



Swindon and Wiltshire LSIP Report

2023



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This Local Skills Improvement Plan has been approved by the Secretary of State in line with the approval criteria set out in the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022, and in accordance with the LSIP statutory guidance.

July 2023



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Executive Summary.

Swindon and Wiltshire Local
Skills Improvement Plan Report

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Executive Summary

This Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) is for the Swindon & Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) region. This report 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 the region, nationally and those from the skills sector.

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/benefit to others within the education, skills and support systems.

The Skills for Jobs Whitepaper¹ published in January of 2021 set out how the current government intended on the transformation of Further Education to ensure the skills provision delivered post-16 met the economic requirements for the country's continued growth, including the transformation and revitalisation of technical education, with LSIPs one of the key tenets in the reform, by *'bringing employers, colleges and other providers, and local stakeholders together to set out the key changes needed to make technical skills training more responsive to employers' skills needs.'*

Post-16 educational pathways can be delineated into three areas: academic, technical and vocational, and Technical Education provision is within every Level of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) from Entry level through to Level 8. Some technical education and training may not be within NQF, such as courses that are short, modular or industry-certified and accredited training. The core technical qualifications considered for the LSIP are:

- ◆ Apprenticeships
- ◆ T-Levels
- ◆ Higher Technical Qualifications, and
- ◆ Shorter non-core curriculum provision, such as:
 - Skills Bootcamps
 - Other short courses via funding mechanisms such as the Strategic Development Fund (SDF), and expected via the Local Skills Improvement Fund in direct response to identified industry needs.

Although BTECs are classified as vocational or applied courses (and are being partially defunded where there is considerable overlap with T-Levels) they are expected to be part of the non-academic Post-16 qualification landscape for the immediate future and are considered as having technical equivalence for some occupational pathways (such as the Applied Science BTECs).

Business West was designated as the Employer Representative Body (ERB) by the Department for Education in August 2022 against an application for the initial three year delivery period, commencing 2022. Business West chose to undertake an in-depth qualitative research project to gather and interpret current, granular and detailed intelligence (with the involvement of providers and partners) to build on existing understanding and identify any regionally significant needs outside of national and sectoral foresights. Business West was also designated to deliver LSIPs for Gloucestershire and the West of England LEP regions and those reports will also be available online when approved.

Due to limitations on report length and structure, this report cannot provide the full and in-depth findings sector by sector, and we therefore encourage all stakeholders and potential partners to read the 'Priority Findings' documentation alongside regional strategic documentation such as Swindon & Wiltshire LEP's

¹ From *Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth*, by the Department for Education, 2021 ([Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk)). In the public domain.

Strategic Economic Plan, Swindon & Wiltshire Skills Plan and the Apprenticeship Strategy. We welcome all inquiries for discussion of findings, alignment, opportunities to engage or collaboration and how to best synergise projects in a whole systems approach for the benefit of employers, learners, providers and all others in the region.

The Swindon & Wiltshire region is a region of significant GVA producing 15% of the total for the South West, but with a slowing growth in total output and now in line with national average growth. Swindon as a region has above average productivity per person (+£19,900), but Wiltshire's productivity is significantly lower at -£12,300 per person. The region has a total workforce of around 326,500, but this has decreased by 3% since 2016 in opposition to national growth of around 1%. 4.3% are currently unemployed, lower than the national rate, and lower than average qualification attainment to NVQ L4 or equivalent at 38% compared to 43% for England as a whole.

Our primary methods of employer and stakeholder engagement were through in-depth engagements in the formats of interview discussion and immersion or focus events, allowing employers to explain and explore their understanding of sectoral changes alongside identified needs within the organisation and attached to their understanding of wider sectoral and technological changes. All engagements incorporated questioning routes attached to the UK's Net Zero Strategy, decarbonisation and sustainability, as well as core and soft skills and digitalisation. Outside of these primary methods the LSIP team were open to shorter and more open routes of discussion, with a multitude of activities inputting into the LSIP's findings and report but not considered part of the core research activities due to not meeting the 40 minute direct discussion threshold to be considered an in-depth engagement – the Head of Skills Planning alone held or attended around 20 additional meetings and events for the purposes of LSIP activity and engagement that would not be incorporated into primary engagement.

A number of cross-cutting themes have been delineated within this initial Stage of delivery, both for action by training providers and stakeholders, and for further exploration and refinement with further detail in Section 2. We also outline in Section 3 our suggested activities for Stage 2 delivery (from August 2023) including actions and priorities across the skills system to benefit employers in terms of access, navigation, messaging, governance, synergistic and amplifying opportunities and potential measures and indicators of success and performance.

During Stage 2 delivery, we will continue to develop our understanding via agile research methodologies, partnerships and monitoring progress in the roadmap for change. This roadmap and continuation will provide significant further opportunities to continue to add meaningful and ever more succinct understanding of unmet and changing skills needs that align with employers' imperatives and consequently targeted interventions within skills and supporting systems to ensure the Swindon & Wiltshire region remains one of the best places to live, work, grow and thrive. We will also ensure we align these activities where feasible with other programmes and initiatives that support post-16 educational improvements and understanding, both via the Department for Education and regional and national partners, including Swindon & Wiltshire LEP (delivering Growth and Careers Hub provision) and the Local Authorities, Swindon Borough Council and Wiltshire County Council.



Part One: LSIP Priorities.

Swindon and Wiltshire Local
Skills Improvement Plan Report



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Part 1: LSIP Priorities

LSIP Overview and Background

The Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIP) are designed to put additional employer voices at the heart of skills planning, providing better intelligence and a more joined up regional approach to meet employers' needs, helping close the gap between post-16 (technical) education and workforce readiness and to aid in planning and preparation for changes to industrial needs within priority sectors. This report is for the Swindon & Wiltshire LEP region, an area of almost 730,000 people with a workforce of around 378,000 and a strong, diverse economy with strengths in professional and financial services and high value manufacture amongst others.

The Skills for Jobs Whitepaper of 2021² outlined the importance of ensuring technical education could be driven by employers' needs, creating a '*...strengthened and unified post-16 education and skills system that will benefit individuals, the economy and the nation*'. This Whitepaper also outlined the intention and setup of direct response mechanisms towards this, initially via the Strategic Development Fund (and now the Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF) as its replacement) and primary response mechanism, but there are expectations for further impact across core curriculum planning and alignment.

Business West was also designated as Employer Representative Body (ERB) for two adjacent LSIP regions, Gloucestershire and the West of England, allowing investigation on a wider geographic basis whilst allowing for comparison of aligned sectoral needs and delineation of any difference within comparator region. Both of these reports will be made available at the same time as this Swindon & Wiltshire report. We have worked closely with a number of regional organisations through Stage 1, including the Swindon & Wiltshire LEP, both Wiltshire College & University Centre and New College Swindon, the Swindon & Wiltshire Institute of Technology, Independent Training Providers (ITPs) via the Gloucestershire & Wiltshire Partnership, and Local Authority representatives.

Aims and Intentions

The Swindon & Wiltshire LSIP has been developed to:

- ◆ Gather and interpret granular and up-to-date 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
- ◆ Develop robust and effective methods of longer-term employer engagement to drive change and input into the system to best meet a region's needs.

Alongside these core aims, the LSIP may have additional impact or input into peripheral and supporting systems, initiatives and programmes, such as those further from the labour market, in receipt of universal credit and therefore return-to-work or work progression support and provision, Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) and wider business, employee or learner support, information and guidance. There are numerous supporting agencies and projects supporting and addressing Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND), communities and individuals who face additional barriers to

² From *Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth*, by the Department for Education, 2021 ([Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)). In the public domain.

learning and employment that can improve access to potential available labour market and support employers to recognise and mitigate any additional needs, to effectively provide meaningful employment and benefit to employers and employees. We recognise that the LSIP may have findings of relevance to these providers and supporting agencies, and will ensure longer term we are open to meaningful integration of these. Wiltshire Council in particular has highlighted the recently published “SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan³”, providing a national strategy for greater support and integration into the wider skills and employment system and outlining where support may align with LSIP intentions longer term, and the need for integration of disability employment.

The Swindon & Wiltshire LSIP focusses on selected priority sectors alongside cross-cutting themes key to economic growth and change. Due to the value found in both the Swindon & Wiltshire Skills Accelerator Progression Fund forums, held in partnership with New College Swindon as a precursor of the national rollout, and from the West of England Plus trailblazer activities, we chose a continuation of the pre-LSIP and trailblazer methodologies of in-depth, lower volume qualitative analysis, to add meaningful depth to existing national, regional and sectoral understanding of change and need. We recognise that this lower volume approach may not provide a statistically robust method of analysis taken in isolation but have incorporated existing understanding and analysis into our methodology, to hopefully usefully extend understanding and to provide further granular intelligence, re-prioritisation during current and future shifts in needs.

Our core in-depth methodology produced a good level of detail that reinforced and reprioritised existing understanding of employers’ skills needs alongside identified new areas for further investigation and provision, with the concatenated output of needs statements in the Priority Findings documentation providing useable specificity for providers to act upon, without being prescriptive in how responses should be planned. This hopefully found a central point between being actionable, and recognising that those who currently procure, plan and provide education and training are best placed to decide how best to incorporate these findings to meet the region’s needs alongside and within existing provision.

The sectoral foci for Stage 1 delivery were chosen to align with existing regional imperatives and developed in partnership with primary stakeholder input (both regional further education (FE) Providers, representation of ITPs via the Gloucestershire and Wiltshire Partnership and representation from the LEP) prior to and during designation (March - May 2022). These parties were invited to initial discussions of potential foci, to ensure both alignment with regional needs and regional provision, with the priority sectors chosen following these discussions.

The Priority Findings from Stage 1 activity have been made freely available to all whom could benefit from access, and we are continuing conversation about further research for Stage 2. For further information about the research project, outputs and methodology please see Section 2 and Annex B.

Sectoral Foci

The priority sectors chosen for the Swindon & Wiltshire region were prioritised utilising a matrix approach across four criteria:

- ◀ High Value (GVA) - *as measured by most recent statistics*
- ◀ High Employment - *as measured by most recent statistics*
- ◀ High Growth Potential - *expected to be capable of significant above trend growth in near future subject to barriers being addressed*

³ From *Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement Plan*, by the Department for Education, 2023 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-and-alternative-provision-improvement-plan>). In the public domain.

- ◀ *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 & retention, technology including automation, skills development, significant regional capacity loss etc)

In the table below, we have incorporated both regional and national statistics. Where feasible we have prioritised regional figures, with national statistics used where identified in our preliminary sectoral and secondary research, where they are more recent, or where they are more closely aligned with requisite data e.g. the Department for Education Unit for Future Skills dashboard highlights current online job adverts, but does not extrapolate to current estimated vacancies, which is a more precise indication of need within a sector. All national figures are highlighted as such and appended where feasible with regional comparative data.

Sector	High Value	High Employment	High Growth Potential	High Need/Change
Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering	Engineering contributes £645 billion GVA nationally ⁴ , manufacturing a larger share of GVA than nationally	11% of total employment within Swindon & Wiltshire, 2.67 million manufacturing employees nationally ⁵	Significant opportunities for region attached to growth in the green economy – energy, fuels, efficiency, infrastructure	Highest increase nationally in labour market tightening, LEP analysis suggested 20,000 jobs to be created
Construction	Value nationally of sector in 2021 around £115 billion ⁶ , £1.1 billion in Swindon & Wiltshire ⁷	Around 17,500 employees in the region	Expected national increase in recruitment of 25% over the next 5 years ⁸	73% nationally report difficulties recruiting skills and technical workers, +1 million expected retirements in next decade
Health and Social Care	Adds approx. 5.59% total regional GVA, £137.7 billion nationally ⁹	Around 35,000 employed in region ¹⁰ in health & care, 11% of total roles	Predicted growth in employment needs of 22% 2018 - 2025 ¹¹	Since 2012/13 vacancy rates have increased from 3.8% to 10.7% in the UK ¹⁰

⁴ From *A hotbed of innovation: New research reveals engineering adds up to an estimated £645bn to the UK's economy annually*, by the Royal Academy of Engineering, 2022 (<https://raeng.org.uk/news/a-hotbed-of-innovation-new-research-reveals-engineering-adds-up-to-an-estimated-645bn-to-the-uk-s-economy-annually>). In the public domain.

⁵ From *EMP13: Employment by Industry*, by the Office for National Statistics, 2022 ([EMP13: Employment by industry – Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/employment-and-labour-markets/employment-by-industry)). In the public domain.

⁶ From *Construction statistics, Great Britain: 2021*, by the Office for National Statistics, 2022 (<https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/constructionindustry/articles/constructionstatistics/2021>). In the public domain.

⁷ From *Swindon and Wiltshire Local Economic Assessment*, by Swindon and Wiltshire LEP and Hatch Urban Solutions, 2022 (<https://swlep.co.uk/dashboard>). In the public domain.

⁸ From *CSN Industry Outlook – 2023–2027*, by CITB, 2023 (<https://www.citb.co.uk/about-citb/construction-industry-research-reports/construction-skills-network-csn/#uknations>). In the public domain.

⁹ From *Gross value added of the human health and social activities sector in the United Kingdom from 1990 to 2022*, by D.Clark, 2023 (<https://www.statista.com/statistics/760150/human-health-sector-gross-value-added-in-the-uk/>). In the public domain.

¹⁰ From *Swindon and Wiltshire Local Economic Assessment*, by Swindon and Wiltshire LEP and Hatch Urban Solutions, 2022 (<https://swlep.co.uk/dashboard>). In the public domain.

¹¹ From *Health and social care funding projections 2021*, by Stephen Rocks, Giulia Boccarini, Anita Charlesworth, Omar Idriss, Ruth McConkey and Laurie Rachet-Jacquet, 2021 (<https://www.health.org.uk/publications/health-and-social-care-funding-projections-2021>). In the public domain.

Agriculture, Agri-tech and pre-gate food production	Net contribution nationally to GVA of £18.9 billion ¹²	0.5 million employed nationally in sector ¹¹		Significant labour market shortages in food and farming nationally ¹³
Automotive Industries	Sector nationally GVA of £58.2 billion, but automotive manufacture decreasing ¹⁴	Slightly above average employment at 48,000 roles in region ¹⁵		Both significant loss to region in manufacture and significant change attached to Net Zero expected

The majority of these sectors have significant importance to the region's growth and economic output alongside relevance and alignment to Post-16 educational provision in the region. The exception is the Automotive sector, which was chosen as a focus due to its prior national significance from within the region (Honda's UK base in Swindon, which closed in 2021 with a loss of around 3,500 jobs and the presence until October 2022 of Cooper Tyres in Melksham, whose presence had reduced from a peak of around 700 in 2019 to closure late in 2022, post-designation), but still retaining alignment with existing FE provision in the region, hence inclusion as a sector with potential significant change in focus with the disbandment of the former supply chain and some lead companies.

These were chosen as the initial foci through pre-and-post designation meetings and conversations with stakeholders and to align with regional sector strengths and needs. We note that during Stage 2 delivery we will continue to 'deep dive' and refine understanding of skills needs within these sectors, but there is also some appetite for additional inclusions and sub-sectoral research, both within related and unrelated sectors and themes - in particular it is likely that due both to lack of significant regional representation and engagement throughout Stage 1 delivery, that Automotive as a focus will be adjusted, potentially towards, mobility, logistics, transportation and infrastructure. These are expanded in section 2.8 alongside suggested primary refinement areas within Stage 2 delivery in section 3. These are expanded in section 2.8 alongside suggested primary refinement areas within Stage 2 delivery in section 3.

Thematic Foci

Alongside these sectoral divisions, we continued to incorporate and thematic 'drivers of change' and cross-cutting threads within skills needs that had been highlighted in the West of England Plus Trailblazer and prior Business West-led research into industry transformation and skills needs. These themes were:

◀ Core and Soft Skills (otherwise known and transferable skills or critical workplace skills)

These are needed for most roles and are frequently listed as most sought after in recruitment, they enable effective communication, ability for further learning and a baseline of ability to progress within all pathways and professions.

¹² From *Agriculture in the UK Evidence Pack, September 2022 update*, by the Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs and the Government Statistical Service, 2022 (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1106562/AUK_Evidence_Pack_2021_Sept22.pdf). In the public domain.

¹³ From *Labour shortages in the food and farming sector: Fourth Report of the Session 2021-22*, by the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, 2022 (<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/9580/documents/162177/default/>). In the public domain.

¹⁴ From *Industry Topics: Economy*, by SMMT, 2020 (<https://www.smmmt.co.uk/industry-topics/economy/>). In the public domain.

