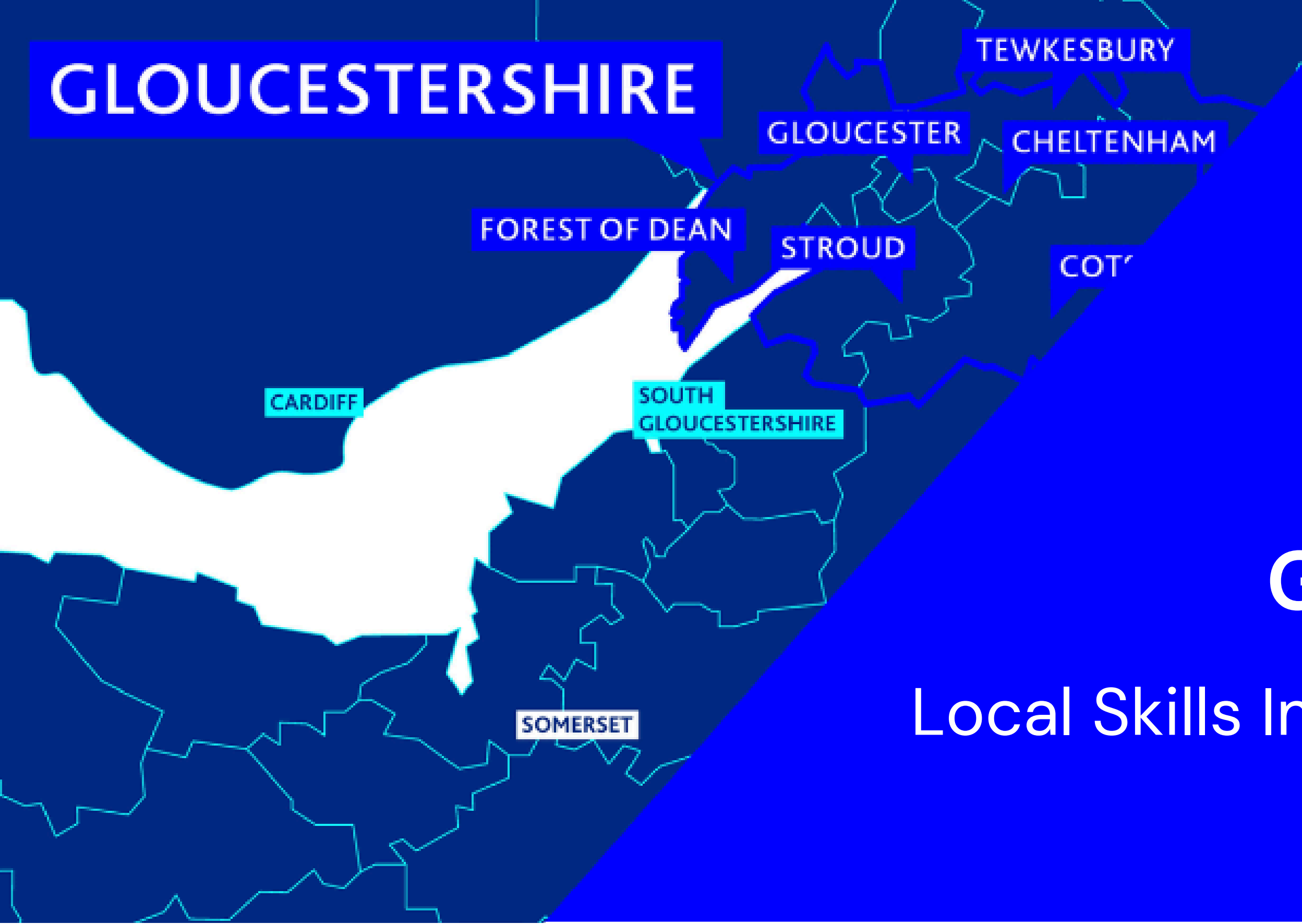


GLOUCESTERSHIRE



Gloucestershire

Local Skills Improvement Plan:

Skills Snapshot



Funded by UK Government

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What are LSIPs?

◀ The Local Skills Improvement Plans are Department for Education funded research projects responding to the Skills for Jobs Whitepaper of 2021, which emphasised the importance of employer-driven technical education.

