute to a more cohesive skills system, and in the longer term will support the development of higher quality solutions.

Increased knowledge of employer skills needs: A key output of early Skills Council meetings has been the quality insights generated from cross-stakeholder discussions. The Skills Councils have enabled stakeholders to collectively interrogate known skills challenges in detail, and have surfaced new intelligence about access to skills. For instance, the Construction Skills Council identified a growing skills demand for individuals with a driving licence. Attendees reported that the prohibitive cost of learning to drive and then owning and maintaining a vehicle means that local residents are unable to access several employment and training opportunities, and employers struggle to fill vacancies. Whilst this skills need does not relate to technical skills provision (and therefore cannot be addressed as part of LSIP activity), it demonstrates the value of the forum in exploring issues in detail which may be addressed through other local and national initiatives.

Increased co-design of training provision: As evidenced in the case study below, the Skills Councils are proving an effective mechanism for enabling providers to develop content that means future workers have the relevant core skills and are encouraging employers and providers to shape and co-design provision – both of which are core outcomes of the LSIP.

Adapting training to meet employer needs: Environmental considerations in construction

The construction Industry Skills Council has provided an important forum for employers and providers to directly engage and help shape training provision in Worcestershire. As part of the facilitated discussions on the appropriateness of existing training provision, an employer raised that an understanding of sustainable practices and environmental factors was an existing skill need for which there has been a rapid increase in demand as clients look for ways to reduce their carbon footprint and meet sustainability goals. The employer noted that it would be beneficial therefore for this to be added to the local curriculum.

Heart of Worcestershire College have quickly responded to this feedback, and added content on construction sustainability to their existing provision.

Supporting strategic alignment with complementary initiatives

As seen in the case study below, as well as co-ordinating and delivering LSIP activities, we have taken an active role in ensuring employer voice and insights from delivery feed into other strategic skills initiative in the County.

A Sport and Physical Activity Local Skills Plan for Worcestershire

Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport & Physical Activity (CIMSPA)'s local skills project brings together employers, education providers, and employability-focused organisations to effectively and efficiently match supply and demand in the sports and physical activity sector through local skills action plans.

CIMSPA & H&W Chamber have collaborated by sharing data on employer need and providing representation on working groups to create alignment between the Worcestershire LSIP & Worcestershire Sport & Physical Activity Local Skills Plan. Through the LSIP, the Chamber has championed the economic benefits of the Worcestershire workforce being more physically active by increasing productivity and enabling people to stay in work as they age as a result of being healthier.

Understanding employers' skills shortfalls

Objective 1 of the LSIP is to equip workers with technical skills & knowledge needed to alleviate employers' skills shortfalls and enable individuals to progress in their careers. Key to this is ensuring that appropriate training is available to meet employer and individual needs, both in terms of content and delivery formats. Analysis undertaken to inform the LSIP did not identify any specific skills requirements for which there was not some form of provision already available in the County, suggesting a need to modify content rather than design new training.

To support the modification of existing provision, the LSIP commits to undertaking a more detailed skills mapping activity using the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (ifATE) occupation maps. We have started this work through the Industry Skills Councils by issuing businesses with a form to identify specific skills needs and asking providers to complete provision audits to enable identification of common skills needs and potential gaps in provision. Early analysis of the mapping exercise confirms many of the LSIP findings: digital business administration and transferrable common skills remain in demand by local employers, but awareness of available provision and the formats currently delivered could be modified to increase take up.

The outcomes of the skills mapping exercise will inform the work of the Skills Innovation Labs which are due to launch in September 2024. It is from this test and learn approach that we expect to see the desired outcomes of providers modifying training to meet current and future skills needs and a reduced number of employers reporting skills gaps.

However, an early benefit of the skills mapping work has been **helping employers articulate their skills needs**. Some Skills Council attendees reflected that some employers found the skills mapping a challenging and time-consuming exercise, underscoring the need

to develop the workforce planning capabilities of businesses across the County (LSIP Objective 4). Qualitative engagement with participating employers indicates that they found it a useful exercise and valued LSIP facilitation of the process.

Promoting common skills and workplace behaviours

Our employers have consistently reported that technical skill development needs to combine the development of transferrable skills relevant for all workplaces, and that specific provision is also required to address common skills gaps.

In response to this, we have secured UKSPF funding to deliver [two short form courses](#) targeted at highlighted common skill needs: an Introduction to basic digital skills and an introduction to professional skills. The Introduction to Digital Skills covers many of the skills needs highlighted by employers in the LSIP, including basic IT administration as well as coverage of the key Microsoft packages (Teams, Excel, Word and Outlook). Similarly, the Introduction to Professional Skills has been designed to target known skills and behaviour gaps such as time management, presentation and communication skills. Both courses run regularly and are bookable on the Chamber website.