¹⁵ From *An Analysis of the Local Swindon and Wiltshire Labour Market and Skills Requirements*, presented by Paddy Bradley, analysis by Bruce Morley and Andreas Schaefer, 2023 (https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/sub-groups/skills-talent/skills-talent-2023/7-mar-2023/swlep-labour-market-070323.pdf?sfvrsn=7964d5cd_3). In the public domain.

◀ Core Digital Skills

Considered to be the skills employers need the majority of employees to have to utilise existing work systems, undertake core activities on digital infrastructure and platforms and communicate effectively both internally and externally. These were highlighted by the wide spectrum of response and understanding within trailblazer activity during conversation around digitalisation and within existing research and trends analysis, and recognition of such has been accelerated by the impacts of the pandemic on work practise via hybridisation and digital connectivity.

◀ Technological Change and the impact of Digitalisation

Technological change and digitalisation have been variously accelerated during and following the Covid pandemic alongside factors associated with tightness and lack of liquidity in the labour market. These factors are considered to be primary drivers of changing skills needs attached to continued growth, improved productivity and efficiency and potentially leading to significant transformation of employment and industry.

◀ Needs attached to the UK's Net Zero Strategy, decarbonisation, sustainability and 'green skills and technologies'

The UK's Net Zero Strategy outlines the national imperative to fully decarbonise all sectors of society by 2050, so there are clear UK and regional needs to decarbonise all industrial sectors and infrastructure, but less clarity surrounding understanding of requisite skills, timescales, and cost burdens to employers. These were chosen for incorporation into trailblazer activities and – following this – written explicitly into guidance for LSIP delivery and expectation.

The core skills needs (both soft and digital) remain essential to employers and are often perceived and needed to allow the development of enhanced or advanced technical skills, as well as gainful employ as a whole, with needs often either prior to or in parallel with new skills needs.

What is the LSIP attempting to solve?

The LSIP is a project to put additional employer need at the heart of skills provision, ensuring greater alignment between a region's business needs for continued success and a region's response to meet those needs. The Swindon & Wiltshire LSIP is primarily attempting to build on existing understanding and add granular intelligence to allow providers to make meaningful interventions in existing provision and to identify areas for new provision to meet immediate employer needs for continued commercial success and growth but will also have broader repercussions across the skills and employer support systems.

Stage 1 activity (to a degree) highlights some of these requirements, but also highlights areas where we can identify we have not yet reached a level of granular understanding in terms of industrial and employer needs, modes and methods of change, timescales attached to needs versus commercial viability of industry need and will therefore prioritise elements of these within Stage 2 activity as 'deep dive' topics in both interview and immersion event structures.

The structure of activity for Stage 1 delivery revolved around three distinct phases of activity:



These can be summarised as primary research activities, working with providers and stakeholders to translate business input into skills needs and responses, and identifying how the wider skills system can respond and where LSIP activities in Stage 2 can be planned for wider regional benefit and synergy.

Potential primary audiences for the LSIP activities and findings are within three broad areas:

- ▶ Employers, who may find alignment with their needs (strengthening existing understanding) or may not (allowing further exploration of unmet skills needs for further clarification and exploration towards further response).
- ▶ Those with the duty to respond (FE Providers of Technical Education)
- ▶ Those who should 'have regard', including but not limited to:
 - ▶ other education and training providers,
 - ▶ Local Enterprise Partnerships and Local Authorities
 - ▶ Employer organisations, sectoral bodies and centres of innovation,
 - ▶ The Jobcentre Plus network,
 - ▶ CEIAG providers
 - and*
 - ▶ Other organisations that support the needs of employees and learners

We have - through the priority findings process - divided employers' reported needs statements into areas of the workforce we believe they are most pertinent towards, from new entrants without experience (such as those direct from post-16 long course without significant industry placement or experience) through to awareness within senior management or changing needs in experience workforce. These findings have relevance to into-work education and training provision, and in-work training needs, both for internal upskilling and for those who are looking to progress within work towards more highly skilled occupation or further financial reward.

The LSIP has operated via an agile engagement methodology, utilising learnings from the LSIP trailblazer, pre-LSIP activities within Swindon & Wiltshire and previous Business West Sector Skills Statements research projects on a regional basis, with the intention of providing analysis of employer engagement, strengths and weaknesses of competing methodologies of research, and to predominantly build on existing national, regional and sectoral understanding.

Alongside the delivery of granular business intelligence towards regional needs for growth and prosperity, the LSIP is also attempting to improve business engagement mechanisms, both within the reporting of unmet needs and within the wider skills system; we therefore developed a light touch but comprehensive referrals system against reported needs, to ensure that employers with whom we engaged could receive signposting towards additional support and internal and external supporting partners to continue to investigate needs and solutions. This will be expanded further for the region and integrated into Stage 2 delivery and employer engagement with a pathway developed for ensuring skills gap analysis results in signposting, navigation and suggestions for further exploration to meet identified needs.

We have designed the process to work collaboratively and openly with all whom could benefit from engagement. All regional FE providers – plus those whom provide towards regional needs and employers – were incorporated into the research and events delivery, often with LSIP teams invited to engage in their own employer engagement activities such as employer forums planned and held simultaneously. We recognise too that there is a significant part employers need to play in improving the system for their benefit, whether that is through sharing identified needs to assist with provision, or by further engagement within skills, careers and learner support to help embed industrial needs, career awareness and potential industrial transformation.

The LSIP findings and process have the potential to feed into existing regional and sub-regional strategies, mechanisms and planning processes: identified priorities for LSIP incorporation include the Swindon & Wiltshire LEP's Skills Plan, Delivery Plan for Sustainable Economic Growth and Business Action Plan, all of which take forward sub-sets of identified priorities from the Swindon & Wiltshire Local Industrial Strategy. Our ongoing collaborative relationship with the LEP ensures we can align with and input into planning and strategic processes, documents and initiatives as identified.

We have and will continue to make iterative improvements in the LSIP methodology, to improve understanding of the skills system, response from the skills and supporting systems and employer engagement, in particular in respect to ensuring small to medium enterprises (SMEs) and those with low capacity for non-critical activities have the ability to engage and benefit from LSIP activities. The LSIP will have maximum impact when it recognises and reflects the needs of employers around direct skills provision, and we therefore are working towards longer term 'meshing' of LSIP processes, findings and engagement activities to support and initiatives of additional value to employers including via careers services and provision, strategic and sectoral research and planning.

Further work will be undertaken in Stage 2 to ensure we can leverage Business West's existing networks and audiences, whilst recognising that there is true value in engaging those not already engaged, in particular SMEs, and intend on identifying additional opportunities to collaborate and routes to market for further reach into those not yet engaged.

Why does the LSIP matter? How can it help?

The rapid transformation of work life and environments have come about due to both wide-ranging economic factors and changes to the labour market in terms of those seeking work and those available for work. In some respects, these are accelerations of existing transformational progressions within employment due to political and geopolitical change. Whilst some of the themes of changing work are well known, there is uncertainty in direction for some employers, and needs within both the existing workforce and future employees for educational provision and workforce planning are only partially known in terms of both need and timescales. The LSIP – as a current project exploring from an employer's perspective needs and awareness of transformative factors – can assist in closing gaps in understanding and support current understanding of employers needs from Post-16 educational routes.

To a degree, employers do not care whether the available and applicable training is vocational, technical, or academic, and these separations are used primarily within provision and planning; as long as courses appear to meet recognised needs in terms of delivery method and content and can mitigate concerns attached to time and money they will meet needs; however, understanding of the skills system, provision and routes to market (frequently alongside understanding of internal needs) is intermittent and compounded by change.

What is currently happening?

Existing provision and supporting initiatives

Existing Post-16 technical education provision in the region is provided via the two FE Colleges, Sixth forms and the Swindon & Wiltshire Institute of Technology, as well as via Independent Training Providers (as represented for the region by the Gloucestershire and Wiltshire Partnership (GWP)), and industry specific programmes, continued professional development (CPD) and courses, via accredited, certified

and non-accredited methods). Around 70% of apprenticeships nationally are delivered by Independent Training Providers, and 67% of training providers are considered ITPs¹⁶.

Projects in the Swindon & Wiltshire region to provide education and training support to both employers and employees are predominantly delivered via the Growth Hub, in response to employer needs as well as supporting employers with wider employment and skills needs. The FE Providers in the region have employer engagement teams for training provision uptake, understanding and support.

There are a number of recent and imminent significant changes to the Post-16 educational landscape, with FE providers recently being moved from private to public sector classification, potentially reducing access to investment and funding outside of direct central government mechanisms, as well as changes to national core delivery attached to the gradual removal of some BTECs and the wider rollout of T Levels. This is set against some funding levels that have not changed against increases to the cost of living and expectations in recompense for employment (that is not being fully met within teaching professions in the same capacity as some industry roles, reducing the potential uptake of teaching for career progression from some career pathways) and both regional and nationally funded provision and response, and the forthcoming LSIF.

Other Parts of the System

Our primary non-FE partners for delivery of the LSIP in Swindon & Wiltshire are Swindon & Wiltshire LEP, with significant input from both Swindon Borough Council and Wiltshire Council. ITPs have been represented and integrated into Stage 1 delivery via GWP. We have worked extensively with the LEP to ensure the LSIP can add value and alignment with strategic planning, avoid replication of existing initiatives, and will remain doing so throughout project delivery longer term. There is some uncertainty in how devolution may affect this region, in particular through the potential dissolution of LEPs and the transfer of LEP responsibilities to other governmental structures in the region, but this should not have any meaningful impact on Stage 2 delivery during at least the first year (2023-2024).

Away from direct education and training provision, there are additional needs being met (or partially met) for both employers and learners, including via careers services, support for those further from the labour market, those with additional needs or barriers to education or work. We recognise the importance of integration and relevance but not focus primarily on potential unmet needs within these, unless they have been explicitly referenced during our employer engagement activities; we do however recognise that labour market liquidity can be improved by improving opportunities for those under-employed or with the potential to return to work, including within those on universal credit, other jobseekers and those whom are underemployed – there are existing regional and leading support projects from the Growth Hubs and Careers Hubs and via Local Authorities and partner agencies that are being utilised by those seeking employ, underemployed or looking for further progression. The Local Authorities will be further integrated in Stage 2 delivery as the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) third investment priority, 'People & Skills', starts to roll out responses to regional needs as identified by these authorities, but also via some delivery of the national Multiply programme for numeracy skills.

Early stage careers interventions and awareness are themes that were highlighted by employers in most sectors and we expect further activity to highlight cross-pollination between employers and careers service providers; variously these services are provided via the Careers and Enterprise Company and Careers Hubs, directly via staff within school and FE careers provision, and is being integrated into ITP delivery, but with further analysis on potential improvements to be done under the proviso that

¹⁶ From Key Facts about Independent Training Providers, by AELP, 2021 ([keyfacts-itps-v12.pdf \(aelp.org.uk\)](https://aelp.org.uk/keyfacts-itps-v12.pdf)). In the public domain.

apprentices are already employed with the funder of the apprenticeship, so there is some minor consternation about future expectations in this element of service delivery.

What changes are needed?

Employers are suggesting through the LSIP process both changes to content and mode of provision. There is a – somewhat justifiable – perception that core curriculum and national qualification framework courses are shaped solely by large employers and therefore don't wholly meet SME needs, without the accompanying and mitigating understanding of potential adaptations and adjustments via training providers, through discussion and ongoing effective relationships. This is alongside a lack of awareness of current shorter provision towards immediate and future needs in understanding technological shift or industrial trends, at least in part due to shorter term funding and delivery cycles that do not provide significant lead time to generate demand, as well as potentially competing funding streams such as those seen for regional and national Bootcamp programmes, which have to a degree put similar provision in competition with itself. There is some need against technological change – in particular attached to green skills and job – for stimulation of demand in some areas and ensuring awareness of commercial demand and viability, to allow employers to recognise current and future demand shifts.

Overwhelmingly employers prefer delivery methodologies that are flexible, rapid, and modular where feasible, but this must take into account the demands of the learners too, at least some of whom may prefer to gain recognised qualifications whilst combining studying and work. Employers also need to better understand technical provision (definitively T Levels, where recognition remains low, and still for some Apprenticeships alongside the benefits of shorter courses) and the commitments they may need to make towards support, industry placements and experience; this needs to be tempered with greater awareness of benefit, helping employers to embed and take advantage of longer-term learners, and reducing barriers to engagement.

Alongside having unmet needs in the understanding of existing provision and requirements, employers need to feel that they can meaningfully shape provision and build relationships with providers so that there is greater understanding and recognition of alignment with needs. Simultaneously, employers (smaller in particular) need further support to understanding current and future skills needs, as well as highlighting issues with bureaucracy and administration of longer term provision such as apprenticeships, and need to identify how longer term investment into skills needs as part of strategic growth planning will pay dividends across recruitment, retention and futureproofing, highlighting further potential needs for region-wide messaging about training and its' impact on longer term retention and economic output versus short term commitment towards planning and integration into workforce development. The current reduced ability national to recruit fully trained employees requires a whole system shift towards workforce training, secession planning and development as core parts of businesses' growth strategies.

How will the LSIP drive change?

Section 3 outlines in further details the expected longer-term direction of LSIP delivery, opportunities and a 'whole-system approach' that Business West has identified as priority activities, collaborative opportunities and ongoing employer engagement – these will include a refinement of methodology and impact measurement, additional signposting and navigational support in direct response to identified needs and change, awareness raising of opportunities, amplification of existing initiatives and pathways for support, galvanic opportunities and events to increase employer understanding of current and future need, change, provision and other regional response. To a degree, due to the wide sectoral alignments identified for Stage 1 delivery, there are now highlighted areas within our sectoral and thematic understanding where we have identified additional skills needs to delineate and clarify understanding. These areas (expanded in section 2 and the priority findings documentation) will be embedded and highlighted in Stage 2 delivery to ensure further granularity of skills needs and appropriate provisional

and systemic responses. Stage 2 will continue work in mapping the wider skills and employer support system, to improve signposting, amplify existing initiatives of benefit to employers and identify gaps in both provision and support.



Part Two: Taking the LSIP Forward.

Swindon and Wiltshire Local
Skills Improvement Plan Report

Part 2: Taking the LSIP Forward

2.1 Summary

This section outlines both sectoral and thematic reported needs and summarises the findings reported to us by employers in Stage 1 delivery. This is an illustrative snapshot of the comprehensive ‘Priority Findings’ documentation¹⁷ for the Swindon and Wiltshire region. We continue to welcome discussion of these as work progresses into Stage 2 delivery and invite any and all employers, providers and stakeholders to get in touch via lsip@businesswest.co.uk

LSIP engagement for the Swindon & Wiltshire region comprised of 142 in-depth engagements, totalling approximately 228 hours of direct engagement time. This was via 8 research events and 3 other events with a research focus integrated for 116 attendees, 23 interviews and 3 wider skills discussions. Just under 25% of in-depth engagements within Swindon & Wiltshire were with existing Business West, members, with 75% through non-members and new contacts. Further breakdown of these activities, including sectoral alignment, are within Annex B.

2.2 Priority findings process

To assist with the ‘Duty to Respond’ and the Accountability Statement processes for providers in the region, we adopted a structured approach to the LSIP’s prioritised findings release, publishing separate documents per sector. Each document was segmented as follows:

- ▶ Summative Labour Market Intelligence (LMI)
- ▶ Analysis of future regional employment needs within the sector
- ▶ Summative analysis of top occupational priorities, shortages and opportunities
- ▶ Primary LSIP research via employer engagement, categorised into:
 - ▶ Core, soft and transferable skills needs
 - ▶ Core digital skills needs
 - ▶ Sector specific & technological change skills needs (including ‘digitalisation’)
 - ▶ Skills needs attached to the UK’s Net Zero strategy, decarbonisation and sustainability

We also incorporated a table outlining additional systemic or labour market needs highlighted through our research that was not directly linked to skills needs but was frequent enough to ensure we incorporated into this process. We proceeded to delineate needs statements across different types of employees’ needs, from younger inexperienced new starters through to experienced workers with needs for upskilling, reskilling and awareness and understanding, particularly in respect to identifying future need and change. Each sector specific document has been published on Business West’s website and made available to providers and stakeholders within the region at the end of March 2023. We have held feedback sessions and welcoming feedback since release, to ensure these are living documents and continue to be refined. The documents are contained within appendices and are in more depth than what we have included in summary here.