◀ LSIPs are being delivered by Chambers of Commerce and other Employer Representative Bodies – Business West is delivering 3 LSIPs in adjacent LSIP areas, allowing for a wider geographic investigation and comparison of sectoral needs:

West of England and North Somerset
Gloucestershire
Swindon and Wiltshire



A map of the West of England region, showing county boundaries. Three areas are highlighted with colored callouts: Gloucestershire (blue), West of England (green), and Swindon & Wiltshire (cyan). Other counties shown include Devon, Somerset, and Dorset.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

WEST OF ENGLAND

SWINDON & WILTSHIRE

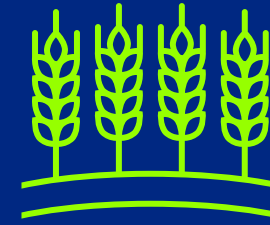
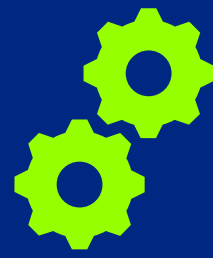
SOMERSET

DEVON

DORSET

Who makes up the LSIP?

Sectors were selected based on high value (GVA), high employment, growth potential and existing need or change expected in the local area.



Digital Industries (IT, Tech and Business Services)

- ◀ 5% of the total GVA for the local area [1]
- ◀ Fast growth over the last decade with further expected – 31.5% growth nationally in the sector from 2011–2020 [2]

Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering

- ◀ High GVA in the area – £2.8bn [3]
- ◀ High employment, especially in manufacturing – 35,000 jobs with growth expected due to Net Zero [4]

Agriculture, Agritech and Land Management

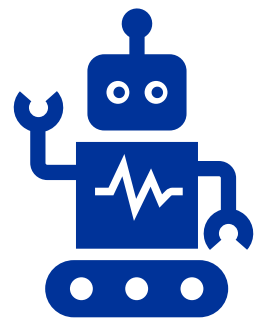
- ◀ 8.8% GVA, compared to national figures of 6.4% [5]
- ◀ Shortfall in labour market nationally, extrapolation would give a vacancy figure of approx. 6,250 unfilled roles [6]

Construction and the Built Environment

- ◀ High GVA for the local area – £1bn [7]
- ◀ High recruitment in the local area with more roles anticipated due to expected retirements and skills shortage for technical workers [8]

Cross Cutting Themes:

As well as these focus sectors we also look at themes that have been highlighted by employers in the West of England Plus Trailblazer. These themes are present in all businesses regardless of size or sector.



Technological Change and Digitalisation

- ◀ Covering the emerging technologies that are adapting the way businesses in the local area recruit and operate daily
- ◀ Believed to promote growth and improve productivity



Net Zero, Sustainability and Green Skills

- ◀ Aligning the national Net Zero strategy within the local area particularly seeking clarity around the skills needed, timescales and financial implications for employers



