GREATER LINCOLNSHIRE & RUTLAND

Local Skills Improvement Plan

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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[1], and in accordance with the LSIP statutory guidance[2].

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) has been a truly collaborative process and Federation of Small Businesses could not have produced this plan without the input of a very wide range of employers, stakeholders, partners and individual supporters.

First and foremost our thanks go to this area's dedicated and engaged employers. Through our employer consultation activities which were run over winter 2022/23, we engaged with approximately 400 local employers, all of whom gave up valuable time away from their business to help us "get under the bonnet" of the area's skills challenges to create change. Our aim throughout the LSIP process was to put them at the very heart of how skills are identified, developed, and deployed. In putting embedded local businesses at the heart of the system we can provide skills and opportunities to local people to do meaningful work with local benefits, leading to better wellbeing and quality of life.

Our gratitude also goes to the Greater Lincolnshire & Rutland's training providers. The colleges, sixth form institutions, universities and independent training providers engaged with the LSIP process in a very healthy way, recognising that the LSIP is a chance for change for the better. Key representatives from these groups have not only provided real insight into the local skills system as it is – its positives and where there are challenges – but have acted and reacted to the actions and outcomes together, and with intent for continued collaboration and improvement.

Further recognition must go to the counties' local authorities who helped to communicate details of the employer engagement, fed in as employers themselves and provided reports and data wherever needed. Others in the public sector who are also deserve our thanks are the local actors for Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (GLLEP), the Careers & Enterprise Company, Business Lincolnshire and Growth Hub and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

A number of fellow Employer Representative Bodies (ERBs) who cover Greater Lincolnshire & Rutland also assisted in spreading the word of the engagement opportunities, but others also participated in the primary research on behalf of their members. Thank you to them for that time and insight.

We extend our gratitude to Habit5 for their expertise and support throughout the LSIP process, and also to The Knowledge Ladder for their contribution.

Finally, our most sincere thanks go to the Greater Lincolnshire & Rutland LSIP Steering Group. Their vast contribution could not possibly be measured. Their guidance, decision-making and vision for an ambitious and fair future for skills are the very foundation of this report, and all the outcomes and actions to come.

Overall, we would like to show our sincere appreciation to all of those who have enthused about, engaged with, contributed to, advocated for and volunteered their expertise and time for this project.

This is a story of opportunity and ambition, told from a part of the world that has been all too overlooked and underestimated in the past. But a range of factors - from the people profile to the major projects already in train - highlights the need for more, new and up-to-date skills.

It's time for change, and that begins here.

Katrina Pierce

Development Manager and LSIP Lead for Greater Lincolnshire & Rutland, Federation of Small Businesses

INTRODUCTION

What does a truly 21st Century skills system look like for Greater Lincolnshire & Rutland? How do our colleges, universities, independent training providers, apprenticeship specialists, and organisations strategically transform delivery of training to meet changing learner demand, the keen force of technological advances, industrial shifts, dynamic work patterns, the shifting sands of regulation and looming environmental pressures? The Greater Lincolnshire & Rutland Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) is our region's opportunity to realign supply and demand of skills, putting local employers at the very heart of the system. Over the following pages and annexes, a bold new skills improvement plan - based on localised employer and stakeholder insight and local geographic and demographic data - will be articulated to drive necessary change over the next three years to 2025.

PROLOGUE

Skills Fit for a Century

Greater Lincolnshire & Rutland's training providers – from sixth form colleges to private specialised enterprises – have the mammoth task of equipping a workforce that spans a century. People who left secondary education in the 1970s still play a significant role in the local labour market and are prime to be re- or up-skilled. At the same time there are students becoming economically active this year who will still be working in the 2070s, and facing unknown challenges presented by technology, the natural environment and industries that are yet to be invented. Providing the right range of technical skills via courses that appeal to learners across these generational profiles is not the only challenge; providers must also supply learning and development opportunities that meet employer expectations, are inclusive and accessible, cater to an economically diverse population across a wide and rural geography, respond to rapid change, and can be delivered locally amid an intricate funding framework. This is an intense and complex proposition, but when we also consider unprecedented shifts in the workforce and pressures bearing down heavily on businesses triggered by a vicious series of external shocks (including, but not limited to, the Covid-19 pandemic, the UK exiting the EU, interrupted supply chains, the global economic downturn, war in mainland Europe, an ongoing energy crisis and wounding inflation rates), this demonstrates the timeliness and value in reviewing and realigning how skills are developed and deployed in the area.

Preparing for the Fifth Industrial Revolution

Greater Lincolnshire & Rutland has borne witness – and in some cases led the way – across many industrial changes. From British Agricultural Revolution in the 17th Century to the heavy industry of William Foster & Co and Ruston Bucyrus in the early 20th Century, our area now finds itself at the dawn of another age, one where people, industry and commerce, the environment and technology must find ways to work in harmony, all at a time of global economic, environmental, and social disruption. The Fifth Industrial Revolution is upon us. This shift presents a huge opportunity for Greater Lincolnshire & Rutland – and its people – to adopt and lead transformative ways of working, and to face what could be barriers and turn them into juggernauts that force through blockers towards progress. The force behind that will be skills; equipping people with the capabilities, inspiration and opportunity to do essential, meaningful work.

Understanding exactly what skills are needed for this next industrial sea change, and to overcome existing labour issues, is critical. Employers are well-placed and a vital source to understand what our skill needs are right now, where they will need skills for the future, and where they see potential for employment growth. Intensive consultation with the Greater Lincolnshire & Rutland business community has driven this skills improvement plan and when underpinned by demographic, geographic and economic data we can be confident that this new plan paves the way to provide skills that will be vital to the Fifth Industrial Revolution.

PART ONE: IDENTIFYING THE LSIP PRIORITIES

Part one of this report sets the context for the LSIP and part two provides specific detail on taking forward the priorities that have been identified based on the feedback gathered. Part three provides the indicative "roadmap" to help bring the LSIP to life and making an impact on the region's learners, employers and educators.

Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) was, from September 2022, appointed by the Department for Education as the designated Employer Representative Body (ERB) to prepare a Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) for the Greater Lincolnshire & Rutland area, which aligns with the GLLEP geography.

Working with commissioned local research agency, Habit5, FSB planned and executed an extensive programme of research and engagement activities to seek feedback from local employers, training providers and strategic stakeholders to inform the LSIP. The focus was on understanding the true nature of skills challenges which underpin the recruitment, retention, productivity, diversification, diversity, funding, and growth challenges faced by employers of all sizes, as well as education and training providers. Understanding the causal factors behind the issues raised by employers, their impacts and potential remedies provides the opportunity for change.

The aim of the LSIP report is to identify key actionable priorities and recommendations for changes to make post-16 technical education and/or training more responsive and aligned to local labour market needs. LSIPs must be informed by robust evidence, and meaningful dialogue between employers, training providers, and strategic stakeholders, including local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) and local authorities, and FSB has endeavoured to reach representatives from all parties and captured their insights, knowledge and collated this as data to shape our approach.

It is prudent to bear in mind that LSIPs are both a process and a plan for making provision more responsive to employers' skills needs. The process of consulting with employers and developing the plan was as important as this LSIP report itself. This was done by creating dialogue, with a view to forging stronger and more meaningful relationships between the local employer community and skills system.

The engagement approach we have used aligns with the Department for Education's (DfE) 'Statutory Guidance for the Development of a Local Skills Improvement Plan'[3] (October 2022). DfE is overseeing and funding the development of LSIPs across the country, and FSB is held accountable for the development of the LSIP by DfE. LSIPs are a key part of achieving the aims set out in the Skills for Jobs White Paper[4], which looked to put employers more firmly at the heart of the skills system. Building of these networks and relationships is an important outcome into improving the capacity and capabilities of businesses in the area, and can underpin future work in many policy areas, as well as providing peer-to-peer learning.

The Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022[5] places duties on specific providers of post-16 technical education or training to co-operate with the designated ERB and have regard to these plans, and associated guidance from the Secretary of State, when considering their post-16 technical education or training offer. With respect to this duty, providers should have regard to and contribute to meeting local skills priorities alongside other aspects of their provision. Accountability is evidenced through subsequent Accountability Agreements that set out how providers have engaged with employers and responded to LSIPs. Certain providers may also have a duty to review how well the education or training provided by their respective institution meets local needs and consider what action their institution might take to better meet those needs. A range of other national and local bodies and agencies – from Business Lincolnshire to the Department for Work and Pensions, from District Councils to Employer Representative Bodies (ERBs) – can also play an important role in supporting and facilitating the development and implementation of LSIPs as part of a collaborative process.

Before we move on to the main body and articulating the priorities and actions of the Greater Lincolnshire & Rutland LSIP, there is merit in reminding ourselves that the statutory guidance outlines that LSIPs should:

- set out the key priorities and changes needed in a local area to make post-16 technical education or training more responsive and closely aligned to local labour market needs;
- represent an employer view of the skills most needed to support local economic growth;
- set out actionable priorities to better meet these skills needs, that employers, providers and stakeholders in a local area can get behind;
- not attempt to cover the entirety of provision within an area but focus on the key changes and priorities;
- focus on a three-year period and be reviewed and updated as appropriate during this time;
- avoid making recommendations regarding national skills policy and focus on what can be done locally; and
- describe how skills required in relation to jobs that directly or indirectly support Net Zero targets, adaptation to Climate Change or meet other environmental goals have been considered.

LOCAL STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Greater Lincolnshire & Rutland (GL&R) is an area of natural and economic diversity, which is reflected in the range of opportunities open to local people – depending on their background, location and ability to travel.

The area is a vast geography covering over 7,000 square kilometres[6]. It is comprised of the ceremonial counties of Lincolnshire and Rutland, with ten local districts (North Lincolnshire, North East Lincolnshire, West Lindsey, East Lindsey, North Kesteven, South Kesteven, City of Lincoln, Boston Borough, South Holland and Rutland). Spanning the land between the south Humber bank down to The Wash, it has county borders with Cambridgeshire and Norfolk to the south, and Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, Northamptonshire and South Yorkshire to the West. The eastern side sits entirely on the Lincolnshire Coast of the North Sea, giving it strategic advantage for energy, maritime, import/export activity and the visitor economy.

This is an area twenty times the size of Birmingham but with the approximate population of that same city[7]. This sparse population has an average of 150 people per square metre, compared with 375 per square meters for the rest of England and Wales.[8] Over 1,138,000 people live across this area (769,500 in Lincolnshire[9], 157,200 in North East Lincolnshire[10], 169,900 in North Lincolnshire[11] and 41,400 in Rutland[12]).