2.3 Action and response from providers

Providers have been responsible for mapping current and planned future provision against needs outlined within Priority Findings documents and also identifying provision gaps within the LSIP region where there is likely to be a deficit of supply against anticipated demand. In terms of embedding and taking forward the findings of the LSIP, providers have been reflecting these in their Accountability Statements for provision commencing September 2023 onwards and will turn their focus towards implementation over

¹⁷ From *Business West Local Skills Improvement Plan Priority Findings*, by the LSIP team at Business West, 2023 (<https://www.businesswest.co.uk/business-west-local-skills-improvement-plan-priority-findings>). In the public domain.

the next few years. The Annual LSIP Report refresh will continue to shape providers responses to identified skills needs and priorities within the LSIP process. We are also aware of - and involved in - other elements of response to the LSIP findings, including via Ofsted Enhanced Inspections (where applicable), ongoing liaison with other training providers, and where requested discussion of strategic and direct curriculum planning.

The Local Skills Improvement Fund¹⁸ (LSIF) is intended as a direct response mechanism to LSIP priority findings and will be replacing the Strategic Development Fund. Business West commits to supporting and enhancing successful applicants and ensuring full integration of this project, without side-lining other provision and support of non-included providers.

2.4 What do employers want

2.4.1 System, navigation, awareness

Both our LMI research and business engagement activities have been focussed on division of stated needs statements, subdivided by areas of the workforce (current and future). We have consistently been mindful of, and clearly communicating limitations to our intelligence and areas where there are gaps in data.

We have mapped our findings to the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education occupational pathways where possible as the most comprehensive and easily understood terminology for both employers and training providers to relate to roles and functions within the labour market and expect to continue to do so throughout Stage 2. We considered employees needs at different points within their working lives – those already with extensive experience within the sector, career changers, and new entrants from Post-16 Education and Training.

To make sure our findings are sufficiently robust and reflective of the sector as a whole, we only incorporated needs statements where they met an evidence threshold (and removed outlying needs for further clarification and investigation in future activities), or where they align with national findings and/or regional LMI.

2.4.2 Existing provision

Employers consistently made broad systemic points about their needs and the changes that they need to retain economic viability and grow to meet future needs. Provision should break down the barriers that currently exists between industry and teaching (e.g., terms and conditions which make it difficult to recruit teachers with relevant recent experience especially in the sectors where technological developments continue at pace). Courses (where possible) need flexibility of content and delivery, modular options, responsive to changes and reflective to drive uptake.

In many cases our engagement activities with employers identified significant gaps in awareness of local existing provision, and most employers have significant needs for information, advice and guidance about suitability and differences in qualifications and courses in order to both identify best solutions to needs and to frame their engagement in the LSIP appropriately longer term; both apprenticeships and T-Levels have only partial understanding within the region's employers as to commitment, need and suitability for recruitment and training.

¹⁸ *Applying for funding from the local skills improvement fund.* (2023, May 24). GOV.UK. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/applying-for-funding-from-the-local-skills-improvement-fund>

2.4.3 New provision

Within our prioritised findings we have suggested changes in relation to existing provision (divided between Post-16 technical curriculum and other non-technical content e.g., work readiness of learners by the end of their course) and the needs for new provision. Employers overwhelmingly request flexible, modular and rapid provisional responses to needs, with longer term and core curriculum course often utilised primarily for specific roles where prior work has been undertaken in partnership with providers to embed understanding of suitability and employer support within the process. A significant proportion of employer's reported needs aligns with shorter course delivery, for initial understanding or investigation of sectoral or technological change, to fill gaps within existing workforces and to upskill and reskill employees towards the future.

2.4.4 Next steps

We expect these themes and findings to be reflected within accountability and strategic documentation from FE providers, and Business West are committed to review, collaborate and support to ensure that the LSIP can be meaningfully integrated into regional responses to employer's needs. We outline within each section some areas where we expect to focus Stage 2 research on deep dives and other work, but this will be a dynamic model that can evolve as work develops. We will continue with our core methodology of research via wide-spectrum analysis of business expectations of change and need alongside incorporating in-depth qualitative research into the areas that require further delineation and granular understanding.

2.5 Core, Soft and Transferable Skills (Critical Workplace Skills)

Soft and transferable skills are still considered essential across all sectors and most roles – upon which technical needs specific to a sector can be learnt and embedded, and as a gateway towards opening up potential pathways within careers and organisations. Common themes came up repeatedly across all sectors:

- ◀ Communication across all categories: verbal (especially face to face for younger cohorts), written, digital, and both internal and external modal shifts. Some indicators of communication 'anxiety' to be addressed in new entrants to the workforce, against preliminary observations of the impact of the pandemic on learner needs and expectations.
- ◀ Work readiness especially of younger staff members, realistic expectations of the workplace and roles within employers, motivation and work ethic.
- ◀ Leadership potential and behaviours, supervision and management of people and projects/workstreams.
- ◀ Administration and organisational skills including time management.
- ◀ Problem solving, critical thinking, and how individual roles impact on outcomes of the whole organisation.
- ◀ Succession planning and workforce development (which has been brought closer to the fore by Brexit, covid and the resultant tight labour market).
- ◀ Resilience, especially where hybrid and remote working is the norm.

Some sector specific needs/alignments were identified outside of this, see below sections for sector specificity alongside the prioritised findings documents within Annex B.

Potential Deep dive topics for Stage 2 LSIP delivery

- ◀ "The Disconnect": Employer expectations and assumptions of soft skills and ability from new entrants to workforces
- ◀ Project Management and Leadership as critical work functions

2.6 Core Digital Skills

Businesses have reported significant additional support and training needs in effective utilisation of generic and specialist digital systems for core office and work requirements. Some of these are attached to work functions carried out by almost all roles (email, data recording and analysis, planning and administrative functions) and some are more industry and role specific. Employers are both looking for direct solutions via provision and support to effectively manage rollout and utilisation. Common themes across sectors include:

- ◀ Email and communication platforms, including calendar management (Microsoft office etc)
- ◀ Communication via digital modes – effectiveness and expectation in digital comms
- ◀ Infrastructure for hybrid work such as Teams – Collaboration, communication, efficiency, standardisation of usage, rollout
- ◀ Customer Relationship Management/Customer Management Systems (CRM/CMS) (Internal data usage in general outdated – those with digital client facing systems/support can often use as a unique selling proposition (USP))
- ◀ Generic office functions for data and usage (including Excel and databases)
- ◀ Some social media/marketing expectations across core functions undertaken by new employees (such as those within administrative and business roles)
- ◀ There is a disconnect in employer expectations with younger new entrants to the workforce and their experience and ability to use core office platforms – having grown up with online social activities and digital pastimes does not necessarily translate to business specific digital skills.

There are further sector-specific interventions and needs within all sectoral findings documents, including both re-prioritisations and additional core sectoral digital needs and alignments.

Potential Deep dive topic for Stage 2 LSIP delivery

- ◀ Effective Internal Rollout of Digital Systems

2.7 Alignment to the UK's Net Zero Strategy, Decarbonisation, Sustainability and Climate Change – Skills Needs

This theme is key to the long-term sustainability of the wider economy but the major issue across all sectors is that the specifics of the implications are undefined and demand is lumpy and low at present. There is an element of market failure and raising demand from the perspective of employers – turning demand signals into economic certainty for business investment is a high priority to improve uptake of provision.

Major investment and planning currently focussed around regulatory/legislation changes (which are often a response to crunch events such as the hike in gas prices following the war in Ukraine) and/or large procurement decisions within major contractors. Cash flow and responding to other business risks often takes precedence.

Across all sectors (short course) management training on what the implications for their sector, organisation and role would help pick up key themes, such as:

- ◀ Calculations and monitoring of carbon budgets, lifecycle assessments, whole life concept including disposal
- ◀ Understanding funding for Net Zero, including Green Finance, cost benefit analyses (Low hanging fruit), measurement of footprints, Return on Investment (ROI)
- ◀ Regulatory/ legislative frameworks and expected changes, required timescales for action, clear direction of travel, including carbon offsetting.

- ◀ Waste and resources management, pollution, waste and plastics on sites/in delivery. Sustainability is often isolated in roles rather than embedded in delivery roles
- ◀ Communicating change and sustainability (internal for success and external for benefit), understanding and planning for changing end consumer demand.

There are also a number of sector specific needs and alignments outside of these core facets, contained within the Priority Findings documentation. Further to conversations with the LEP and other stakeholders, we intend on integration of a wider 'green economy' approach to all business engagement activities outside of any sector specific foci, to align with regional imperatives for economic growth and transition.

2.8 Sector 1: Advanced Manufacture and Engineering

2.8.1 Labour Market Intelligence summary

The Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering sector is a significant driver of growth and employment provision within the UK's economy. A recent manufacturing report produced for the House of Commons (March 2023)¹⁹ suggested that manufacture accounted for 9.2% of total GVA between October and December 2022, while total employment in VAT and PAYE registered businesses accounted for 2.67 million workers across the country.²⁰

Manufacturing and Engineering roles provide 11% of total employment within the Swindon and Wiltshire region²¹ and around 18% of all UK employment.²² Both Swindon and Wiltshire have strong areas within the broader manufacturing sector, for example Dyson's UK headquarters are based in Malmesbury, Wiltshire. Swindon has a separate Manufacturing and Engineering footprint, in particular Swindon demonstrates a core strength of pharmaceutical manufacturing where employment is eight times higher the national average.

Labour market tightness for the manufacturing sector comes out as top under research conducted since 2019 from the Covid Jobs Research UK group based at the universities of Edinburgh and Essex. They measure tightness as vacancies % unemployment, splitting this down into two component parts – tightness caused by vacancies being more proliferate, vs tightness caused by declines in 'search effort.' Manufacturing has seen the highest increase in labour market tightening since Q4 2019 at over 350% increase²³.

Both Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering are relatively specialised compared to the national picture but the number of businesses has been declining in Swindon and Wiltshire. Nonetheless employment has continued to grow in these industries, suggesting the average firm size has also grown.²⁴ Sectors with the highest apprenticeship starts included Engineering and manufacturing technologies (26%)²⁵

¹⁹ From *House of Commons Library – Economic Indicators for Manufacturing*, by the House of Commons, 2023 ([SNO5206.pdf](https://www.parliament.uk/resources/pdfs/SNO5206.pdf) ([parliament.uk](https://www.parliament.uk))). In the public domain.

²⁰ From *EMP13: Employment by Industry*, by the Office for National Statistics, 2023 ([EMP13: Employment by industry – Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/employment-and-labour-markets/employment-by-industry)). In the public domain.

²¹ From *Local Industrial Strategy*, by Swindon and Wiltshire LEP, 2020 (<https://swlep.co.uk/about/our-strategies/lis>). In the public domain.

²² From *Mapping the UK's Engineering Workforce*, by the Engineering Council, 2020 (<https://www.engc.org.uk/media/3466/mapping-the-uks-engineering-workforce.pdf>). In the public domain.

²³ From *Market Tightness by Industry Post-COVID*, by Covid Jobs Research: UK, 2022 (<https://covidjobsresearch.co.uk/market-tightness-by-industry-post-covid/>). In the public domain.

²⁴ From *Local Industrial Strategy*, by Swindon and Wiltshire LEP, 2020 (<https://swlep.co.uk/about/our-strategies/lis>). In the public domain.

²⁵ From *Local Industrial Strategy*, by Swindon and Wiltshire LEP, 2020 (<https://swlep.co.uk/about/our-strategies/lis>). In the public domain.

2.8.2 Priority Needs

- ▶ Priority needs (awareness and understanding against workforce) shortage occupations via national data research, and primary business engagement employer reported skills needs
- ▶ Shortages within occupations as identified nationally with suggested route to attract new workers to sector
- ▶ Apprenticeships/Full time 16-19 study programmes:
 - ▶ Production and entry level roles; Machinists, fitters, operatives
 - ▶ Data analysts
 - ▶ Electrical engineers

T levels Higher Apprenticeships Full time and part time HE:

- ▶ Mechanical engineers

Sector Specific and technological skills

- ▶ Design Engineering requirements across wider roles: custom design technologies (CDT), technical drawing, computer aided design (CAD)
- ▶ Wider need for understanding of cloud storage, digitisation, data and analytics, turning data into intelligence
- ▶ Needs for understanding coding/software development becoming wider across Engineering roles – python in particular, computer modelling
- ▶ Business skills within Engineering roles: sales, communications, ‘financial viability in my role’
- ▶ Project management and research and development through to commercialisation of new products Understanding project flow and efficiencies from R&D stages through prototyping, build, quality assurance (QA) and certification
- ▶ Lean manufacture and quality improvement, design thinking and methodologies
- ▶ Design Engineering – need for understanding across roles, more design requirements in more Engineering and Manufacturing roles. 3D printing
- ▶ Automation & artificial intelligence (AI) Robotics, Cobotics gaining in wider awareness and adoption

Net Zero, Decarbonisation and Sustainability specific needs:

Electrification as a core sectoral change (and needs attached to high voltages, H&S, batteries and storage, codes and standards) gas systems and replacements

2.8.3 Priority areas for Stage 2

- ▶ CAD, Digital and Design Engineering
- ▶ Data...
- ▶ Industry 4.0
- ▶ **Net Zero theme: Engineering for the Energy Transition**

2.9 Sector 2: Construction

2.9.1 Labour Market Intelligence summary

Nationwide trends are broadly replicated for the Swindon & Wiltshire region, where the Construction sector currently employs 17,500 workers and adds £1.1 bn to the sub-regional Gross Value Added (GVA).²⁶ Employment in Construction is predicted to grow at a rate of 1.6% per year in the period of 2017 – 2027,

²⁶ From *Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership Dashboard*, by Swindon and Wiltshire LEP, 2022 (<https://swlep.co.uk/dashboard>). In the public domain.

attaining a net increase of almost 1,000 jobs on top of the ones required to meet the replacement demand for the sector.²⁷

73% of Construction sector firms surveyed faced difficulties in finding skilled manual or technical workers, and having relied on migrant and foreign labour before the pandemic and the UK's departure from the European Union, the Office for National Statistics reported a 42 per cent fall in the number of EU nationals working in UK Construction between 2017 and the end of 2020. Construction sector vacancies peaked in Q3 2022 at around 50,000 and remain higher than any period prior to the first half of 2021.

Demographically there is an aging workforce with the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) estimating around 1 million are expected to retire from the sector in the next decade. 28

2.9.2 Priority Needs (awareness and understanding against workforce)

Priority needs (awareness and understanding against workforce) shortage occupations via national data research, and primary business engagement employer reported skills needs.

Shortages within occupations as identified nationally with suggested route to attract new workers to sector

Apprenticeships, T levels Full time 16 to 19 study programmes:

- ◀ Woods trades (Joiners/Carpenters etc.) and interior fit out
- ◀ Electrical trades
- ◀ Bricklayers
- ◀ Surveyors
- ◀ Plumbers

L2 Boot Camps/adult education budget (AEB) programmes including CSCS card:

- ◀ Groundworkers/labourers / plant operatives

Sector Specific and technological skills

- ◀ Modular and offsite construction for portable and static sites
- ◀ Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) are all expected to be understood as principles/basics to enable future adoption as required. Energy assessors, as the use of Energy Performance Certificates increases.
- ◀ Retrofit coordinators will be essential to ensure quality installation across different systems
- ◀ Project managers with an understanding of the retrofit process
- ◀ Insulation installers. Existing installers will need to be upskilled if minimum qualifications are set in PAS2035 for building retrofit
- ◀ Plumbing and Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) and its place within fabric first/performance.
- ◀ Heat pump installers. Starting by upskilling existing Gas Safe engineers, existing training needs to be improved and standardised
- ◀ Expected changes to Gas certification and skills, needs for existing workforce to reskill as legislation impacts, timescales awareness of need

²⁷ From *Swindon and Wiltshire Local Economic Assessment*, by Swindon and Wiltshire LEP and Hatch Urban Solutions, 2022 (https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/strategy/economic-priorities/swindon-and-wiltshire-local-economic-assessment-final-march-22.pdf?sfvrsn=c21cbb0c_3). In the public domain.

²⁸ From *UK Job Vacancies (thousands) – Construction*, by the Office for National Statistics, 2021 (<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/timeseries/jp9l/unem/previous/v71>). In the public domain.

Net Zero sector specific:

Insulation of existing buildings and structures with focus on retrofit of external (solid) walls and internal modifications.

Planning, Installation and commissioning of solar (PV and heating) including project management of larger scale facilities.

Alignment of skills needs with commercial viability - return on investment, payback period, sustainability 'basics' within built environment.