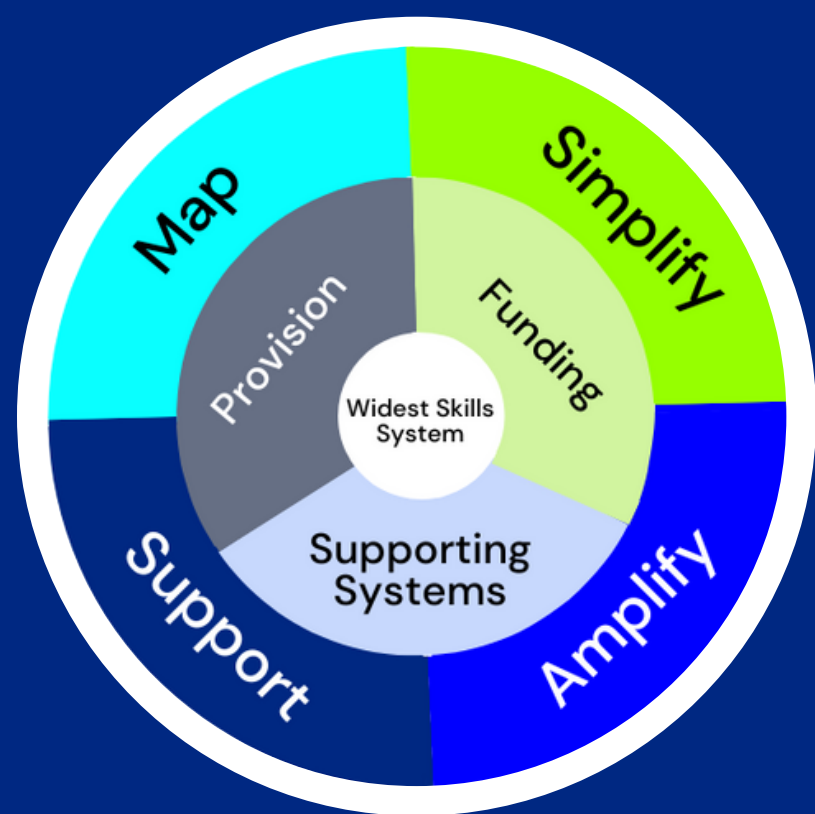
Core and Transferable Skills

- ◀ The skills many employers highlighted as a priority. Enabling staff to undertake core activities on digital infrastructure and platforms and communicate effectively both internally and externally

Aims and Objectives of the LSIPs:

Aims: The aim of the LSIP is to **improve understanding** of the **wider skills system** and the factors that contribute to it including provision, funding and supporting systems.

Objective: Bring together employers, education and training providers and other local stakeholders to **set out the key priorities and changes needed** in the area to ensure post-16 technical education and **training better aligns with business needs**.

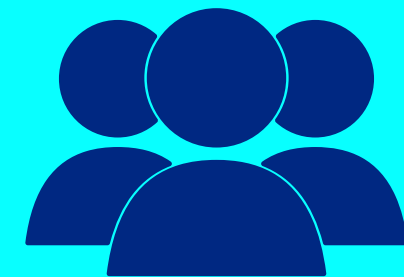
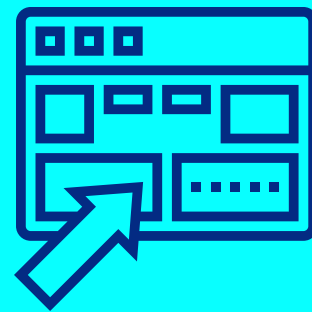


We want to **encourage collaboration and influence change** across the skills system in the local area.

We will do this by **simplifying** the system, **mapping** existing provision and identifying and sharing wider needs, **amplifying** this existing training and **supporting** businesses and providers in the local area.

Engagements:

Our focus is to engage with employers, education and training providers and other local stakeholders of all sizes in our selected sectors. While we want to speak to any and all employers, we are keen to engage those who are disengaged from the skills system and ensure that SMEs are fairly represented.



Primary Research

- ◀ 1-2-1 interviews
- ◀ Focus Groups
- ◀ Wider Skills Discussions
- ◀ Skills Clinics
- ◀ Surveys

