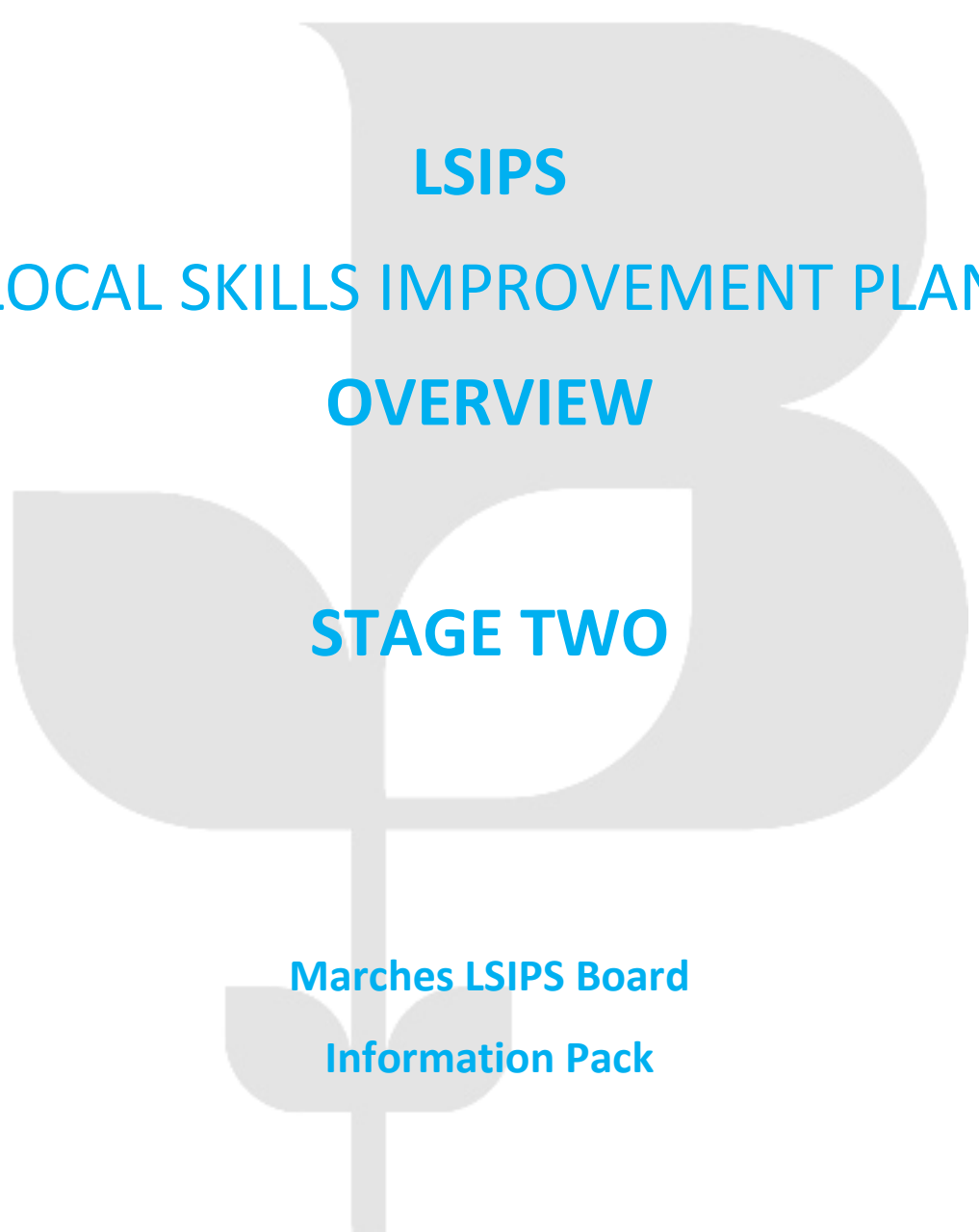


# **Marches LSIPs**

Local Skills Improvement Plan



**LSIPS**  
**LOCAL SKILLS IMPROVEMENT PLAN**  
**OVERVIEW**  
**STAGE TWO**

**Marches LSIPS Board**

**Information Pack**



# Marches LSIPs

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## Local Skills Improvement Plan

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# Marches LSIPs

## Local Skills Improvement Plan

### LSIPS Overview

Shropshire Chamber of Commerce has been selected by the Department of Education to be the **Employer Representative Body** (ERB) for the Marches LEP area. This includes Herefordshire, Shropshire & Telford & Wrekin.