2.9.3 Priority areas for Stage 2 (deep dives)

- ▶ Fabric First Efficiency
- ▶ Building Regulations and Change (Building Standards, Legislation)
- ▶ Net Zero theme: Retrofit and Decarbonisation
- ▶ Net Zero theme: Sustainable Building Techniques and Modern Methods of Construction

2.10 Sector 3 Health, Care & Life Sciences

2.10.1 Labour Market Intelligence summary

Health and Social Care is one of the sectors predicted to experience a high level of growth due to a set of demographic changes taking place in the UK and other Western economies.²⁹ Health and Care as a sector adds approximately total gross value added (GVA) across the local economic partnership (LEP) region at 5.59%, however this is 7% of the total for Wiltshire, due to the prevalence of other higher value sectors in concentration in Swindon such as professional and financial services, which are less substantial in Wiltshire. Total jobs in Swindon & Wiltshire within this sector are 28,108, with Care workers and nursing the top posted occupations in Wiltshire³⁰. Given its proportion of the UK totals the GVA for the Swindon & Wiltshire region from Health and Care activities is likely to be around £1.49 billion.

The total number of Care sector posts in Swindon and Wiltshire was around 19,200 in 2021/22, 14,000 of which were Wiltshire and 5,200 Swindon. This was comprised of 17,200 filled posts and 2,100 vacancies³¹. Since 2012/13 vacancy rates have increased from 3.8% to 10.7% in the UK.

In Swindon and Wiltshire, Life Sciences are also of particular note, with employment of around 10,000 employees, significantly higher than UK averages and growing, with a 56% growth rate in between 2015 and 2020. Life Sciences is the only regional priority sector to have experienced growth over the past 5 years.

2.10.2 Priority Needs

Priority needs (awareness and understanding against workforce) shortage occupations via national data research, and primary business engagement employer reported skills needs
Shortages within occupations as identified nationally with suggested route to attract new workers to sector

Adult recruitment and training programmes. (AEB/Boot Camp funded):

- ▶ Care Workers (within residential, nursing or other specific sites)

²⁹ From *West of England Employment and Skills Plan*, by the West of England Combined Authority, 2019 (<https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/West-of-England-Employment-and-Skills-Plan-July-FINAL.pdf>). In the public domain.

³⁰ From *Swindon & Wiltshire Skills Plan*, by Swindon & Wiltshire LEP, 2020 (https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/strategy/swindon-wiltshire-skills-plan.pdf?sfvrsn=af743f0f_2). In the public domain.

³¹ From *Adult social care sector and workforce in South West*, by Skills for Care, 2021/22 (<https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Adult-Social-Care-Workforce-Data/Workforce-intelligence/publications/regional-information/South-West/South-West.aspx>). In the public domain.

- ◀ Home Carers / domiciliary care

Apprenticeships (e.g., Healthcare Support Worker L2/ Senior L3, Nursing Associate L5 Healthcare Asst Practitioner L5)

- ◀ Nursing and midwifery

Sector Specific and technological skills

There's significant scope and efficiencies within the sector to be found using telecare services, other forms of remote service provision including assessment (incorporating sensors, Visual Reality, machine learning and Artificial Intelligence) to reduce the frequency of short visits, freeing up Care staff for deeper and more meaningful visits to clients to support emotional wellbeing.

Potential use of digital services, data analytics and data science, including care management systems and systems integrations (including incorporation of consumer Health Tech and wearables as likely trend) to manage case work and store data securely. Better understanding of data including visualisation, GDPR and use of databases/CRM systems.

Both of the above particularly relevant for discharge (e.g. clinical setting to home) services, reablement and Integrated care systems.

Infection control knowledge and its application to clinical and non-clinical settings.

Assistive technologies and Cobotics/lifting

Chatbots and Customer Service

Bloodwork, tests and detections

Preventative medicine

Net Zero sector specific:

Waste reduction & management especially in relation to Single Use Plastic and food

Carbon footprint – measurement and targeting reductions especially in easier business areas

Virtual and online service provision as sustainable options to offset journey times and mileage

2.10.3 Priority Areas for Stage 2 (deep dives)

- ◀ Successful Tech and Digital Adoption (In H&SC)
- ◀ Discharge, reablement and Integrated Care
- ◀ Home Care
- ◀ Net Zero theme: Decarbonising estates and facilities
- ◀ Net Zero theme: Sustainable service delivery and improving efficiency

2.11 Sector 4: Agriculture, Farming, pre-gate food production, Agri-tech and Land Management

2.11.1 Labour Market Intelligence summary

According to Defra reports, the total farmed area in Swindon & Wiltshire in 2021 was 272,504 hectares, with 2,329 total holdings within this region (of which 118 were in the much more urban Swindon BC area). The proportion of Agriculture businesses within Swindon and Wiltshire's sectoral business composition is almost double that of England, 7% compared to 4%³², although for the 5 years up to 2021 the number of separate business enterprises has declined markedly by 9%³³.

³² From *Swindon and Wiltshire Local Economic Assessment*, by Swindon & Wiltshire LEP and Hatch Urban Solutions, 2022, page 6 (https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/strategy/economic-priorities/swindon-and-wiltshire-local-economic-assessment-final-march-22.pdf?sfvrsn=c21cbb0c_3). In the public domain.

³³ From *Swindon and Wiltshire Local Economic Assessment*, by Swindon & Wiltshire LEP and Hatch Urban Solutions, 2022, page 9 (https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/strategy/economic-priorities/swindon-and-wiltshire-local-economic-assessment-final-march-22.pdf?sfvrsn=c21cbb0c_3). In the public domain.

LEP analysis via Lightcast suggests a total working population within Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing of 4,251 – around 1.2% of the total employment opportunities, 18% below the national average rate.

Swindon & Wiltshire LEP Labour Market analysis³⁴ suggests that farming and food have experienced declines in terms of employment and GVA over 2021/22, partially explained by the pandemic restrictions, and recognises that farming in the region is one of the areas of economic activity that new green skills will be needed for (S&W LEP Green Skills and Jobs report), alongside Engineering, which will also have significance for the Agricultural sector.

Lightcast trends provided for the region by the LEP in March 2023 for 2021 suggest that the Agricultural workforce will remain reasonably static in the near future, with the role of 'Farmer' being the most populous occupational title.

There is a known intelligence gap concerning professionals and service providers operating towards the Agricultural or Agri-tech sector, and therefore we have attempted to incorporate general trends in roles for the sector but not classified via standard SIC analysis as within the sector. Some of the FE (and to a lesser extent HE) provision is of value to categories of learners who have on the job experience or who have been brought up on farms but seek formal technical qualifications either to consider diversification opportunities for their farm, or to benefit from up-to-date learning about regulatory changes, technological updates, ecology and biodiversity developments affecting the sector.

2.11.2 *Priority Needs*

Priority needs (awareness and understanding against workforce) shortage occupations via national data research, and primary business engagement employer reported skills needs

Shortages within occupations as identified nationally with suggested route to attract new workers to sector

L2 and 3 technical qualification routes, L4 and 5 specialist and managerial routes

General farm roles:

- ▶ Equipment farm roles (internal and external)
- ▶ Support and suppliers
- ▶ Roles attached to livestock
- ▶ Roles attached to arable and crop production
- ▶ Data and analysis consultancy

Sector Specific and technological skills

- ▶ Technological change short course programme for managers and those involved in Engineering.
- ▶ Automation/robotics/drones/ sensors (including data/image capture,
- ▶ Sensors/machine learning (ML) and data systems
- ▶ Augmented Reality/Virtual Reality (AR/VR) and simulation as both learning methods and tools in sector

Specialist digital /data basic skills programme (as from Construction sector) short course programme for the sector for roles within the following areas:

- ▶ data ownership and management
- ▶ data protection, sharing and security
- ▶ data driven decision making
- ▶ data analytics and intelligence

³⁴ From *Swindon & Wiltshire LEP Economic Assessment Summary*, by Swindon & Wiltshire LEP and Hatch Urban Solutions, 2022 (https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/strategy/economic-priorities/economic-assessment-2022/1-executive-summary-march-2022.pdf?sfvrsn=1b1b5129_3). In the public domain.

- ◀ supply chain requirements (and potential increasing needs for compliance/ability)
- ◀ localised intelligence platforms
- ◀ data as driver efficiency and productivity
- ◀ CRM and data platforms

2.11.3 *Priority areas for Stage 2 (deep dives)*

- Advanced Commercial Agri-Tech (Robotics and Autonomy)
- Digital Farming (Data, sensors)
- Smart Farm Management (Integration of Technology and Efficiency)
- Net Zero theme: Decarbonising Farm Infrastructure

2.12 Sector 5: Automotive

Please note that as outlined in section 1, engagement with this sector was minimal, with Business West identifying and reaching out directly to approximately 70 Automotive sector employers directly (50 of these via the LSIP Engagement team, the remainder via leads within other projects for LSIP purposes), converting into only 3 completed in-depth engagements, with an additional 7 held with stakeholders and providers. Business West also worked with Wiltshire College & University Centre to design and deliver a sectoral event for these employers, with around 100 companies identified for invite, but due to low uptake this event was cancelled. Therefore, these needs statements are based on a very small set of engagements.

2.12.1 *Labour Market Intelligence summary*

Automotive manufacture turnover in 2019 was £78.9 billion, down 4% from the previous year, but wider Automotive sector turnover was up 1.6% to £326.6 billion, with a GVA (Gross Value Add) to the nation of £58.2 billion³⁵. According to the ONS³⁶, Motor Trades within the South West added just over £2.2 billion GVA in 2020, significantly down from previous years, predominantly due to the impacts of the pandemic, with the years 2016-2019 averaging almost £3.1 billion GVA. Since this time a major manufacturer, Honda have closed their Swindon facility impacting direct and supply chain employment considerably.

The majority of the workforce in this sector are educated up to Level 3 standards, with or without appropriate qualifications, but the skills needed to remain economically active are aligned to the transition away from internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles and towards electrification and alternative fuels.

The largest employment sector across the Swindon & Wiltshire region is the car industry in its broadest sense, but now in terms of wholesale, retail and repair services, whereas previously this was closer tied to manufacture, in particular prior to the closure of the Honda plant³⁷. Nationwide trends are therefore broadly replicated within the Swindon & Wiltshire LEP region, with the 'Wholesale, and retail trade: repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles' section of employment providing approximately 48,000 roles, slightly above national averages. It should be noted that in maintenance and repair trades in particular, a significant amount of recruitment is via less formal routes and therefore online jobs postings may not present an accurate picture in terms of need.

³⁵ From *SMMT Industry Topics: Economy*, by SMMT Driving the Motor Industry, 2020 (<https://www.smmt.co.uk/industry-topics/economy/>). In the public domain

³⁶ From *Data and analysis from census 2021: Economic output and productivity*, by the Office for National Statistics, 2021 (<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/economicoutputandproductivity>). In the public domain

³⁷ From *An Analysis of the Local Swindon and Wiltshire Labour Market and Skills Requirements*, presented by Paddy Bradley, analysis by Bruce Morley and Andreas Schaefer, 2023 (https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/sub-groups/skills-talent/skills-talent-2023/7-mar-2023/swlep-labour-market-070323.pdf?sfvrsn=7964d5cd_3). In the public domain.

The future of the sector employment is quite uncertain, and there are few projections available. The Department for Education 'Skills Imperative 2035' analysis expects 'wholesale and retail trade' employment in this region to grow at almost one third the rate of the average of the UK; 0.5% in comparison to 1.4%³⁸, i.e. a relative shrinking in comparison to other competitor sectors.

The Institute of Motor Industry in 2022³⁹ predicted a labour market shortage nationally within Motor Trades of around 160,000 by 2031 'due to an aging population, decreased immigration and the green agenda'

2.12.2 Priority Needs (awareness and understanding against workforce)

Based on Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI) 2022 sector analyses we outline areas of the sector in highest skills and labour needs, the majority of which are replacement need driven.

Apprenticeships and 16 to 19 Vocational:

- ◆ Automotive Retail – maintenance and repair – technician/ mechanic (inc. MOT testers) – Current regional workforce estimated to number 2,730 and shortage of 294 by 2031.
- ◆ Coding and software development – full stack development, python, C++, Azure

Technical upskilling programme for current technicians; addition to Apprenticeship standard:

- ◆ CAD, simulation, VR as tool and product
- ◆ Changes to energy and fuel systems – electrification, alternative fuels such as hydrogen and potential impacts and timescales
- ◆ Further granularity within electrification:
- ◆ Battery technology (and maintenance, repair, and operations (MRO)),
- ◆ high voltage systems,
- ◆ hybridisation,
- ◆ understanding of long-term sector impact
- ◆ infrastructure and wider transportation sector changes
- ◆ Impact of 5G and fibre connectivity on Automotive technology

Short workshops programme open to all management and staff (bootcamp style delivery):

- ◆ Understanding energy usage and efficiency
- ◆ Electric Vehicles (EV) sectoral transformation and impact, embedding change within facility: battery technology, MRO, alignment to Net Zero Strategy, charging infrastructure
- ◆ Greater awareness of expected/potential changes such as hydrogen as a fuel

2.12.3 Priority Areas for Stage 2 (deep dives)

- Transports and Logistics
- Maintenance and Repair (Garages as well as transport and logistics)
- Electrification (EV and wider electrification and infrastructure)
- Net Zero topic: Alternative Fuels and Infrastructure

³⁸ From *The Skills Imperative 2035: Essential skills for tomorrow's workforce: Long-run labour market and skills projections for the UK*, by Rob Wilson, 2023

(https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1143825/The_Skills_Imperative_2035_labour_market_projections_-_general_guidelines.pdf). In the public domain.

³⁹ From *Creating long-lasting careers in a changing sector: UK Automotive Sector Baseline Report 2022 Summary Report*, by the Institute of the Motor Industry, 2022 (https://tide.theimi.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-06/IMI%20-%20Annual%20Research%20Report%202022_summary%20report.pdf). In the public domain.



Part Three: Delivering the LSIP Priorities.

Swindon and Wiltshire Local
Skills Improvement Plan Report



Part 3: Delivering the LSIP Priorities

3.1 Summary

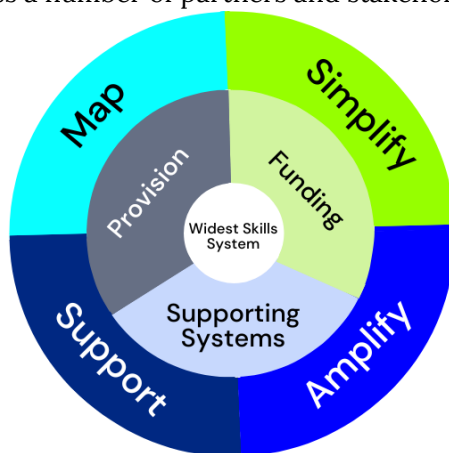
The principles of longer-term LSIP delivery and a roadmap for change for the Swindon & Wiltshire Local Skills Improvement Plan can be delineated into three areas for future work and refinement:

- ◀ Research and Engagement
- ◀ Addressing Systemic Needs
and
- ◀ Collaborative Messaging

The areas employers can benefit from integration into the skills system are across access to and understanding of provision, understanding funding and financial arrangements, and understanding available support to identify, map and navigate solutions to labour market challenges, alongside providing support for mutual benefit into the skills system, such as via provision of industry placements, guest sessions for learners and steorage and guidance for providers and affiliated projects and initiatives.

The LSIP through its core activities and wider delivery (and impact and partnership with others) can meaningfully support and assist in the widest possible skills system for the benefit of employers, through mapping, supporting, amplifying and simplifying for employers:

- ◀ Understanding employers' needs (research content and engagement methodologies)
- ◀ Addressing systemic issues and needs (map, simplify, amplify and support)
- ◀ Clear replicable messaging based on evidence, peer recommendation and a 'one message many voices' methodology across a number of partners and stakeholders utilising collaborative action



The LSIP will have most potential impact when all identified elements of need are incorporated into intended existing and new response and direct delivery, as well as recognised across the widest possible skills and employer support systems regionally. We recognise that across the region, the widest skills system (incorporating business support, careers support, skills support, JobCentre provision, business intelligence and other elements alongside FE provision and other relevant training) is complex and therefore we are not putting forward suggestions for potential support gaps and additional service provision specifically within this roadmap (such as the suggested activities outline in Stage 2 guidance, to be made publicly available June 2023); however, we commit to mapping these existing supporting mechanisms, projects and partners to attempt to delineate longer term potential gaps in the supporting system during the initial period of Stage 2. We believe there is more value at this stage in amplifying existing initiatives, such as existing initiatives via the Growth Hubs, Local Authorities and employer encounters as per the national Careers & Enterprise Company initiatives and supporting programmes.

Collaboration and Communication	Governance and Ownership	Measuring Success and Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joined up approach • Engaging the non-engaged • Regionwide approach • Creative ways to keep businesses up-to-date (Podcast) • Centralised portal • How can employers identify solutions needs and find advice working with young people? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilise LEPs and other bodies • Continued business engagement • Action focused plan • National stakeholders • Profitability and benefits to businesses • Impartial governance • Difficulties with a single-led approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FE Providers with a duty to respond • Follow up with businesses • Key messages and objectives of the LSIP • Demystify the fog

Business West held ‘Developing a Regional Roadmap’ sessions for each LSIP region, to ensure we could identify existing initiatives and tailored interventions for each region, dependant on existing provision, support and understanding of the system, with input from businesses, training providers and stakeholders (see Annex B for further information). We divided these facilitated sessions into three areas for incorporation into Stage 2 delivery, summarised for the Swindon & Wiltshire region as follows:

Collaboration and communication

- ◀ Online platform and/or database of provision and support that is business facing – how can we encourage wide use and consistent updating? Who could have ownership?
- ◀ Strengthen existing partnerships and forge new beneficial ones between stakeholders
- ◀ More easily accessible information for employers
- ◀ Utilise best practise and case studies nationally and internationally

LSIP Governance

- ◀ Utilise the skills and talent groups in region, with the addition of new relevant metrics – all doing the same thing and on the same page regarding LSIP and the skills system
- ◀ Explore the wider landscape to ensure better mapping of those who need to be involved, especially via Trade Associations.
- ◀ How can we as a region benefit from LSIP engagement? Bring in more awareness and highlighting of opportunities.
- ◀ Via an impartial and with quality assurance responsibilities

Measuring impact and success

- ◀ Key metrics within LSIP delivery are via engagement and recorded through the LSIP report refresh
- ◀ Celebrate what is going well, recognise change in uptake, demand and provision

An additional key principle that stakeholders within this region wanted to ensure was fairly represented and incorporated into longer term LSIP delivery is the alignment of Multiply and support currently delivered and planned towards specific parts of the region’s populace, in particular those with SEND and other barriers to employment and training, with a suggestion of ensuring also that ESOL (English as a second or foreign language) provision is identified and shared, to widen the potential employment market for new trainees and entrants.

Business West will – as expected in the guidance and designation process – produce annual progress reports during Stage 2 for release by June 2024 and June 2025, outlining how the system has been changed, including across navigation, support and provision, as well as employer perception. As this report is

limited, the refinements of understanding and deep dive activities are likely to be summarised here and published separately. We will review both direct response through provision, uptake and awareness and identify further targeted activities to improve awareness, access to and uptake of provision, ensuring lessons learnt are shared with all partners and embedding collaborative response into regional skills planning.

A key principle in successfully addressing systemic needs is the principle of ‘no wrong door’ in respect to advisory information given to employers against identified and potential needs, but this will require greater stakeholder understanding of supporting bodies, simplification of the narrative attached to the skills system, work to address employer awareness of both support and provision and shared consistent messaging from primary partners. Time will be allocated in partnership with others to mapping employer’s existing routes to support, current awareness and potential collaborative solutions to improve employers access to best possible responses for identified needs.

For many years local authorities in the region have provided good facilitation of apprenticeship and other skills opportunities within the region, for example the Swindon Apprenticeship Network Group (SANG) run by Swindon Borough Council’s Skills co-ordinator. The future focus of this group is currently uncertain due to recent restructuring activities.

Swindon & Wiltshire LEP is investigating delivery of Skills Bootcamps within the region during Stage 2 activity, which will be a beneficial route towards shorter flexible skills provision aligned with LSIP findings, and are developing an apprenticeship support initiative and campaign to encourage 50 new employers to take on apprentices, providing meaningful and relevant examples for the wider business audience, both of which will be incorporated into the wider intended delivery of LSIP provision in Stage 2. Additional LEP projects affiliated with supporting and developing the wider employment and skills system include:

- ◆ A learner development programme through the Business Cyber Centre⁴⁰, regional cyber cluster and the CyberFirst⁴¹ Schools programme
- ◆ Development of a comprehensive coordinating offer providing advice and support for routes into employment for military leavers, developed in partnership with Defra and military charities, with a significant expected pathway towards agricultural and forestry careers and opportunities
- ◆ Ongoing analysis of regional jobs provision and jobs demand, with associated skills analysis via Lightcast’s labour market intelligence, with business records also linked to financial health and economic context for further levels of robust analysis of the changing marketplace and economic direction of Swindon & Wiltshire
- ◆ A wider programme looking at opportunities utilising the existing immersive technologies within FE provision towards virtual industry placements in a lab approach

Partnership and collaboration in action and narrative are key in assisting employers to engage with the skill system, from investigation through diagnosis to receipt of solution: better collaborative responses from all potential points of contact to simplify an employer’s journey are essential and we will work with both Local Authorities and other supporting bodies to develop a primary process for iterative improvement that puts employer needs at the heart of suggested action via a multi-agency approach. If it is feasible to identify and agree primary routes to market and messages, we will then break down this approach into areas appropriate for diagnostic/analytical support, solutions for longer provisional response, solutions for shorter provisional response, and business support/navigation/brokerage options and opportunities.

⁴⁰ From *Business Cyber Centre*, by Business Cyber Centre (<https://bcc.co.uk/>). In the public domain.

⁴¹ From *CyberFirst Overview*, by the National Cyber Security Centre (<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/cyberfirst/overview>). In the public domain.

We recognise that employers need to play a part in the system too, both in terms of change of awareness, perception and uptake and also in providing support and input via providers towards learners needs. We will amplify and encourage take up of opportunities, existing programmes and initiatives such as via GWP and the Growth and Careers Hubs, encourage greater aggregation of demand and awareness of support required for learners via workplace awareness, opportunities, experience and placements, alongside raising employers' ability to analyse and identify needs, partially through internal resource and skills gap analysis, partially through raising understanding of sectoral change, best practise and opportunity attached to skills and provision.

Providers are integrated into the LSIP system explicitly via the current response mechanisms; the new Annual Accountability Statements, which will show how FE providers are responding to both National Skills Priorities and directly to the LSIP priorities, the inclusion of Skills within enhanced Ofsted inspections, and potentially directly and indirectly through both curriculum planning and strategic planning documentation, but it is also likely that the LSIP will be further incorporated into regional planning and procurement processes via both the LEP and Local Authorities. We have worked closely with providers through Stage 1 delivery and will undertake further activity to ensure Business West continues to be seen as a trusted partner, critical friend and employer engagement asset and can be integrated into existing engagement activities alongside providing opportunities to work collaboratively.

We recognise that more work can be done with a wider variety of stakeholders representing both the skills system and employer support. We intend to integrate further communication and partnership with stakeholders during planning and implementation of Stage 2, highlighting the benefits of our integration and support of existing initiatives within employer engagement, discussion of 'front door' activities into and from LSIP engagement for employer benefit, shared messaging to employer audiences, increased awareness of needs identification and support and alignment with regional imperatives. These will be integrated into the external governance mechanisms intended via the LEP's Skills & Talent Subgroup into wider skills planning processes, ensuring maximum replicability and alignment of region-wide activities.

Business West as the Accredited Chamber of Commerce for Wiltshire has access to – through various routes – a significant proportion of the employer audience for the region and critically we provide strength in our impartiality and representation. Business West as a whole will help in the coordination of shared messaging and region-wide response coordination, leading by example where possible by engaging directly with the skills system and providing industry placements for technical education learners, as well as further integrate into strategic planning and development bodies via the LEP and Skills & Talent Subgroup and where identified and relevant within Local Authorities.

For region-wide strategic planning, the key documents for the Swindon & Wiltshire region will be any updates to the Swindon & Wiltshire Skills Plan and SWLEP Local Skills Report; these documents ensures that strategic direction, priorities and business needs from within the Local Industrial Strategy (and the LSIP findings) are replicated for Skills needs and have clear intended direction for planning purposes, including within procurement of education and training via regional funding. We are maintaining conversation with the appropriate contacts within Swindon & Wiltshire LEP and recognise the benefits of our ongoing working relationship for the betterment of the region and integration into identification of priority education and training delivery. There is a declared intention to ensure the LSIP and the Swindon & Wiltshire Skills & talent subgroup – alongside senior management for the LEP overall – align and work comprehensively together during Stage 2.

3.2 Research and Engagement

A number of expected areas of deep dive and refinement have been outlined in section 2; these are areas that have been highlighted in the initial phase but are areas that we believe further investigation will yield more targeted intelligence to help shape responses from providers towards employers' needs. These subjects will allow us to continue to engage those employers previously engaged and those still to engage.

We will incorporate these elements into our interview narrative, tailored towards those previously engaged as areas for further analysis, and adapt the existing interview script and prompts to incorporate more questioning routes directly related to these needs. We will also be focussing our events outputs onto these areas to help shape response from providers, whilst simultaneously continuing the LSIP's agile and open methodology, to ensure we can discuss skills needs and understanding in the widest possible way.

An in-depth breakdown of LSIP engagements and activities is within Annex B, but in summary Business West held 142 in-depth engagements relevant to the Swindon & Wiltshire region totalling approximately 228 hours of direct engagement time (with some included in more than one region due to geographic representation, economic activity or workforce or learner activity). Engagement with SMEs remains more difficult than larger employers, with capacity reportedly at low levels due to both the labour market liquidity and the cost-of-living crisis compounding availability - this is similar to trailblazer and the pre-LSIP SAPF activity but this time more aligned with the energy crisis, cost of living and labour market driven shortages in staffing. We believe some lead time in raising awareness (and potential impact) of the LSIP will ensure that Stage 2 Activities have further reach, generating higher engagement, including within SME audiences which is a priority area. We will undertake greater exploration of partnership routes to market and collaborative opportunities, including greater incorporation into Chamber activities and via external partners, other ERBs and education and training providers.

As outlined within Section 2, we intend on both a continuation of our core research methodology alongside specific deep-dive and refinement activities that align with employers' reported needs within which we believe there is further merit in investigation. We will - with partner collaboration and development - release further details of these areas of research and the intention for further integration into skills provision and planning.

Although we believe our current core methodology provides a good level of granular intelligence to act upon and add value to existing understanding, we recognise that it is structured in a way that favours those with the capacity and willing to make themselves heard, potentially via other routes too, such as larger employers. We will refine and further develop our lighter touch modes of research and engagement (whilst still allowing them to be one point of access to further engagement) and as such intend on producing and further supporting new surveying methods and content, likely with some outputs in partnership with other sectoral ERBs and stakeholders, as well as with FE colleges and other training providers.

Our Stage 1 research content was both a continuation of the successful trailblazer narrative and a further sector-specific prompted conversation shaped with input from stakeholders and existing research and understanding, both within Business West and via external routes. We will work where possible with others with sectoral understanding to ensure additional questioning routes align with widest possible needs for understanding and to investigate prioritisation and change within sectors.

We have outlined in intended deep dive activity for Stage 2 further explicit and additional foci attached to green jobs, green skills and the integration into core curriculum delivery alongside short modular training provision and will continue activities attached to employer demand and awareness and ensuring maximum alignment with skills planning, highlighting and amplifying legislative change, benefits, end-consumer needs and expected timescales for change. As mentioned previously, there will be a greater focus and integration of research and engagement methodologies aligned with a 'green economy' narrative, both to identify skills needs and change and to galvanise change within the business community towards identified aims and legislative requirements.

A significant proportion of both our employer and stakeholder engagement events were held in partnership with others, primarily FE colleges, yielding good buy-in at both strategic and curricula levels,

and we intend on expanding and continuing this method of events delivery, both through identifying existing opportunities for LSIP integration and via new events outputs in partnership with a wider range of stakeholders. This will increase access to employers to date unengaged with FE and Business West as well as synergise engagement and research activities for mutual benefit.

We will incorporate more overt and explicit requests for partnership, opportunities and dual-branded events into Stage 2 delivery and ensure during the initial Stage 2 planning processes we hold similar forums and targeted meetings with relevant organisations to align activities.

3.3 Addressing Systemic Needs

Mapping the system and gaps: Although in-depth research has been done by Business West (and continues to be refreshed) into existing provision in the region, there will be a need to continue to map skills provision and understand its' relevance to employers' needs as well as learners' needs and position within regional requirements. This will allow us to identify further gaps within provision and analysis recommendations and priority actions for the annual LSIP updates.

Simplify: All too frequently, feedback on the availability and relevance of education and provision was either patchy, incorrect, unknown or dismissive, and there is a vast need to simplify the region and nation's access to education and training narrative for employers to identify routes to potential solutions. Whilst there are national initiatives that will support this (such as the integration of apprenticeships into the UCAS application process and website) that the region will no doubt benefit from too.

There are a number of initiatives in place within Swindon & Wiltshire that are already working to provide concise and tailored support to both employers and employees for skills needs, including via the Growth Hubs, Work Wiltshire⁴² (tailored predominantly towards employees and learners, but with sections for professionals and wider understanding of post 16 options and younger people) and Swindon Learning Town. Business West will continue to map the existing support system and – working with the LEP and councils – develop a map of potential supporting initiatives that can be of benefit to all stakeholders and employers in the region, to ensure consistency in recommendations for identifying skills needs and finding routes to appropriate provision.

Amplify: There are some nation-leading initiatives in the Swindon & Wiltshire that Business West will support via LSIP activities, including via the Swindon & Wiltshire Institute of Technology and other providers, Innovate UK EDGE South West, the Growth Hubs and those referenced above as upcoming initiatives within the LEP and other organisations. We believe these will benefit from amplification through Business West's Skills teams, and we will integrate awareness, understanding and signposting to these for employers, to further close the gap between recognition of need and provision of support and response. We will also incorporate information into LSIP engagement with further information and advice on pipelines and inclusive training opportunities to improve access to the labour market for people with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP), to simultaneously improve labour market liquidity and opportunities for people with additional needs.

Navigate: Employers have identified (both overtly and implicitly) that they struggle to navigate and understand current provision, routes to market and identification of best solutions to needs. Therefore, we recognise (whilst not owning the process) that there needs to be perhaps widest change to employer's understanding of support and response mechanisms and greater awareness across partners and stakeholders of the best supporting projects and initiatives. Business West will ensure that during Stage 2

⁴² From *Work Wiltshire*, by Work Wiltshire (<https://workwiltshire.co.uk/>). In the public domain.

we are providing a tangible and clear follow up to all employers engaged to share the best 'front door' for initial conversations, whether that is via a Growth Hub, direct to training providers or via further engagement with the LSIP team to explore skills needs, understanding and potential opportunities.

Light touch signposting was incorporated into Stage 1 delivery and employer engagement activities, in particular following the trailblazer activity highlighting direct benefit from doing so in response to LSIP engagement. We will methodically and explicitly increase this element of employer engagement so that any identified needs during engagement are met with a formal LSIP team response to assist with signposting, awareness and navigation of the widest skills system. The region's Growth Hub's remain the first and most-appropriate point of contact for a business to receive support against identified or partially identified needs.

Support and provide: We will encourage employers to engage positively with 'giving back' to learners and potential workers, for both short-term and longer-term benefits including driving greater recognition of careers and pathways in CAIEG and opportunities for employer integration, opportunities to highlight vacancies and sectors, improvements to recruitment and retention through meaningful engagement with learners via experience, placements, lecturing and any other relevant opportunities to engage with both learners and providers.

Galvanise: There is a need in some instances to provide additional support for employers to understand and explore potential technological change and skills needs change, and we will therefore reprioritise galvanic events in LSIP delivery that share industry knowledge from expert sources and partners alongside raising awareness of the necessity of skills need identification, similar to the pre-designation regional Skills Accelerator Progression Fund (SAPF) employer forums in Health and Care and the West of England Plus LSIP Trailblazer activities in Jet Zero and Aerospace Digitalisation. If these activities can raise employers' awareness of impending changes in employment, training and educational needs then they can go a significant way towards changing the hearts and minds of senior managers to integrate skills needs and provision in strategic planning and development foresighting.

3.4 Messaging and Collaboration

Employers have clearly suggested that they and therefore the region will benefit from clear, consistent messaging about skills provision and identification of solutions, both in terms of how to identify need and solutions. This concept suggests that LSIP marketing and communication activities should be geared towards a 'one message many voices' modality, with agreed shared narratives to be utilised via providers and supporting bodies where possible. The Business West intention as part of Stage 2 is to utilise external governance via the LEP Skills & Talent Subgroup to work out how to best translate this into measurable improvement in understanding regional provision and suitability.