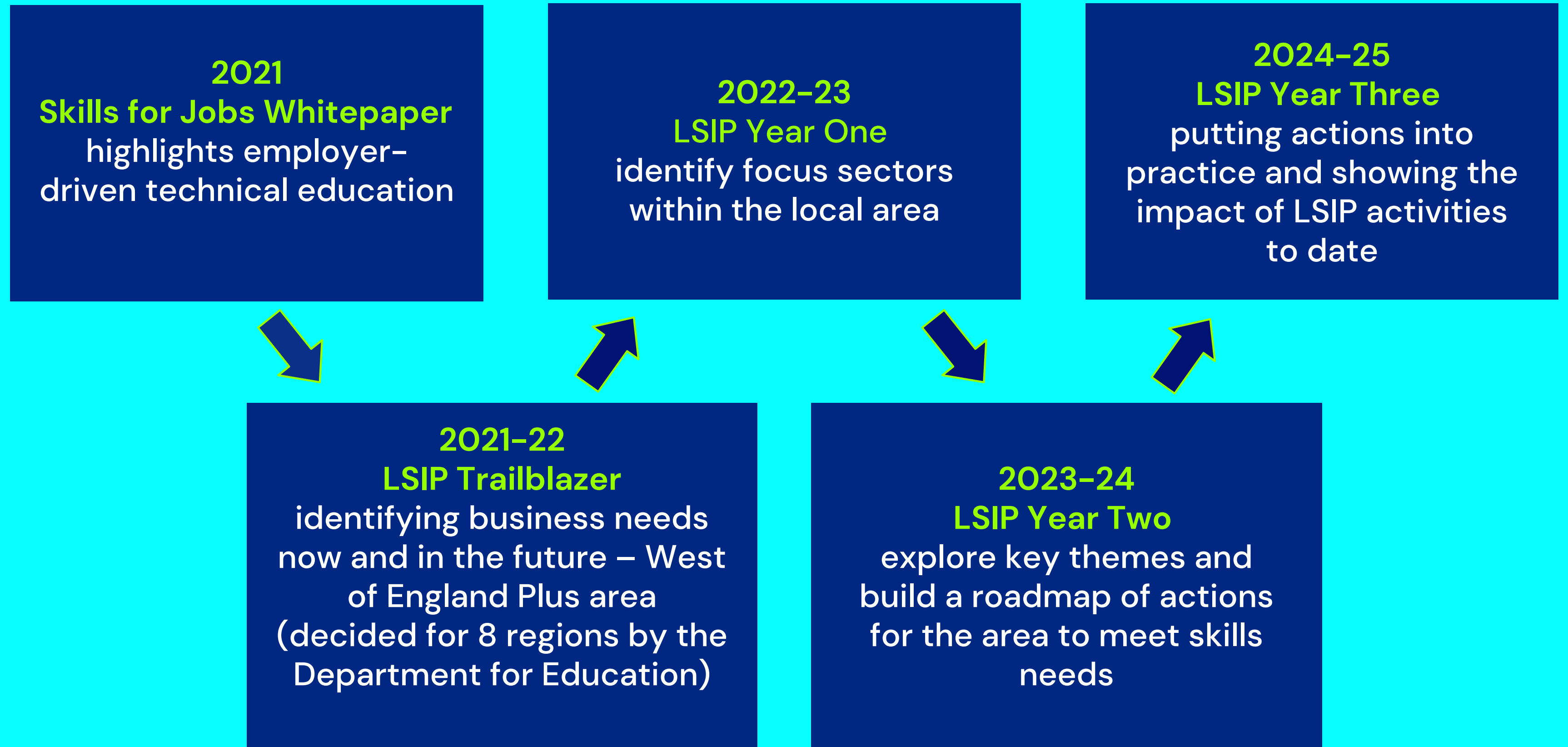
Secondary Research

- ◀ Labour Market Intelligence
- ◀ Regional Research Reports
- ◀ Regional Data
- ◀ National Trends
- ◀ Applying National Figures Regionally

Who are we talking to?

- ◀ Any size business, Micro and SME to Enterprise
- ◀ Based in the region or has a footprint in the local area
- ◀ 331 employers, partners and providers engaged
- ◀ 557 hours of engagement

LSIP Timeline:



Activity Timeline

2021–22 LSIP Trailblazer

15 events from November 2021 – March 2022 including:

- Focus Groups
- **Sector Awareness events**
- Deep Dive events driven by our findings

Over 50 survey responses

Over 110 interviews with employers, partners and providers

2022–23 LSIP Year One

32 interviews and skills discussions

In-person round tables and forums attended by 140 employers, partners and providers, topics include Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering, Net Zero, Agri-Tech and Agriculture and Digital Industries

Developing a Regional Road Map of actions based on our findings from these events

2023–24 LSIP Year Two

39 interviews and skills discussions

In-person round tables and forums attended by 104 employers, partners and providers

40 people attended our Meet the Expert events

10 businesses used our Skills Clinic service

Deep Dive focus groups for topics including Advanced Commercial Agri-Tech: Skills, Robotics and Autonomy

2024–25 LSIP Year Three

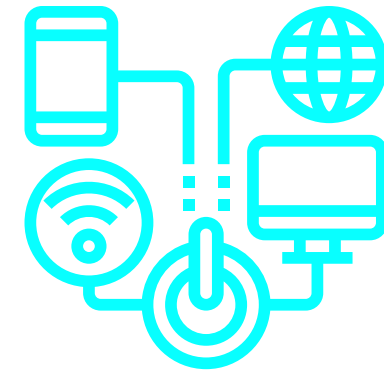
7 events running from October 2024 – February 2025, including:

- Roadmap Action Clinics
- **Meet the Expert**
- Career spotlight sessions such as Gloucestershire Careers Hub and Agriculture Careers

Skills Clinics

Signposting Local Provision service
Impact Dashboard
Skills, Local Growth Planning and LSIP Update 2025

Digital Industries (IT, Tech and Business Services) Key Findings:



- ◀ **AI/VR safe usage:** there is a lack of trust around AI/VR, more education is needed around how to integrate AI/VR and other emerging technologies into businesses safely and ensure ongoing safety
- ◀ **Cyber-attacks and vulnerability of businesses:** businesses reported fears around increased digital attacks – compliance with ISO2700 and cyber essentials training can help with this
- ◀ **Job roles are changing:** there is increased need for software developers, cloud specialists and AI consultants who can help people navigate the cyber landscape. Key skills highlighted include being able to translate business requirements, understanding the cloud and data protection
- ◀ **Diversity and inclusion:** new entrants to the workplace have highlighted this as a priority, it is also becoming a focus for companies, with businesses reporting work is being done to support neurodiverse staff through communication passports
- ◀ **Cloud security, data security and compliance:** there has been a greater shift to ensure all in the supply chain are correctly using software for customer and business security

Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering Key Findings:



- ◀ **Project Flow Understanding:** Importance of understanding project flow from research and development stages through to quality assurance and certification
- ◀ **Education and Training:** adaptability, culture fit, and transferable skills are preferable in this sector due to the changeable job roles, systems and duties
- ◀ **Peer networking:** would be useful especially with other start-ups and SMEs, this would be particularly beneficial for overall wellbeing and resilience
- ◀ **Recruitment challenges:** businesses have highlighted their wish to diversify their workforce
Funding and support: businesses need more support on how to identify funding opportunities and secure grants, which would enable SMEs to scale up, improve efficiency and be more cost-effective
- ◀ **SMAC Skills:** Social Media, Mobile Technology, Analytics, and Cloud Computing skills are essential for new starters, covering newer methods of communication, emerging technologies and data storage and analysis

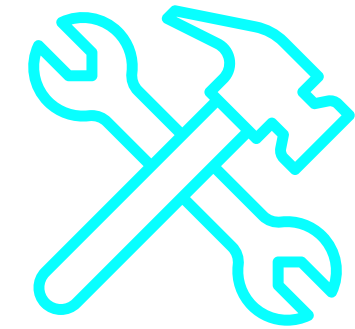
Agriculture, Agritech and Land Management Key Findings:



- ◀ Engineering needs: there is an emerging need for engineering skills to be embedded across the sector
- ◀ Emerging technologies: businesses recognise the need to reskill the workforce to reflect changes in technology
- ◀ Automation: there is a need for training to understand and integrate technologies that can assist manually intensive processes, such as robot wrangling
- ◀ Legislation, policy, and economic factors: will impact the sector and the skills required for it
- ◀ Robotics, drones and sensors: expected there will be a surge in usage as more businesses embrace emerging technologies and increase use of data and artificial intelligence (AI)
- ◀ Agritech adoption: or agricultural technology, is expected to increase as businesses embrace emerging technologies

Construction and the Built Environment

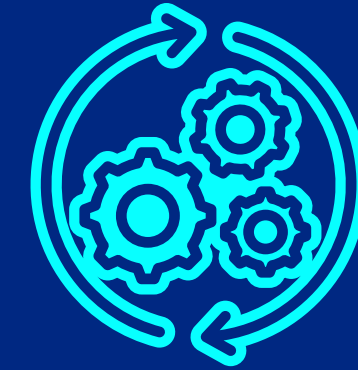
Key Findings:



- ◀ Renewable energies: electrical training would help businesses prepare for the future
- ◀ Retrofit Demand: Growing need for awareness of retrofit and commercial demand
- ◀ Training Needs: Training required for heat pumps and charging points
- ◀ Planning and Sustainability: Understanding the planning system, sustainability, and project management
- ◀ Understand the assets: approach the entire building with consideration of listed buildings and built-up areas, as opposed to a one-size-fits-all solution
- ◀ Training Uptake: Increase in training uptake for operative and surveyor positions, with specific focus on water and energy conservation

Technological Change

Key Findings:



- ◀ **Access to IT:** remains an ongoing issue; mobile apps have helped to bridge the gap but digital poverty risks leaving some behind with technology usage increasing across sectors
- ◀ **Disconnect between curriculum and industry:** this is often heightened by technological advancements, but apprenticeships and placements help with this
- ◀ **Skills needed:** how to develop, manage, and maintain good-quality backup systems including hardware, requirements, and processes
- ◀ **Safe data handling and AI usage:** More training and awareness needed around how to use AI safely and efficiently and understanding potential risks
- ◀ **Embracing new digital tools:** support is needed to address how to integrate new technologies and hardware with existing infrastructure, so that it can be used efficiently
- ◀ **Investing in fast-changing tech, roll-on roll-off subscriptions:** software packages being subscription-based gives businesses the power to 'try before you buy' and find a programme that suits their needs and budget

