

Business
West

Gloucestershire
LSIP Report
JUNE 2024



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"I welcome the publication of the Local Skills Improvement Plan Progress Report for Gloucestershire. These reports set out progress made on meeting the skills needs of local employers. As well as being a valuable source of information for local skills deliverers, employers and stakeholders, the reports along with the LSIPs themselves, will provide important intelligence for the newly established Skills England."

Minister for Skills, The Rt Hon Baroness Smith of Malvern

This progress report has been prepared in accordance with Local Skills Improvement Plans: Stage 2 Guidance (dated November 2023) and is intended to review progress against the local skills improvement plan published in August 2023.

This report was produced in June 2024, but publication was delayed due to the pre-election period.



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1. Who is this publication for?

The annual Local Skills Improvement Plan Progress Report aims to illustrate the developments that have taken place in Gloucestershire in Stage Two of the delivery of the LSIPs. This will look at progress towards actions identified in Stage One of the LSIP, as well as any subsequent actions that have been highlighted by contributors to the LSIP. This report will also look at stakeholder and employer relationships in the local area, the expenditure of the Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF), what has been achieved to date and what we as an area made up of diverse stakeholders, businesses, providers, learners and other agencies still want to achieve. It will also seek to contextualise any changes to the economy or local strategy in the area and align with the goals outlined in the Gloucestershire Devolution agreement which is “designed to drive economic growth and change public services to the benefit of people who live and work in Gloucestershire” (<https://www.gloucester.gov.uk/devolution>).

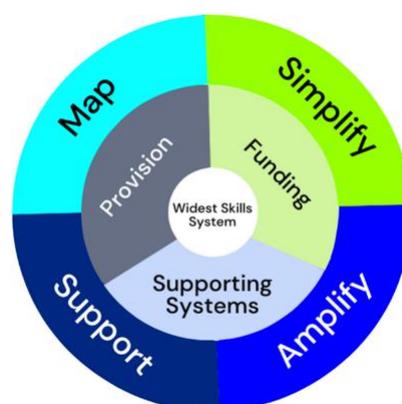
This report is written with the contributors of the LSIP in mind, including, but not exclusive to, employers, training providers, further education institutions, Local Authorities and stakeholders. The aim is to provide an overview of the second year of delivery, highlighting the knowledge and needs that have been identified, the actions that have been formulated in response to these needs and the positive impact that can already be seen across the local area as a result of the LSIPs.

Employers may find it useful to see which skills needs are most widely reported and in demand in their sectors and areas; these can be found in full in the Priority Findings updates [here](#). It is hoped that this will provoke further conversation and planning around workforce development and skills development.

Training providers and education institutions will be able to use the priorities and actions set out in this report to best modify and develop provision that will meet the skills needs of employers now and in the future. Local Authorities can also develop provision for those further away from the workplace or already in employment that require upskilling or reskilling to ensure their roles are suitable for the changing economic landscape.

It is hoped that this report will amplify the work that is already being done in response to these identified needs, promoting existing, and encouraging further, positive collaborations across the local area and galvanise further engagement with the wider skills system.

This report shows progress made in Year Two of the LSIP, however the [initial LSIP Report](#) published in August 2023 will provide fundamental context for this report.



2. Summary of the LSIP:

This Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) for the Gloucestershire local area has been produced by Business West Chambers of Commerce as part of the national LSIP delivery, producing a selective skills analysis aligned to collaboratively chosen sectors from the perspective of employers and incorporating views and input from stakeholders within Gloucestershire, nationally and those from the skills sector. During the process of the LSIP, core functions of the LEP have been transferred to local government, however the LSIP continues to operate on LEP geographies, and the objectives and delivery remain unaffected, barring a change in the external advisory structures which now sits within Gloucestershire County Council (GCC).

Sectors were selected based on the following criteria:

- High Value (GVA) - as measured by most recent statistics.
- High Employment - as measured by the most recent statistics.
- High Growth Potential – expected to be capable of significant above trend growth in the near future subject to barriers being addressed.
- High Need/Change - expected to be or currently subject to significant barriers to growth or adverse business conditions in near future (e.g., workforce recruitment and retention, technology including automation, skills development, significant regional capacity loss etc)

Based on the above criteria the sectors chosen as priority focus for Gloucestershire are:

- Digital Industries (IT, Tech and Business Services)
- Agriculture, Agritech and Land Management
- Construction
- Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering

As well as looking at the sector specific skills needs for each of the sectors, the LSIP will also be looking at the following cross cutting themes:

- Sector Specific and Technological Change
- Critical Workplace, Core and Transferable Skills (including Core Digital)
- Net Zero Skills

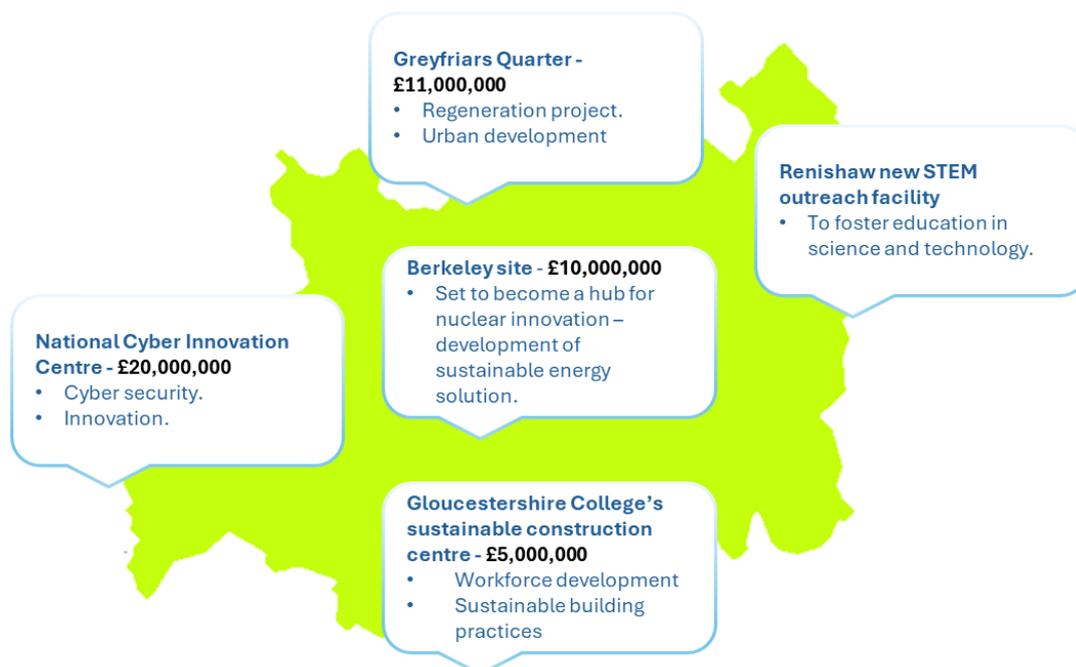
The primary focus of the LSIP's intended outputs is towards Post 16 Technical Education and providers of Post 16 education (Further Education), but the findings may be of use and benefit to others within the education, skills and support systems.

The aims of the LSIP are as follows:

- Gather and interpret employer intelligence about unmet skills needs within their existing workforce and for new entrants to the workforce.
- Assist providers to act on this intelligence alongside existing research into and understanding of shortages, regional and occupational priorities, and known change to sectoral needs.
- Help with decision making for potential changes to existing core post-16 technical provision, to help close the gap between formal learning and work readiness.
- Identify skills needs within employers that may be met with additional non-core curricula delivery.

3. Strategic Economic Update

This report is for Gloucestershire, an area of around 650,000 people with an active workforce of 344,000 and a strong, diverse economy. The area has above average productivity for the South West but lower than national in terms of GVA, low unemployment at 3.1% (March 2023¹), but the highest share of 50–64-year-olds of all neighbouring area and is a net exporter of 18–24-year-olds².



Since the production of the Gloucestershire LSIP report, the key changes not directly resulting from LSIP activities which could significantly affect the strategic and economic context of the area have primarily involved new investments, infrastructure, and programmatic initiatives. This section will outline some of the major announcements likely to influence Gloucestershire's labour market and skills training.

Local Governance and Institutional Changes

As part of a national strategy outlined in the February 2022 Levelling Up White Paper, Gloucestershire's local governance landscape is witnessing significant changes. The government has announced the transition of functions and assets from the GFirst Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to the Gloucestershire County Council, effective April 2024. This move aligns with the government's aim to integrate LEPs into local democratic institutions by 2030, enhancing local governance and accountability³.

¹ From GFirst LEP Jobs and Economic Bulletin, by Jute Blackmon, 2023 ([@HYPERLINK "https://www.gfirstlep.com/downloads/economy/gfirst-lep---jobs-and-economic-bulletin---march-2023.pdf"](https://www.gfirstlep.com/downloads/economy/gfirst-lep---jobs-and-economic-bulletin---march-2023.pdf) <https://www.gfirstlep.com/downloads/economy/gfirst-lep---jobs-and-economic-bulletin---march-2023.pdf>). In the public domain.

² From Gloucestershire Five Foundations of Productivity Evidence Report, by GFirst LEP ([@HYPERLINK "https://www.gfirstlep.com/downloads/2019/gloucestershire_five-foundations-of-productivity_evidence-report_2019.pdf"](https://www.gfirstlep.com/downloads/2019/gloucestershire_five-foundations-of-productivity_evidence-report_2019.pdf) https://www.gfirstlep.com/downloads/2019/gloucestershire_five-foundations-of-productivity_evidence-report_2019.pdf). In the public domain.

³ <https://www.gfirstlep.com/news/a-seamless-transition-for-gfirst-lep-evolution-not-extinction/>

David Owen, the LEP Chief Executive, has been seconded as the Director of Economy and Environment within the County Council to ensure a smooth integration. The majority of GFirst LEP's staff have also transitioned under TUPE regulations.

Investment Highlights

The summaries below provide some context for the economic and structural developments in the local area that we believe will have some impact on Gloucestershire's labour market and subsequent skills need.

Nuclear Innovation at Berkeley

The Berkeley site is set to become a hub for nuclear innovation, thanks to a £10 million investment from Chiltern Vital Group, working with partners like Rolls Royce SMR and the University of Bristol. This initiative now includes a strategic partnership with SGP Industria and Poland's Central Hydrogen Valley to develop sustainable energy solution⁴.

Urban Development and Cyber Innovation

Gloucester city centre is poised for transformation with an £11 million investment from the Levelling Up Fund, focusing on the Greyfriars Quarter. Similarly, Cheltenham is receiving £20 million to facilitate the National Cyber Innovation Centre, positioning the area as a leader in cyber security⁵.

The Western Gateway Partnership, in collaboration with BBRC and regional stakeholders, has initiated new research to identify opportunities for private sector investment to support regional growth, with findings expected by next summer⁶.

Financial and Construction Sector Developments

The launch of the £200 million South West Investment Fund by the British Business Bank, in partnership with GFirst LEP, marks a significant commitment to small business growth across the local area⁷.

In construction, Bromford's acquisition of land in Cheltenham for 180 homes highlights the ongoing residential development⁸. Additionally, Gloucestershire College's partnership with Beard Construction for a £5 million sustainable construction centre underscores the area's commitment to skilled workforce development and sustainable building practices.