In our sessions developing Stage 2 intentions and activities, the consensus was towards 'you said we did' and peer content, highlighting how provision and support are responding to employer needs alongside case studies and narrative from those whom have taken advantage of new, successful and tailored provision – both via shorter term deliveries such as bootcamps and via core curricula course such as T-Levels and Apprenticeships; we will pivot requests through LSIP engagement towards these types of content, to hopefully improve understanding and take up, alongside any requisite messaging attached to the successful LSIF applications, helping make change in narrative and comprehension of the skill system.

Additional messaging and marketing will be integrated attached to both improving understanding of T-Levels and the potential benefits of providing input and placements Stage 1 engagement has highlighted that more needs to be done to dispel myths, highlight benefits and share opportunities.

3.5 Governance

The LSIP project management and oversight structure is comprehensive and will remain so. Direct project management is maintained within the LSIP delivery team with direct reportage to the Skills contracts holder, Business West's Finance Director. Operational and Strategic decisions are made as per the internally agreed and written project application and internal project plan. Business West maintains a joint internal working/governance group made up of the Heads of the Skills Delivery, Skills Research, Strategy & Policy and Membership departments, with the oversight of the Finance Director as Skills contracts holder, and access to all Senior Management as required or requested. The LSIP Project Manager is required to report to the Business West senior management team (SMT) quarterly and to the executive board biannually to ensure project alignment, progress and internal oversight. Internal and external auditing are carried as per contractual obligation and internal processes.

For Stage 2 delivery – and to ensure ongoing alignment within regional skills planning and procurement, we will establish a direct external governance mechanism as mentioned via the LEP Skills & Talent group, ensuring maximum alignment with and buy-in from regional partners, and will provide input and alignment into long term strategic direction, ongoing collaborative opportunities to leverage sectoral expertise when needed, and ensure the beneficial establishment of working groups towards both the LSIP and the Subgroups core functions.

3.6 Measuring Success:

Business West has started region-wide conversations about how best to commit to comprehensive and useful measures of success, project metrics and performance indicators – some of these are reasonably easy to identify via:

- ◀ internal engagements
- ◀ referrals
- ◀ identified needs (and routes to market)
- ◀ SME representation
- ◀ integration of FE and ITP into delivery/research
- ◀ provision of events (both research and galvanic)
- ◀ marketing and communications outputs, including analysis of impact and progression.

There have also been suggestions that – if adequately measured against an existing baseline - there could be more robust measures of impact, such as via those who voluntarily choose technical education pathways, take up of provision in explicit response to the LSIP and those with whom FE Providers engage for planning purposes. These will be developed further during Stage 2 planning activities, in further partnership with providers and primary stakeholders and shared prior to commencement where feasible.

Annex A: Strategic and Economic Context.

Swindon and Wiltshire
Local Skills Improvement Plan Report

Annex A: Strategic and Economic Context

4.1 Economic Context of the Swindon & Wiltshire Region

The economies of Swindon and Wiltshire are quite distinct from each other and on most indices, Wiltshire is the larger and more prosperous of the two in comparison to the wider South West region and England/ Great Britain (GB) overall. The total resident population is 510,300 (of which 309,700 are of working age) for Wiltshire and 233,700 (of working age 150,100) for Swindon. The levels of employment are higher in Wiltshire than the GB average (76%), being 81.6%, but marginally lower in Swindon (74.5%).

For the most recent period available (2022) the level of economic inactivity is lower than the average for GB (21.5%), at 48,600 or 16.7% for Wiltshire and 21.1% for Swindon (with a larger than average proportions being retired in both areas).

The most recent claimant rate, for April 2023 bears out this economic prosperity – the proportion of the working age population claiming out of work benefits is significantly lower than the regional and national averages for Wiltshire 6,240 or 2.0% of the working age population. The figures for Swindon are more mixed, Swindon at 4,645 or 3.1% of the working population, making it higher than the South West at 2.5%, but lower than GB at 3.8%)

The proportion of residents holding an NVQ level 4 qualification is higher than the national average in Wiltshire (45.6%) but markedly lower in Swindon (33.7%) vs 43.3% (GB) for the most recent data point available being December 2021.

4.2 Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) Data and Reports Provided by Swindon & Wiltshire LEP (SWLEP) Used in the Development of the LSIP

SWLEP: Swindon & Wiltshire Skills Plan 2020 https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/strategy/swindon-wiltshire-skills-plan.pdf?sfvrsn=af743f0f_2

SWLEP: Local Skills Report March 2021 <https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/sub-groups/skills-talent/local-skills-report-march-2021.pdf>

SWLEP: Local Industrial Strategy & related documents: <https://swlep.co.uk/about/our-strategies/lis>

Lightcast proprietary reports produced for Swindon, Wiltshire & sector specific queries (not publicly available)

SWLEP: Summary of available national research on potential Green Skills and Jobs, January 2022 (provided direct)

4A.3 Other sources of information relevant to, and used, as part of developing the LSIP

DfE Further Education and Skills for the academic year 2022/23 <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/further-education-and-skills>

DfE Apprenticeships and traineeships for the academic year 2022/23 <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/apprenticeships-and-traineeships>

DfE Local Skills Dashboard [Local skills dashboard - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/local-skills-dashboard)

Nomis dashboard summarising ONS data by LEP:

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1941962903/report.aspx#tabrespop>

Swindon & Wiltshire Local Economic Assessment March 2022

https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/strategy/economic-priorities/swindon-and-wiltshire-local-economic-assessment-final-march-22.pdf?sfvrsn=c21cbb0c_3

ONS data, UK Business Activity Size and Location, 2022

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/business/activitysizeandlocation/datasets/ukbusinessactivitysizeandlocation>

COVID Jobs Research [Market Tightness by Industry Post-COVID - COVID Jobs Research UK, 2022,](#)

[The Skills Imperative 2035: Occupational Outlook – Long run employment prospects for the UK, Baseline Projections \(nfer.ac.uk\)](#)

<https://nfer.ac.uk/key-topics-expertise/education-to-employment/the-skills-imperative-2035/>

Labour Market & Skills projections 2020-2035 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/labour-market-and-skills-projections-2020-to-2035>

DEFRA, Holdings, areas and make up of UK agriculture by county, June 2022

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1084972/structure-england-june21-county-23jun22.ods

House of Commons DEFRA Report, Labour Shortages in the food and farming sector, March 2022

<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/9580/documents/162177/default/>

DEFRA, Agriculture in the UK, 2021

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1106562/AUK_Evidence_Pack_2021_Sept22.pdf

[Manufacturing-the-Future-Workforce-Full-Report.pdf \(catapult.org.uk\)](#) January 2020,

<https://hvm.catapult.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Manufacturing-the-Future-Workforce-Full-Report.pdf>

Economic Indicators for Manufacturing, March 2023 Report from House of Commons Library

[SN05206.pdf \(parliament.uk\)](#)

ONS (2022) Construction statistics, Great Britain:

2021 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/constructionindustry/articles/constructionstatistics/2021>

CITB (2023) The skills construction network: United Kingdom Five Year Outlook 2023-

2027 <https://www.citb.co.uk/media/acbnbn5t/csn-national-report-final-report.pdf>

ONS Construction Industry Job Vacancies time

series <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/timeseries/jp9l/unem>

Office for National Statistics (ONS) Census

2021 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/datasets/TSO60/editions/2021/versions/3>

Ecuity Consulting & Local Government Association (2020) Green Jobs 2030-2050

Local Government Association LG Inform <https://lginform.local.gov.uk/reports/view/lga-research/estimated-total-number-of-direct-jobs-in-low-carbon-and-renewable-energy->

[sector?mod-area=E10000013&mod-group=AllCountiesInCountry_England&mod-type=namedComparisonGroup](#)

CITB Labour Market Intelligence report, January 2023 <https://www.citb.co.uk/media/o2nngsgp/csn-lmi-south-west.pdf>

Health Foundation, Health and Social Care Workforce, June 2022 <https://www.health.org.uk/REAL-centre/health-and-social-care-workforce>

Skills for Care Report, The state of the adult social care sector and workforce in England, October 2022 <https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/adult-social-care-workforce-data/Workforce-intelligence/publications/national-information/The-state-of-the-adult-social-care-sector-and-workforce-in-England.aspx>

Adult social care sector and workforce in South West. <https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Adult-Social-Care-Workforce-Data/Workforce-intelligence/publications/regional-information/South-West/South-West.aspx>

NHS Recruitment Portal, online, accessed March 2023 https://www.jobs.nhs.uk/xi/search_vacancy/

NHS Vacancy Statistics (and previous NHS Vacancies Survey) - NHS Digital. <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/nhs-vacancies-survey>

Health and social care funding projections 2021. The Health Foundation. <https://www.health.org.uk/publications/health-and-social-care-funding-projections-2021>

Swindon and Wiltshire Local Economic Assessment. (2022, March). Swindon and Wiltshire LEP. Retrieved March 27, 2023, from https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/strategy/economic-priorities/swindon-and-wiltshire-local-economic-assessment-final-march-22.pdf?sfvrsn=c21cbb0c_3_

Annex B: Process for Developing the LSIP.

Swindon and Wiltshire
Local Skills Improvement Plan Report

Annex B: Process for Developing the LSIP

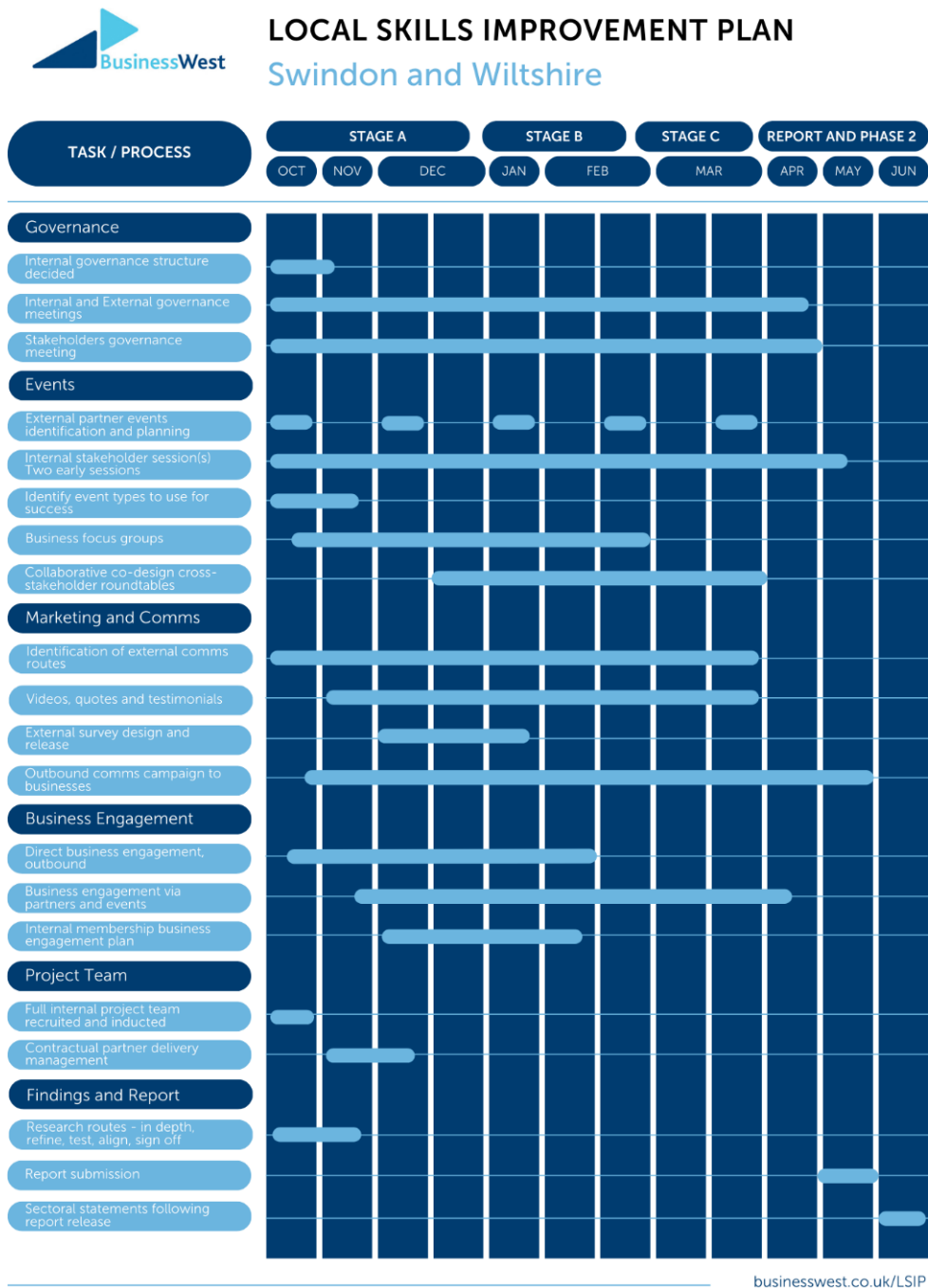
5.1 Summary

Business West utilised the principle for development of the LSIP methodology that most value could be added through this process by undertaking qualitative research, to add to existing understanding via granular and current employer's needs statements, rather than volume or quantitative analysis, significant quantities of which exist through Labour Market Intelligence and other national, regional and sectoral skills needs research. This process produced needs analysis on the principles of 'truing the wheel, not reinventing it' and adding value by freely sharing LSIP findings with others who could benefit from it, rather than replicating existing understanding. The findings align comprehensively against trends in existing sectoral national understanding, but provide additional detail on demand, re-prioritisation and micro-intervention within existing provision, alongside identification of potential areas for new provision.

A number of initial sectoral priorities were chosen in collaboration, prior to and during the designation phases, with sessions held with FE providers, ITPs and stakeholders such as the Local Enterprise Partnership. The principles under which sectoral investigation and prioritisation took place were to ensure both maximum impact aligned with the region's industries and economy, and relevance and applicability to FE provision within the region.

A project plan, timeline and executive summary were developed and shared, both internally for project governance and management and with stakeholders, to ensure best possible awareness of project intent, outputs and timescales, ensuring awareness of engagement and collaboration potential and helping in shaping partnership opportunities.

Swindon & Wiltshire LSIP Project Gantt Chart (overview)



5.2 Methodology

As outlined above, Business chose as primary engagement methodology a qualitative framework, with a 40 minute plus expected timescale for each engagement for inclusion. The LSIP project operated under an agile project methodology, refining the questioning route and prompts, to ensure maximum benefit to the process.

Business West utilised a coherent division of questions and a qualitative methodology with an open exploratory narrative to encourage wide response, with sector-specific and general prompts alongside targeted sectoral and thematic events, utilising both internal expertise and understanding of sectoral change and existing research and understanding into needs, change and sectoral transformation.

The wide spectrum investigation was initially aligned across 5 areas of need and change:

1. Business Growth & Change: Needs and perception
2. Skills & Training: Understanding and utilisation of existing provision, challenges in content alignment and modes of delivery
3. Recruitment and Retention: Gaps, shortages and impact on workforce development
4. Technological Change and Industrial Transformation: Including digitalisation, changes in operational need and workforce expectations
5. Understanding of, alignment to, and needs associated with the UK's Net Zero Strategy, decarbonisation and sustainability

These were incorporated into our primary semi-scheduled interviews with additional topic guides and sector and business specific prompts, with research undertaken into each business prior to interview engagement. Our identified audience for primary engagements was across senior management and decision makers, operational and HR managers and within businesses ranging from SME to large organisations with alignment to both sectoral and thematic foci as outlined below:

Region	Gloucestershire	Swindon and Wiltshire	West of England
Cross Cutting Drivers of Change	Digitalisation, Technological Change, Core Digital Net Zero, Sustainability, Decarbonisation, Climate Change Core and Transferable Skills		
Comparator Sectors	Agriculture Agri-Tech Land Management	Health, Social Care, Life Sciences Agriculture, Agri-Tech Land Management	Health Social Care Life Sciences
Baseline Sectors	Construction Advanced Manufacturing Advanced Engineering		
Unique Sectors	Digital Industries	Automotive	Creative Industries

We divided sectoral engagements into baseline sectors (identified within each region as a priority focus), comparators (those within two designated regions and a unique sectoral focus within each region. This was alongside thematic and cross-cutting drivers of change, allowing wider engagement with those who

identified relevance within essential themes without specific sectoral alignment, ensuring we could respond to and engage with any self-identified relevance.

Engagement in interview format was prioritised as a primary method for research, with the majority of communications directing potential audiences towards this, alongside attendance in the events programme. An automated portal with direct calendar and appointment booking access was developed during early delivery to help eliminate barriers to engagement.

Research and business engagement events were set up to follow sectoral and thematic alignments for the region, with some running for baseline or comparator sectors to address larger audiences and explore any potential differences in perceived unmet skills needs. Employer and stakeholder events primarily focussed on one or more of these elements of research, to stimulate deep discussion and further analysis of employer needs. The average time of engagement was over 60 minutes interview format and 90 minutes for events.