### Local Skills Improvement Plan- Overview

“The Government’s **Skills for Jobs White Paper** set out an ambitious plan to put employers more firmly at the heart of the skills system to help ensure businesses and people have the skills they need to thrive and progress. LSIPs are a key part of achieving this aim.

Led by designated ERBs (Employer Representative Bodies), LSIPs will set out a clear articulation of employers’ skills needs and the priority changes required in a local area to help ensure post-16 technical education and skills provision is more responsive and flexible in meeting local labour market skills needs.

LSIPs are different to previous skills plans in that they give employers, through local ERBs, a clear and strengthened role in shaping local skills provision. Through the Act, LSIPs will have real traction with the key stakeholders as well as supporting and incentivising outcomes that meet employers needs through reforms to FE funding and accountability, including giving colleges greater freedom to flex and develop their offers.

The role of the designated ERB is to lead the development and subsequent reviews of a LSIP for a specified geographical area working with employers, providers, and local stakeholders.”

### Stage 2 Expectations

“The objective of stage 2 is embedding the LSIP process in the local skills system. Designated ERBs will be expected to galvanise collaborative action with employers, providers and local stakeholders to support the delivery of the actionable priorities and the roadmap set out in the LSIP, keep the LSIP reviewed and report annually on progress. This will help to achieve better alignment of the local skills system with employers’ needs and help to sustain the alignment in the longer-term.”

Extracts from the DfE Guidance Stage 1 (October 2022) and Stage 2 (May 2023)

# Marches LSIPs

## Local Skills Improvement Plan

To maximise use of funds and to continue with the recognised branding with strong message, we will continue to use those resources for Stage 2.

Funded by



Department  
for Education

**Marches LSIPs**  
Local Skills Improvement Plan



## Help us to help **YOU**

**Are you from one of these sectors?**



**Engineering /  
Manufacturing**  
including Food &  
Drink Production



**Professional  
Services**



**Construction**  
including  
Environmental  
Technologies



**Health &  
Social Care**

**Do you employ staff?  
Then we need YOUR help**

**What is the Marches LSIPs?**  
The **Local Skills Improvement Plan** - a DfE nationwide project. Shropshire Chamber has been selected by the DfE to undertake this work in the Marches, working closely with Herefordshire & Worcestershire Chamber.

**What is the purpose of the project?**  
To understand the skills training requirements in the next 3-5 years within different sectors. To bring together the views of employers and trainers to help look at innovative ways to deliver future training.

**How can you help?**  
We need your views on how you see training evolving in your sector. How have skills shortages changed how you work and does this give us innovative ideas for the future?

**Your voice is key to this being a success.**  
We ask that you fill in a one-off questionnaire, answer a series of text polls or share your thoughts 1:1 with our researchers (**in confidence of course**).

**Help ensure training  
meets the future head on**

**Click here to complete the Survey TODAY!**

<p><b>Marches LSIPs Team</b> E: <a href="mailto:lsip@shropshire-chamber.co.uk">lsip@shropshire-chamber.co.uk</a> T: 01952 208227 W: <a href="http://shropshire-chamber.co.uk">shropshire-chamber.co.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Project Directors:</b> <b>Richard Sheehan &amp; Ruth Ross</b> Project Manager: Rosie Beswick Project Administration: Alex Brown</p>
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Funded by  
UK Government

Aug 2023-March 2025

Page | 4

# Marches LSIPs

## Local Skills Improvement Plan

### Ruth Ross– Marches LSIPs Project Director – Executive Summary

Provided to the Department for Education as part of the application for Stage 1

The Marches LSIP project designated ERB Shropshire Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with Herefordshire and Worcestershire (H&W) Chamber of Commerce and other ERB's will engage businesses across three local authority areas encompassing a 2,300 square mile rural geography containing three main urban centres (Herefordshire, Shrewsbury and Telford) and a plethora of smaller market towns. Infrastructure and travel challenges dictate the need for a blend of research engagement methodology to include a technology-based solution, sectorial and geographical events, 1-2-1 interviews both physically and virtually all delivered in a meaningful collaborative way and designed to utilise and complement the work of the Marches LEP, SAP and others operating in this space through gap analysis. The LSIP will seek to identify existing provision whilst interrogating research study results to priorities key provision changes through short, medium, and longer terms. We will work with other LSIP ERB's to ensure commonality in questions to gain a broad view across the Midlands, as well as the local views.

The Marches LEP region is made up of over 90% of businesses employing 10 people or less, existing engagement clearly identifies the need to facilitate an understanding of the future direction of skills needs within specific sectors and the potential offered by decarbonisation and Net Zero. We will through our work, facilitate the upskilling of decision makers within this business group to allow informed contribution to the LSIP around future needs, something lacking at this time. Our research questioning will be codesigned with partners to ensure that we can dig down well below the surface on needs and that the intelligence is relevant and impactful.

Whilst we have prioritised the following sectors for stage 1 there are clear overlaps that will impact all businesses and our initial report will identify any gaps in provision to support new entrants to and existing workforce. Initially we looked at all the sectors of size in the Marches LEP region along with those highlighted by stakeholders. From this list we looked at each sector to understand, even those growing, was it significant enough to be considered in this first stage, as well as how the sectors overlapped, ensuring our core choices would give us a clear overview of the future and future needs for skills.

- Engineering/manufacturing/ inc. Food and Drink Production
- Professional Services
- Construction / inc. Environment Technologies
- Health & Social Care

The LSIP report stage 1 will identify provision requirements at as micro a level as possible, to ensure providers can respond in a realistic practical way to meet the needs of business in the short, medium, and long term.

The governance of the project will involve as many stakeholders and partners that the guidance recommends, representation from Private Business, LA's, LEP, FE, HE, Private Training Providers, Business Boards, and other ERB's such as FSB, NFU and CITB and will be chaired by an appropriate private sector representative. The Terms of Reference (TOR) for the board set out the role it plays in guidance compliance, review of activity, financial performance and previewing of LSIP stage 1 prior to submission. Reference to the funding and Project guidance will be always used.

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Designated ERB	Shropshire Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise
Specified Area	The Marches
Name of ERB lead	Ruth Ross, Marches LSIPs Project Director

# Marches LSIPs

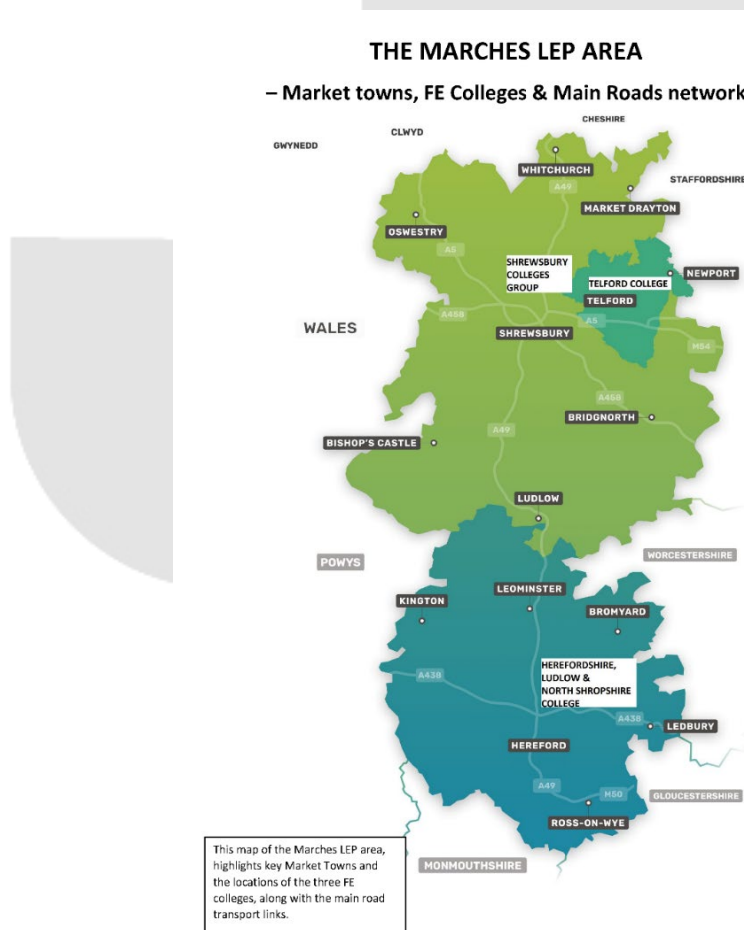
## Local Skills Improvement Plan

### Marches LSIPs Geographical Breakdown

The following three images will show the vastness of the geographic area and ranges in skill / qualification attainment across the very differing population types & areas.

Recap: *The Marches administrative boundary area comprises two counties, Shropshire and Herefordshire, a largely rural area comprising of 2,300 square miles with an urban core in each area along with well over thirty market towns and three Local Authority areas.*

The Marches area being a mixture ranging from ultra-rural to urban spanning a vast area, as indicated on the maps. The entire western edge borders with Wales. To the north Cheshire, to the East the West Midlands conurbation and Staffordshire, to the southeast Worcestershire and Gloucestershire. This vast mix plays out across the Marches as various areas focus on different directions, for example Telford which naturally has a focus to the West Midlands.





# Marches LSIPs

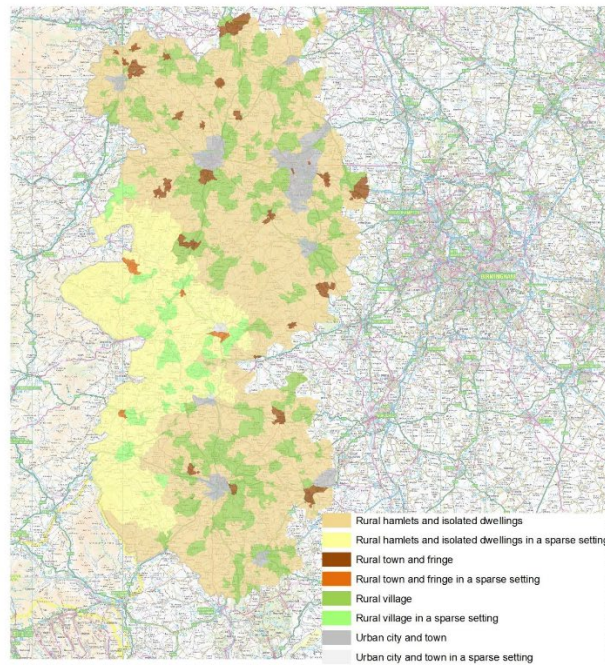
## Local Skills Improvement Plan

### THE MARCHES LEP AREA

#### – Rural / Urban Classification

Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

The Marches LEP OAs by rural / urban classification 2011



© Crown Copyright and database rights 2014  
Ordnance Survey Licence No. 100023661  
DEFRA, Rural Statistics Unit  
rural.statistics@defra.gov.uk

0 5 10 20 Miles

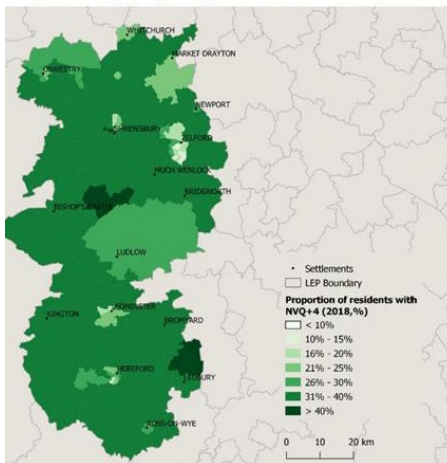
Source: ONS, DEFRA, DCLG

This map of the Marches LEP area, highlights the rural / urban make up of the area.

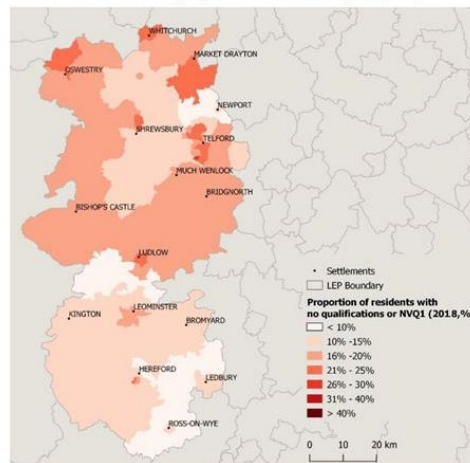
### THE MARCHES LEP AREA

#### – Residents with high qualifications and with no or low qualifications (2018)

Residents with high qualifications across the Marches (2018)



Residents with no or low qualifications across the Marches (2018)



# Marches LSIPs

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## Local Skills Improvement Plan

### Marches LSIPS Stakeholder Overview

To explain the diverse range of business organisation, sector specialists and providers below are list just some of those we will be working with to understand the knowledge and data already available. This will allow for a strong knowledge base of what employers are currently accessing, have available and how this provision is supplied. Taking this base knowledge and analysis as a foundation stone for the LSIP Programme focus.

Some of these organisations will be incorporated into the Marches LSIPS Board, others we will collaborate with to gain knowledge, assist in gap analysis and to reach for those employer groups who are currently underrepresented.

*Recap: To combat the geography and vast differences between urban and highly rural areas we are working in collaboration with our neighbouring Chamber in Herefordshire. Alongside this we are ensuring we work with and learn from, both the Marches LSIP Board and the wider business engaged and specialist bodies.*

#### **FOR EXAMPLE....**

Local Authorities

Local Enterprise Partnership

Neighbouring Chambers of Commerce

Further Education Providers

Higher Education Providers including specialist providers such as Harper Adams University

Private Training Providers

National Farmers' Union

Department of Work & Pensions

Other ERB's such as the Federation of Small Businesses

Specialist in sectors or skills such as the Marches Local Skills Improvement Plan Board

National Training Bodies



# Marches LSIPs

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## Local Skills Improvement Plan

### Marches LSIPS Board Members

Main Board – in the process of finalisation, confirmation, acceptance of invitations sent and personnel choices.

1. FE & Lead for LSIF - Telford College (representing FE)
2. HE – University Centre Shrewsbury (representing HE)
3. LA – Telford & Wrekin Council
4. LA – Shropshire Council
5. LA – Herefordshire Council
6. Employer - AICO
7. Employer – WR Partners
8. Employer – Paveaways
9. Employer – AllPay
10. Employer/Sector Specialist - Shropshire Partners in Care (SPIC)
11. Other ERB/Chamber – Coventry & Warwickshire Chamber
12. 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector/LEP – Landau/Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)
13. Independent Training Provider – In-Comm
14. Shropshire Chamber (contract holder for the Marches LSIP) – Chair and Project Director
15. Shropshire Chamber (contract holder for the Marches LSIP) – Deputy Chair and Chamber CEO

Example of the different Sub-Groups that could be included but are not limited to.

- CIPD
- The Bids
- NHS
- DWP / JCP
- MSPN
- Other private providers
- National bodies i.e., CITB
- Specialist bodies such as West Midlands Partners in Care



# Marches LSIPs

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## Local Skills Improvement Plan

### Marches LSIPS Terms of Reference

#### 1. Purpose

DfE guidance states that LSIPs will embed a stronger and more dynamic partnership between employers and further education (FE) providers. They are a key component of the wider reforms to post-16 technical education and training set out in the Skills for Jobs White Paper and the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill.

The purpose of The Marches LSIP Stage 2 Board is to support and enhance the work of the Stage 2 Marches LSIP team. To help the team to access the necessary stakeholders and intelligence required, to encourage cross working, to support the aims and objectives of the Stage 1 LSIP report. To support the team to meet the various goals set out by the DfE both at the outset and during the Stage 2 process.

#### 2. