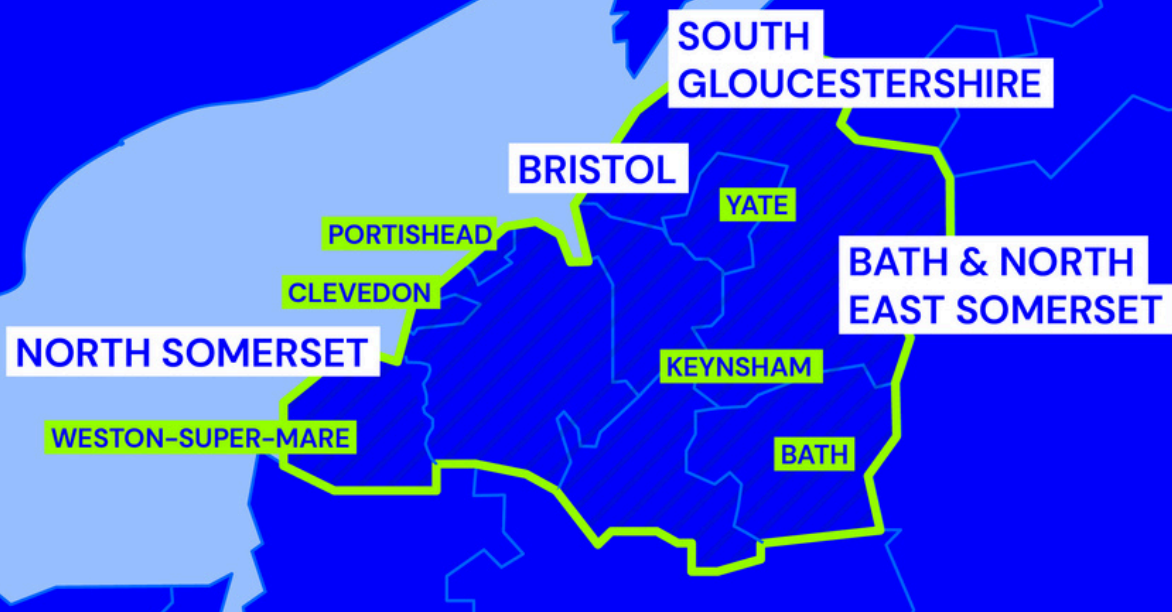


Clean Energy Report 2026

Part of the Local Skills Improvement Plans

WEST OF ENGLAND & NORTH SOMERSET



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"Here in the natural home of new green jobs, the clean energy sector across the West of England has grown by an extraordinary 140% since 2015. The shift to a greener economy is already delivering real opportunities for people and businesses across our region. As investment in renewable energy accelerates and we work to retrofit more homes and workplaces to make them comfortable for people and cut bills and pollution, training and education are essential.

"The West of England has a strong foundation to build on. We are home to a talented, innovative and highly skilled workforce, but meeting the scale of this opportunity means investing in people. From helping workers gain new skills to ensuring young people have access to industry-relevant education and training, we're determined to equip more residents with the expertise that employers need now and in the future.

"By pinpointing where skills shortages are emerging and where support can have the greatest impact, this report can help us shape the programmes, partnerships, and investment needed to create pathways into good jobs, strengthen our workforce, and ensure every community across the West of England can share in the benefits of the clean energy transition."

Helen Godwin, Mayor of the West of England



Executive Summary

This report has been produced as part of the Business West Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) and sets out the skills, training and workforce needs of the Clean Energy sector across the West of England & North Somerset, Gloucestershire, Swindon & Wiltshire, and Somerset. Clean Energy is a priority growth sector for all four local areas, underpinned by the UK's Modern Industrial Strategy and the national Clean Energy Jobs Plan, and is central to each area's net zero and climate emergency commitments. The report combines primary research from conversations with local businesses and stakeholders alongside secondary research to identify local priorities and recommend the changes needed to support the sector's growth.

Key Findings

- Clean Energy is a major and growing source of employment: DESNZ experimental analysis estimates the sector will support around 856,000 jobs nationally by 2030, up from 437,000 in 2023, with the South West set to see the largest occupational growth in construction, electrical and engineering trades.
- Technical and trade skills shortages are the most consistently reported issue, particularly qualified electricians, high-voltage skills, construction and retrofit trades, as well as planning and specialist roles (ecologists, consultants), all of which risk project delays and rising costs.
- Core workplace skills – including sales and communication, stakeholder and community engagement, project leadership, and data and digital skills – have been identified as critical skills to deliver projects effectively.
- Structural barriers – grid and infrastructure constraints, inconsistent installation quality, public misconceptions, economic pressures on businesses, and policy uncertainty – are consistently reported as slowing investment, training and workforce growth across the region.
- Heat and buildings represent the single largest workforce opportunity in the region, with the South West Net Zero Hub estimating a need for around 16,679 FTE workers in insulation, retrofit coordination and low-carbon heating by the late 2030s.

Priority Actions

- Expand funded, faster routes into qualified electrician status, including the Experienced Worker Route (EWR), to convert existing informal workers into qualified tradespeople.

- Deliver a consistent regional messaging and comms campaign on Clean Energy career pathways, demand and co-benefits.
- Develop critical enabling skills (leadership, communication, sales, digital) in post-16 learners and existing employees through accessible, flexible training and knowledge sharing workshops.
- Invest in quality assurance and mentoring for installers to address poor-quality installations.
- Maximise local-first procurement and social value commitments to grow apprenticeships through council-led Clean Energy projects.

What Businesses are Telling us

- *"Need workers who understand how systems integrate for quality energy efficient installs."*
- *"We need to attract more people into every stage of the planning process to overcome bottleneck."*
- *"Need to be able to show the wider co-benefits of clean energy projects to bring more people on board."*
- *"Too many risks and barriers for businesses to offer work experience and take on apprentices at present."*

Introduction and Methodology

Context

This Clean Energy report is published as part of the Business West Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs), covering the West of England & North Somerset, Gloucestershire, Swindon & Wiltshire, and Somerset. The LSIP is a central government-funded research project working to better align post-16 technical training and education with employer needs. In alignment with Local Growth Plans, the UK's Modern Industrial Strategy,¹ and the Clean Energy Jobs Plan² Clean Energy industries have been identified as a priority growth sector across all four local areas within the Business West LSIP geography, reflecting its role in driving economic growth, supporting regional development, and the transition to net zero.³

As per the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022, LSIPs have a responsibility to consider the skills for Net Zero, adaptation to climate change or other environmental goals.⁴ This includes a requirement to consider the priority occupations to deliver the Clean Energy Superpower Mission and accelerating to Net Zero by 2050, set out in the Clean Energy Jobs Plan.⁵

This Report Aims To:

- Summarise the Clean Energy Landscape across Business West's LSIP areas
- Provide qualitative business insights into skills, training needs and challenges
- Recommend next steps and changes to better support the Clean Energy sector

The LSIP is focused primarily on the skills, training needs and the support or changes needed to overcome current or predicted shortfalls at a local level. Whilst strategic and national barriers for the clean energy sector cannot be overlooked (grid and infrastructure limitations, government messaging and investment etc.) the primary aim of the LSIP is to identify the local skills and training needs for the sector to succeed. Please be aware that wider barriers and recommendations are fed back to local councils, and national bodies including Skills England.

¹ Department for Business and Trade, The UK's Modern Industrial Strategy (November 2025)
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/69256e16367485ea116a56de/industrial_strategy_policy_paper.pdf

² Department for Energy Security & Net Zero, Clean energy jobs plan (2025)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clean-energy-jobs-plan/clean-energy-jobs-plan-html>

³ For further information see main LSIP webpage: Business West, Local Skills Improvement Plans
<https://www.businesswest.co.uk/advice-services/growing-a-business/local-skills-improvement-plans/>

⁴ Section 1(6) of the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022

⁵ Gov.UK Guidance for developing a Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) (2025)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-skills-improvement-plans/guidance-for-developing-a-local-skills-improvement-plan-lsip>

Methodology

For the purpose of this research, the LSIP adopted the definition of 'clean energy' within the Clean Energy Jobs Plan, which includes:

Offshore Wind; Onshore Wind; Solar; Fusion Energy; Nuclear Fission; Clean Flexibility and Smart Systems; Electricity Networks; Hydrogen; Carbon Capture Utilisation and Storage; Long Duration Energy Storage; Greenhouse Gas Removals; Domestic and Non-Domestic Heat Pumps; Heat Networks; Biomethane; Energy Efficiency and Retrofit.⁶

Primary Research

This LSIP is based on robust and direct evidence, combining qualitative employer insight with quantitative labour market data and intelligence. Qualitative insights were gained via one-to-one interviews, sector skill discussions, and wider stakeholder engagement.