The area is largely made up of hamlets, villages and around 30 market towns and just one city (Lincoln). The largest centres of population are the city of Lincoln (approx. 93,000), Grimsby (88,000), Scunthorpe (80,000), Grantham (42,000), and Boston (41,000)[13] and the headcount is steadily increasing, the population grew by 57,916 between the 2011 and 2021 censuses[14]. 51% of the people living here are female, 49% male. According to the 2021 census, the area is 96% white, 1.6% Asian, 1.3% Mixed heritage, 0.6% Black[15]. Life expectancy here is 81 years – 83 for women and 79 for men. The median age is 45.9 years. For the working age population (16-64), there are 990,900 people. 487,500 are men and 503,400 are women[16].

Jobs density at 0.79 is lower than the national average of 0.87 for the UK. This presents acute challenges for linking labour supply to demand. It also highlights disparities in key economic and labour market statistics within Greater Lincolnshire & Rutland, and challenges through travel in skills provision and labour supply for employment[17].

Given the rurality and coastal profile of the area, this does mean that 50,000 of those who live in the area are located within an area recognised as being in the 10% most deprived regions in the UK[18]. Many of the areas of Lower Super Output by Indices[19] of Multiple Deprivation are clustered along the eastern/coastal side of the geography, but not exclusively. 78% of the population are deemed as economically active[20], with 528,100 individuals in employment. 11,700 are currently unemployed[21]. A total of 54,200 households across the area are declared as workless. The area used to have an above average rate of NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training) aged 16-17 but since 2018 this has fallen to just under the UK average, from 3.1% to 2.7%[22]. NEETs aged up to 24 do require focus however as opportunities for younger people are variable across the area.

The majority of people (79.3%) are reported as being in good health[23] but the top five conditions ailing the population are hypertension, depression, obesity, diabetes and asthma[24]. Speaking of ailments, the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020 onwards has taken its toll on the local workforce. Several factors, including premature deaths (10.7% of all deaths in the area were linked to Covid), and early retirement means that average working age population has shrunk and is forecast to decline further. The number of residents joining the economically inactive count is growing[25].

The region has benefited from a large migrant workforce since the late 1990s; in 2020 there were approximately 35,000 EU workers here, totalling 8% of the workforce[26] and 65% of the "non-British" workforce[27]. Many of these workers fill (typically) low-wage vacancies in critical sectors such as agrifood, health and care and the visitor economy. However, the UK's exit from the EU sparked by the referendum in June 2016 has impacted the supply of labour from these communities as many returned to their country of origin and there have been fewer new European arrivals. Employers in the sectors who had become dependent on the availability of migrant labour now report persistent problems in recruiting for seasonal and full-time roles.

17% of the populace state they have no formal qualifications and 9% have only entry level/Level 1 qualifications as their highest academic or vocational achievement, but 21% do hold a Level 4 or above qualification[28].

Average earnings by Median Wage are at their highest in Rutland (£15.83),[29] and that is the only district in the area where earnings are above the United Kingdom average of £14.77.[30] They are at their lowest in Boston (£11.55). An estimated 25% of the population earn below the real living wage[31].

The spread of the county as well as its rurality present challenges for accessing training and work, as raised by employers throughout the LSIP research. Transport does prove a challenge in such a large, rural area, yet it is a vital factor in connecting people to work, education, healthcare and leisure. The wide spread of communities means there is uneven demand on the transport system and car travel is often the easier option[32]. This results in over 3.8 billion vehicle miles travelled on Lincolnshire's roads each year[33]. However, car travel is expensive and age-restricted, making opportunities to travel to work and training difficult for those under 17 or from a household where learning to drive, buy a car, insure and run it is prohibitive. Buses are also key to enabling people to access work, education and wellbeing activities – approximately 12 million passenger journeys a year are taken across 275 bus services[34]. This dependency on cars and buses also causes a challenge in Lincolnshire driving down local carbon emissions from vehicular travel.

Despite the difficulties, the area boasts a strong and growing mixed economy valued at over £23.9bn per year[35], with ambitions to add £3.2bn to GVA by 2030[36]. The region has seven priority sectors[37] and four "game changer"[38] sectors where growth and economic generation are predicted to require more and new skills.

Greater Lincolnshire & Rutland is an area with a high volume of enterprises. The Office for National Statistics estimates for 2021 indicate that there were 40,905 businesses located in Greater Lincolnshire and Rutland, with SMEs making up the overwhelming majority[39].

Those from outside the area will be surprised at the diversity and strength of key industries here. This location has some of the highest quality farmland at Grade 1&2[40], making this one of the most significant places for agriculture in the UK. Farmers here grow 30% of the nation's vegetables and produce 18% of the poultry, with a total agricultural output of over £2bn in 2019 – that equates to 12% of England's total production. This strength in agriculture is replicated in food processing, with the UK's largest fish processing cluster located on the Humber, the centre of the UK's fresh produce industry in South Lincolnshire and major arable, poultry and meat processors spread right across the area[41]. A dedicated leading-edge UK Food Valley is already in place to support growth and inward investment in the area[42]. The British Steel Plant at Scunthorpe is also a major player in local production and employment, with 4,000 people employed on site, all contributing to the manufacture of 2.8 million tonnes of liquid steel per annum[43]. GL&R also supports "world class" enterprises in packaging, food processing, fertiliser production, agri-tech and logistics. It is also a leader in innovation in the care sector.

The area boasts a number of ports on the East Coast which have regional, national and international significance. The major port at Grimsby handles agri-bulks, construction materials, forest products, project cargo, steel and other metals, automotive imports, bulk energy and offshore wind equipment and Ro-Ro ferries[44]. The port at Immingham is the UK's largest port by tonnage, typically handling approximately 46 million tonnes of cargo each year. It is also a critical port in the UK's supply chain for sustainable electricity generation[45]. Further south, the Port of Boston alone has 18,000 square metres of warehousing and acts as a fresh fruit and vegetables hub, with direct links into the UK's largest food processing cluster, located in South Lincolnshire[46]. A small dry cargo port at Sutton Bridge adds to the area's import-export capabilities. Between them, they account for 25% of UK rail freight[47] and serve energy companies, manufacturers and retailers across Great Britain. Easy links on the western side of the county to the A1 and East Coast Main Line are also important for logistics.

GL&R, at the forefront of turbine technology is renowned for expansive manufacturing opportunities and is at the cutting edge of growing digitisation and automation. It is a strategically important location for defence and security, with a supply chain that has been formed over many decades[48] and five operational RAF bases at Scampton, Waddington, Coningsby, Digby and Cranwell. Its visitor economy is estimated to be worth over £2.49bn per annum and supports at least 30,000 FTE jobs[49]. Furthermore, it is an area of immense opportunity for development in key areas such as energy, nationally significant infrastructure projects (e.g. the West Burton STEP fusion plant and proposed Hydrogen generators), distribution, healthcare and manufacturing. The Humber Industrial Cluster Plan[50] for accelerating clean growth and transition to net zero emissions – from a current base as the largest CO_2 emitting cluster in the UK[51] - alone is a significant industry and one prime to generate innovation, jobs and local prosperity.

Taking all of this context into account the area can only meet and maximise continued growth and opportunities if the right skills are locally available to employers at the correct scale. Shortfalls in key sectors and occupations threaten the possible transformative development of the area, as well as the future prospects of local people. There is little value in being home to some of the world's most innovative and disruptive digital systems and robotics if people are not trained or qualified to use the technology. The same challenge is presented for clean growth plans and massive infrastructure developments; a local dearth of capable, work ready and skilled people is limiting to fulfilling the area's enormous potential.

The rurality of the area has historically been a challenge for training and skills provision, and while that issue will not automatically disappear, a full and up-to-date understanding of the issues - along with harnessing new technology and 21st Century-fit training offers - are key to transforming the region and the prospects of Greater Lincolnshire & Rutland's people.

EMPLOYER AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The primary research that has powered this LSIP focused upon the identification, aggregation and prioritisation of the skills and training needs of local employers of every size, sector and location across Greater Lincolnshire & Rutland. Secondary research covering published sources and data has been conducted concurrently and provides the underpinning data on local economic needs, gaps, demographic, economic and geographic drivers.

The primary research fieldwork was completed between 13th December 2022 and 1st March 2023. Since the conclusion of the research, FSB and the LSIP Steering Group has developed and defined the priorities and actions and has taken an iterative approach to finalising the plan with local providers - as well as providing an emerging priorities report in March 2023 - as required and outlined in the DfE process diagram[52].

The end outputs required are insights drawn from qualitative and quantitative research evidence of unmet, poorly met and future skills needs, to inform and incorporate within the LSIP for Greater Lincolnshire and Rutland.

Looking up to three years ahead, the LSIP itself is charged with:

- Setting out the key priorities and changes needed in a local area to make post-16 technical education or training more responsive and closely aligned to local labour market needs.
- Providing an agreed set of actionable priorities that employers, providers, and stakeholders in a local area can get behind to drive change.
- Describing how skills, capabilities and expertise required in relation to jobs that directly contribute to or indirectly support Net Zero targets, adaptation to Climate Change or meet other environmental goals, have been considered.

Qualitative Fieldwork: Focus Groups with Employers

Over 1,475 individual hours of in-person and online focus group time (with 59 employers at 2.5 hours of consultation per session) were conducted as part of the LSIP consultation process. One group was conducted online using Zoom, with nine held at a representative mix of locations across the Greater Lincolnshire & Rutland geography. The diverse economic and employer landscape demanded that the consultation reach out and seek to engage with participants in their locality. The dates, times and venues for this fieldwork, are as detailed in Table 1 in Annex B[53].

Qualitative Fieldwork: Focus Groups with Providers and Key Stakeholders

Five focus groups were conducted with representatives of providers covering sixth form colleges, further education, higher education, commercial and not for profit specialist training organisations. Three of the groups were conducted in person, each at a different location, with two run online via Zoom to allow for those who could not travel due to other commitments.

Three further sessions with local training providers were held (one before and two after the submission of the Emerging Priorities Report) to develop the actions collaboratively and iteratively. The dates, times and venues for all these sessions are also detailed in Tables 2 and 3 in Annex B[54].