Delivery of these courses began in May 2024 so remain in the early stages, but early feedback suggests that these have been well received by learners. Wider stakeholders view the courses as playing an important role in supporting workers to feel more confident about their skillset and ability to meet employer requirements for progression. Over the longer term, we expect the courses to contribute to a reduction in employers reporting a lack of common skills and appropriate workforce behaviours as a problem amongst new recruits and education leavers.

Promoting appropriate workplace behaviours

Alongside formal courses to develop common skills, employers have called for initiatives to enhance individuals understanding of the workplace environment and the behaviours and ways of working that this requires.

To deliver against this, we have reinvigorated the Young Professionals Forum, a quarterly meeting which will provide young people from across the County an opportunity to practice networking skills and learn more about the common skills and behaviours required to progress in their careers directly from industry experts. Previously the Young Professionals Forum was designed for early career professionals, however in response to LSIP findings, we have extended the scope to include individuals in still in education to support transitions into and between work. We have worked closely with our education and training providers to promote this opportunity and look forward to engaging with our young people at the relaunch on [25 July 2024](#).

We have also worked collaboratively with partners to support activities aimed at raising awareness of common behaviours and skills, and the role that both individuals and employers should play in workforce development. This includes working with the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) to engage Worcestershire businesses in piloting the [Employer Standards](#) and self-assessment toolkit – a framework designed to help businesses address skills gaps by promoting early engagement with individuals still in education to create accessibly pathways into work. Employers who engaged with the pilot reported that

they found the Standards a helpful way to think practically about the longer-term skills development journey of potential employees and the role that businesses can play in providing meaningful work experience as well as interview and application support.

We have also begun working with Worcestershire County Council to support their initiative targeted at improving workplace readiness. As explained in the case study below, this project has been implemented in direct response to the LSIP, evidencing the active roles our partners are taking in supporting delivery and the collaborative working which the LSIP promotes.

Worcestershire County Council: Developing a common set of workplace behaviours for Worcestershire

Alongside the need to create specific training courses and programmes to support the development of common skills, the LSIP has reinvigorated conversations about the workplace readiness of education leavers and who is responsible for developing the workplace behaviours and skills for our young people. Engagement has highlighted that some individuals looking for work are unaware of the common skills and behaviours that employers across our key sectors will require, as well as wider misconceptions about how these skills are developed through education and training provision. Individuals can therefore struggle to recognise and articulate their relevant experience during interviews and/or know what types of opportunities to access in order to build their CVs around these skills.

To help address this challenge, Worcestershire County Council have begun work on a set of common workplace behaviours for the County, designed to clearly articulate the behaviours employers expect from those about to start work. The behaviour standards will be an important tool for young people to use when they are preparing for interviews, allowing them to have evidenced examples of key skills and behaviours, such as occasions where they have been part of a team or managed their time effectively.

Once co-designed with relevant partners, these standards will be piloted in schools for individuals entering their GCSEs to enable students to understand employer expectations and benchmark their current experience, identifying areas to build on through their studies and into further and higher education. Education and training providers will be encouraged to embed the standards into course marketing materials so prospective students have a clear understanding of not only the technical skills they will pick up, but also the behaviours they will develop that employers will expect in future roles.

Developing Workforce Capabilities

Alongside the development of technical and transferrable skills, the LSIP highlighted the need increased leadership and management capabilities of local businesses – a skills gap also reflected in the LEP’s Skills Action Plan. Local providers have responded to this by promoting existing provision (through platforms such as [Colleges Worcestershire Resource Hub](#)), and as shown in the case study below, creating new, flexible training options.

Supporting leadership and management skill development

In response to the findings of the LSIP, Kidderminster College have developed a range of leadership and management training opportunities. This includes the development of a Management and Leadership Skills Bootcamp, which has been approved by Worcestershire LEP for delivery in 2024 – 2025, as well as suite of flexible training modules which will meet the demand for micro-credentials and core leadership skills identified in the LSIP.

It is anticipated that increased management skills will be a key enabler in supporting the wider priorities of the LSIP, namely in developing the workforce planning capabilities of managers (Objective 4) and promoting a culture where business leaders recognise the strategic importance of proactive workforce development in raising business productivity (Objective 3).

Promoting a culture of developing people and talent

Promoting a culture where business leaders recognise the value of proactively developing people and talent to the productivity of their business is a key LSIP priority. In addition to supporting initiatives which promote employers taking an active role in common skills and workforce behaviours development, we will deliver an awareness raising campaign to communicate the importance of staff training.

To inform the campaign, we have undertaken additional research to understand the incentives and benefits for employers to invest in training. Enhancing business performance and productivity, maintaining a competitive edge, supporting staff progression and development and adhering to compliance and legal obligations are the key motivations for skills investment by local employers. However, as we heard when developing the LSIP, operational constraints (such as budget limitations and time available for training), low awareness of available provision and a perceived lack of appropriate training formats are commonly cited as barriers to providing/investing in staff training.

What still needs to be achieved?

We have been flexible in our delivery of the early roadmap to ensure resource is appropriately focused. Overall, stakeholders engaged as part of this review are pleased with the progress made to date, and have praised the focus on quality rather than quantity of activity. Slippages against original timescales can be explained by the following factors:

- **Delivery team capacity constraints:** a key learning from delivery to date has been that despite our strong existing links with local employers, the awareness raising and trust building required for businesses to meaningfully engage with strategic initiatives takes time. As such, core LSIP delivery team resource has necessarily focused on programme mobilisation and driving quality employer engagement, resulting in limited capacity to begin delivery on other planned activities (such as the incentives and benefits research).
- **A focus on co-design:** our collaborative approach to LSIP implementation has also contributed to lags in delivery. For example, on recommendation from the LSIP Board, we postponed the first meeting of the Industry Skills Council in January 2024 to afford further time for stakeholder input to forum design and secure buy-in.

To mitigate the impact of slippages, we are working with partner organisations to deliver elements of activity – notably the incentives and benefits research and the business culture campaign – to ensure that remaining LSIP activities are successfully delivered within the remaining timeframe.

No significant new actions have been identified as required for ensuring successful delivery against the LSIP objectives. Based on feedback from partners, we have decided to not proceed with the development of a Colleges Worcestershire Portal. The Portal – an easy-to-use website collating information on both available funding for training and the provision delivered by our Further Education Colleges – was proposed as a way of improving the accessibility of training provision information based on feedback from business and employees that difficulties in navigating available courses was a notable barrier to accessing skill development opportunities. Engagement with the education and training providers confirmed the time and cost of developing and maintaining the Portal would be prohibitive given the volume of courses provided in the area and the pace at which training and funding opportunities change. The creation of the [Colleges Worcestershire Resource Hub](#), developed using LSIF revenue funding, will serve a similar purpose to the proposed Portal.

The next year of LSIP delivery will build on the learnings and partnership structures implemented in the last 12 months. We will continue to work flexibly so that the LSIP remains responsive to immediate skills challenges, and will continue to work with our partners to promote wider employment and skills interventions which are aligned to LSIP ambitions.

Our focus will be on supporting business with workforce planning, promoting investment in training and development opportunities, and trialling different approaches to curriculum design. This will include:

Promoting the workforce planning toolkit

A key objective of the LSIP is to improve the workforce development and planning activities of managers to enable businesses to identify their skills needs and providers to adapt

training accordingly. Worcestershire County Council have developed a workforce planning toolkit, a free resource which provides guidance for businesses to create a comprehensive workforce development strategy. This includes templates for developing a range of supporting documents including:

- Business Strategy;
- Recruitment & Retention Plan & Employer Brand Strategy;
- DEI Action Plan;
- Team Performance Plan;
- Succession Plan; and,
- Training & Development Plan.

Over the next year, we will work collaboratively with the Council and Worcestershire Growth Hub to promote the toolkit. This will include referring as many businesses as possible to the scheme as part of other LSIP employer engagement activities, and supporting the co-ordination of clinics to provide real time support to businesses in using the toolkit.

Launching the Business Culture Campaign

Informed by the insights from the incentives and benefits research and broader employer engagement, we will launch an awareness raising campaign to communicate the importance of training staff to business owners around the County. The campaign will be a key mechanism for delivering against the third LSIP objective of promoting a culture developing people and talent, and will be a call for action for businesses to recognise their role as both a consumer and producer of skills.

The start of the campaign will be marked by a series of launch events that employers and education and training providers will be invited to attend. As part of campaign development, we will create a campaign plan to March 2025 and share this with partners to enable co-ordination and promotion of key messages. Engagement with campaign materials and events will be closely monitored, and will use existing LSIP forums - e.g. the Board, Skills Councils and Training Provider Steering Group – to communicate learnings and campaign outcomes.

Developing Skills Innovation Labs

A crucial focus of the final year of LSIP delivery will be the implementation of Skills Innovation Labs. Designed as a forum for collaborative testing of different approaches to curriculum design and delivery, the Skills Innovation Labs will help us address both short- and longer-term skill gaps whilst improving our understanding of what works locally to inform future training development.

Outcomes of the skills mapping exercise suggest that the focus of the Skills Innovation Labs will be on exploring adaptations to existing training to better meet the needs of local businesses. The next Skills Council meetings will be used to collectively agree the skill gaps to be explored further, using the deploy, adapt, import and develop model. LSIP funding will then be used to pilot different approaches, offering opportunities for employers to drive curriculum design and a forum for education and training providers to respond to local demand.