With 63 clean energy-specific engagements, covering the broad areas of:

- Business context and growth plans
- Skills needs and shortfalls
- Current training procedures, needs, and preferences
- Current and predicted barriers faced
- Suggested support, changes or interventions to address shortfalls and support the successful transition to cleaner energy.

This was supported by engagements across the LSIP research, including 553 cross-sectorial businesses providing insight into green skills and wider workforce needs as part of a telemarketing campaign.⁷

Secondary Research

The secondary research draws on a combination of national, regional and local datasets to build a robust picture of clean-energy labour-market demand and sectoral strengths across the South West. National estimates of clean-energy employment and occupational demand are informed by experimental DESNZ analysis of the ONS Low Carbon and Renewable Energy Economy (LCREE) Estimates, the ONS Annual Population Survey, and DESNZ workforce projections, providing a consistent baseline for understanding jobs growth across key technologies.⁸

⁶ Department for Energy Security & Net Zero, Clean energy jobs plan (2025)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clean-energy-jobs-plan/clean-energy-jobs-plan-html>

⁷ To view the main Local Skills Improvement Plan Reports (2026) see here: Local Skills Improvement Plans released (Dan Graves, 2026) <https://www.businesswest.co.uk/blog/blog-posts/local-skills->

⁸ DESNZ experimental analysis (2025). See the [Clean Energy Jobs Plan Technical Annex](#) for details

Local-authority projections by the Local Government Association and Ecuity Consulting offer additional insight into the potential scale of low-carbon employment at sub-regional level,⁹ while the South West Net Zero Hub provides detailed local estimates of workforce needs for retrofit and low-carbon heat, including occupations such as heat-pump installers, insulation specialists and retrofit coordinators.¹⁰

Sector-specific intelligence is supplemented by reports from industry representative bodies, including RenewableUK,¹¹ the Offshore Wind Industry Council,¹² Solar Energy UK,¹³ Nuclear South West,¹⁴ and Hydrogen South West.¹⁵ These sources help identify emerging technologies, supply-chain capabilities and investment opportunities across the region's clean-energy industries. Finally, analysis of project pipelines draws on the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) data from the latest Contract for Difference allocation rounds, allowing the report to assess future capacity additions.¹⁶

⁹ Local Government Association, Report: Local Green Jobs Report (2020)

<https://www.local.gov.uk/report-local-green-jobs-report>

¹⁰ Gemserv, South West Net Zero Hub Retrofit Skills Report (2023) <https://www.swnetzerohub.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/SWNZH-retrofit-skills-report-FINAL-2.pdf>

¹¹ Renewable UK, Welcome to Renewable UK: The voice of the UK's renewable energy industry

<https://www.renewableuk.com/>

¹² Offshore Wind Industry Council, Clusters <https://www.owic.org.uk/work/clusters/>

¹³ Solar Energy UK, Solar Energy UK: Empowering the UK solar and storage transformation

<https://solarenergyuk.org/>

¹⁴ Nuclear South West, Nuclear South West <https://nuclearsouthwest.co.uk/>

¹⁵ Hydrogen South West, Hydrogen South West: Accelerate the Change

<https://www.hydrogensouthwest.com/>

¹⁶ Gov. UK, Contracts for Difference (CfD) Allocation Round 7: results

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/contracts-for-difference-cfd-allocation-round-7-results>

Regional Context and Labour Market Intelligence

This section provides an overview of the clean energy landscape in the West of England, Swindon & Wiltshire, Gloucestershire and Somerset. The clean energy assets, projects and employers included in the below mapping exercise were identified through a targeted desk-based review of publicly available sources. Searches focused on local net zero strategies, council climate and energy documents, project developer websites, planning and infrastructure announcements, government datasets, company webpages and relevant regional economic development sources.

Projects were prioritised where they demonstrated clear local significance, such as major generation capacity, grid flexibility, heat network development, clean transport or hydrogen innovation, nuclear and battery supply-chain activity, green skills provision, or a prominent role as a local clean energy employer. The resulting list is intended to provide an indicative snapshot of the clean energy landscape across the selected LSIP areas, rather than a comprehensive audit. Given the pace of investment, planning decisions and technological change in the sector, the project list should be regarded as indicative and may require review and updating before being used for subsequent analysis.

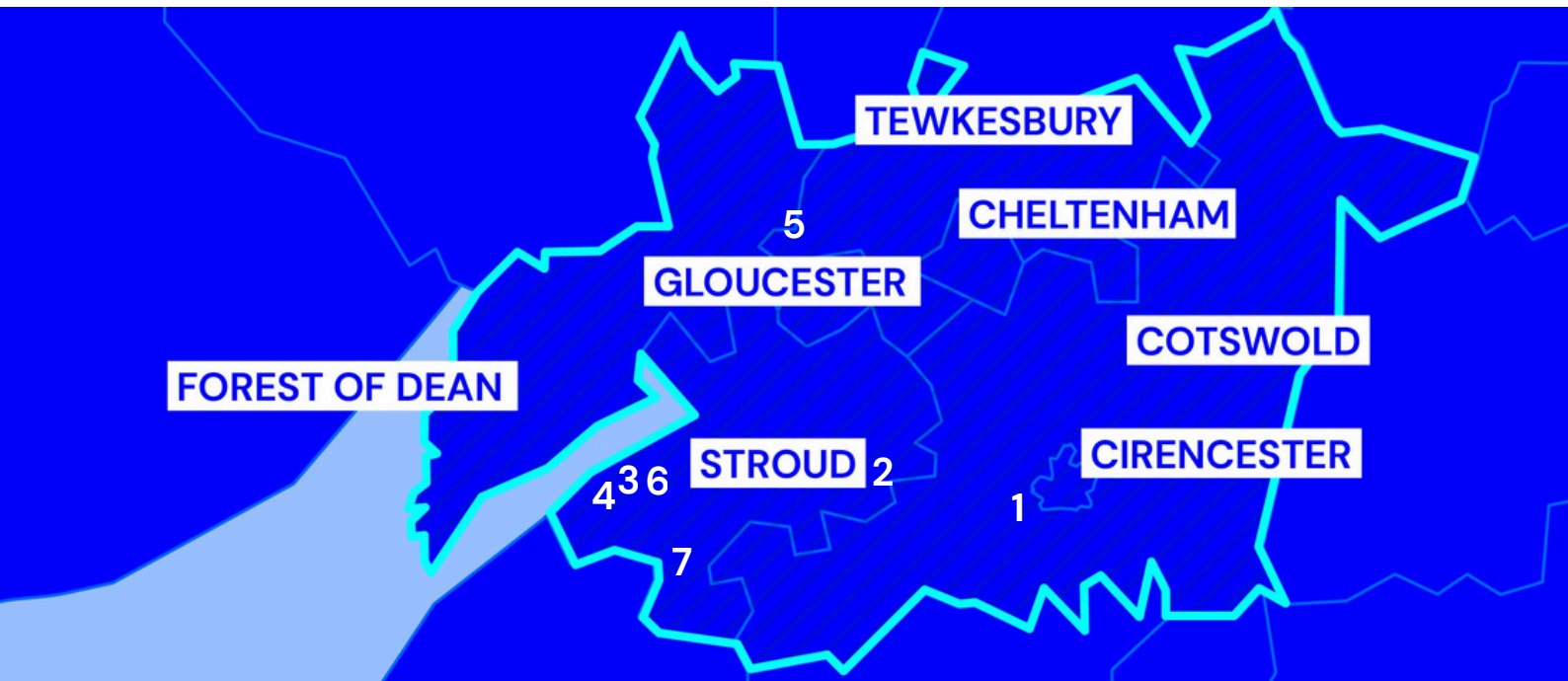
GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Targets

◀ Gloucestershire County Council:

Net zero by 2045 with an interim target of 80% reduction in emissions by 2030, against a 2005 baseline.