Two focus groups were implemented with representatives of key stakeholder organisations. The first of these was conducted with relevant contacts working within public sector bodies including West Lindsey District Council, North Kesteven District Council, Greater Lincolnshire LEP, DWP, etc. The second involved lead contacts at several Employer Representative Bodies (ERBs) who operate across Greater Lincolnshire and Rutland, either within a vertical sector or with a diverse mix of employer types. These included the Lincolnshire Chamber of Commerce, CITB, Lincolnshire Growth Hub and Federation of Small Businesses. See Table 4 in Annex B[55] for details of those sessions.

Quantitative Fieldwork: A Bespoke Online Survey

To re-enforce the quantitative research and to ensure participation from those employers who could not take part in the focus groups, FSB ran an online survey between 21st January and 1st March 2023. A responsive design template in 'Accessibility' mode was used for the online survey.

The survey was structured across the following areas:

- You and your organisation
- Your workforce
- Training your workforce
- The future of skills and training

331[56] businesspeople engaged with the survey in total and a further 13 were disqualified for not being based in the relevant geographic area. Participation in the survey was intentionally inclusive, no hard quotas were applied for any dimension.

Unique survey links were created for multiple partner organisations to use, including all relevant local authorities and bodies. The links enabled us to track the source of a survey response[57].

A further seven participants opted to complete the survey by telephone using the Computer Aided Telephone Interview (CATI) mode of research.

Analysis and Data

As our appointed researchers Habit5 are members of the Market Research Society (MRS) and with extensive experience and expertise in conducting research programmes, we can have complete confidence in the reliability, validity and strength of the analysis.

FSB has also been working with Lincoln-based The Knowledge Ladder to source and analyse local labour market information, demographic data, 2021 Census results and insight into a wide range of "learn and earn" factors such as public transport availability, number of job postings in priority sectors and the required skills stated therein etc. The LSIP report includes vital insight from this agency to provide context for skills issues raised by employers. This ensures that all of the results we report and the actions identified are grounded in reality.

GREATER LINCOLNSHIRE & RUTLAND SKILLS PRIORITIES

Throughout the primary research for the Greater Lincolnshire & Rutland LSIP, particularly the in-depth focus groups, five interconnecting themes consistently emerged as key needs, from an employer's point of view. While these themes (see below) are not specific to technical skills, they encapsulate the intersectionality and complexity of meeting employer needs in Greater Lincolnshire & Rutland. These challenges are significantly compounded where specific sectors or occupations report significant gaps in supply and demand of/for skills.

In order to create focus and prioritisation, the cross-cutting themes flagged by employers during the primary research were taken into consideration alongside existing and well-established local focus areas, namely Greater Lincolnshire LEP's seven Priority Sectors[58].

The LSIP Steering Group assessed which sectors and occupations would have the most significant impact on the seven priority areas. The group established that the cross-cutting themes of work readiness, essential skills, digital skills, decarbonisation and green skills, and leadership and management along with both Construction and Engineering (or Engineering Construction occupations in some cases) touch most or all of the LEP's seven priorities. Table 6 in Annex B[59] demonstrates the relationship between key skills and occupations and the seven Priority Sectors. We see there is absolute correlation between the need for work readiness and essential skills and the seven established priorities. There is also clear and proven need for data and digital skills across all priority sectors. The same can be argued for green skills as growing regulation, customer expectations and procurement asks will all act as drivers to reduce carbon.

If we take Ports and Logistics for example, moves towards producing, maintaining and deploying electric and hydrogen vehicles at one end of the scale and better delivery planning and more effective last-mile delivery at the other encapsulate new green and digital needs. Also, the massive shift to industrial decarbonisation of the Humber region is driving a need for 22,000 more engineering and construction roles; welding, electrical and mechanical engineers and project managers[60] are all critical skills vulnerabilities and must be addressed urgently. The need for infrastructure development and retrofitting across the geography and all sectors is also pressing.

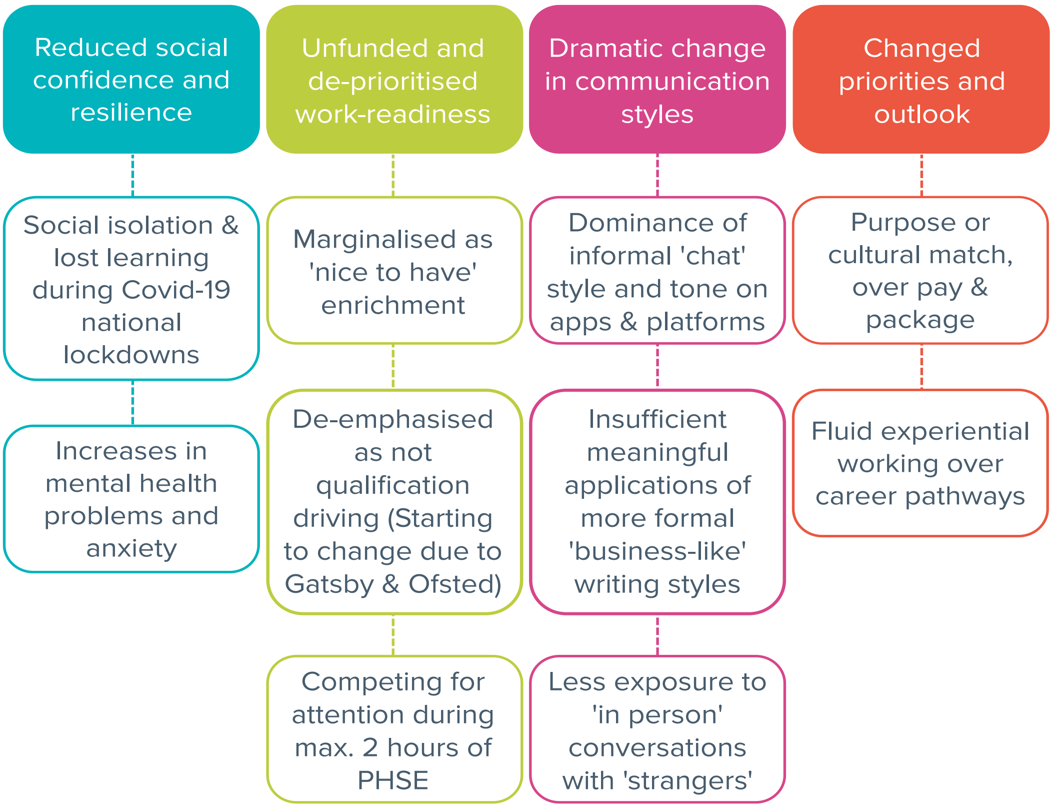
Over the following pages, you will find additional and specific detail on the priorities and actions for addressing skills gaps and enabling training in key growth occupations.

PART TWO:
ACTIONABLE PRIORITIES

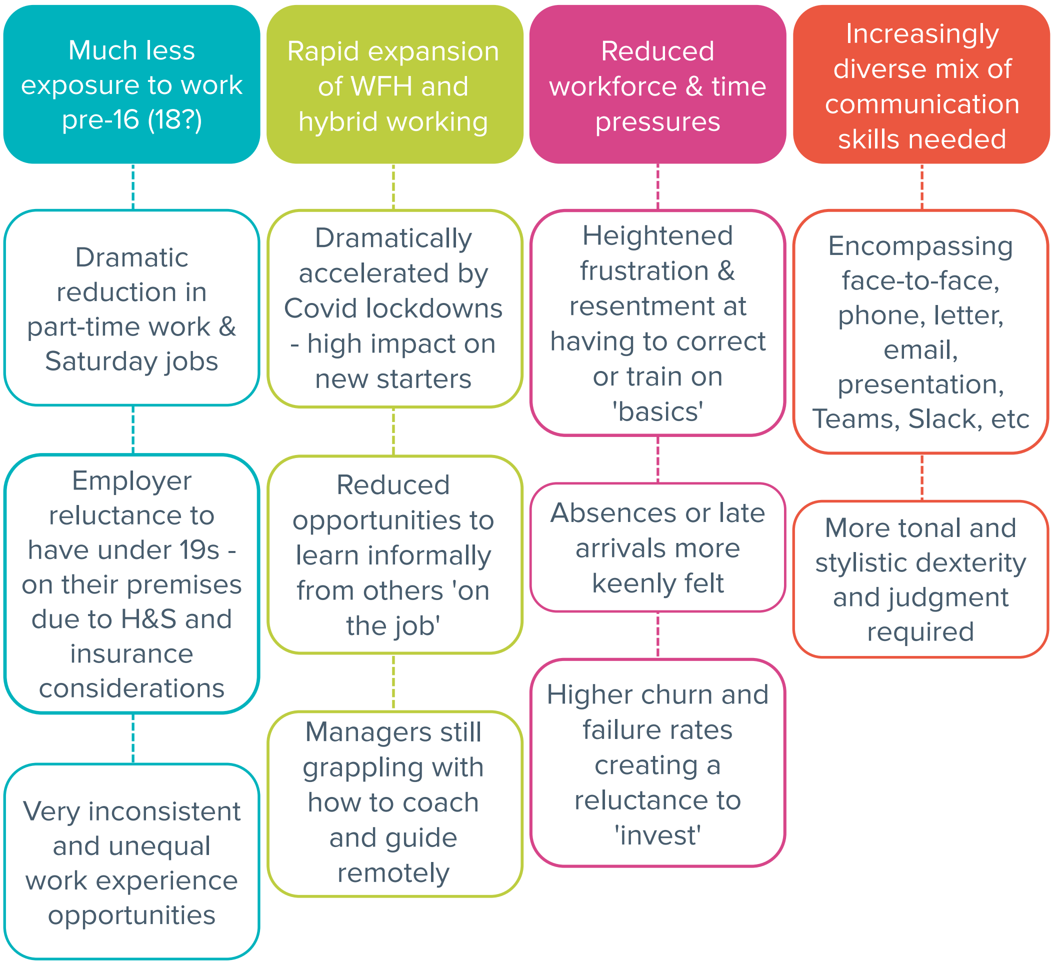
WORK READINESS AND ESSENTIAL SKILLS

A marked deterioration in “work-readiness”, was persistently referenced by employers across sectors and the geography. This issue was stated as being amplified by the Covid pandemic, but the origins do pre-date it. Increased remote or hybrid working is believed to be compounding the problem here, both making it harder to train through peer-to-peer support and active engagement in the workplace, whilst also leaving new employees isolated from company culture and the typical expectations of staff members. An inconsistent approach to providing suitable careers advice, driven by national models, was also repeatedly highlighted.

Employers and Providers largely agree on the factors behind the drop-off in work-readiness and a range of Essential Skills among the under 25s in particular.



Whilst significantly reduced exposure to work is mutually agreed as a big factor here, other employer and working environment influences were also raised.



Essential skills and aptitudes such as communications, customer service, planning, demonstrating enthusiasm, problem solving, time management are expressed in job postings across the top occupations by growth in Greater Lincolnshire and Rutland. The frequency, volume and detail in which this issue was discussed is not only demonstrable of how serious “work readiness” is to local employers, but also how urgently the need to ensure provision aligns with high demand.

Work Readiness and Essential Skills Actions

Employer need	Actionable priority	Responsibility
• 17-year-olds now have limited exposure to the workplace through quality work experience or paid employment outside of education. Employers need to see a shift here as it is negatively impacting their experiences of recruiting, onboarding and developing staff. • Employers report there is a severely reduced and very "hit and miss" approach to work experience across Greater Lincolnshire. While employers have a role to play in hosting placements, they state they are feeling the impacts of attempting to recruit and develop staff who have any experience of the workforce.	1. Develop an Employer-Provider Partnership to offer new or extended placements for all vocational courses, especially those where placements are not mandatory. Funding will be critical here, as will consistent delivery at scale across the area.	• ERBs • Colleges • LCC • Enterprise & Careers Company • Employers • Careers Advisors
• Employers want to see (and receive) much higher quality CVs from applicants to improve and speed-up successful recruitment. Feedback states that the standard is poor, inconsistent and is too focused on qualifications and academic experience, not skills and aptitudes.	2. Short course or modular provision for CV writing from age 16 which is focused on skills and aptitudes rather than just academic achievement. There is perhaps potential for this to become a joined-up process whereby local employers can connect with those who upload their CV to a local portal, with the aim of facilitating offers of work experience, taster sessions, apprenticeships, internships, etc to build confidence and awareness of the world of work.	• Employer-Provider Partnership • The Careers Hub • Careers Advisors • LCC • ERBs
• Essential skills for work were repeatedly and strongly raised in focus groups and the survey by employers. Lack of these skills is contributing to the low standard of "work readiness". Specifically, we are focusing on: • Communications • Numeracy • Resilience • Timekeeping • Teamwork • Professionalism	3. Develop and implement a common employability/essential skills framework for all publicly funded training programmes.	• Employer-Provider Partnership Colleges • LCC
	4. Develop a GL&R Skills Passport, where modules across FE and HE and other Adult Education providers contribute points/stamps to this countywide scheme, building on similar programmes run in neighbouring counties Employers and ERBs would need to buy in to this scheme and employers especially need the tools and time to understand and recognise it.	• Employer-Provider Partnership Colleges • LCC • LEP
• Providers should engage both employers and other training providers to develop essential skills/employability skills module to effectively prepare students for the workforce and support their mental health.	5. Create work readiness Bootcamps targeted at L1 and 2 only. Tailored and flexible to different niche segments, e.g. returners, career changes, disabled people, former prisoners etc. A suitable name needs to be developed however as "work readiness" has potentially negative connotations which could affect engagement and take-up.	• LCC • LEP

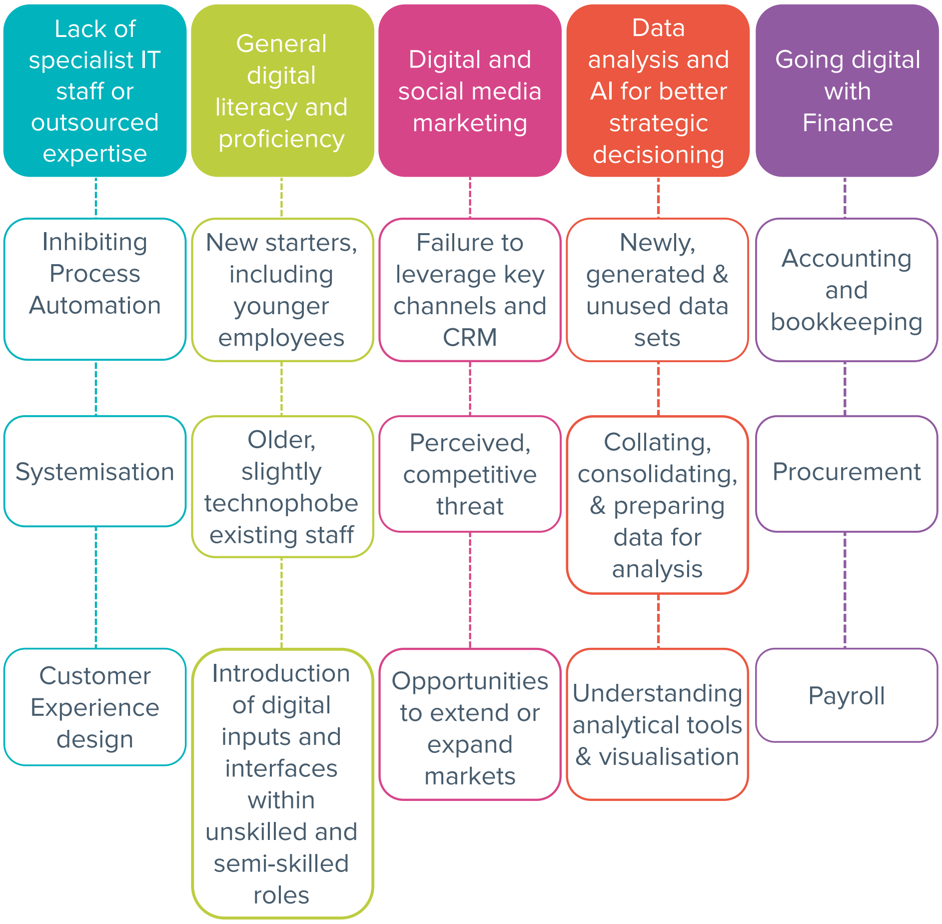
Employer need	Actionable priority	Responsibility
• Employers reported that a significant volume of school and college leavers demonstrate poor standards in the workplace in terms of employability skills and behaviours in a professional setting.	6. Assess provision of current work readiness provision/modules within FE and develop a consistent programme of delivery for the whole area. Correlating the themes with those of the Work Readiness Bootcamps will create consistency but rather than simply rolling that exact programme out within FE environments (where funding would be a challenge anyway), this will allow for flexibility for providers to embed the refreshed programme into existing courses.	• Colleges
• New employees often lacking desired attitudes and behaviours – leading to impacts on service provided, team productivity etc.	7. Develop and implement an essential skills short course programme on workplace behaviour for employed staff, to add value to the induction of a new recruit. In-person delivery of this course will be crucial. Certification could be key to driving uptake.	• Employer-Provider Partnership • LCC

This list is a starting point to help address skills gaps and work readiness in Greater Lincolnshire & Rutland. We expect to further consult employers and discuss these with colleges and other providers as the LSIP is rolled out and monitor progress. We aim to work in collaboration with providers to determine current supply and what should/could be done to increase volumes where that is appropriate.

DIGITISATION AND SMARTER WORKING

When invited to state their single most significant training or technical skills need, employers stated "Digital and IT skills" as a recurring theme.

Five main strands emerged in relation to the digital and IT needs, at markedly different levels of sophistication and technical skill.



From this, we can understand that there are apparently three levels or tiers of digital skills that need building:

- Expertise in specialist roles (coding, cloud, cyber security, development, robotics, systemisation). A shortfall in skills in this specialist area will inhibit process automation, systemisation, and programming, despite automation and robotics being GLLEP focus areas for the county. However, learner appetite here has been flagged as a barrier.
- SME owners wanting to "work smarter" through technology, and basic digital literacy. Many of them flagged their own personal skills gaps. They reported the need to break the cycle of working harder and harder 'in' their business rather than 'on' their business. They self-identified that technology, automation, AI and other digital capabilities were the likely solutions but they lack the skills – personally or within their staff – to take advantage of the opportunities. Digital marketing and social media capabilities were also reported to be weak.

- Basic computer or digital literacy across the board. Confidence and ability using the Microsoft Office suite of solutions (particularly Word and Excel) or similar were frequently raised as skills gaps by employers. A lack of experience or proficiency with apps - required for checking into cleaning shifts for example - was mentioned by SME owners.

To address the first bullet point, we have used Lightcast to identify the top digital or digitally-related occupations which exhibited the highest growth in 2021 within the region, and were also predicted to have the highest numbers of jobs in 2025. These are listed below along with potential routes.

Top Occupations by Growth to 2025 in Digital in GL&R[61]

Occupation	Priority
Programmers and software development professionals L6	Yes – top job growth in digital occupations to 2025. Apprenticeships. FT 16-19 / T Levels.
IT Specialist Managers L6	Yes. Upskilling via Apprenticeships.
IT User Support Technicians L3	Yes. Apprenticeships or T Levels.
Information Technology and Telecommunications Professionals L6	Yes. Apprenticeships.
Information Technology and Telecommunications Directors L6	No. Responsibility of employers.
IT Operations Technicians L3	Yes. Apprenticeships or T Levels.
IT Business Analysts, Architects and Systems Designers L6	Yes. Apprenticeships or T Levels.
IT Project and Programme Managers L4-6	Yes. Apprenticeships or Project Management Apprenticeship.
Telecommunications Engineers L3	No. Responsibility of employers.
IT Engineers L6	Yes. Apprenticeships.

This list is a beginning point to help address occupational shortages in Greater Lincolnshire & Rutland. We expect to further consult employers and discuss these with colleges and other providers as the LSIP is rolled out. We aim to work in collaboration with providers to determine current supply and what should/could be done to increase volumes where that is appropriate.

It is also worth noting at this stage, that **labour market intelligence shows a significant imbalance in uptake of digital occupations by gender, with women and girls being vastly under-represented**[62]. As such there is the option to explore addressing this imbalance in courses and training not pre-determined by someone's occupation.