Throughout the project we utilised an Agile methodology via adaptive and ongoing planning against current identified needs (both for employers and the project delivery as a whole) and a flexible feed-in system, with employers given the ability to engage via whatever method was most appropriate for them and multiple channels of contact developed during project delivery.

5.3 Principles, Limitations and Successes

We believe that the core methodology of in-depth direct engagement to add value to existing understanding through qualitative research and internal analysis provides maximum value from the primary task of LSIP delivery, with open access and free sharing via a publicly accessible platform reaching the maximum potential audiences and highest value in terms of those who should have regard or from whom response is expected. The set up of Priority Findings documentation for FE Providers and the 'Duty to Respond' via accountability statements (and to a degree Ofsted Enhanced Inspections and expectations within curriculum planning and strategic documentation) meant that we incorporated significant existing understanding of labour market intelligence, vacancies, expected growth and replacement needs and other trends and existing data, to help make the widest possible case for investment into regional skills needs.

The intention to investigate sectoral needs via a baseline, comparator and unique sector focus, to identify regional difference in skills needs, did not yield any robust distinctions in skills needs across the three designated regions outside of unique foci: where there were outlier reported needs, these did not make it into the report or findings documentation, but may have yielded additional foci for Stage 2 delivery. It is the author's current impression that as these three LSIPs are physically and economically aligned as part of the Northern end of the wider South West region, with similarities in economic and socioeconomic geographies, the distinctions in skills needs will be minor if at all and represented more within larger employers with specific remits. It will be of interest to Business West in the initial Stage 2 planning stages (July – August 2023) to investigate other regional LSIP outputs attached to similar sectoral and thematic alignments and see whether there are significant differences or potentially gradual reprioritisations of needs through geographic dispersal on a wider basis. There may also be value in identifying other regional clusters, such as within Aerospace, and comparing and contrasting findings to assist in shaping Stage 2 delivery.

SME engagement remains more difficult than larger employers, with a total of 50% of engagements with SMEs, lower than within the other two regions, but with additional resource put specifically into target relevant SME audiences via paid for marketing on LinkedIn. Further partnership activity with stakeholders and sub-contractors is intended for Stage 2 delivery to attempt to address this – we believe that to a degree, having completed the first Stage, being able to highlight findings so far and the initial rollout of

new LSIP communications in both Case Study and ‘you said we did’ formats will go some way towards ensuring greater representation.

There is significant potential to collaborate on wider regional basis for direct project outputs (particularly from our perspective in the more galvanic and awareness raising events) and there could be benefit to all designated ERBs if there are identified synergies in Stage 1 findings and Stage 2 delivery expectations.

5.4 Engagement

The primary employer engagement period took place for 21 weeks, between 17th October 2022 and 13th March 2023, to allow time prior for planning, stakeholder engagement and awareness activities, and following this for the report and roadmap production. During the LSIP Trailblazer project we had a larger Business Engagement team and budget per region, but a shorter delivery time, less lead time and awareness of the LSIP and its’ potential place within the wider skills system, including alignment with other research projects, planning processes and intended impacts on provision.

Our application for LSIP designation outlined our core objective as a minimum of 80 in-depth engagements from relevant businesses based within the Swindon & Wiltshire region or with a self-declared interest in the region via employment, learning or commercial activity. Total engagements incorporated into the Swindon & Wiltshire LSIP primary research was 142 that met our criteria, with these being included in analysis towards the Priority Findings and employer needs statements. Please note that for some events we were unable to allocate sectoral or thematic alignments to registered attendees, therefore providing some input from unknown sectors, but the registration process for events ensured that attendees self-identified their interest with engaging with the topic. Please note too that these statistics do not include engagement via networking, short contact, survey completion, presentations or other contact; solely via the in-depth engagement methodology established prior to delivery as our core method of engagement.

Sectoral Representation via In-depth Engagements

Total # of Engagements (Swindon & Wiltshire)	Automotive	Health, Social Care, Life Sciences	Agriculture, Agri-Tech...	Construction	Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering	Digitalisation	Net Zero	Core and Transferable Skills	Non-Sectoral Aligned	Swindon & Wiltshire Total Engagements
Business / Employers only	3	12	4	4	6	16	6	5	0	35
Other Stakeholders *	7	16	13	9	13	21	7	0	34	78
Businesses and Stakeholders combined	10	28	17	13	19	37	13	5	34	142

*Including providers and supporting bodies

NB: all columns include cross-sector engagements, to cover where an employer self-identified alignment within more than one LSIP priority sector or region, other than the ‘Swindon & Wiltshire total engagements (all sectors)’ column, which includes the total number of individual engagements only.

Employer Size (where known) in In-depth Engagements

Size of Organisations	Automotive	Health, Social Care, Life Sciences	Agriculture, Agri-Tech...	Construction	Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering	Digitalisation	Net Zero	Core & Non-Sectoral Aligned	Swindon & Wiltshire Total Engagements*
Micro	1	1	1	0	3	4	4	3	16
Small	4	7	2	2	4	0	3	4	16
Medium	1	11	1	1	4	3	1	0	16
Large	4	9	13	5	8	1	5	5	38
Total	10	28	17	8	19	8	13	12	86

* All sectors combined

Please note that where applicable, the above figures include cross region and cross sector engagements, some of which employers and/or stakeholders self-declared for more than one region and or events that did not record sectoral alignment or were pan-region or multiple sector. Total number of engagements across all three designated regions was 359.

5.5 Audience Identification, Outreach and Other Engagement Activity

Business West secured significant buy-in from FE providers, with the majority of events organised in degrees of partnership, from hosting events through to collaboratively developed content and co-facilitation. GWP shared and attended events for LSIP delivery with audiences split between training providers and their employer partners for open and frank discussion of needs, intervention and systemic improvement.

Alongside the primary interview and events methodologies, a number of additional 'routes to market' were identified, planned and rolled out, with varying degrees of success; experience and existing understanding, including during the trailblazer, suggested that employers were undergoing an element of 'survey fatigue', with significant numbers of supporting organisations simultaneously requesting input prior to and during this period, however both a short survey (designed to both provide direct input and as a route to further engagement) and a self-reporting questionnaire were developed.

The survey allowed a minimum time commitment for those whom capacity was extremely limited but still wanted to engage with the LSIP process, which was sent primarily via FE providers, but also requested by a number of different stakeholder organisations to share via their marketing channels. This resulted in 73 responses across the 3 LSIP geographies (of which 18 included Swindon & Wiltshire as a regional alignment) with 21 agreeing to follow up discussion, but none completed prior to Stage 1 research completion that would be considered as additional interviews for Swindon & Wiltshire.

The self-reporting questionnaire followed the same outline structure as the interview schedule and was developed at the request of a small number of employers and training providers but was then not utilised by any of those who requested it or was sent to.

5.6 Events Programmes

Business West ran a series of 8 events for the Swindon & Wiltshire region, including those which covered more than one region due to sectoral alignment between November 2022 and March 2023, engaging employers, stakeholders and training providers. These events were separated into three distinct strands of activity:

- ◆ Employer Engagement (primary research, Stage A)
- ◆ Collaborative Codesign (translating needs, Stage B)
- ◆ Producing a Regional Roadmap (actioning priorities and developing a plan for multi-agency delivery, Stage C)

The average event length was 90 minutes of direct engagement time, with the primary format for each stage of activity structured around focus groups and immersion events to encourage deep and granular discussion on specific topics or themes within our foci, as well as larger forum style events covering wider topics and themes in our sectors with breakout style research sessions. Stage B events for co-design and addressing needs were held as collaborative forums to translate the business needs gathered in 121s and focus groups into actionable priorities. The regional roadmap events were held alongside individual stakeholder presentations and meetings (not outlined here but approximately 3 per week during 2023) to plan Stage 2, prepare the roadmap and multi-agency response and keep track of future progress and performance.

Events and Themes

- ◆ Stage A - Health & Social Care and Your Future Skills Needs
- ◆ Stage A - Health, Social Care and Life Sciences: Developing our Regional Skills
- ◆ Stage A - Journey to Net Zero: The Future of your Workplace (Swindon and Wiltshire)
- ◆ Stage A - Skills and Sustainability: Shaping the Future of Advanced Manufacturing
- ◆ Stage A - The Automotive Industry: The Changing Skills Landscape
- ◆ Stage B - Preparing for the Future: Automotive, Advanced Engineering and Construction
- ◆ Stage B - Preparing for the Future: Health, Social Care, Agriculture and Agri-tech
- ◆ Stage C - Swindon and Wiltshire Skills: Developing a Regional Collaborative Roadmap

Delineation of Events Programmes and Stages

Event Type	Purpose	How it worked	Date range
Business Forums/ Immersion events Stage A	Discuss the topic and associated skills needs Gather and record business intelligence Integration of providers to help translate needs and provide additional Post 16 provision expertise and response	In-person Businesses and providers 90 mins – 120 mins 15 – 20 attendees One on each sector and cross cutting theme per region	November 2022 – January 2023
Focus Groups Stage A	Discuss the topic and associated skills needs Gather and record business intelligence Businesses able to discuss freely with peers Open format	Virtual on MS Teams 5-15 attendees 90 mins – 120 mins Businesses only One or two on each sector or cross cutting theme per region Some were cross-region for comparator sectors (e.g., Health and Social Care, and Agri)	November 2022 – March 2023
Collaborative Co-Design Events Stage B	Translating business needs into potential response and action Ensuring the right audience could work together towards interventions and responses	In-person within FE venues Providers, businesses and stakeholders Sharing existing research, discussion of response, issues and intervention 120 – 180 minutes More than one sector within each event, with divided and guided discussion	January 2023 – February 2023
Creating a Collaborative Regional Roadmap Stage C	Thinking about how we, as a region, can work collaboratively to make a support employer with skills gaps to identify appropriate solutions, understand changes and find suitable providers and advice, we will discuss how we can make one single coherent system for employers, create awareness of this plan and how we can monitor our progress as well as record success.	In-person events Providers, businesses and stakeholders Outputs focussed on regional response and towards Stage 2 delivery 120 – 180 minutes Overview of key findings Response to problem statement, three areas of discussion: Collaboration & communication Governance Measuring success	February 2023 – March 2023

5.7 Marketing & Communications

Following the methodologies laid out in our application and above, a 21-week marketing and communications plan was developed alongside primary activities from October 2022 to March 2023 with the intention to share awareness of and increase involvement in the LSIP via:

- ◀ direct call-to-actions (CTAs) in the form of events attended and interviews booked

- ◀ awareness-raising of intent and deliverables to pre-identified stakeholders and businesses
- ◀ awareness raising and engagement CTAs towards employers that Business West had not previously engaged with
- ◀ a survey to help steer focus for each region and identify the learner demand and priority response for Stage C activity

Due to the short timeframe to identify the audience, plan deliverables and implement, the LSIP team again used agile methodologies in communications, to trial different ways of reaching KPIs for a higher return on investment (RoI); if/when a method or mode of communication did not show an effective RoI within 2 weeks, this communication method was no longer be utilised, and the team refocussed efforts on deliverables that gained better responses. Direct, individual and targeted communication was in the form of direct emails, event invitations, and invitations to interview or focus groups. Our core CTAs included the below, listed in order of priority to the project:

1. Interviews booked in with engagement executives
2. Focus group events booked in
3. Collaboration and co-design events with stakeholders and FE providers
4. Learner demand roundtables with ERBs, stakeholders and FE providers
5. A short survey on Smart Survey in which respondents provide their thoughts on the most pressing skills needs and find ways to get involved with the LSIPs
6. Awareness of the project to share with key networks that can be pushed towards our core CTAs

Mass communication channels as below were utilised to achieve both awareness of the project and direct CTAs:

- ◀ Mailers to pre-existing Business West organisations listed on Unity and other procured lists
- ◀ Social media posts, specifically on LinkedIn and Facebook, using the Business West account for paid and organic advertisements
- ◀ Individually created posts and directed messages to selected identified potential audience members
- ◀ Website content – written, video and resource
- ◀ Promotional videos utilising various platforms
- ◀ Press releases, with a focus on changes to Post 16 Educational Provision

Seven newsletters were sent for the Swindon & Wiltshire region and four 'prospect' mailers for lead generation. Personal invites/outreach, direct outbound marketing and word of mouth were reported as the highest single channels that lead to LSIP engagement so will be increased during Stage 2 activities, with targets to be set across the team for outbound identification and contact rates. LinkedIn post impressions and reactions increased by 10% over comparable trailblazer period activities, as did mailer receipt and opening rates. Sign-ups for LSIP specific marketing and communications via Business West increased during Stage 1 delivery, with an increase of 11% across the three regions between October 2022 and May 2023. Additional paid for and targeted LinkedIn marketing campaigns were planned and created for the Swindon & Wiltshire region due to lower baseline take-up via existing channels, but made no discernible difference in response rates or click throughs.

LSIP outreach and networking activities were undertaken both by all relevant employees within the LSIP team and via representation of the LSIP through other departments within Business West, including via Chambers & Membership and the Skills Delivery team. Mass marketing was undertaken through both direct LSIP-specific identified audiences and the incorporation of LSIP updates into wider communications channels, as well as the production of tailored content for partner organisations via both existing and new mailouts. Numerous external events were attended for widening LSIP participation and awareness.

5.8 Stage A Summary

Stage A activity (Articulating employers' skills needs) took place as outlined via both primary LSIP research and secondary data analysis, for incorporation into Priority Findings processes and to guide the research narrative. The secondary analysis was via existing Labour Market Intelligence and existing regional, sectoral and national data on change and skills needs, alongside analysis of existing provision within the region and nationally.

Our agile project methodology allowed us both pre and during delivery to identify the categorisation of skills needs and distinction between the areas identified; core and soft skills, core digital skills (which were further delineated throughout initial phases of employer engagement towards a new distinction in skills needs), sector specific and technological change and needs within sustainability and decarbonisation. We utilised the Priority Findings process too for some incorporation of other systemic needs identified by employer engagement.

Although the primary qualitative analysis created a significant level of granularity, the commitments in terms of time for those who may have reduced capacity is significant; Business West will incorporate further higher volume shorter engagement research methods into Stage 2, with an expectation to utilise surveys sent internally and via partners, as there was greater than expected uptake through this in Stage 1.

5.9 Stage B Summary

Business West worked comprehensively throughout Stage 1 Delivery towards the intentions outlined for Stage B (co-design and response to employers' needs) and we recognised the benefits of incorporating providers and stakeholders into LSIP delivery from pre-designation forwards, to ensure greatest replicability, alignment and buy-in. Significant capacity was designated towards providers from senior management to co-develop both the narrative for regional audiences and to ensure recognition of LSIP's potential value-add to those with both the formal duty to respond and those who may find benefit through regard.

Skills Needs and Occupational Priorities were shared with partial alignment to the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) occupational pathways and maps, but there were some difficulties in some sectors with recognition of appropriate pathways and correspondence to post 16 technical provision due to the employer led narrative attached to skills needs rather than educational standards, employers perceived issues with categorisations and lack of understanding of relevance and change, and a number pointed towards the slow development of standards and lack of awareness in employers as areas that will need reinvestigation. Business West has potentially identified an additional workstream for Stage 2 attached to understanding of educational standards and frameworks as the basis for in-depth discussion of those engaged/involved, potentially in partnership with FE providers. At present there is no precise direction for incorporation into delivery, but will be incorporated into stakeholder and provider conversations within the initial Stage 2 planning process.

Providers were engaged prior to Priority Findings release, in both Stage B and C, to soft start understanding of the delineation and suggested format of Priority Findings, and the narrative, layout and intentions were discussed both at events and during meetings to attempt to find the maximum benefit; illustrative and precise without being prescriptive about response. General and direct feedback from those with the Duty to Respond has been positive, with a number of accountability statements shared and discussed in advance of submission deadlines.

5.10 Stage C Summary

Although Stage C (identifying a regional roadmap for change and addressing learner demand) has been delineated in the project as a separate activity and phase of delivery, the requisite conversations for developing a regional roadmap in a whole-systems approach, to both improve access and awareness for employers and to simultaneously address other issues within the wide skills system, such as learner demand and greater integration of those on the periphery of post 16 education (including but not limited to CEIAG, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and those working with SEND or addressing barriers to learning and employment) have been held throughout Stage 1, from pre-designation and ensuring stakeholders had similar ideas of LSIP primary intentions following differing interpretations of various sections of the Stage 1 guidance²⁵. This meant that Business West had clear intention and idea for what would be formally incorporated into Stage C delivery and how to delineate foci in meaningful engagement with stakeholders and training providers.