Net Zero Key Findings:



- ◀ **Sustainability vs Cost:** this is the most reported consideration of businesses across all sectors. Health and safety is also important in sectors such as Construction and the Built Environment
- ◀ **Sustainability ambitions:** businesses need to communicate these more – for internal and external benefit
- ◀ **Training need:** there is a lack of essential terms such as carbon neutrality, decarbonisation, net zero, but also specific topics such as water and energy conservation – sustainability courses tend to be more broad
- ◀ **Quick wins:** businesses reported using ‘quick wins’ to save carbon in energy-intensive industry including reducing travel or using more sustainable options such as public transport
- ◀ **Tech support:** businesses across sectors are embracing digital tools to support sustainability such as SmartWaste for construction waste management and environmental monitoring

Core and Transferable Skills

Key Findings:



- ◀ **Soft Skills most frequently report as key skill:** During a focus group 92% of attendees stated that soft skills and transferable skills would be preferable to more technical skills when recruiting. Many report that technical skills are easier to teach than soft skills
- ◀ **Communication is key:** especially for students transitioning from education into the workplace
Basic IT skills are lacking: Businesses are finding skills such as Microsoft Office suite (Excel, Word, Outlook) are needed over sector specific software knowledge
- ◀ **Project Management, Leadership and Change Management are in demand:** all industries are seeking these skills

Most reported skills needed:

- Adaptability
- Resilience
- Conflict Resolution
- Willingness to learn
- Problem Solving
- Teamwork
- Organisation
- Positivity

Task and Finish Projects:

As a result of these findings from our core focus sectors, we have determined other areas that require further investigation. We have outlined a series of subproject sprints with the goal of identifying and amplifying existing provision and highlighting where additional provision is needed to meet employer need.

These are:

- Green Skills
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Career Pathways
- IT Literacy and IT Provision

Once completed, all reports will be published on the Resources Page of the Business West LSIP website.

To get involved with any of these projects please email LSIP@businesswest.co.uk.

Impact of the LSIP: Local Skills Improvement Fund:

The Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF) provides investment in the technical skills system and supports further education providers across the area to respond collectively to the priorities outlined in the LSIP.

The Gloucestershire LSIF lead South Gloucestershire and Stroud (SGS) College who oversaw investment of £2.5m into the area as a result of the LSIP.

LSIF funds were used for:

- Developing and refurbishing learning environments including Gloucestershire College's Construction Centre
- Cirencester College purchased specialist IT equipment to aid the delivery of the Cyber Security T-Level
- Development and delivery of a Level 2 award in retrofit at SGS College
- Gloucestershire College funded additional staff to accommodate increased learner numbers
- Hartpury College are developing and delivering courses on technological advancements and digitalisation in agriculture

LSIF spend impact:

- Improved careers guidance and engagement
- Equipment and resources better preparing students for the workplace
- Training in career relevant topics aligning with industry standards

Impact of the LSIP: Business West Activities:

In response to the findings of the LSIPs, Business West has undertaken the following actions:

- ◀ **Green Skills subproject:** The objective of this subproject is to identify demand and provide the data on preferable topics and methods of delivery to training providers and further education to help inform the modification and development of provision going forward. We are also raising awareness of existing provisions in the local area to ensure businesses have clear sight of available training opportunities.
- ◀ **Meet the Expert event series:** to showcase the scope of roles available across industries in the local area as well as the key skills needed within each sector, this series 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."
- ◀ **Skills Clinics and Signposting Local Provision (SLP) service:** To provide businesses in the area with support around identifying their skills needs, and the appropriate training we have launched in-person and online Skills Clinics with our Skills Advisors, as well as the Signposting Local Provision service, where our Engagement Team will be able to provide you with bespoke signposting to local training, services and provision to meet your needs.



Impact of the LSIP:

The additional funding the Department for Education has provided has helped us put projects in place, both capital projects and revenue, to help us address these gaps. The facilities development, equipment purchased and provision developed and delivered simply wouldn't have happened without this additional resource.

The information and data that the LSIP holds is invaluable to us as a training provider in helping us to shape our future curriculum. The LSIP is a formalised and consolidated and really comprehensive piece of research for the West, bringing together employers, businesses and training providers to ensure we are instilling the necessary skills to create the workforce of our future.

– Laura Gaiger, Head of Projects and Business Development for South Gloucestershire and Stroud College



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