Digital and Digitisation Skills Actions

Employer need	Actionable priority	Responsibility
• Multiple employers say they need all staff to have digital literacy skills, namely in commonly used professional software such as the Microsoft Office Suite (Word, PowerPoint, Excel) and email platforms. Competencies in such programmes has been specified in over 14,000 recent local job postings in the top 20 occupations.	8. Improve promotion and communication of the area's existing Microsoft Office digital skills offer more widely and work with colleges and Providers, as well as GL&R LEP, ERBs and/or similar partners to assess the take-up and effectiveness. Resource will need to be dedicated to sourcing necessary specialists to teach these skills. ERBs and Universities should consider working in collaboration to support recruitment of these tutors from industry and academia.	• Employer-Provider Partnership inc Universities • GLLEP • ERBs
• Digital skills integration in education. To keep pace with the rapidly changing digital landscape, education must provide digital skills as a key component of suitable courses. • Each course should have a digital aspect to help individuals gain a comprehensive understanding of, and confidence with, digital tools and how they can be applied in a variety of settings.	9. Agree and develop content and integrate a digital component into relevant post-16 vocational programmes, including Apprenticeships and AEB vocational courses, where not already present.	• Employer-Provider Partnership • Apprenticeship providers • Other ITPs • GLLEP • LCC
	10. Assess the volume and take up of digital skills online/short course programmes against priority occupations, or introduce where not present. Formally decide which existing funding schemes could be flexed or utilised to deliver this.	• Colleges • Other ITPs • GLLEP • LCC
• Wide knowledge of database systems was also reported as weak. As more businesses move towards automation of tasks, communications etc, understanding and day-to-day use of common platforms such as Microsoft Dynamics, Sales Force and other CRMs is critical for many roles.	11. Short course and/or evening programmes focused on databases for business. Potential for Bootcamps with employer contribution.	• Colleges • Other ITPs • GLLEP • LCC
• Social media for business was also identified as a crucial skill that not enough recruits or applicants possess, particularly within SMEs, as the major platforms are not only key communication channels, but they are also used to conduct customer service tasks too.	12. Short course and/or evening programmes focused on social media for business. High potential for Bootcamps with employer contribution.	• Colleges • Other ITPs • GLLEP • LCC

Employer need	Actionable priority	Responsibility
• Businesses report that they have staff that all have vastly differing levels of digital skills, knowledge and abilities. Sharing learning within the workplace should naturally take place, but time and resource constraints prevent this.	13. Establish workplace peer learning programmes and guidance on digital technology to help employees discuss challenges around digital skills, find digital solutions to problems, and share best practice and experience. Peer programmes can be labour intensive to administer and would require a facilitation exercise from FE and allocation of appropriate funding. A new Local Innovation Fund could prove central to achieving this action.	• Colleges • GLLEP • LCC
• Multiple employers say they see AI and automation technologies as a solution to their resource challenges and to free up staff from other tasks. This aligns with the LEP High Priority Opportunity (HPO) for automation in food production especially – however there is not the right level of local provision on offer.	14. Explore provision of short courses on Introduction to AI, automation technologies and future technology, and the potential these tools could unlock for SMEs particularly, across priority sectors including food processing and production.	• Colleges • Universities • GLLEP • LCC
• SME employers in GL&R report that they feel the need to break the cycle of working "in" their business rather than "on" it, and they need training or guidance on how digital tools - from AI to Making Tax Digital, from Database Automation to ChatGPT - could free them up. Currently the SME owners say they don't know what they don't know. They are aware there are possibly digital solutions to their problems but they do not have the time or awareness to seek out the right training or support.	15. Develop a series of short courses targeted at SME owners who wish to explore and understand how "smarter working" through digital tools and resources could unlock market potential, boost productivity, and win back time for them and their staff.	• Colleges • Other ITPs • GLLEP • LCC • FSB
	16. Targeted mentoring/coaching/peer support on business productivity and development using digital solutions. As above, peer programmes can be labour intensive to administer and would require a facilitation exercise from FE and allocation of appropriate funding.	• Colleges • Other ITPs • GLLEP • LCC
• The top specialist skills[63] stated in recent local job advertisements for exclusively digital roles are: • JavaScript (Programming Language) • SQL (Programming Language) • Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) • C# (Programming Language) • Agile Methodology • Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) • Application Programming Interface (API) • Software Development • PHP (Scripting Language) • Computer Science	17. Review relevant course content with local employers to check if these key skills are being delivered into the workforce, and if so what is the quality.	• Colleges • Other ITPs • GLLEP • LCC • Employers

This list is a starting point to help address digital and smarter working gaps in Greater Lincolnshire & Rutland. We expect to further consult employers and discuss these with colleges and other providers as the LSIP is rolled out and monitor progress. We aim to work in collaboration with providers to determine current supply and what should/could be done to increase volumes where that is appropriate.

CONSTRUCTION

There is huge growth in housing, commercial stock and infrastructure expected in Greater Lincolnshire & Rutland in coming years. The sector must be able to address skills gaps, occupation shortages for specialist roles and tackle issues they face in recruiting and developing staff.

A key issue beyond occupational shortages is one of leadership; currently there is very limited, if any, managerial hierarchy in many Construction firms. Recruitment is often informal, and roles are appointed among relatives, friends and acquaintances rather than being more strategic. Addressing this could help open up more junior managerial roles that in time could facilitate succession planning. The LSIP survey also suggests that senior decision makers in Construction have a much older age profile than their peers in Engineering. There is a suggestion that it may be hard to change the mindset and methods of the older business owners in smaller Construction firms. That being said encouraging and supporting succession planning, through relevant Leadership and Management training may represent an opportunity.

Unsurprisingly, the Construction participants in our research were predominantly male (71%) but representation amongst males goes as high as 100% in some key construction occupations, so there is work to be done to address this imbalance to recruit and equip the sector with every opportunity to fill roles and acknowledge diversity issues.

Over a third (36%) of Construction firms did not seek to recruit at all over the last 12 months (compared with an average across all sectors of 25%) despite a demand for key construction roles. The survey data suggests that 7% of Construction companies, tried but failed to recruit over the last 12 months (against an average failure rate of 6% across all sectors). 80% of actively recruiting Construction firms recruited 5 FTE or fewer in 2022. Long term unfilled vacancies are slightly less widespread in Construction (67% of those recruiting) than the average across all sectors (69%).

Construction firms are much more likely to prioritise ‘New progression focused provision’ (30%), and also over index on prioritising ‘Improving awareness of current provision’. They are much less likely than average to rely on in-house or “on the job training” but their propensity to work with external providers is at or below average as well. That said, 36% of Construction firms have ‘Little or no confidence’ that they will find suitable training options in the local area, which is 6% higher than the average. Construction firms are most likely (31%) to select ‘The standard of courses available’ as a significant barrier when sourcing training, they also have a higher propensity than average to select ‘The length of courses available’ (15%) and ‘Transport issues’ (15%).

43% of Construction firms do not have any provider relationships at all. Where they do have a relationship, it is most likely to be with an independent training provider (43%) rather than an educational institution. Where they do have a relationship with a college, Construction (100%) firms are even more likely than the average, to be engaging with a provider based in GL&R. 77% of Construction firms feel that providers have limited or no understanding of their skills needs and challenges, (whereas this thinking was only at 50% across all sectors combined).

Top Occupations by Growth to 2025 in Construction in GL&R[64]

Occupation	Priority
Electricians L3	Yes. Apprenticeships or T Levels.
Fork-lift truck drivers L2	Yes. Short course via Independent Training Providers.
Carpenters and joiners L2	Yes. FT 16-19 or Apprenticeship.
Construction Operatives 2	Yes. Short course/Bootcamp.
Plumbers and heating and ventilation engineers L3	Yes. L3 Apprenticeship.
Metal working machine operatives L2	Yes. Short course.
Construction operatives L2	Yes. Short course.
Quantity surveyors L6	Yes. Apprenticeships for each level from L3-6 to pave the way for this demand.

Construction Actions

Employer need	Actionable priority	Responsibility
• Construction firms are much more likely (41%) to be micro businesses with 1-10 employees. There will be very limited, if any, managerial hierarchy in many Construction firms. Recruitment is often chiefly from among relatives, friends and acquaintances rather than being more strategic. Addressing this, could help open up more junior managerial roles that in time could facilitate succession.	18. Create a recruitment for 21st Century Construction in GL&R Guide for employers between key industry bodies, ERBs and relevant training providers. This must have a keen local focus, not simply generic national information and guidance. Explore potential collaboration with CITB on local promotion of Go Construct to promote career opportunities across the geography. Targeted mentoring/coaching/peer support on business productivity and development using digital solutions.	• Employer-Provider Partnership • ERBs - CITB
	19. Explore ways to mentor and coach business owners in Construction firms as this could prove key to positively evolving their approach to business and operate and plan more strategically.	• Employer-Provider Partnership • ERBs
• 44.8% of all achievements in construction related qualifications are in North East Lincolnshire[65]. Locations of colleges and challenges in recruiting skilled tutors will play a role in this weighting, but there are opportunities across the geography so this must be levelled out.	20. Through the Lincolnshire Federation of Colleges, explore how/why North East Lincolnshire is so successful in its approach to delivering achievements in construction and understand if there is potential for tutors from that district to occasionally work in other colleges where practicable.	• Lincolnshire Federation of Colleges

Employer need	Actionable priority	Responsibility
• The gender split[66] in construction is heavily male; in the top 7 growth occupations in this sector are currently 100% male. With the opportunity and demand for growth in this sector and to drive diversity, this must change.	21. Targeted communications campaign promoting construction careers to females both in FT education and those seeking work.	• Employer-Provider Partnership • DWP
• 77% of Construction firms feel that providers have limited or no understanding of their skills needs and challenges, which is 27% higher than the average across all sectors. Creating Employer-Provider partnerships to aid course development and evolution, as well as generating opportunities for recruitment, could change this.	22. Establish new forums by district with colleges and ITPs, with the opportunity to review course content/standards, explore T level and apprenticeship placements, and for construction firms to put forward staff to step up and become visiting tutors.	• Employer-Provider Partnership
• The top specialist skills[67] stated in recent local job advertisements for construction roles are: • Machinery • Construction • Forklift Truck • Maintenance Engineering • Risk Analysis • Warehousing • AutoCAD • Metal Inert Gas (MIG) Welding • Civil Engineering • Carpentry	23. Review Construction course content with local employers to check if these key skills are being delivered into the workforce, and if so, what is the quality.	• Employer-Provider Partnership
• The top common[68] or essential skills stated in recent local job advertisements for construction roles are: • Communications • Management • Customer Service • Detail Orientated • Operations • Self-motivation • Planning • Problem Solving • Loading and unloading • Leadership • Our research also shows that Construction (58%) firms most widely select 'Management or Supervisory Skills' as a priority development area for their workforce. Construction firms also are much more likely than average to prioritise: Leadership, Teamwork, Communications, Adaptability & Time Management.	24. Review Construction course content with local employers to check if these common or essential skills are being delivered into the workforce, and if so, what is the quality. This will cross over with actions noted in the Work Readiness and Essential Skills section, but it is worth being explicit here for this sector.	• Employer-Provider Partnership

This list is a beginning point to help address construction skills challenges in Greater Lincolnshire & Rutland. We expect to further consult employers and discuss these with colleges and other providers as the LSIP is rolled out and monitor progress. We aim to work in collaboration with providers to determine current supply and what should/could be done to increase volumes where that is appropriate.