Digital and Educational Infrastructure

The cyber tech sector in Gloucestershire continues to expand, with international companies such as Darkscope and TR7 establishing their presence in the area, reinforcing its reputation as a cybersecurity hub⁹. The new STEM outreach facility by Renishaw at its New Mills site further exemplifies Gloucestershire's dedication to fostering education in science and technology¹⁰.

⁴ https://www.investingloucestershire.com/news/berkeley_green_smr/

⁵ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-gloucestershire-67475227>

⁶ <https://www.punchline-gloucester.com/articles/aanews/new-fund-announced-to-unlock-56-billion-regional-investment-western-gateway>

⁷ <https://www.punchline-gloucester.com/articles/aanews/new-fund-announced-to-unlock-56-billion-regional-investment-western-gateway>

⁸ <https://www.business-live.co.uk/economic-development/land-deal-paves-way-180-28538969>

⁹ https://www.investingloucestershire.com/news/tr7_setup_office/

¹⁰ <https://www.business-live.co.uk/manufacturing/renishaw-opens-new-stem-outreach-27334623>

4. Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) Roadmap

This section contains a summary of some of the priority actions developed in the Gloucestershire LSIP throughout 2023-24, both through discussion directly with employers and with the local area's key stakeholders, including through Gloucestershire County Council, district authorities, education and training providers and supporting agencies, including G First LEP prior to their incorporation into Gloucestershire County Council.

There is a full Roadmap table which incorporates all reported sector specific education and training needs and additional actions available [here](#); we have included in this report an indicative selection that are currently underway in various formats, and section 6 and 7 highlight some of the newer identified potential actions as well as progress against these.

Actions identified as required by the LSIP have been categorised as follows:

- Systemic Needs within the wider skills system (provision, support, funding)
- Improving Employer Engagement with post 16 education and training
- Messaging and Awareness to simplify and improve understanding of provision, support and funding
- Measuring Impact to ensure the LSIP has a tangible effect on the wider skills system
- Contractual Outputs as required by the Department for Education in the [LSIP guidance](#)
- Skills Needs Refinement as the basis for ongoing LSIP primary engagement activities
- Provision and Resourcing to highlight direct requests of post 16 providers

Systemic Needs:

Priority	Action/Activity/Milestone	Partners Involved (detail the role and responsibilities of the ERB and relevant partners)	Timescale (start and likely end dates - original and any revisions)	Method of Implementation and outcomes expected	Monitoring arrangements - (how is progress monitored and at what intervals)	Progress Status
Align LSIP activity with Gloucestershire Economic Plan and Local Industrial Strategy to provide	LSIP input provided to support employment and skills priorities within updated Economic Strategy	Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) Employment and Skills Forum	Ongoing, initial activities to support during LEP transition, November 2023 – May 2024	Cross party discussion to ensure maximum feasible alignment of LSIP activities and	Alignment ensured via monthly LSIP meetings with GCC, and via re-established ESF	On track to deliver

collaborative and shared approach to addressing employers' needs as a local area	LSIP Activities in year 3 to be aligned with identified needs	(ESF, as in the GCC Economic Strategy, 2024) and constituent teams through the LEP transition		input of current intelligence of employer need	following LEP transition	
Develop area-wide multi-agency support programme (and clarity of message) for employers who “don't know what they don't know” about future skills needs and opportunities	Topic scope to be agreed via the ESF to ensure shared assistance across Gloucestershire for employers to understand need and support routes Combining of Gloucestershire Skills Portal and Careers Hub website (GCC), refresh of content and links to ensure visibility and access	All stakeholders and supporting agencies, with integrated support from providers and Growth Hubs	Ongoing, initial discussions underway, <i>expected first proposal April 2024</i>	ESF to set scope and ToR for area-wide working group	LSIP and GCC co-ownership and division of tasks and capacity	On track to deliver Skills and Careers portal launched by GCC, iterative development of updated content and structure underway.
Create new or update existing database/resource of post-16 provision delivered into the local area to provide clear understanding of training provision available	Initial resource created to ensure shared single source of intelligence for all parties who may benefit	LSIP ERB to assist in development of resource and working group via GCC and/or ESF	Ongoing, initial activities to support during LEP transition post April 24	To investigate existing awareness and resourcing, utilising internal signposting resources and external	LSIP ERB to complete initial scoping activities to provide starting point for ESF, June 2024	On track to deliver
Create a resource of accepted employer skills support bodies and initiatives in the local area	Resource shared with stakeholder, provider and employer audiences in multi-agency campaign to provide clear understanding of employer support provision to aid in regionwide supporting mechanisms	LSIP ERB to initiate first draft, take to GCC ESF for input, approvals and alignment of activities	First documentation completed, awaiting transition April 2024 onwards, resource to be shared Q3/4 2024	To investigate existing awareness and resourcing, utilise internal signposting resources and external agencies e.g. Growth Hubs	LSIP ERB to ensure on initial agenda for ESF once reformed	On track to deliver, to be approved/audited/ shared via GCC
Incorporate into LSIP engagement/signposting where appropriate Multiply and provision towards those with additional needs	LSIP ERB to research and include additional opportunities and initiatives for SEND support, providing greater access to potential labour market for employers and identified best practise	LSIP ERB to incorporate into engagement follow up activities and year 3 outputs	Complete, ongoing delivery	LSIP ERB to research, create campaign and individual signposting and to disseminate via SAP and stakeholder organisations	Number employers engaged in services, testimonials/ referrals	Completed research/resource, on track to deliver dissemination

Employer Engagement:

Priority	Action/Activity/Milestone	Partners Involved (detail the role and responsibilities of the ERB and relevant partners)	Timescale (start and likely end dates - original and any revisions)	Method of Implementation and outcomes expected	Monitoring arrangements - (how is progress monitored and at what intervals)	Progress Status
Investigate potential of a technical education placements support programme	Develop a county-wide collaborative approach to ensure responsive employer support to placement needs within Post 16 education	LSIP ERB to raise via advisory panel, April 24 onwards, to work with careers services and others	Timescale to be discussed and approved via advisory panel, April 2024	LSIP ERB to assist in development of resource and working group via GCC and/or ESF	LSIP ERB to ensure on initial ESF agenda once reformed	Not yet started
Encourage employers to provide opportunities to learners and to improve Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG)	Assist in the development of up-to-date pre- and post-16 careers information reflecting changed roles, technical skills and entry pathways	LSIP ERB to incorporate existing intelligence, working with Careers Hub leads and CEC on potential for pan-area resource development	LSIP incorporation complete August 2023, ongoing partnership activities	Agreed adoption of systemic supporting initiatives and/or resources towards employers needs	LSIP ERB to ensure on initial ESF agenda once reformed	Completed, ongoing, to be reviewed
LSIP integrated and expanded referrals and signposting service for all engagements, to be aligned with existing support ensuring collaboration with those already delivering in	Comprehensive direct and tailored signposting and referrals to be built into LSIP activities, additional resource within LSIP team for workforce development requirements as identified	LSIP ERB to incorporate into all employer engagement activities	Completed, ongoing refinement	LSIP ERB to use prior engagement with and understanding of widest skills system to provide value to employers	Minimum bi-annual review of signposting	Completed, ongoing, to be reviewed

the local area's areas of responsibility						
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Messaging and Awareness:

Priority	Action/Activity/Milestone	Partners Involved (detail the role and responsibilities of the ERB and relevant partners)	Timescale (start and likely end dates - original and any revisions)	Method of Implementation and outcomes expected	Monitoring arrangements - (how is progress monitored and at what intervals)	Progress Status
Improve employer awareness of and engagement with post 16 provision, utilising case studies and best practise for content, identify further targeted activities to improve awareness of provision and support	Better understanding of need, greater incorporation of training into growth strategies	With partner ERBs, sector representative organisations, Training Providers and Local Authorities Including Growth Hubs, supporting agencies, and to integrate into local strategy	Ongoing for duration of LSIP project, with intelligence on impact shared for further development	Marketing, shared local vision, strategy, direct engagement	Via direct engagement tracking, communications tracking and via partner organisations (through ESF)	On track to deliver
Business West to engage directly with FE education to ensure we can talk with expertise to employers about placements and requirements	LSIP ERB to have direct experience of post 16 technical educational requirements, incorporate into messaging and supporting services, LSIP ERB to investigate T Level placements and other opportunities to engage with FE provision	LSIP ERB to identify T level and apprenticeship providers to work with on placements	Apprentice secured, initial conversations for T Levels underway, wider work ongoing	LSIP ERB to complete scoping and commence placement programmes	Initial T Level placement agreement underway, Apprentice taken on within Business West	Part completed, on track to deliver

Collaborative clear messaging to simplify employer understanding of provision – changes, needs, involvement, amplify and encourage take up	Secure further engagement and referrals to supporting agencies and take-up of existing provision	LSIP ERB to raise via advisory panel, April 24 onwards	Ongoing during LSIP delivery	Need shared vision to enable clear and concise prioritised multi-agency messaging	Monitoring potentially to be undertaken by LSIP ERB and shared with ESF, or coordinated via council means	Not yet started, GCC
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Measuring Impact:

Priority	Action/Activity/Milestone	Partners Involved (detail the role and responsibilities of the ERB and relevant partners)	Timescale (start and likely end dates - original and any revisions)	Method of Implementation and outcomes expected	Monitoring arrangements - (how is progress monitored and at what intervals)	Progress Status
Investigate potential to measure satisfaction with provision following LSIP engagement	Ensure employer satisfaction and demand is recorded and measured for county-wide planning within LSIP and through post 16 providers in third year activities	LEP transition and devolution deal, Adult Education Budget (AEB), Adult Skills Fund (ASF)	Timescale and scope to be discussed and approved via advisory panel, April 2024	Re-engagement and surveying of business engaged with LSIP	Survey results to be shared with providers and external advisory panel	Not yet started
Collaborate with providers to ensure new provision meets employers' needs	Ensure providers have timely sight of employers' needs reported to the LSIP to integrate response to changing modalities and requirements	LSIP ERB with education and training providers	Ongoing throughout LSIP delivery	To share research updates annually and provide both group and individual discussion sessions	LSIP ERB to provide minimum quarterly invites to all education and training providers identified	Ongoing, on track to deliver
Develop agreed project metrics and performance indicators to ensure project performance can be evaluated for impact and progression	LSIP Impact metrics to be discussed and agreed via ESF (or through GCC prior to re-establishment)	LSIP ERB with advisory panel and all providers	Timescale and scope to be discussed and approved via advisory panel, April 2024 onwards	Agree metrics to record, utilise ERB for aggregation of statistical analysis	LSIP ERB to prepare and provide analysis on minimum quarterly basis	Not yet started
Review responses to LSIP via direct response, accountability statements and LSIF progression	LSIP ERB to analyse, discuss and share reviews of accountability updates and informal updates from ITPs Ensure FE providers are aware of and responding to LSIP outputs	LSIP ERB to undertake internally, reliant on FE and ITPs, to discuss with GWP for ITP input	Requests to FE Providers for updates and response April 2024 and 2025, review of accountability statements June/July 2024	LSIP ERB to propose and coordinate in partnership with GCC intelligence and ESF	LSIP ERB to report via the ESF	Not yet started

Utilise additional quantitative metrics to both measure impact and better understand need	Utilisation of locally agreed (and known) metrics towards post 16 technical provision uptake and change in provision	LSIP ERB with advisory panel to outline potential metrics, capacity and access	Timescale and scope to be discussed and approved via advisory panel, April 2024	GCC and LSIP ERB to agree joint capacity and need	LSIP ERB to report via the ESF	Not yet started
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Skills Needs Refinement:

Priority	Action/Activity/Milestone	Partners Involved (detail the role and responsibilities of the ERB and relevant partners)	Timescale (start and likely end dates - original and any revisions)	Method of Implementation and outcomes expected	Monitoring arrangements - (how is progress monitored and at what intervals)	Progress Status
Research – deep dives and continuation, understanding employers' needs	Refine and develop understanding of local area skills needs against priority deep dive topics outlined in LSIP Report 2023-24	LSIP team in partnership, utilisation of secondary research	Initial findings March 24, updated report Jun 24	Internal function, ongoing, ongoing discussion with GCC, district authorities and FE colleges	LSIP ERB to outline intended activities with ESF	Initial decisions made, outline operational plan in preparation
Develop lighter touch modes of LSIP engagement for employers with time constraints	Develop survey and short self-service portal to ensure SMEs can input into LSIP findings with less time commitment and receive similar signposting and support from LSIP activity	LSIP ERB to develop and gain approval via GCC	From April 2024	Utilisation of internal resource to develop against LSIP progress and priorities so far	Internal project management oversight	Ongoing
Further investigative work into needs for the 'green economy'	Develop through additional secondary research and partnership activities a clear understanding of priority sectors for green aligned skills needs, timescales and requirements	LSIP working in partnership with GCC, Climate Leadership Gloucestershire and District Authorities	First green provision supply and demand project to be completed March 2024	Initial secondary research and provide surveying, ongoing refinement of outputs developed in partnership	Project outputs decided in partnership with GCC	On track to be delivered

Provision and Resourcing:

Priority	Action/Activity/Milestone	Partners Involved (detail the role and responsibilities of the ERB and relevant partners)	Timescale (start and likely end dates - original and any revisions)	Method of Implementation and outcomes expected	Monitoring arrangements - (how is progress monitored and at what intervals)	Progress Status
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Since the Gloucestershire LSIP inception numerous skills needs have been directly reported and are under consideration for response and further refinement of need and response. The [Priority Findings Documentation](#) previously released in March 2023 and 2024 breaks down these skills needs into sectoral and workforce requirements and therefore these are not included here. Directly reported and underlying needs are being addressed through FE Colleges, Independent Training Providers and Higher Education Institutions. Some of these activities are highlighted in Section 6 of this report, with further releases to follow based on both direct input and review of FE Accountability Statement updates. Business West as designated ERB for the Gloucestershire LSIP will continue to review and input into the response from education and training providers to ensure alignment with needs as reported via the LSIP and identified through other routes.

5. What Has Been Achieved So Far?

Significant progress towards employer needs has been made across the local area through multiple agencies and we have already seen significant impacts from the new provisions and changes, in response to and aligned with the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), such as those funded by the Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF) and the overall Further Education (FE) provision.

Below, we highlight a selection of activities that are either underway or completed, addressing the needs identified through LSIP activities to date. These include:

- New, improved, or changed provisions
- New relationships
- Changes to the way support and training are described
- New partnership activities

The LSIP is a great opportunity to galvanise change and raise awareness of the responsiveness and flexibility of the post-16 FE system, as well as those who support employers, employees, and learners.

Please note, skills needs and their subsequent actions that were identified in Stage One of the LSIP are still relevant, a summary of all needs identified to date can be found in the [Priority Findings](#) for each sector by local area.

What are we doing?

As the Employer Representative Body conducting the LSIP, Business West has conducted individual broad sector-based interviews, topic-focused deep dive interviews (refining topics previously explored in year one), focus groups, wider skills discussions, and co-design sessions with employers, partners, and providers.

We have collated the most prominent needs in Gloucestershire, focusing on our core areas of need identified in the earlier stages of the LSIP: Sector-Specific and Technological Change, Net Zero Skills, and Critical Workplace, Core, and Transferable Skills.

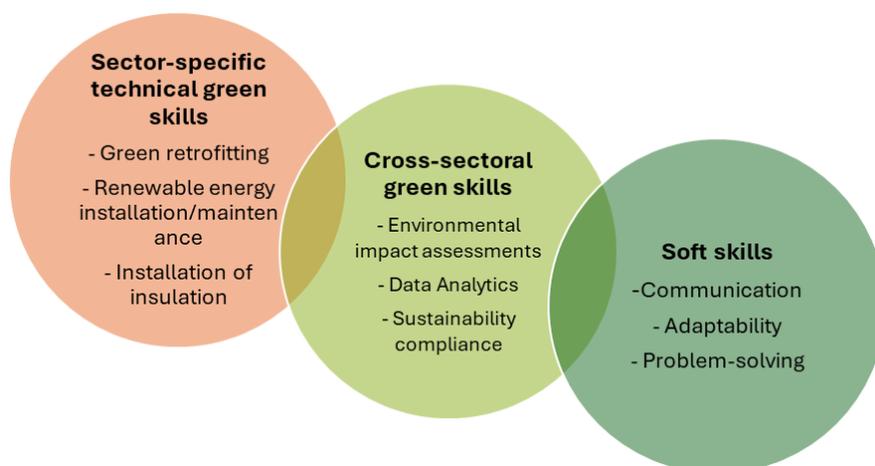
To date, we have had 331 meaningful engagements, resulting in 557 hours of conversation with employers, partners, and providers in the local area.

Identified Need: The importance of decarbonisation of industry and accordant green skills planning within the curriculum has been highlighted by LSIP contributors and is a priority within local and district government, as outlined in documentation such as the [Economic Strategy 2024-2034](#). However there needs to be a better **understanding of the upskilling needed for green jobs and roles, and more clarity for employers on the opportunity attached to the growth of the green economy** and investment in affiliated green skills and career pathways.

Action: Business West has – with partners including Gloucestershire County Council – been developing a Green Skills-centred subproject in response to the actions identified in year one of the LSIP, to run alongside the core research project for a shorter period. In this subproject, we have begun to examine existing shorter format green skills provision delivered into the local area, whilst also aiming to reach a shared definition of green skills and to identify further demand for sector-specific technical green skills courses which will shape procurement and provision into the future.

In parallel to this, Climate Leadership Gloucestershire has recognised the need for a Green Skills Co-Ordinator. This role will sit within GCC's Employment & Skills hub and will be recruited to in Summer 2024. GCC has secured funding for an initial period of 2 years for this role.

Impact: The intention of this project is to raise awareness of existing provision and identify demand and gaps in delivery. Once this has been determined, we can integrate amplification of the existing provision and provide data around required topics and methods of delivery to education and training providers to help inform the modification and development of provision going forward. There has been a clear preference towards short, sharp training courses, as opposed to longform training such as apprenticeships, when looking at Green Skills provision in the county.



Identified Need: Contributors to the LSIP have highlighted the need for improved **Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance**, particularly around accessibility for employers and learners around training opportunities, **skills needed and career pathways**.

Action: The LSIP delivery team are currently reviewing the [Gloucestershire Skills and Careers Portal](#) to ensure that content is aligned and updated with LSIP gathered intelligence, and also reviewing the structure and format for ease of access/use as an existing county-wide resident, learner and employer facing portal.

Impact: We will be working closely with Gloucestershire County Council, Gloucestershire Employment and Skills Hub and The Careers and Enterprise Company to monitor engagement with the portal and the subsequent impact on the local jobs market. In addition to providing clear information for employers and individuals to access training in Gloucestershire, this resource will strengthen CEIAG in schools across the County.

Identified Need: Earlier careers guidance intervention has been repeatedly highlighted as a concern by both employers and partners. The current method of engagement at the Year 10 level is thought to be too late, especially when trying to engage students in STEM topics. LSIP contributors felt that engagement before secondary school is ideal, but engagement before GCSE subject selection is an absolute necessity. More support and guidance for parents and carers navigating careers advice were also frequently requested.

Action: During Stage Two of the LSIP, we hosted a series of "Meet the Expert" events to showcase the scope of roles available across industries in the local area. These events included sector-specific topics such as "Electrical Skills for Energy Transition" in the Construction sector, as well as deep dives on topics with reported skills gaps across multiple sectors, such as "Mastering B2B Sales Essential Skills."

Impact: In addition to highlighting more roles within the sectors, these webinars provided attendees with insights into some of the key skills needed within each sector. It is hoped that this increased knowledge and understanding of the sector and roles within, will encourage further uptake of roles in the industry both for those new to the workplace and those looking to change career.



Identified Need: Improving employer awareness of and engagement with post 16 provision is an ongoing LSIP priority, as well as maintaining the involvement of partners and providers. By establishing a sense of ownership in the programme from Growth Hubs, Training Providers and supporting agencies, the actions and priorities will be better integrated into Gloucestershire strategy.

Action: Throughout the LSIP to date, we have maintained a collaborative approach with employers, partners, and providers in the local area, aiming to galvanise change by gaining input and investment in the future planning of the wider skills system. We have been utilising case studies and best practise for promotional content as well as showcasing the impact of the LSIP so far. We have continued working with LSIP contributors to identify further targeted activities to improve awareness of provision and support, in the second year of the LSIP, this was achieved by publishing updated findings and inviting discussion through written responses, one-to-one meetings, and attendance at one of our three Gloucestershire Co-Design sessions.

Impact: *“By sharing knowledge and understanding among a wide variety of partners, the LSIPs offer a solid platform for businesses to be part of the key debate about meeting local skills requirements with a view to help stimulate growth and economic activity in the region. We are pleased to support them.”* - Sam Holliday, FSB Development Manager at Federation of Small Businesses – FSB

Identified Need: For many employers in the local area, **understanding their bespoke skills needs, the scope of existing support and awareness of how to access** is a barrier to engaging with the wider skills system.

Action: During Stage Two of the LSIP, Business West introduced Business Skills Advisors to provide bespoke skills analysis and advice for businesses on a one-to-one basis, both in person and online.

Impact: The in-person sessions have been held at co-working spaces across the county to further promote the LSIP within its representative area and to ensure the resources developed in response to Stage One LSIP actions are accessible to all employers. In addition to raising awareness of funded support and amplifying existing provisions, the Business Advisors can advise on:

- People and skills needs
- The most relevant training providers
- The best training solutions for your business
- Apprenticeships/apprenticeship levy
- Upskilling your existing workforce
- Internships and work experience
- Low carbon and green initiatives
- Workplace culture and wellbeing

These sessions will continue into Year Three of the LSIP on a rolling basis, available both by appointment and as drop-in sessions.



What is the LSIF doing?

Gloucestershire was awarded £2.5 million in funding from the Department for Education through the LSIF, covering April 2023 to March 2025. As the lead provider for the local area, South Gloucestershire and Stroud (SGS) College has overseen the funding, enabling the four FE colleges within Gloucestershire (SGS College, Cirencester College, Gloucestershire College, and Hartpury College) to work collaboratively. This collaboration aims to create a county-wide approach to narrowing skills gaps and avoiding duplication while completing their own internal projects.



Identified Need: Collaborate with providers to **ensure new provision meets employers' needs** and ensure providers have timely sight of employers' needs reported to the LSIP to integrate response to changing modalities and requirements

Action: The LSIF has been used to develop and refurbish learning environments, purchase equipment, and upskill staff for the priority sectors outlined in the LSIP, as well as the cross-cutting themes.

Cirencester College has purchased new specialist IT equipment for the delivery of the Cyber Security T-level and invested in new IT equipment and furniture for the new library function, incorporating digital skills development.

Gloucestershire College has used LSIF funds to purchase equipment and teaching resources for their construction centre at the Cheltenham campus. They have also invested in staff development, particularly in training around renewable technologies, enabling them to teach green skills and recruit more staff to accommodate increased learner numbers.

Hartpury College has focused on Agri-Tech, developing and delivering short courses on technological advancements and digitalisation in agriculture.

Impact: This equips the current workforce with the skills to support key business decisions and innovation, ultimately driving efficiency.

How are FE and other training providers responding?

SGS College, outside of their direct response through the LSIF, continue their involvement and engagement of Business West and the LSIP into their existing employer engagement activities, development of additional collaborative activities and direct teaching staff experience and integrations, with examples of activities including their Annual Employer Conference and staff awareness days, with employment readiness highlighted as a [particular thematic](#) priority highlighted from prior LSIP outputs and their own research initiatives,

Gloucestershire College have outlined within their accountability statement a significant investment aligned with LSIP priorities, including a new construction centre development in Cheltenham incorporating training for electrical trades and addressing labour market shortages. Critical skills and soft skills have been highlighted in their strategic planning to be reinvigorated across curriculum areas through greater integration of employer engagement activities and specific initiatives in digital skills and ongoing proactive partnership activities towards the cyber cluster centred around Cheltenham and Gloucester.

Identified Need: A key theme throughout the LSIP to date has been to **amplify the existing provision in the local area**, act as a signposting service for all engagements and to be aligned with existing support ensuring collaboration with those already delivering in the local area's areas of responsibility.

Action: Adult Education in Gloucestershire, managed by Gloucestershire County Council, has further developed its IT provision to take account of the digital skills needs identified via the LSIP. In response to the LSIP, Hartpury University and College are leading a skills review, as outlined in their most recent accountability statement, aligned with the LSIP priority sectors. Additionally, they are reviewing provisions adjacent to the immediate LSIP priority areas and have developed their own agriculture and livestock foundation program, set for delivery from September 2024.

Impact: *"We are especially keen as a college on working with other providers in a strategic and joined up way to ensure that the collective curriculum offered meets the needs of both young people as well as the county's workforce for the future."* - Sara-Jane Watkins, Principal at South Gloucestershire and Stroud College

What is the local area doing? (Strategy, support, procurement, and planning)

GCC has led the development of and publication of the [Gloucestershire Economic Strategy](#). Add hyperlink. This was published in May 2024 and includes chapters on employment and skills and business support that are directly aligned with the LSIP.

GCC has begun initial consultations with DfE and the colleges in Gloucestershire over Adult Education Budget (AEB) devolution, as part of a possible wider devolution deal for Gloucestershire. The intention is to develop a co-produced approach to this in the County.

GCC has accelerated its work on Social Value and this includes substantial ongoing investment in employment and skills in the County, including apprenticeships, jobs for disadvantaged residents, careers talks, interactive careers activities and events.

"This piece of work is more important than ever given the evolving economy and associated challenges that lie ahead." - Andy Collop, Vice-Chancellor, Principal & CEO at Hartpury University and Hartpury College

What is industry doing?

Identified Need: **Digital literacy and improving digital skills** has been a recurring theme through our research in each of our core focus sectors, with many employers stating that basic IT skills are a preference when recruiting over more specific technical abilities.

Action: All FE Providers have integrated additional prioritisation against LSIP identified critical skills needs including digital, including via bootcamps and additional T Level in IT, Cirencester College has been working collaboratively with local employers to determine the relevant digital skills needed for the workforce and upskilling staff to deliver these skills. Conversations are also being held with local employers who host work industry placements and T-level placements.

Impact: Digital software updates will also contribute to the wider digital strategy for the College and the local area as a whole. These updates will upskill staff to enable them to deliver the skills needed in the 21st-century workplace.

“Proper recognition of the importance and value of technical skills to the national and regional economy is long overdue and it is only right and fitting that this new approach places employers and local communities front and centre....in fostering a prosperous future for the region.” - Professor Peter McCaffery, Vice Chancellor and Governor at Royal Agricultural University

Identified Need: Contributors to the LSIP have reported that it would be useful to have an **awareness of the funding available** for training.

Action: In addition to the amplification of existing provision within our signposting activities, industry bodies have also begun highlighting their support that aligns with the LSIP priorities. CITB have published a document mapping the products, grants and services they identified to support the delivery of the LSIP and feed into the priority sector of the construction industry, including information of technical education, careers education, CITB grants and funding.

Impact: By ensuring that the existing support is readily available, along with support mechanisms such as funding, it enables employers to easily obtain training and support that aligns with the LSIP priorities, ensuring they are keeping up with expected industry standards.

Testimonials and Partner Impact

To measure the impact of the LSIP, we have collected testimonials and case studies with employers, local authority and further education in the local area to share their experience, how they are involved and the changes they have already seen. Testimonials can be found in full [here](#).

In a video testimonial with Business West, Vicky Lukins, Career Hub Lead for Gloucestershire Careers Hub, within the Gloucestershire County Council told us how she was involved in the LSIP and the impact the LSIP has had so far:

“We’ve made sure that the Cornerstone Employer group (key employers within Gloucestershire) align their objective to the work that’s being done through the LSIP priorities.

It’s really important to ensure from our perspective that young people, schools and teachers understand the future industry skills gaps and skills needs so that young people can be prepared for the future jobs that are going to be out there when they leave.

It’s been really helpful having that information to take to schools and colleges and having that information at our fingertips so that we can go to our careers leaders and schools, we can educate our teachers and say... these are the industries that are growing across Gloucestershire, this is the future skills needs, this is how we can work with you to create meaningful experiences of the workplace for young people to target employers who are going to have a future offer for your school leavers. So, it’s been really beneficial to have a steer and some guidance on what is going to be the future job market for those young people.

It’s bringing schools and colleges and particularly the FE sector together to collaborate on provision, making sure provision is fit for need, but also making sure that employer voice is key in that provision development.”

6. What Still Needs to Be Achieved?

The focus on year three activities will move away from research and data gathering, towards actions that have been identified in the LSIP to date and evidencing the impacts of these actions, as well as actions that have already taken place. In addition to the actions outlined in the Roadmap tables in section 4 of this report, we have included a selection of the actions we will also be looking to address below.

T Levels, industry placements and business engagement

Employers have expressed concerns about their lack of understanding regarding educational placements like T-Levels, demand and the benefits to providing these. We plan to address this by working to develop an offering in partnership to support and guide employers through a Technical Education Placements Support Programme. This initiative will involve direct collaboration with further education providers and employers to ensure relevant knowledge and placement opportunities. If successful, this programme will encourage more employer investment in technical education placements in the local area and increase the number of industry placements available to students.

Post-16 Technical Education and the response to LSIP priority needs

FE Colleges in the local area are in the process of publishing their Accountability Statements, in which they will respond to the actions outlined in the [2023 LSIP Report](#), as well as the [2024 Priority Findings Updates](#). We will review these statements to monitor the progress of existing actions and identify potential opportunities for collaboration or areas where we can support colleges in achieving these objectives. To further encourage the collaborative efforts highlighted in these Accountability Statements, we aim to create and promote area-wide messaging about the evolving skills needs. Emphasising the importance of collective planning to address skills gaps will reassure employers and students that there is a coordinated approach to skills planning and delivery in the local area.

Short, modular, flexible and stackable training

Many contributors to the LSIP have suggested shorter, modular training as an alternative to longer programs like apprenticeships. This approach is believed to facilitate further upskilling and reskilling, ensuring staff maintain relevant industry skills. The demand for such training is demonstrated by programs like the SGS College Retrofit bootcamps. Our subproject sprints will analyse key areas, including Green Skills, EDI, and Digital Skills, to assess current offerings, identify additional needs, and determine the best delivery methods. We will then collaborate with training providers and local authorities to integrate these insights into future training initiatives.

Further Skills Needs Refinement

Whilst we are moving away from conducting further extensive 121 interviews, we will be continuing with Deep Dives and Refinement activities on topics and themes that were determined to be of interest to the sector and the local area, that we felt required further exploration including the Effective Rollout of Digital System, Smart Farm Management and CAD, Digital and Design Engineering. As with year two, this will be done through continued engagement with employers and partners via 121 interviews and focus groups. We will also be continuing our Meet the Expert series of events, expanding the themes to incorporate topics that have been referenced in the latter portion of stage two of the LSIP.

Information – and Communication - Technologies

Throughout our engagement with employers, partners, and providers, a common theme that has been identified is the skills gap in IT, and the potential need to reinvigorate the terminology ‘information and communication technologies’ or ICT. While the LSIP has focused on emerging technologies like AI and their impact on workplace skills, it has become clear that there is also a need to address fundamental, functional IT skills. To properly understand this need, identify existing provisions, and create new solutions to close this skills gap, we will undertake a task and finish subproject in Autumn 2024, assigning actions to the relevant parties as a result.

Review of LSIP Value and Engagement

The employer, partner and provider engagement we have undertaken to date has given us a broad understanding of how the area views the skills system and the skills needs that are currently in place. As the focus for the next stage of the LSIP is to show the value that has been added to the local area, we think the best way to illustrate this is through action rather than additional in-depth research at this stage. Therefore, we will be moving to a lighter method of engagement for the third year of the LSIP, focusing on gaining additional detail through survey responses and wider skills discussions. These survey responses will also allow us to quantify the data that we have obtained to date, as well as provide a local perspective to national data and show the impact on employers, partners and providers in Gloucestershire by asking these parties to reflect on changes that have occurred since the inception of the LSIP.

Further Skills Needs Refinement

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Integrate LSIP into Changed Local Planning

Following the LEP transition, and to ensure LSIP activity aligns with the Gloucestershire Economic Plan, we will be contributing to the Skills Advisory Panels that have been reestablished within the local area. In addition, we will continue to support Gloucestershire County Council and the constituent teams through the LEP transition via monthly meetings. We will provide up to date guidance and knowledge based on the findings of the LSIP to date, as well as any additional learnings as we gain them, highlighting priority areas of action needed within the area. This collaboration will support the area to achieve their objectives.

Turning Need into Action, Reviewing Impact

The main objective for Business West moving into year three of the LSIP is to ensure that LSIP actions are achievable and can be taken forward for long term impact in the period following June 2025. We will be working closely with employers, partners and providers to support any actions they have been allocated through the LSIP and to amplify this work to show the project's impact in the local area. We are also undertaking further activities and increased promotion to illustrate the impact of the project to date. Through ‘Where Are You Now?’ surveys for both employers and partners we will be speaking with employers who we initially spoke to in year one of the LSIP to monitor the impact they have seen and changes that they have embedded.

In addition to these conversations, we will continue to create video and written testimonials to show the full scope of businesses and partners we have been working with, as well as the variety of actions that have occurred as a result of the LSIP. Furthermore, we will be publishing an impact dashboard to show change as it happens and measure against existing baseline data to illustrate the impact of the LSIP to date.