Events during this period were held in roundtable format around three distinct areas for incorporation into the roadmap:

- ◀ Collaboration and Communication
- ◀ Governance
- ◀ Metrics and Measures of Success

These tangible outputs allowed us to focus on ensuring rational and strategic intentions as a region, including the additional needs attached to identifying the existing supporting infrastructure available to employers to both identify and support against skills needs. Each of these areas could be discussed from the perspective of providers, employers and stakeholders, to ensure a whole-systems approach of relevance via a multi-agency response that will be governed externally via the Skills & Talent subgroup, to ensure this set of tasks and outputs aligns too with wider regional skills planning and strategy.

Roadmap events: 3 total (one per region), alongside numerous meetings and sessions with individual stakeholders, providers and via existing groups and structures representing regional stakeholders, in particular via the LEP.

5.11 Green Skills, Green Jobs, Green Economy: Alignment to the UK Net Zero Strategy

Note from May 2023 LSIP Approval Process Guidance (not publicly available): “Green skills” means the skills, capabilities or expertise needed to support jobs that contribute directly or indirectly support the net zero target contained in section 1 of the Climate Change Act 2008, adaptation to climate change or meeting other environmental goals.

Business West is a certified B Corp and one of the largest Chambers of Commerce in the country, with the purpose to:

“help businesses of all sizes take advantage of the opportunities and address the problems created by this new world so they may successfully start, grow, export and innovate”

As such, Business West aims to ensure the region we operate in is the best place for all to live, work, learn and prosper and we have long been focussed on more than just economic prosperity. Business West is committed to safeguarding the environment and addressing the Climate Crisis. We are signed up to the International Chambers of Commerce Climate Coalition and incorporate sustainability, decarbonisation and alignment to the UK’s Net Zero Strategy into all activities undertaken, both internally and in our engagement with businesses and stakeholders in the region.

Decarbonisation and sustainability were incorporated into the heart of the West of England Plus LSIP Trailblazer, and further expanded within each of the three region’s Business West was designated as ERB

for in the LSIP national rollout, with our methodology incorporating discussion and awareness of skills' needs for futureproofing growth through decarbonisation and sustainability, within core functions, technological change and legislative and policy change. These findings are separated out within each sector in the Priority Findings documentation, summarised in Section 2 of the report and initial expectations of Stage 2 research within this Annex.

Our intended deep dives and refinements of skills need understanding aligned with green growth have been incorporated into every sector specifically for future activity, driven by our Stage 1 research, for further analysis and understanding of employer's expected needs, with the core investigative activity attached to Green Skills and Green Growth to be retained throughout Stage 2. We are aware of both existing and upcoming strategic documentation aligned with sustainable growth and skills needs.

5.12 Providers

Through and prior to Stage 1 delivery, Business West have developed meaningful collaborative relationships with FE providers in Swindon & Wiltshire. Both FE Colleges were integrated into LSIP delivery, with engagement and support from Swindon UTC, although we would like to bring all relationships with Providers of Post 16 Technical Education to an improved level of partnership, transparency and integration into LSIP activities and believe the LSIF is a potentially beneficial additional method to do so, ensuring alignment and certainty of purpose and partnership. There is however some implicit potential via the LSIF application process and expectations of explicit support to LSIF applicants for the de-prioritisation of any providers not directly involved. Business West will therefore need to ensure that (if applicable) non LSIF providers are not marginalised or excluded from the LSIP process and treated evenly outside of LSIF support elements in terms of employer signposting and information.

We believe that through Stage 2 delivery we can encourage greater recognition of the Business West LSIP team as a direct asset for both internal and wider employer engagement, ensuring alignment of needs and activities within FE and post-16 education.

Swindon & Wiltshire – FE Colleges, Post 16 Education Providers and Higher Education Institutes

FE	New College Swindon
FE	Swindon and Wiltshire Institute of Technology (SAWIOT)
FE	Wiltshire College & University Centre
Other Education Provider	UTC Swindon
Other Education Provider	100 Ways in 100 Days
Other Education Provider	Green Labyrinth
Other Education Provider	Learning Curve Group
Other Education Provider	Seetec Pluss
School Sixth Forms and Sixth Form Colleges	Stonar School Park Academies Trust Trust Sixth Form – Lydiar Park Academy, Abbey Park School Commonweal The Park Academies Trust (Lydiard Park) The Ridgeway School & Sixth Form College

	GWA Academy Abbeyfield The Clarendon Academy Salisbury Sixth Form College Melksham Oak Community School Malmesbury School The Corsham School Royal Wootton Bassett Academy The John of Gaunt School St John's of Marlborough Kingsbury Green Academy The Godolphin School The Wellington Academy The Sarum Academy
Representative Body	Construction Industry Training Board (CITB)
Representative Body	Gloucestershire & Wiltshire Partnership (GWP) – representing ITPs within the Gloucestershire and Swindon & Wiltshire

5.13 Stakeholders – summary, engagement, outreach, table

During designation and prior to LSIP Stage 1 Delivery, Business West attempted to identify all potential stakeholders and partners for the Swindon & Wiltshire region, to highlight the benefits of LSIP engagement, raise awareness and identify potential collaborators and partners. Below we have summarised both primary and secondary stakeholder organisations with whom we have identified potential synergies and included in pre- and post-designation communications and invites. Those who have been involved directly and explicitly involved some self-selection and identification, in particular with national ERBs and sectoral representative bodies. We believe during Stage 2 there will be significant benefit to a wider participatory mechanism to ensure national bodies can identify potential relevance, incorporation and similar access and awareness on a national footing.

Identified stakeholder organisations with an interest in the Swindon & Wiltshire LSIP

ERB	Corsham Chamber
ERB	Swindon Chamber (Thames Valley)
ERB	The Federation of Small Businesses (FSB)
ERB	Wessex Chambers of Commerce
Other	Department for Education
Other	Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
Other	Recruitment and Employment Confederation (REC)
Other	The Careers & Enterprise Company
Other	UCAS
Regional Stakeholder	Gloucestershire and Wiltshire Partnership (GWP)
Regional Stakeholder	Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

Regional Stakeholder	Swindon Borough Council
Regional Stakeholder	Wiltshire Council
Representative body	National Farmers Union (NFU)
Trade Association	Electrical Contractors Association (ECA)

5.14 Local Enterprise Partnership Integration & Involvement

Premise had been set via the LSIP pre-designation activities for an integrated relationship with FE Provision and was expanded in initial Stage 1 activity through rigorous discussion of outputs, alignment and sharing of progress with the LEP and the Local Authorities with shared remits across employment and skills. Project meetings were held predominantly through LEP pre-existing groups alongside less formal or regular meetings with various departments and representatives of projects and authorities. The LEP fed into the initial pre-designation application, and we have integrated where feasible alignment into every element of LSIP delivery.

Stage 2: Principles and Outlines

The objective of stage 2 of the LSIP is to embed the LSIP process in the local skills system. We will be expected to “galvanise collaborative action with employers, providers and local stakeholders to support the delivery of the actionable priorities and the roadmap” that we have set out in our report.

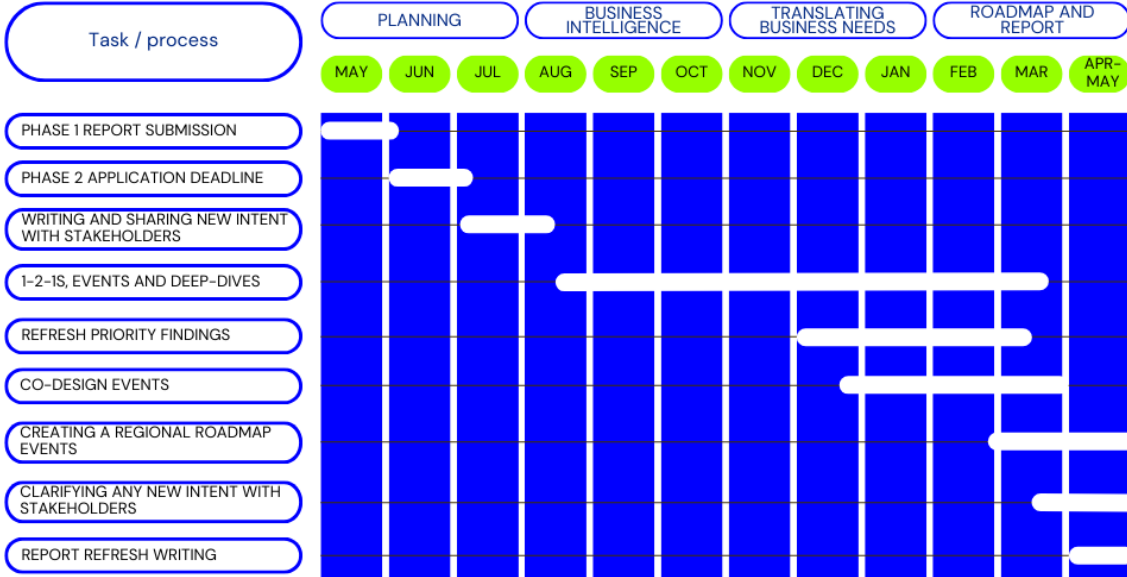
In light of this, we will be continuing with similar activities that we hosted in Stage one of the LSIP, including 40-minute 1-2-1 interviews and small focus groups on specific topics and themes within our sectoral foci, as well as the larger business forum style events where we cover wider topics and themes in our sectors.

We will also continue to host co-design collaborative forums to translate business needs gathered in 1-2-1s with local FE providers (and ITPs, etc.). In addition, we will be hosting regular regional roadmap events to plan and keep track of our actionable priorities with our engaged businesses, stakeholders and providers.

However, in addition to all of the above, this time around we will also be undertaking further deep dives into areas where we feel our research could go further within our current sectoral foci, refining topics where we know there is a requirement for change, where gaps in understanding have been highlighted and where there is a high need for skills in that topic or subsector. We will be hosting specific focus groups and galvanic information sharing events on these themes, as well as our regular 1-2-1s and focus groups.

Below we have outlined some intent in terms of changes to methodology and foci, alongside an outline of the intended delivery timescales prior to the first report refresh. We expect a significant level of additional granularity and specificity attached to previously identified needs that will hopefully form a further meaningful basis for providers to respond against, including understanding of demand and timescales for commercial viability. We look forward to the extended (12 month) delivery timeline and believe we will achieve greater reach, engagement and granularity.

LSIP Stage 2 Project Cycle Gantt Chart



Stage 2 Intended Engagements Structure:



Deep-dive themes:

These topics below are the areas which have been highlighted during Stage 1 as areas for further investigation. We have attempted to divide these into both incorporations into interview methodology and potential initial foci for events outputs in Stages A and B of Stage 2.

Baseline Sectors:

Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering <i>Region: West of England, Gloucestershire, and Swindon & Wiltshire</i>	
Deep Dive Topics (for events engagements)	New Interview Narrative (all topics to be incorporated into Interview Question Route)
CAD, Digital and Design Engineering	Production Roles
Data	Data Analysis
Industry 4.0	Project Management
Engineering for the Energy Transition	Mechanical Engineering
	Industry 4.0
	QA and Testing
	Automation
	Resource Efficiency
	Sales Mentorship
	In-House Training

	Electrical Engineering
	Net Zero/Green Skills set of questions surrounding each topic: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Energy - Waste - Policy - Legislation - Communicate change - Measurement and ROI

Construction <i>Region: West of England, Gloucestershire, and Swindon & Wiltshire</i>	
Deep Dive Topics (for events engagements)	New Interview Narrative (all topics to be incorporated into Interview Question Route)
Fabric First Efficiency	Carpentry, Joinery
Building Regulations and Change (Building Standards, Legislation)	Heat Pumps and Boilers
Retrofit and Decarbonisation	Solar and EVs
Sustainable Building Techniques and Modern Methods of Construction	Modern Methods of Construction
	Building Performance and Fabric First Efficiency
	Digital Design and CADs
	Upskilling and Reskilling for Plumbing and Heating
	Soft Skills and Representing the Company On-Site

Comparative Sectors:

Agriculture, Agritech, Agri-food and Land Management <i>Gloucestershire and Swindon & Wiltshire</i>	
Deep Dive Topics (for events engagements)	New Interview Narrative (all topics to be incorporated into Interview Question Route)
Advanced Commercial Agri-Tech (Robotics and Autonomy)	Smart Farm Management (Monitoring and Technology)
Digital Farming (Data, sensors)	Automated Farming
Smart Farm Management (Integration of Technology and Efficiency)	Agricultural Engineering
Decarbonising Farm Infrastructure	Communications and Connectivity
	Data
	Sectoral Drivers of Change (Economy, Policy, Legislation)
	“Farming 4.0” (Connectivity, Automation, Smart Farm)
	Net Zero/Green Skills set of questions surrounding each topic: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Energy - Waste

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policy - Legislation - Communicate change - Measurement and ROI
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Health and Social Care and Life Sciences <i>West of England, Swindon & Wiltshire</i>	
Deep Dive Topics (for events engagements)	New Interview Narrative (all topics to be incorporated into Interview Question Route)
Successful Tech and Digital Adoption (In H&SC)	Health Care and Multiple Needs
Discharge, reablement and Integrated Care	Pinch Points in Provision (Health and Care)
Home Care	Advanced Digital and Remote Service
Digital, Computer and Statistical Literacy (Life Sciences)	Infection Control and Core Service Provision (Medication, Dressing, Hoisting)
Decarbonising estates and facilities / Service delivery and improving efficiency	Data and Systems Integration / Productivity and Efficiency in Systems
	Balancing Training and Work
	Gaps in Core Digital Ability
	Leadership and Management
	Life Sciences and Transferable Skills (Life Sciences, Computer Science, Maths, Statistics, Engineering and Chemistry – diagnostics, data, etc.)
	Net Zero/Green Skills set of questions surrounding each topic: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Energy - Waste - Policy - Communicate change - Measurement and ROI

Unique Sectors:

Creative Industries <i>West of England</i>	
Deep Dive Topics (for events engagements)	New Interview Narrative (all topics to be incorporated into Interview Question Route)
Immersive Technologies (Writing, Production)	Data visualisation, Data analytics
Software and Coding	Design Software
Marketing, PR, Comms	Videography and Motion
Sustainable Production	Project, Client Management, and Account Management
	Cloud Collaboration and Development
	Service, Sales and Pitching
	AI
	In-house and mentoring

	<p>Net Zero/Green Skills set of questions surrounding each topic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Energy - Waste - Policy - Communicate change - Measurement and ROI
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Digital Industries <i>Gloucestershire</i>	
New Interview Narrative (all topics to be incorporated into Interview Question Route)	New Interview Narrative (all topics to be incorporated into Interview Question Route)
Marketing (Digital Services), PR, Comms	Data Usage, Data Science and Data Visualisations
Software and Coding: Digital Industries	Increasing Adoption of Consultancy Mindset and Client Needs Focus (Commerciality, Planning and Delivery, Evaluation and Lead Conversion)
AI and Automation	Cyber Security
Systematic Sustainability within Service Provision (Data storage)	Project Management
	Effective Software and Service Integration
	Cloud Collaboration and Development
	<p>Net Zero/Green Skills set of questions surrounding each topic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Energy - Waste - Policy - Communicate change - Measurement and ROI

Automotive, Transport, Logistics Infrastructure and Sustainability <i>Swindon & Wiltshire</i>	
Deep Dive Topics	New Interview Narrative (all topics to be incorporated into Interview Question Route)
Transports and Logistics	Coding and Software
Maintenance and Repair (Garages as well as transport and logistics)	CAD and Simulation
Electrification (EV and wider electrification and infrastructure)	Data, Analytics, Diagnostics and Interpretation
Alternative Fuels and Infrastructure	5G and Connectivity and its Impact on Transport and Logistics
	High Voltage Batteries and Longer-Term Sector Change
	<p>Net Zero/Green Skills set of questions surrounding each topic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Energy

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Waste - Policy - Communicate change - Measurement and RO
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Crossing Cutting Drivers of Change, Thematic Investigations:

Core Soft and Core Digital <i>West of England, Gloucestershire and Swindon & Wiltshire</i>	
Deep Dive Topics	New Interview Narrative (all topics to be incorporated into Interview Question Route)
“The Disconnect” (Employer Expectations and Assumptions)	<p>These topics will be included in general interview question route for all</p> <p>Note: Rather than focusing on any Net Zero specific deep dives, this theme and green skills will be an essential focus within each of our sectoral foci.</p>
Project Management and Leadership	
Effective Rollout of Digital Systems	

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