ENGINEERING

Engineering and Engineering Construction firms in Greater Lincolnshire have arguably one of the most significant challenges in the area; to fill key occupations in time to meet the growth and development, both within the sector and the local area. There are already acute shortages in construction occupations - electrical and mechanical engineers, welders, project managers and specialist plant operators[69] for example - and the demand is projected to grow significantly.

A distinct difference for this sector is the spread of their staff; 29% of Engineering companies had more employees located outside the GL&R than within it. Just a quarter had all of their employees located in the area, indicating that Engineering and Engineering Construction firms have an administrative head office or base here as opposed to carrying out all of their contracts locally. This does present a skills development challenge when we are primarily looking to local providers to address skills gaps. It could also mean the skills focus and HR decision-making of larger Engineering and Engineering Construction enterprises may lie outside the GL&R area.

What we do know is that from the LSIP research, Engineering firms were much more likely to be based in North East Lincolnshire or Boston Borough, which gives some sense of targeting and prioritisation for providers in those areas (Boston College and The Grimsby Institute for example).

Nearly all (96%) Engineering enterprises, have been in recruitment mode over the last 12 months but data suggests that 9% of Engineering companies tried but failed to recruit over the last 12 months (against an average failure rate of 6% across all sectors). Engineering companies were much more likely than average (87% v 60%) to be actively recruiting when the survey was conducted. Around two-thirds (65%) of Engineering firms recruited more than 5 FTE in 2022. That points to exploring in-house training as a possible solution as a single Engineering firm may often have enough new recruits or employees at a given level to support a training course in their own right.

75% (where recruiting) of Engineering firms have at least one vacancy that has remained unfilled for three months or more, compared with 69% across the total survey sample. Given the high level of skills needed in this sector, nearly 8 out of 10 Engineering firms find skilled professional and technical roles the hardest to fill (versus an average of 56% across all sectors). They are much more likely than other sectors (59% v 30%) to see recruiting employees with the right technical skills as a Top 3 challenge. Pair this with the fact that 39% of Engineering firms lost more than 10 FTEs in 2022, the workforce in Engineering is often quite fluid, with high churn.

When they look outside their own business, Engineering firms are much more likely than average to source training from ‘a local college’ (47%) or a ‘trade body’ (42%). They over-index though in their intent to source training ‘in-house’ (63%) and/or peer-to-peer ‘on-the-job’ (58%).

Only 20% of Engineering firms have ‘Little or No confidence’ that they will find suitable training options in GL&R, compared with an average across all sectors of 30%. But 15% of them simply ‘Don’t know’ and only 10% are ‘Very or Extremely confident’ of finding suitable training in GL&R. 44% of Engineering firms regard the relevance of training and/or the impact of time spent being trained, as among the most significant barriers (both wider than for ‘funding or financing training’). Over three-quarters (76%) of Engineering firms claim to have a relationship with a College. Where they do have a relationship with a College, Engineering (94%) firms are even more likely than the average, to be engaging with a provider based in GL&R.

Engineering firms are much more likely (50% vs 32% across all sectors) to credit providers with understanding their skills needs and challenges, which provides an excellent foundation for further improvement.

Top Occupations by Growth to 2025 in Engineering in GL&R[70]

Occupation	Priority
Engineering professionals L6	Yes. Apprenticeships for each level from L3-6 to pave the way for this demand.
Engineering technicians L3	Yes. L3 Apprenticeship or T Level.
Mechanical engineers L6	Yes. Apprenticeships or HE.
Production and process engineers L6	Yes. Apprenticeships or HE.
Design and development engineers L6	Yes. Apprenticeships or HE.
Science, engineering and production technicians L3	Yes. L3 Apprenticeship or T Level.
Electrical engineers L6	Yes. Apprenticeships for each level from L3-6 to pave the way for this demand.
Welders L2-3 (pipe welders L3, general welders L3)	Yes. L3 Apprenticeship or T Level.

Engineering Actions

Employer need	Actionable priority	Responsibility
• Feedback from employers in this sector was clear on one issue – awareness of the opportunities for exciting and rewarding engineering careers within the sector. This appeared to frustrate businesses in North and North East Lincolnshire where there is a higher concentration of engineering firms, however this is common across the geography. • Engineering firms are much more likely than average to plan to recruit apprentices (72%), graduates (72%), forces service leavers (44%) and college leavers (39%).	25. Key representative groups to collaborate with employers and providers to create campaigns to promote careers in engineering in GL&R.	• X Forces, Armed Forces Covenant etc • ERBs – CATCH UK, ECITB • Careers Advisors • DWP
• Nearly all (96%) Engineering enterprises have been in recruitment mode over the last 12 months. They are more likely than average (74%) to be actively seeking to recruit, over the next 12 months. • However, data suggests that 9% of Engineering companies tried but failed to recruit over the last 12 months (against an average failure rate of 6% across all sectors). Skilled engineering/ engineering construction roles rather than other roles within the sector appear to be the very hardest to successfully recruit. These employers are much more likely than other sectors (59% v 30%) to see recruiting employees with the right technical skills as a Top 3 challenge. • 75% of Engineering firms have at least one vacancy that has remained unfilled for three months or more, compared with 69% across the total survey sample. This can be a drag on productivity and SMEs' ability to take on work.	26. Create a recruitment for 21st Century Engineering/Engineering Construction in GL&R Guide for employers between key industry bodies, ERBs and relevant training providers. This must have a keen local focus, not simply generic national information and guidance.	• Employer-Provider Partnership • ERBs inc ECITB
• 44% of Engineering firms regard the relevance of training and/or the impact of time spent being trained as among the most significant barriers. Given recruitment levels a single Engineering firm may often have enough new recruits or employees to support a training course in their own right. There is opportunity here for bespoke in-house training.	27. Explore delivering bespoke, tailored short courses in-house for engineering firms. This would naturally need to be communicated within the sector for maximum awareness and take-up.	• Colleges • ITPs • ERBs
• The gender split[71] in engineering is heavily male; in the top 10 growth occupations in this sector are currently 94%-99% male. With the opportunity and demand for growth in this sector and to drive diversity, this must change.	28. Targeted communications campaign promoting engineering and engineering construction careers to females both in FT education and, via DWP, those seeking work.	• Employer-Provider Partnership • DWP

Employer need	Actionable priority	Responsibility
• The top specialist skills[72] stated in recent local job advertisements for engineering roles are: • Machinery • Maintenance Engineering • Mechanical Engineering • Electrical Engineering • AutoCAD • Production Line • Auditing • Hydraulics • Risk Analysis • Computer Aided Design	29. Review Engineering course content with local employers to check if these key skills are being delivered into the workforce, and if so, what is the quality. Consult further with employers and work collaboratively with colleges and other providers to develop / grow provision.	• Employer-Provider Partnership
• The top common[73] or essential skills stated in recent local job advertisements for engineering roles are: • Communications • Management • Customer Service • Problem Solving • Detail Orientated • Operations • Self-Motivation • Planning • Mathematics • Packaging and Labelling • Engineering firms most widely select 'Management or Supervisory Skills' as a priority development area for their workforce.	30. Review Engineering course content with local employers to check if these common or essential skills are being delivered into the workforce, and if so, what is the quality. This will cross over with actions noted in the Work Readiness and Essential Skills section, but it is worth being explicit here for this sector.	• Employer-Provider Partnership

This list is a beginning point to help address Engineering's occupational shortages and skills gaps in Greater Lincolnshire & Rutland. We expect to further consult employers and discuss these with colleges and other providers as the LSIP is rolled out and monitor progress. We aim to work in collaboration with providers to determine current supply and what should/could be done to increase volumes where that is appropriate.

DECARBONISATION AND GREEN SKILLS

With the UK's target to achieve "Net Zero" status, i.e., ensure the UK reduces its greenhouse gas emissions by 100% from 1990 levels by 2050 and by 68% by 2030, looming ever closer, there is a significant need to ensure that the nation and our region are equipped with the right skills to make this a reality. However, at present 62% of the UK public currently has no understanding of what "green skills" means and 65% said they don't have access to any green skills training[74]. This must shift, and quickly because as climate change begins to impact on businesses and communities in environmentally vulnerable (coastal, low lying) areas, we in Lincolnshire need to be especially prepared not only for the challenges, but also the vast opportunities around industrial decarbonisation and renewable energy generation.

The low carbon and energy economy, already worth £1.2bn per annum to the area, holds exceptional potential, offering an unprecedented level of private investment of £60bn over the next fifteen years. 12,000 people already occupy jobs in this sector, and this is set to grow by another 20,000 in coming years. There is set to be a further substantial surge in demand for skilled labour in the Humber cluster as multiple Net Zero projects are set to commence from 2024. The projects anticipated in the Humber are estimated to support 22,800 new industrial jobs[75]. This points to enormous opportunity, but also significant commercial, development and environmental risk if these skilled roles cannot be filled.

Through the LSIP research, it is apparent that employers see huge potential for environment/sustainability/net zero activity and growth in the Greater Lincolnshire & Rutland region across sectors and rural districts. However, employers in engineering and construction call for greater supply of necessary skills in order to maximise the opportunities.