Major Clean Energy Projects, Assets and Employers



1. ZeroAvia – Cotswold Airport, – Kemble: A major hydrogen-electric aviation company developing hydrogen fuel-cell and electric propulsion systems
2. Ecotricity – Stroud: Supplies 100% green electricity generated from wind and solar
3. Berkeley Science and Technology Park – Berkeley: R&D, laboratory, office, manufacturing and education space focused on nuclear and clean-energy, including the SGS Berkeley Green Campus
4. Severn Edge Low-Carbon Energy Campus – Berkeley and Oldbury Corridor: Promoting opportunities in new nuclear, hydrogen, renewables and synthetic aviation fuel
5. Maisemore Solar Farm – near Gloucester: A 49.9 MW solar farm with the aim of saving an estimated 16,188 tonnes of CO₂ each year, the equivalent of taking over 10,000 cars off the roads every year. It will generate enough energy for 9000 homes
6. World's End Solar Park – near Berkeley: A 50 MW solar park, with an estimated output equivalent to the annual electricity use of at least 12,501 homes
7. Renishaw – Wotton-under-Edge: Advanced-manufacturing employer producing key components for renewable energy generation

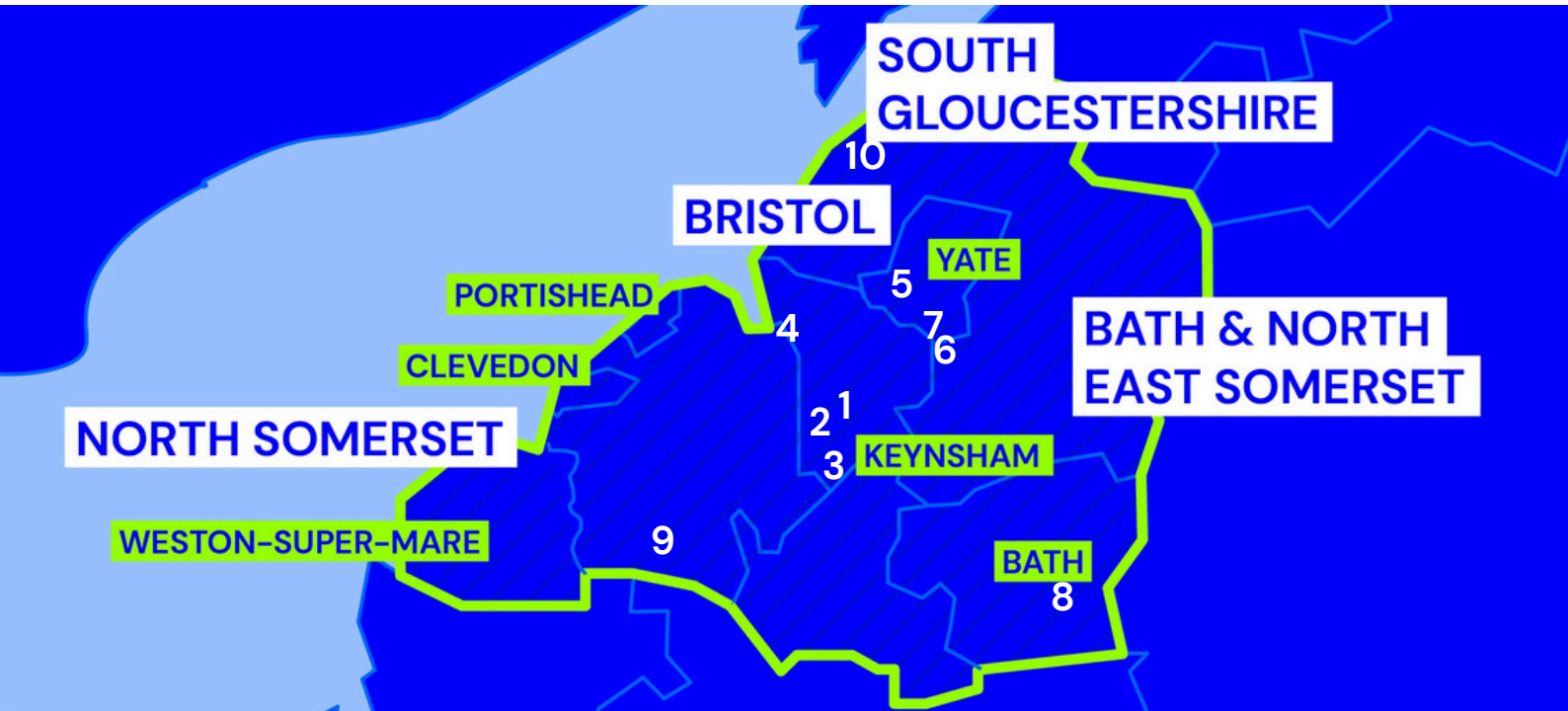
WEST OF ENGLAND AND NORTH SOMERSET

Targets

◀ West of England Mayoral Combined Authority:

Regional target to reach net zero emissions and halt the decline of wildlife and the natural environment by 2030

Major Clean Energy Projects, Assets and Employers



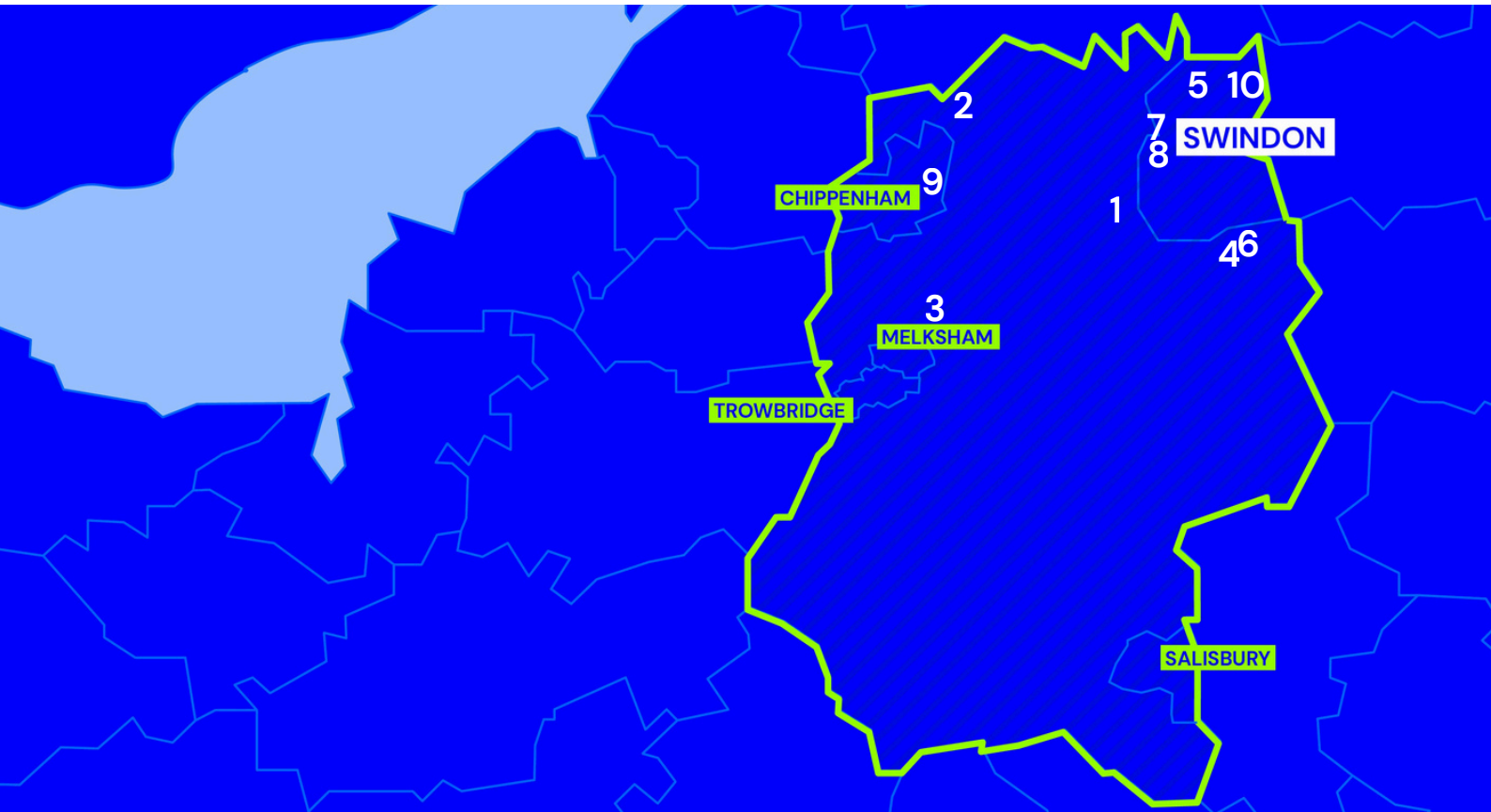
1. **Bristol City Leap:** More than £1 billion of investment across solar PV, heat networks, heat pumps, energy efficiency and EV charging
2. **Castle Park Energy Centre:** Includes a 3MW water-source heat pump supplying heat and hot water to around 2,500 homes
3. **Bath Road Energy Centre – Bristol:** Intended to provide low-carbon heat and hot water for more than 7,000 homes and cut carbon emissions by up to 65% compared with individual gas boilers
4. **Bristol Wind Terminal / Bristol Energy Transition Hub – Avonmouth:** A proposed terminal to support floating offshore wind in the Celtic Sea
5. **Larks Green Solar Farm and Battery – South Gloucestershire:** A 70 MWp solar farm with a 49.5 MW battery
6. **NCC – Emersons Green:** A major wind-blade and composites innovation asset, supporting next-generation wind energy technology
7. **IAAPS, University of Bath – Bristol & Bath Science Park:** £70 million clean propulsion research facility
8. **Bath & West Community Energy:** Community energy organisation with a growing development pipeline
9. **Kitland Solar Farm – North Somerset:** Statkraft has secured planning consent for a 39.9 MW solar farm north of Langford, expected to generate electricity equivalent to the annual use of around 13,000 homes
10. **The Severn Edge Low Carbon Energy Campus – Berkeley and Oldbury Corridor:** Promoting opportunities in new nuclear, hydrogen, renewables and synthetic aviation fuel

SWINDON AND WILTSHIRE

Targets

- ◀ **Wiltshire Council:**
County-wide target to be carbon neutral by 2030

Major Clean Energy Projects, Assets and Employers



1. [PureBiochar –Royal Wootton Bassett](#): Aiming to be one of the largest biochar facilities in the country. Removing up to 18,500 tonnes of carbon – equivalent to the annual emissions of almost 6,000 UK homes.
2. [Minety Battery Storage – Malmesbury](#): One of Europe’s largest battery storage clusters with 150 MW total capacity
3. [Lime Down Solar Park – Melksham](#): Proposed utility-scale solar and battery storage project with an anticipated generation capacity for 115,000 homes annually, subject to consent. A decision is expected by the government in late 2026 or early 2027 following the examination process
4. [Swindon Solar Park – former RAF Wroughton](#): 60.9 MWp solar farm linked to a 15-year power purchase agreement for HSBC’s London headquarters
5. [Chapel Farm Solar Park – Blunsdon](#): 5 MW ground-mounted solar scheme it raised more than £2.4 million from over 800 investors
6. [Common Farm Solar Park – Wroughton](#): 4.8 MW community/council-linked solar park structured to provide community benefit payments
7. [Barnfield Solar Farm – Swindon](#): 2.5 MW private-wire solar PV scheme
8. [Waterside Innovation Hub Battery – Swindon](#): 12 MW/24 MWh battery storage system
9. [Good Energy – Chippenham](#): 100% British-made renewable electricity, UK’s only B Corp-certified home energy supplier
10. [Mount Pleasant Solar Farm – Swindon](#): Proposed 35 MWac solar farm

SOMERSET

Targets

◀ Somerset Council:

The county is working towards becoming carbon-neutral by 2030, alongside local-authority decarbonisation and climate resilience work

Major Clean Energy Projects, Assets and Employers



1. **Hinkley Point C – near Bridgwater:** One of the UK's largest clean-energy infrastructure projects that will provide low-carbon electricity for around six million homes for 60 years
2. **Agratas Gigafactory – Puriton:** A major battery manufacturing investment expected to create up to 4,000 jobs, with initial battery-cell production targeted for late 2027 or early 2028 and full operation in the early 2030s
3. **Somerset Energy Innovation Centre – Bridgwater:** A low-carbon business and innovation hub
4. **Summerway Drove Battery Energy Storage System – Bridgwater:** A 90 MW battery storage scheme intended to store renewable electricity and support grid stability
5. **Watchet Battery Storage Project:** 15 MW battery energy storage project with operation expected by the end of 2027
6. **Evercreech Renewable Energy Anaerobic Digestion Plant – near Shepton Mallet:** Processes around 95,000 tonnes of food and organic waste each year, and can supply green gas equivalent to the needs of up to 8,000 homes
7. **Camp Road Solar Farm – near Yeovil:** 15.23 MW solar farm to supply Leonardo Helicopters
8. **Swang Farm Anaerobic Digestion – Cannington:** A biomethane plant connected to the Wales & West Utilities network, used as a case study of green gas supply to local communities

The development of clean energy industries is central to local areas' ability to meet their climate emergency declarations and net zero commitments across the LSIP areas. There is a clear need to accelerate the deployment of low-carbon technologies across power, heat and buildings. Achieving this requires more than reducing emissions through demand-side measures. It also depends on expanding the local supply of clean energy, strengthening supporting infrastructure and developing resilient supply chains.

This section provides an overview of key clean energy sectors in the South West of England with a focus on the LSIP's four local areas, highlighting both current assets and future growth opportunities.

It is important to note that the scale of new generation, storage and electrified heat set out below is not guaranteed by project pipelines alone, it also depends on the capacity of the local electricity network to accommodate it. National Grid Electricity Distribution (NGED), which covers the South West including all four LSIP areas, reported a regional connection queue of around 19GW as of early 2026, and reform of the national connections process (moving to a "first ready and needed, first connected" model) is still being rolled out.¹⁷ This means the below section should be read as reflecting the pipeline of ambition and opportunity, rather than a guaranteed delivery timeline.

Offshore Wind

Although the local areas covered in this report are not a major centre of fixed-bottom offshore wind generation, they can play a growing role in supporting floating offshore wind (FLOW) development in the Celtic Sea. UK ambitions for the area include the delivery of up to 4–5 GW of floating capacity in the 2030s, with The Crown Estate progressing seabed leasing and development activity.¹⁸

The region's main strengths lie in port infrastructure, engineering capability and innovation assets. The Port of Bristol is positioning itself as a strategic base for turbine assembly, storage and logistics for Celtic Sea projects.¹⁹ This is supported by a wider engineering and manufacturing base across the West of England and Gloucestershire, including firms specialising in composites, marine engineering and systems integration. Research and supply-chain development is further supported by

¹⁷ South West Net Zero Hub, Connections Reform explained (January 2026) <https://www.swnetzerohub.org.uk/connections-reform-explained/>

¹⁸ Celtic Sea want eCluster, Commissioned by the Offshore Wind Industry Council & The Crown Estate, Celtic Sea Cluster: South Wales and South West England <https://www.owic.org.uk/media/jtha5o2y/ruk008-p-02-h-chapter-2-celtic-sea-cluster.pdf>

¹⁹ The Bristol Port Company, Bristol Wind Terminal (BWT) <https://bristolenergytransitionhub.com/#BWT-Pop-Up>

national innovation assets such as the National Composites Centre.²⁰ Taken together, these assets position the LSIP areas as part of a wider enabling hub for offshore wind, with strengths concentrated in infrastructure, innovation and supply-chain participation rather than direct generation.

Onshore Wind

Onshore wind capacity in the local areas remains limited compared with other parts of the UK like Scotland and northern England. However, the region has a modest installed base, consisting mainly of small-scale wind farms and individual turbines.

Recent updates to the National Planning Policy Framework indicate a potential shift towards greater support for onshore wind,²¹ although growth in the local areas is expected to remain incremental and largely community led, with a focus on smaller schemes and integration with local energy systems. The most recent round of the government's Contract for Difference (CfD) scheme awarded no new onshore wind projects in the region, with support instead concentrated on solar development.²²

Solar

Solar photovoltaic (PV) deployment is the most mature and widely distributed form of renewable energy in the South West. The region consistently ranks among the leading areas in the UK for installed capacity due to favorable solar irradiation and the availability of land suitable for both ground-mounted and rooftop systems.²³ Alongside large commercial schemes, there has been a steady increase in innovative delivery models, including community-energy initiatives and peer-to-peer energy trading. Community schemes such as Solar Together, use collective purchasing to reduce installation costs for households and small organisations, helping to expand access to rooftop solar and support local decarbonisation efforts.²⁴

Overall, solar energy remains one of the region's most established and scalable clean-energy assets with expected continued expansion. The latest round of

²⁰ Celtic Sea Cluster, Commissioned by the Offshore Wind Industry Council & The Crown Estate, Celtic Sea Cluster: South Wales and South West England <https://www.owic.org.uk/media/jtha5o2y/ruk008-p-02-h-chapter-2-celtic-sea-cluster.pdf>

²¹ The Guardian UK backs biggest English onshore windfarm in a decade among 190 green energy projects (2026) <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2026/feb/10/uk-onshore-windfarm-new-green-energy-projects-contracts>

²² DESNZ (2026): [Contracts for Difference \(CfD\) Allocation Round 7: results](#)

²³ DESNZ (2025): Energy Trends: [September 2025, special feature article - Regional renewable electricity in 2024](#)

²⁴ Wiltshire Council (2025): [Solar Together 2025 now open as trusted group-buying scheme returns for Wiltshire and Swindon residents](#)

the CfD scheme (Allocation Round 7) shows a strong project pipeline within the LSIP geographies covered in this report. If all awarded projects progress to delivery, they will add approximately 435 MW of new solar capacity by 2029.²⁵ Based on typical UK load-factor assumptions, this would be enough to power around 150,000 homes each year. Alongside increased generation, this growth also creates opportunities to expand co-located storage and smart-energy systems, helping to integrate solar more effectively into local energy networks.

Heat and Buildings

Heat and buildings represent one of the most significant clean-energy opportunities in the South West, driven by the region's older housing stock, high share of off-gas properties and ambitious local net zero targets. Existing low-carbon heat infrastructure is most developed in Bristol, where the established city-centre heat network continues to expand under the long-term Bristol City Leap partnership. A key asset is the Castle Park Energy Centre, which uses a harbour-based water-source heat pump to supply heat to thousands of homes.²⁶ Outside Bristol, Swindon and Wiltshire host several campus-scale schemes such as the Great Western Hospital energy centre, which incorporates heat-pump technology.²⁷

The scale of the retrofit requirement in the South West illustrates the urgency of action and the potential of the economic opportunity. A report published by the South West Net Zero Hub estimates that to reach net zero, the region will need to install around 2.5 million air-source heat pumps, 485,000 ground-source heat pumps and 1.4 million wall-insulation measures across its housing stock.²⁸ At current deployment rates, these upgrades are expected to take 200 years for air-source heat pumps, 278 years for ground-source systems and more than 600 years for solid-wall insulation, highlighting how far delivery currently falls short of net-zero trajectories.²⁹ This gap underscores the potential for accelerating retrofit of the building fabric alongside the expansion of heat networks and low-carbon heating. Delivering both in tandem not only reduces emissions but also supports local supply chains, creates skilled jobs and strengthens the wider clean-energy economy across the South West.

²⁵ DESNZ (2026): author's calculations based on Gov. UK, Contracts for Difference (CfD) Allocation Round 7: results <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/contracts-for-difference-cfd-allocation-round-7-results> accompanying dataset

²⁶ Vattenfall, Vattenfall in Bristol <https://heat.vattenfall.co.uk/where-we-are/bristol/>

²⁷ NHS Great Western Hospitals, Sustainability <https://www.gwh.nhs.uk/about-us/sustainability/>

²⁸ Gemserv and QA, South West Net Zero Hub Retrofit Skills Roadmap (2024) <https://www.swnetzerohub.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/SWNZH-Retrofit-Roadmap-report-FINAL.pdf>

²⁹ South West Net Zero Hub (2024): as above

Nuclear and Hydrogen

Nuclear and hydrogen form two of the South West's most significant clean-energy strengths, underpinning both current industrial activity and future growth opportunities. Hinkley Point C is a key asset in Somerset, supported by a substantial ecosystem of engineering, design and project-management firms across Bristol and South Gloucestershire. This concentration of expertise gives the region a major role in national new-nuclear delivery and positions it strongly for future opportunities in advanced nuclear technologies.³⁰

The wider Bristol city-region also hosts a growing hydrogen and low-carbon innovation cluster. Hydrogen South West showcases a regional ecosystem involving aerospace, ports, utilities, engineering firms and public-infrastructure operators, including organisations such as Airbus, Bristol Airport, Bristol Port, Wales & West Utilities and EDF Hymanics. The region's comparative advantage lies not in large-scale hydrogen production but in enabling infrastructure, system integration and industrial applications – areas where its engineering strengths, transport assets and industrial clusters align closely with national hydrogen deployment priorities.³¹ This is reinforced by recognised technical capability in hydrogen storage and infrastructure: the National Composites Centre (NCC) in Bristol co-founded the national Hydrogen Skills Alliance and has developed composite cryogenic and high-pressure hydrogen storage tank technology for aviation and transport applications,³² alongside open-access hydrogen awareness training delivered with the High Value Manufacturing Catapult.¹⁶

Beyond current operations, Somerset's clean energy credentials continue to grow. Agratas' electric vehicle battery plant at the Gravity Smart Campus is expected to create around 4,000 direct jobs, with many more as part of the wider supply chain.³³ Agratas is already partnering with local providers on bespoke training, including a new fast-tracked battery manufacturing apprenticeship developed with Skills England.³⁴ Looking further ahead, the proposed West Somerset Tidal Lagoon between Minehead and Watchet – while still at an early, pre-funding stage – is identified in both the Somerset Economic Prosperity Strategy and the Somerset LSIP as a future clean energy opportunity, with the potential to power up to 2 million UK homes with low-carbon

³⁰ Nuclear South West, Energising the South West Nuclear Sector, <https://nuclearsouthwest.co.uk/home/>

³¹ Hydrogen South West, About Us <https://www.hydrogensouthwest.com/about-us>

³² National Composites Centre, Composite cryogenic tanks tested with liquid hydrogen by NCC (October 2023) <https://www.nccuk.com/insight-impact/composite-cryogenic-tanks-tested-with-liquid-hydrogen-by-ncc/>

³³ Somerset Council, Momentous day for Somerset as gigafactory plans move forward <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/news/momentous-day-for-somerset-as-gigafactory-plans-move-forward/>

³⁴ Billy Camden, 'Battery apprenticeship unit added after 'rapid' employer consultation' (FE Weekly, March 2026) <https://feweek.co.uk/battery-apprenticeship-unit-added-after-rapid-employer-consultation/>

energy.³⁵ These developments, alongside Hinkley Point C, point to sustained, long-term demand for Somerset's engineering, construction and technical skills pipeline, reinforcing that developing this pipeline is not only about training provision, it also depends on giving young people, career changers and those returning to work meaningful exposure to these industries. Somerset's new Clean Energy Technical Excellence College, hosted by University Centre Somerset (UCS) College Group, offers a real opportunity to strengthen these progression pathways and connect local people to the skills and careers needed to support this growth.

Together, these regional assets highlight a cross-sector proposition with economic opportunities in nuclear delivery, hydrogen infrastructure, clean aviation and power-system engineering. This breadth is matched by strong labour-market demand for higher-value technical and engineering occupations, including project and systems engineering, electrical and mechanical installation, welding, digital design, safety case development and operations and maintenance roles – many of which transfer across energy, advanced manufacturing and transport.

Workforce & Labour Market Data

Experimental analysis by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) using the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Low Carbon and Renewable Energy Economy Estimates shows that clean energy industries require a wide range of technical, professional and operational occupations.³⁶ These roles extend across complex supply chains, and industry feedback indicates that firms often make use of large numbers of contracted and project-based workers.

National projections suggest substantial growth across key occupational groups by 2030. The largest increases are expected in skilled construction and building trades, skilled metal, electrical and electronic trades, and science, research, engineering and technology professions. Demand for corporate managers and directors, operatives, business and public service professionals, and administrative roles also rises sharply, reflecting the breadth of roles underpinning the expansion of clean-energy industries.³⁷

Local estimates for clean-energy occupations are currently produced only at the regional level. While this does not offer the same granularity as LSIP local-area geographies, the South West figures provide a useful and indicative benchmark for

³⁵ Somerset Council, Somerset Economic Prosperity Strategy 2025-2045 <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/business-economy-and-licences/somerset-economic-prosperity-strategy-2025-2045/>

³⁶ Department for Energy Security & Net Zero, Clean energy jobs plan (2025) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clean-energy-jobs-plan/clean-energy-jobs-plan-html>

³⁷ Department for Energy Security & Net Zero, Clean energy jobs plan (2025) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clean-energy-jobs-plan/clean-energy-jobs-plan-html>

assessing workforce needs across the LSIP geographies.

The South West projections broadly mirror national clean-energy workforce requirements, with the greatest demand concentrated in construction, electrical and engineering trades, followed by scientific, technical, managerial and administrative roles. This alignment suggests the region faces the same core skills pressures as the UK as a whole, though with more modest growth in senior corporate roles, reflecting the region's existing industrial base.³⁸

Table 1: Experimental analysis of increase in direct jobs supported by occupational group and region, 2023 to 2030 (FTE values rounded to nearest 500)

Occupational Group	Direct jobs
Skilled construction and building trades	3,000
Science, research, engineering and technology professionals	1,000
Skilled metal, electrical and electronic trades	2,000
Corporate managers and directors	1,000
Process, plant and machine operatives	1,500
Business, media and public service professionals	500
Business and public service associate professionals	500
Administrative occupations	500
Science, engineering and technology associate professionals	500
Elementary trades and related occupations	500
Other occupations	1,500

Source: DESNZ experimental analysis for the South West (2025).

Sectoral Estimates

Sectoral estimates in the Clean Energy Jobs Plan are produced at the national level and represent an upper-bound scenario for potential job creation.³⁹ These projections are modelled using the latest available Low Carbon and Renewable Energy Economy (LCREE) data from the ONS and incorporate DESNZ workforce assumptions for 2030.

³⁸ DESNZ (2025), as above

³⁹ DESNZ (2025), as above.

Table 2: Total jobs supported in clean energy sectors (direct + indirect)

Sector	2023	2030
Offshore wind	31,000	100,000
Onshore wind	13,000	45,000
Solar	20,000	35,000
Heat and buildings	66,000	248,000
Other clean energy sectors	307,000	428,000
Total clean energy	437,000	856,000

Source: DESNZ experimental analysis (2025).

While national estimates offer the most up-to-date and methodologically consistent picture of –clean energy– job creation, there have also been earlier attempts to generate local estimates. These local projections – including those produced for the Local Government Association (LGA) in 2020⁴⁰ – use different methods, assumptions and underlying datasets, and should therefore not be compared directly with the national figures. However, they remain relevant for understanding the broad potential scale and distribution of clean energy– jobs across places.

Table 3: Total jobs estimated in clean energy sectors in four LSIP local areas

LGA 2030 estimates	West of England & North Somerset	Swindon & Wiltshire	Gloucester-shire	Somerset
Low-carbon electricity	5908 (35%)	3300 (30%)	6901 (55%)	6534 (63%)
Low-carbon heat	3255 (19%)	2063 (19%)	1892 (15%)	1339 (13%)
Alternative fuels	677 (4%)	367 (3%)	625 (5%)	264 (3%)
Energy Efficiency	2978 (18%)	1887 (17%)	1732 (14%)	1225 (12%)
Low-carbon services	2156 (13%)	775 (7%)	521 (4%)	372 (4%)
Low emission vehicles & Infrastructure	1956 (12%)	2516 (23%)	914 (7%)	630 (6%)
Total jobs	16,930	10,908	12,584	10,363

⁴⁰ Local Government Association, Report: Local Green Jobs Report (2020) <https://www.local.gov.uk/report-local-green-jobs-report>

Source: Author calculations based on Local Government Association (2020) Local Green Jobs – Accelerating a Sustainable Economic Recovery dataset.

The South West Net Zero Hub’s Retrofit Skills Roadmap provides further evidence on the scale of workforce needs in heating and buildings; a sector identified as one of the largest contributors to future clean-energy employment. Their findings point to significant shortages across several critical roles. Heat pump engineers and electricians, solid wall insulation installers and retrofit coordinators all require annual workforce growth of more than 10% for the region to reach a net zero housing stock by 2050.⁴¹

To meet this demand, the South West will need substantial expansion across key occupations. Estimates indicate a requirement for around 3,263 additional solid-wall insulation installers by 2036 (equivalent to 272 full-time equivalents per year), 360 retrofit assessors and 275 retrofit coordinators by 2032 (45 and 34 FTE per year respectively), and 9,815 additional heat-pump installers by 2040 (660 FTE per year). In total, around 16,679 full-time equivalent workers will be required across project management, insulation installation and low-carbon heating by the late 2030s.⁴²

The largest demand is expected in low-carbon heating, driven by the need for most homes to transition away from fossil-fuel systems. This reflects not only the installation of heat pumps but also the ongoing maintenance, replacement cycles and labour-intensive work involved in converting properties to low-temperature heating systems. Demand for insulation installers is also high, although this peaks earlier and declines over time as installations are completed, reflecting the fact that insulation measures typically require less ongoing maintenance than heating systems.⁴³

⁴¹ Gemserv and QA, South West Net Zero Hub Retrofit Skills Roadmap (2024) <https://www.swnetzerohub.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/SWNZH-Retrofit-Roadmap-report-FINAL.pdf>

⁴² Gemserv and QA, South West Net Zero Hub Roadmap (2024): as above.

⁴³ Gemserv and QA, South West Net Zero Hub Roadmap (2024): as above.

Business Insights and Actions and Changes Needed

The following sections set out what businesses across the LSIP area told us about their skills needs, the barriers they face, and the changes needed to address them. These findings sit alongside, and are consistent with, the workforce challenges identified nationally in the Clean Energy Jobs Plan, which highlights that much of the clean energy workforce transition will need to come from upskilling people already in work rather than new entrants alone, that the workforce includes a significant proportion of older workers approaching retirement within the next decade, and that there remains low awareness of green careers among young people.⁴⁴ The need for improved green careers information was also reflected in the West of England Growth Strategy, which identifies weak green careers awareness and information as a specific constraint on the region's growth.⁴⁵

Table 4: Workforce and Technical Skills Needs

Priority Needs and Shortfalls	Supporting Evidence and Employer Voice	Implications
Qualified Electricians	Electrical skill needs across regions, overall low rates of learners progressing onto Level 3 electrical apprenticeship after Level 1 and Level 2 study. With an 8% fall in electrical apprenticeship starts in the South West in 2025 compared to 2022/23.⁴⁶ <i>"We need workers who understand how systems integrate for quality energy-efficient installs" and "to maintain clean energy installs."</i>	Project delays, rising costs, competencies not there to enable upskilling in clean energy technology, poor installs. The Clean Energy Jobs Plan identifies skilled construction and electrical/electronic trades as the largest sources of projected occupational growth – the low rates of learners progressing to Level 3 poses a direct risk to delivering the Plan's workforce ambitions.

⁴⁴ Department for Energy Security & Net Zero, Clean Energy Jobs Plan (October 2025)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clean-energy-jobs-plan/clean-energy-jobs-plan-html>

⁴⁵ West of England Mayoral Combined Authority, West of England Growth Strategy (2025)

<https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Growth-Strategy-Web.pdf>

⁴⁶ ECA, 2026 Electrical skills gap deepens as apprenticeship starts fall despite surging demand (Feb 2026) <https://www.eca.co.uk/news/2026/feb/electrical-skills-gap-deepens-as-apprenticeship-starts-fall-despite-surging-demand>

Electrical and High-Voltage Skills	Shortages of high voltage skills: <i>"Need the 132kV and above skills, expensive to train. Salaries have doubled to reflect shortage and needs."</i>	Risks to grid upgrades and infrastructure delivery, rising costs.
Construction and Building Trades	Need for core construction and building trade skills, including roofing and plumbing. Companies reported: <i>"It's difficult to recruit people who can combine electrical and solar skills with practical roofing experience. Most candidates tend to have skills in only one area. Electricians are often unwilling to work on roofs or at height, while roofers typically lack the electrical knowledge or qualifications required to complete solar installations. This division between trades creates ongoing operational difficulties."</i>	Core competences are not there for project delivery and potential upskilling. The lack of skills and workforce supply for retrofit and construction was highlighted in the West of England Growth Strategy as constraining the region's ability to meet demand. ⁴⁷
Planning and Specialist Roles	Lack of planners, ecologists, and specialist consultants creating bottlenecks. <i>"We need to attract more people into every stage of the planning process to overcome bottleneck... officers are currently overworked and more likely to lean on processes to slow work down rather than be proactive."</i>	Delays across project lifecycles, hard to find specialist consultants to get projects up and running, key constraint, particularly for large-scale infrastructure projects.
Maintenance Technicians	Need for more technicians to maintain technology, from domestic installs (heat pumps, solar, batteries) to large-scale wind and solar farms. <i>"We need more electricians for solar maintenance" and "technicians to work on wind sites – they're a very specialist environment with more maintenance needs than solar and demand here is expected to grow."</i>	Shortages of skilled workforce to maintain installs and large clean energy sites.

⁴⁷ West of England Combined Authority, West of England Growth Plan (2025)
<https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/about-us/our-strategy/west-of-england-growth-plan/>

"Only by training electricians who are qualified to install the appropriate technology can a building maximise its energy efficiency. To enjoy the safe and reliable electricity we do today, we must train a workforce who are competent to integrate existing electrical systems with low carbon, smart technologies." – Head of External Affairs, ECA

Priority Actions: Building Technical and Trade Skills

The section below summarises the recommendations and next steps to help address the workforce and core skill needs highlighted above, these are regional recommendations that the LSIP will work with local partners to deliver or support.

1. **Experienced Worker Route:** Greater support and funding for the Experienced Worker Route (EWR), to allow electricians working within the sector without proper qualifications to gain a Level 3 qualification and subsequently upskill in clean energy technologies and help meet clean energy targets.
2. **Career Pathways and Support:** More promotion of the roles and pathways within clean energy industries, transition and upskilling pathways and current and predicted demand. Amplifying existing guidance and co-developing new resources where necessary. There should be *"more initiatives across colleges and universities to raise awareness of future-proofed jobs in this sector."*
3. **Planning:** Attracting more people into planning roles, there were successful initiatives mentioned where *"developers have worked with university students to demonstrate how they can best work through planning application processes when developing clean energy sites, which has helped create an appreciation and awareness of the sector that will subsequently help attract new talent in"*. Another initiative launched to try and address the shortages of planning officers was introduced by The British Chambers of Commerce in 2024 with the business-backed Planning Skills Fund.⁴⁸ The Fund aims to support the training and upskilling of up to 100 learners into planning roles within local councils, in partnership with Aviva, and the Royal Town Planning Institute.
4. **Messaging:** Ongoing joined-up marketing and comms campaign to raise awareness of current and potential demand opportunities within Clean Energy – key projects, available training and business support initiatives, workforce demand, etc.
5. **Funding:** Funded support and training for businesses looking to reskill and upskill in the clean energy sector. Provision and awareness varies

⁴⁸ British Chambers of Commerce, Planning Skills Fund
<https://www.britishchambers.org.uk/policy-campaigns/planning-skills-fund/>

significantly across the four LSIP geographies. Business support organisations play a crucial role in delivering this, acting as trusted local intermediaries between national/regional funding streams and the SMEs and sole traders who make up most of the sector's workforce.

Table 5: Workforce and Core Skills Needs

Priority Needs and Shortfalls	Supporting Evidence and Employer Voice	Implications
Sales and Communication	Sales and advocacy skills overlooked but crucial to <i>"bring more people on board"</i>, communicate the wider co-benefits of clean energy projects and ensure the <i>"anti-ESG narrative doesn't win."</i> These skills are vital across roles, from developers and installers to community liaison officers, sales advisors and marketing/comms roles.	Limits uptake of clean energy, poor community engagement and perceptions.
Stakeholder and Community Engagement	Need for stronger partnerships and relationship management to help drive market stimulation and demand. Community engagement has been reported as increasingly difficult, and there is a real <i>"need to be able to show the wider co-benefits of clean energy projects to bring more people on board."</i>	Delays to project delivery, limited buy-in, and missed opportunities with wider benefits of projects.
Project Management and Leadership	Demand for Site Managers, Project Leads, Coordinators and general leadership skills. Including leaders with sustainability knowledge that can work to decarbonise existing practices within the industry.	Delivery risk without leadership capability, the Clean Energy Jobs Plan identifies corporate managers and directors as one of the occupational groups needed to grow to deliver its 2030 ambitions, meaning a shortage locally could constrain how much of the region's project growth can actually be delivered.

Data and Digital	Continued skills needs for data analytics, sensors, and digital tools. Including the ability to effectively monitor and report on data and impact.	Risks to project delivery and energy efficiency prohibits data-driven decisions,, missed opportunities with messaging and comms. The Clean Energy Jobs Plan also highlights the important role of data to deliver efficient, well-monitored clean energy infrastructure, reinforcing the need for more joined-up ways of working and investment in this area.
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Priority Actions: Strengthening Core Skills

The below section summarises the recommendations and next steps to help address the workforce and core skill needs highlighted above, these are again regional recommendations that the LSIP will work with partners to deliver or support.

1. **Developing Core Skills:** Through workshops and webinars like the LSIP Meet the Expert Series to cover core topics for existing employees to access, alongside the promotion of local skills information and support services for businesses to identify and access upskilling opportunities and support. The LSIP team will also work to support greater employer insight days and partnerships to help ensure core skills are developed with post-16 learners through knowledge sharing and work experience.
2. **Co-Benefits of Clean Energy:** Working with key stakeholders to amplify co-benefits of clean energy through events, workshops and shared messaging, considering the wider place-based benefits for the local community and opportunities that can be maximised.
3. **Data-Led Decision-Making:** The LSIPs alongside key partners play a role in providing up-to-date granular insights that can continue to support national decision making and reporting, to ensure regional implementation of national strategies including the Clean Energy Jobs Plan. There is also a need for greater business support and resources on optimising digital and AI usage – for increased business productivity and lower environmental impact through improved efficiency.

Training Modes, Preferences and Barriers

Summary of the most common ways businesses are upskilling their staff, alongside their training preferences and concerns about current standards.

Typical Modes of Training

- In-house informal training with manufacturer and wholesaler training used when required.
- Businesses typically travel outside of the region to complete training. Some of the reasons for this were that their internal network of trusted providers and manufacturers is outside of the region, they were not aware of local training offers, or because of more consistent and ongoing delivery of training through manufacturers or providers outside of the region.

Training Preferences, Concerns and Considerations

- Short, flexible courses outside of working hours (typically no more than 3 days) are the preference of businesses. For courses longer than 3 days, businesses said they would look for the added value of the course and why it is spread across more days.
- Ensuring core competencies with appropriate qualifications first is key to ensuring quality and safety is not compromised with short course delivery.
- Concerns with apprenticeships being *“too long to meet urgent workforce needs and targets.”* More support is needed for faster routes to electrical qualification for existing workers through funding the Experienced Worker Route (EWR), to allow electricians working within the sector without proper qualifications to gain a Level 3 qualification and subsequently upskill in clean energy technologies.
- Employers report that current apprenticeship frameworks do not always reflect clean energy industry needs. Despite companies recognising that apprenticeships are one of the best long-term routes into the industry they often cannot offer an apprenticeship covering the full breadth of experience required, unless through services like the Shared Apprenticeship Scheme.⁴⁹
- There are also specific barriers for people in trades looking to upskill into clean energy. Roofers, for example, already have the roof condition, load-bearing and structural expertise needed for safe solar installation, but face barriers entering the market as Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) accreditation is geared primarily towards electricians.

⁴⁹ See here for more information CITB, Shared Apprenticeship Services
<https://www.citb.co.uk/apprenticeships/hire-an-apprentice/types-of-apprenticeships/shared-apprenticeship-services>

Actions and Changes Needed:

1. **Apprenticeship Standards:** Current apprenticeship frameworks and competence standards should be reviewed jointly with key employers, training providers and accreditation bodies to ensure they reflect the growing clean energy industry needs.
2. **Messaging and Comms:** Consistent shared messaging and comms through regional campaigns to showcase benefits and opportunities for employer engagement to support interest in potential upskilling.
3. **Flexible Offerings:** Providers are working to meet the needs of employers through flexible training and offers of bespoke programmes to match organisation needs. Through discussions with businesses, this should be continued to allow for take-up as and when needed. More joined up regional campaigns (building on the above point) is recommended to raise awareness of the local offer and help encourage greater take up.
4. **Local Opportunities and Partnerships:** Maximising opportunities with local projects and developments, such as the council's regional clean energy commitments (including retrofit and energy efficiency targets), for more local partnerships with a "local-first" procurement approach recommended. This also includes maximising opportunities with social value commitments (e.g., ongoing employer/provider engagement, more engagement with local SMEs).
5. **Transition Pathways for Adjacent Trades:** Clear and accessible transition pathways into clean energy from those with relevant skills and experience – e.g., roofers looking to upskill and work in solar. National Federation of Roofing Contractors (NFRC) is currently working with MCS and industry stakeholders to ensure that expanded pathways into solar installation create opportunities for relevant trades to upskill while strengthening competence and installation quality. The NFRC believe this means widening what 'competence' means for solar installation specifically and recognising roofing expertise as a legitimate and necessary component of accreditation, not just an add-on to an electrical qualification.

"This excellent report demonstrates that all the pieces of the clean energy system matter, but without the right skills available at local level to deliver quality outcomes for residents and businesses we won't go far enough, soon enough. That's why Gloucestershire is building the Federated Green Skills Faculty – an innovative, collaborative approach to upskilling the workforce to enable us to meet the challenges of net zero through the efficient production and consumption of Clean Energy." – Green Skills Coordinator, Gloucestershire County Council

Table 6: Commonly Reported Barriers

Whilst the LSIP is focused on the skills, training needs and the changes needed at a local level, the section below provides an overview of some of the common barriers highlighted in conversations with businesses. These barriers sit outside the direct scope of the LSIP's skills remit and this report, but they shape the environment in which local training and workforce interventions succeed or fail.

Top Barriers	Supporting Evidence and Employer Voice	Implications
Grid and Infrastructure Constraints	Delays and limitations due to grid capacity, especially in rural areas. <i>"Complex and slow process of dealing with Distribution Network Operator (DNO) for grid connections" with Ofgem currently working to reform and accelerate grid connections as a result.⁵⁰</i>	Prevents and slows deployment of renewable technologies, creates ongoing uncertainty for businesses planning workforce and investment decisions.
Poor Quality Installations	Driven by cost pressures and <i>"race to the bottom driven by schemes like ECO4"</i>, alongside lack of public awareness of certification schemes and how people can ensure quality installs through their chosen contractors.⁵¹ <i>*The West of England Combined Authority have launched funded schemes seeking to address quality installation issues including Retrofit West's support with access to Heat Geek and Bath and West Community Energy's mentoring and inspection for new installers. This type of mentoring and inspection model should be continued and extended to cover</i>	Safety risks, poor perceptions, and reduced consumer trust lead to lower take-up and demand.

⁵⁰ Ofgem, Ofgem sets out major reform package in next step to accelerate grid connections <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/press-release/ofgem-sets-out-major-reform-package-next-step-accelerate-grid-connections>

⁵¹ See more information here: National Audit Office: 'Weak controls and oversight blamed for faulty home installations under energy efficiency scheme' (Oct, 2025) <https://www.nao.org.uk/press-releases/weak-controls-and-oversight-blamed-for-faulty-home-installations-under-energy-efficiency-scheme/>

	<i>other clean energy technologies where installer numbers are set to scale quickly.</i>	
Economic Pressures on Businesses	The high costs of businesses is reducing hiring, training and ability to take on apprentices. <i>“There are too many risks and barriers to offer work experience and take on apprentices,” and the “move to bring minimum wage of apprentices in line with adults is not reflective of the extra time and resource you spend on them”.</i>	Constrains workforce growth, reduces investment in skills and apprenticeships, and risks undermining the pipeline of new entrants needed to meet clean energy targets.
Policy Uncertainty	Lack of long-term certainty and investment from the government was a shared frustration among businesses who want clear, consistent messaging from the government that supports clean energy deployment, aligns with infrastructure reality and business needs. <i>“Delays in government funding and local authority procurement have caused financial strain and stagnation in the retrofit sector, leading to many redundancies”.</i>	Reduces investment in projects, skills, and workforce, and slows the conversion of national targets into local commitments.

Conclusion

Clean Energy is a nationally significant and local growth opportunity for the Business West LSIP area. DESNZ analysis points to substantial jobs growth across the South West by 2030, concentrated in construction, electrical and engineering trades, while the region's assets in offshore wind enabling infrastructure, solar, nuclear, hydrogen and retrofit give it a genuine role to play in delivering the Clean Energy Superpower Mission set out in the Clean Energy Jobs Plan. However, this potential depends on more than a skilled workforce – grid capacity and connection delays, remain a huge constraint on the pace at which new generation, storage and low-carbon heat can be deployed. Building the region's technical and workforce capability must therefore go hand in hand with continued investment in network infrastructure.

"The findings in this report closely reflect the priorities we've identified through the Somerset LSIP. As investment in clean energy, advanced manufacturing and low-carbon technologies continues to grow, we need to make sure we are building the engineering, electrical, construction and digital skills needed for the future. Just as importantly, we need employers to be part of that journey by helping young people, career changers and those returning to work gain exposure to the sector, understand the opportunities available and develop the skills and confidence to take the next step. By continuing to work together across education, industry and local government, we can help create a more inclusive talent pipeline that supports both employers and local people as we transition to a low-carbon economy." – Future Skills Lead, Somerset Council and LSIP Business Engagement Manager

Key Takeaways

- Technical and trade skills shortages – particularly electricians, high-voltage engineers, retrofit installers and planning/specialist roles – are the most immediate constraint on delivery, and are already causing project delays and rising costs.
- Core workplace skills, especially sales, communication, community engagement, leadership and digital capability, are equally important to ensuring projects are delivered well.
- Structural barriers – grid capacity, installation quality, business cost pressures and policy uncertainty – sit outside the direct scope of the LSIP but strongly shape the environment in which local skills and training interventions succeed or

fail.

- Without coordinated action, the gap between projected demand and the pipeline of skilled workers is likely to widen. Addressing this requires sustained collaboration between the LSIP, training providers, employers, local authorities and national bodies.

This report directly supports the LSIP's statutory role, under the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022, to identify the skills, training and support needed to deliver Net Zero and the priority occupations set out in the Clean Energy Jobs Plan. The priority actions identified throughout this report – covering technical skills, core skills, training delivery, and the barriers to progress – form the basis of the LSIP's ongoing work with partners across the West of England & North Somerset, Gloucestershire, Swindon & Wiltshire and Somerset, and will be taken forward through the activities and monitoring arrangements set out in this plan. Wider, non-skills barriers identified through this research (grid capacity, policy certainty and investment) will continue to be fed back to local councils and national bodies including Skills England.

Resources

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