Decarbonisation and Green Skills Actions

Employer need	Actionable priority	Responsibility
• Basic climate literacy needs to be improved in both the education system and places of work, including employers.	31. Assess and develop programmes where there are gaps with a focus on priority occupations . Develop and implement industry specific 'Achieving net zero' online / workshop-based programmes for staff and managers with a focus on priority occupations – IEMA's All Jobs Greener package for example.	• Colleges • ITPs • IEMA
• 40% of SMEs and 67% of large employers think it is likely or very likely that they will seek training related to sustainability / net zero skills and capabilities within the next three years. This is even more prevalent in employers in Wholesale & Retail, Construction and Education & Childcare businesses.	32. Development and implementation of industry specific Net Zero online module programmes.	• Colleges • ITPs
• Greater Lincolnshire & Rutland has a higher than national average of ageing housing[76] and non-domestic[77] stock (only Lincoln and North Kesteven are under the average for below C grade EPCs). This presents huge opportunities for retro-fitting to upgrade and improve energy efficiency.	33. Cross over here with construction priorities, but there is opportunity to develop a GL&R wide Retro-Fit Steering Group where businesses, construction firms and Providers can collaborate on a plan for retro-fitting, with students working on the plans and eventually the fit out.	• New steering group • Colleges • ITPs

Employer need	Actionable priority	Responsibility
• The plans to decarbonise the Humber area will place increasing prominence of, and demand for, sustainability skills, particularly in construction, energy and engineering.	34. Specific industrial decarbonisation training provision for engineering and construction, specifically in NE Lincs but there is likely to be increasing demand for this across GL&R over the next three years as Net Zero targets for 2030 and 2050 approach. As with other priorities however, colleges are suffering from a lack of skilled tutors in this area.	• Colleges

This list is a beginning point to help address Net Zero/Decarbonisation and Green Skills gaps in Greater Lincolnshire & Rutland. We expect to further consult employers and discuss these with colleges and other providers as the LSIP is rolled out and monitor progress. We aim to work in collaboration with providers to determine current supply and what should/could be done to increase volumes where that is appropriate.

LOCAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Greater Lincolnshire & Rutland is an area of incredible diversity, which is reflected in the range of opportunities open to local people – depending on their background, location and ability to travel. The issues set out in the Local Strategic Context section explain the numerous and diverse challenges local providers face in upskilling the area's populace.

The actions listed here are aimed at being a starting point to tackle the most pressing issues.

Local Socio-Economic Actions

Themes from employer feedback	Actionable priority	Responsibility
• Due to the size and rurality of Greater Lincolnshire and Rutland, transport to access training is a challenge. Public transport[78] is patchy in provision and can be a barrier. Some colleges provide transport for students, but this is not consistent.	35. Assess transport provision with specific focus on under-served areas and identify where this can be improved to remove barriers for students (cost, bus routes, timings).	• LCC
• There needs to be better and increased employment prospects for disabled people in GL&R, taking into account travel, access and workplace barriers.	36. Offer short courses to employers that highlight barriers to employment for people with disabilities in priority occupations and provide training for employers accordingly. Employers may need an incentive to stimulate take-up and to be shown examples of existing initiatives and their successes.	• Colleges
• Lincolnshire also has a falling number of NEETs for 16-17 but continued action must be taken to sustain this trend and target NEETs up to age 24.	37. Establish a NEET task force populated by DWP, providers with particular success of attracting former NEETs and ERBs from priority occupations to link up labour market opportunities with training.	• DWP • Employers • ERBs

This list is a beginning point to help address local socio-economic conditions and barriers in Greater Lincolnshire & Rutland. We expect to further consult employers and discuss these with colleges and other providers as the LSIP is rolled out. We aim to work in collaboration with providers to determine current supply and what should/could be done to increase volumes where that is appropriate.

LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

Across the geography, employers reported that Greater Lincolnshire & Rutland is a place of “accidental managers” i.e. staff becoming senior by being promoted to be people or technical managers due to length of service or by being good at their role. However, there is no requirement for managers to undergo informal or certificated training to lead a team, despite this needing a very specific set of skills and competencies. This is especially prevalent in the Construction sector.

41% of employers state that Management or Supervisory skills are a priority. In addition 34% of employers state that Leadership is priority development areas for their workforce for the next three years. This demonstrates there is a strong appetite for this training for those in the workforce at management level, but that provision must be delivered in and around work and meet appropriate standards.

For business owners, who earlier reported being trapped working “in” their business rather than “on” it, this shows potential for strategic leadership training and peer support that could help boost productivity of GL&R’s SMEs.

Engineering firms are much more likely than average to intend to: Provide technical training (81%), L&M training (81%) and soft skills training (67%). Further, both Construction (58%) and Engineering (56%) most widely identified ‘Management or Supervisory Skills’ as a priority development area for their workforce.

Leadership & Management Actions

Employer need	Actionable priority	Responsibility
• There is a need for enhanced leadership and management skills. This was flagged most frequently by those in the construction sector, giving us a steer on prioritising upskilling in one area before broadening out. • Survey showed that 61% of employers plan to conduct ‘Management development and leadership’ skills training over next three years and 75% say these are priority areas for development over the same timescale. • Improving Management or supervisory skills regarded as widely selected priority over next three years.	38. Assess current provision and develop bite sized courses / modules to provide flexible delivery. Potential to explore opportunities with high quality leadership providers for bite sized courses / modules. Providers to collaborate with CITB where possible.	• Employer-Provider Partnership • ERBs inc CITB

LOCAL SKILLS SYSTEM

Across GL&R, further education providers and independent training providers offer a range of approaches to training, recruitment, and retention. Additionally, local businesses have created their own schemes to develop talent within their industry.

While these individual efforts are beneficial, there is a need for collaboration within the system across the region. By working together, employers, providers and strategic stakeholders can ensure that skills training and education, recruitment, and retention efforts are more effective and efficient. Collaborative efforts could include sharing best practices, resources, teaching staff and knowledge, as well as coordinating efforts to address skills gaps in priority areas. Collaboration on bidding for funding also presents a huge opportunity.

When employers were asked which potential improvements to GL&R's technical skills provision (e.g. training, courses, qualifications, etc) they would regard as the top three, they chose:

- "Fostering 'Greater collaboration"
- "Improving funding"
- "Enhancing course delivery methods"

When Providers were asked to complete the same take, all of the groups strongly prioritised "Improvements to funding methods and models". But they also signalled a strong emphasis on 'Greater collaboration between employers and providers' as also highly important.

Local Skills System Actions

Themes from employer feedback	Actionable priority	Responsibility
• More meaningful collaboration between the local business community and colleges is needed to ensure that the pipeline of skills and competencies students emerge with from FE colleges aligns with roles available. • The region's colleges should work together to bid for funding. This collaboration will be increasingly important going forward, including work with the region's universities, Greater Lincolnshire LEP and key partners. • Need to foster greater collaboration, improve funding and enhance course delivery methods	39. Explore/increase collaborative bidding and delivery partnership with the region's FE colleges, region's universities, GLLEP and partners. This area has seen particular success in collaborating – SDF2, IOT, LEEP, GAIN and College improvement fund have all worked well. However, this collaboration could be widened to include sixth form colleges.	• Lincolnshire Federation of Colleges • Universities • LEP • Employers • ERBs
• Greater Lincolnshire employer base report that they find training provision and options, including information on levels, course lengths, eligibility and funding confusing. • Improve relationships between businesses and training providers – of the employers who have an existing relationship with a training provider, a quarter are working with an enterprise outside of the LSIP area. • Need for clear, targeted information on the role of local skills provision, what they can do for local businesses and how funding can and does work.	40. Provide a service to employers to demystify the skills system and communicate training courses, levels, different provision, funding, maximising the levy and how providers can help employers to understand and meet their needs. A website focused solely on communicating this to employers is a good start.	• Lincolnshire Federation of Colleges • ITPs • ERBs

This list is a beginning point to help address skills system challenges in Greater Lincolnshire & Rutland. We expect to further consult employers and discuss these with colleges and other providers as the LSIP is rolled out and monitor progress. We aim to work in collaboration with providers to determine current supply and what should/could be done to increase volumes where that is appropriate.

PART THREE:
DELIVERING THE LSIP PRIORITIES

	Actionable Priority	Responsibility (Provider(s) or Other Partner)	When?	Monitoring Progress	Potential Barriers
Work Readiness and Essential Skills	1	• ERBs • Colleges • LCC • Enterprise & Careers Company • Employers • Careers Advisors	From Q4 2023	Quarterly meetings with reports to monitor progress on No 1.	Low take-up from employers in priority areas.
	2	• Employer-Provider Partnership • The Careers Hub • Careers Advisors • LCC • ERBs	From Q1 2024	Quarterly meetings with reports to monitor progress on No 2.	Need to overcome perception of the value and impact of CV writing courses.
	3	• Employer-Provider Partnership Colleges • LCC	From Q4 2023	Monthly reports on development/progress from providers to ERB.	Take-up and buy-in from the workforce and those currently outside of the workforce.
	4	• Employer-Provider Partnership • Colleges • GLLEP • LCC	From Q4 2023	Monthly reports on development/progress from providers to ERB.	Take-up and buy-in from employers and the workforce (and those currently outside of the workforce).
	5	• LCC • LEP	From Q4 2023	Monthly reports on development/progress from providers to ERB.	Perceptions around what "work readiness" means and the name of the programme/course would need careful consideration.
	6	• Colleges	From Q4 2023	Quarterly reports on development/progress from providers to ERB.	Providers may require funding to carry out this review.
	7	• Employer-Provider Partnership • LCC	From Q1 2024	Monthly reports on development/progress from providers to ERB.	The need to certificate is critical, as is "in person" delivery - This must not be an online course.

	Actionable Priority	Responsibility (Provider(s) or Other Partner)	When?	Monitoring Progress	Potential Barriers
Digitisation and Smarter Working	8	• Employer-Provider Partnership inc Universities • GLLEP • ERBs	From Q4 2023	Quarterly reports on development/progress from providers to ERB.	Providers may require funding to carry out this review.
	9	• Employer-Provider Partnership • Apprenticeship providers • Other ITPs • GLLEP • LCC	From Q4 2023	Quarterly reports on development/progress from providers to ERB.	Additional input from employers required to ensure the content meets their expectations.
	10	• Colleges • Other ITPs • GLLEP • LCC	From Q4 2023	Quarterly reports on development/progress from providers to ERB.	Providers may require funding to carry out this review.
	11	• Colleges • Other ITPs • GLLEP • LCC	From Q1 2024	Quarterly reports on development/progress from providers to ERB.	Sourcing appropriate local experts to deliver the training at the right level. Ensuring strong take-up from employers is also crucial.
	12	• Colleges • Other ITPs • GLLEP • LCC	From Q4 2023	Quarterly reports on development/progress from providers to ERB.	Sourcing appropriate local experts to deliver the training at the right level. Ensuring strong take-up from employers is also crucial.
	13	• Colleges • Other ITPs • GLLEP • LCC	From Q1 2024	Quarterly reports on development/progress from providers to ERB.	Peer programmes can be labour intensive to administer.
	14	• Colleges • GLLEP • LCC	From Q1 2024	Quarterly reports on development/progress from providers to ERB.	Sourcing appropriate local experts to deliver the training at the right level. The “sell” of developing these organisational capabilities to employers also needs consideration.

	Actionable Priority	Responsibility (Provider(s) or Other Partner)	When?	Monitoring Progress	Potential Barriers
Digitisation and Smarter Working	15	• Colleges • Universities • GLLEP • LCC	From Q1 2024	Quarterly reports on development/progress from providers to ERB.	Sourcing appropriate local experts to deliver the training at the right level. Time-poor SME employers will also need to be won over to ensure they recognise the value of giving up time to attend these courses.
	16	• Colleges • Other ITPs • GLLEP • LCC • FSB	From Q1 2024	Quarterly reports on development/progress from providers to ERB.	Peer programmes can be labour intensive to administer.
	17	• Colleges • Other ITPs • GLLEP • LCC • Employers	From Q4 2023	Quarterly reports on development/progress from providers to ERB.	Providers may require funding to carry out this review. Securing review time with employers may prove challenging.

	Actionable Priority	Responsibility (Provider(s) or Other Partner)	When?	Monitoring Progress	Potential Barriers
Construction	18	• Employer-Provider Partnership • ERBs - CITB	From Q1 2024	Quarterly reports on development/progress from providers to ERB.	CITB's engagement is critical.
	19	• Employer-Provider Partnership • ERBs	From Q1 2024	Quarterly reports on development/progress from providers to ERB.	Peer programmes can be labour intensive to administer.
	20	• Lincolnshire Federation of Colleges	From Q1 2024	Monthly reports on development/progress from providers to ERB.	Poor communication between providers – however this is unlikely to do the strength of the Federation of Colleges.
	21	• Employer-Provider Partnership • DWP	From Q1 2024	Quarterly reports on development/progress from providers to ERB.	Providers may raise concerns about communications campaigns not being a panacea to the issue.
	22	• Employer-Provider Partnership	From Q4 2023	Quarterly reports on development/progress from providers to ERB.	The Partnership may require funding to carry out this review. Securing review time with employers may prove challenging.
	23	• Employer-Provider Partnership	From Q4 2023	Quarterly reports on development/progress from providers to ERB.	The Partnership may require funding to carry out this review. Securing review time with employers may prove challenging.
	24	• Employer-Provider Partnership	From Q4 2023	Quarterly reports on development/progress from providers to ERB.	The Partnership may require funding to carry out this review. Securing review time with employers may prove challenging.

	Actionable Priority	Responsibility (Provider(s) or Other Partner)	When?	Monitoring Progress	Potential Barriers
Engineering	25	• X Forces, Armed Forces Covenant etc • ERBs – CATCH UK, ECITB • Careers Advisors • DWP	From Q4 2023	Quarterly reports on development/progress from providers to ERB.	Bringing this diverse group of organisations together with a productive outcome may be challenging.
	26	• Employer-Provider Partnership • ERBs inc ECITB	From Q1 2024	Quarterly reports on development/progress from providers to ERB.	ECITB's engagement is critical.
	27	• Colleges • ITPs • ERBs	From Q4 2023	Quarterly reports on development/progress from providers to ERB.	Take-up within the sector will need careful management.
	28	• Employer-Provider Partnership • DWP	From Q1 2024	Quarterly reports on development/progress from providers to ERB.	Providers may raise concerns about communications campaigns not being a panacea to the issue.
	29	• Employer-Provider Partnership	From Q4 2023	Quarterly reports on development/progress from providers to ERB.	The Partnership may require funding to carry out this review. Securing review time with employers may prove challenging.
	30	• Employer-Provider Partnership	From Q4 2023	Quarterly reports on development/progress from providers to ERB.	The Partnership may equire funding to carry out this review. Securing review time with employers may prove challenging.

	Actionable Priority	Responsibility (Provider(s) or Other Partner)	When?	Monitoring Progress	Potential Barriers
Decarbonisation and Green Skills	31	• Colleges • ITPs • IEMA	From Q1 2024	Quarterly reports on development/progress from providers to ERB.	Ensure IEMA is engaged from Q4 2023 to ensure there is scalability in the delivery of their AJG courses.
	32	• Colleges • ITPs	From Q1 2024	Quarterly reports on development/progress from providers to ERB.	Take-up of online provision without strong communications and incantation will limit success.
	33	• New steering group • Colleges • ITPs	From Q4 2023	Quarterly reports on development/progress from providers to ERB.	Clear and robust clarification on the focus of retro-fitting areas and priorities. Strong collaboration between the group and providers is essential.
	34	• Colleges	From Q4 2023	Quarterly reports on development/progress from providers to ERB.	Collaboration with HEYLEP and LSIF on this specific development area is essential.
Local Socio-Economic Conditions	35	• LCC	From Q1 2024	Quarterly reports on development/progress from providers to ERB.	Ensuring this is a new and fit-for-purpose review and not a re-working of existing general research on local transport provision.
	36	• Colleges	From Q1 2024	Quarterly reports on development/progress from providers to ERB.	Employers may need an incentive to stimulate take-up and to be shown examples of existing initiatives and their successes.
	37	• DWP • Employers • ERBs	From Q4 2023	Quarterly reports on development/progress from providers to ERB.	DWP will have a key role in bringing this group together and ensuring outcomes.
Leadership & Management	38	• Employer-Provider Partnership • ERBs inc CITB	From Q1 2024	Quarterly reports on development/progress from providers to ERB.	The Partnership may require funding to carry out this review.

	Actionable Priority	Responsibility (Provider(s) or Other Partner)	When?	Monitoring Progress	Potential Barriers
Local Skills System	39	• Lincolnshire Federation of Colleges • Universities • LEP • Employers • ERBs	Immediately – LSIF bidding already in train	Quarterly reports on development/progress from providers to ERB.	Will sixth form colleges wish to be involved? Barring their participation may be contentious and limiting.
	40	• Lincolnshire Federation of Colleges • ITPs • ERBs	From Q1 2024	Quarterly reports on development/progress from providers to ERB.	Strong collaboration and communications to ensure this is achievable is critical. An ongoing comms campaign on the website is also required – not a one-off launch.

All reporting is to be mandatory and written into Phase 2 Governance and overseen by the Greater Lincolnshire & Rutland LSIP Board.

ENDNOTES

1 https://www.legislation.gov.uk/en/ukpga/2022/21/contents/enacted
2 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-skills-improvement-plans
3 Local skills improvement plans - statutory guidance (publishing.service.gov.uk)
4 Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth (publishing.service.gov.uk)
5 Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022 (legislation.gov.uk)
6 https://www.greaterlincolnshirelep.co.uk/assets/documents/1_GL_EUSIF.pdf
7 https://www.greaterlincolnshirelep.co.uk/assets/documents/Greater_Lincolnshire_Local_Skills_Report_January_2022.pdf
8 https://www.greaterlincolnshirelep.co.uk/assets/documents/1_GL_EUSIF.pdf
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14 https://loric.bgu.ac.uk/knowledge/greater-lincolnshire-and-rutland-2021-census-demographics
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16 Table 1 Annex A
17 Greater Lincolnshire LEP Local Skills Report 2022
18 Lincolnshire County Council Corporate Plan
19 Figure 1 Annex A
20 Table 2 Annex A
21 Table 2 Annex A
22 www.greaterlincolnshirelep.co.uk/assets/documents/Greater_Lincolnshire_Local_Skills_Report_January_2022.pdf
23 https://lhih.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Lincolnshire-JSNA-infographics-March-2023.pdf
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25 https://www.greaterlincolnshirelep.co.uk/assets/documents/Greater_Lincolnshire_Local_Skills_Report_January_2022.pdf
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27 https://www.greaterlincolnshirelep.co.uk/assets/documents/Labour_Market_Implications_of_COVID_and_Brexit_Mar_2021.pdf
28 Figure 2 Annex A
29 Figure 3 Annex A
30 Figure 3 Annex A
31 https://lincolnshire.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s47160/Appendix%20B%20-%20Local%20Transport%20Plan%205%20Summary%20and%20Prospectus.pdf
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34 https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/6277/lincolnshire-bus-service-improvement-plan
35 https://www.greaterlincolnshirelep.co.uk/assets/documents/GLLEP_Annual_Report_for_2020_-_2021.pdf

36 https://www.greaterlincolnshirelep.co.uk/assets/documents/GLLEP_Local_Industrial_Strategy_%282021%29.pdf
37 https://www.greaterlincolnshirelep.co.uk/priorities-and-plans/sectors/
38 https://www.greaterlincolnshirelep.co.uk/priorities-and-plans/game-changers/
39 Table 3 Annex A
40 https://www.greaterlincolnshirelep.co.uk/assets/documents/1_GL_EUSIF.pdf
41 https://www.greaterlincolnshirelep.co.uk/priorities-and-plans/sectors/agri-food-sector/
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46 https://www.greaterlincolnshirelep.co.uk/whats-new/gateway-to-growth-at-port-of-boston/
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50 https://heylep.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Humber-Estuary-Plan-final-draft-Jan-2021.pdf
51 https://www.humberindustrialclusterplan.org/
52 Figure 1 Annex B
53 Table 1 Annex B
54 Table 2 and Table 3 Annex B
55 Table 4 Annex B
56 Table 5 Annex B
57 Figure 1 Annex C
58 https://www.greaterlincolnshirelep.co.uk/priorities-and-plans/sectors/
59 Table 6 Annex B
60 https://www.humberindustrialclusterplan.org/files/Cluster%20Plan%209%20March.pdf
61 Table 1 Annex C
62 Table 4 Annex C
63 Table 2 Annex C
64 Table 5 Annex C
65 Figure 7 Annex C
66 Table 8 Annex C
67 Table 6 Annex C
68 Table 7 Annex C
69 https://www.humberindustrialclusterplan.org/files/skills_report.pdf
70 Table 9 Annex C
71 Table 12 Annex C
72 Table 10 Annex C
73 Table 11 Annex C
74 https://www.iema.net/all-jobs-greener
75 https://www.humberindustrialclusterplan.org/files/skills_report.pdf
76 Figures 12-14 Annex C
77 Figures 15-17 Annex C
78 Figure 5 Annex A

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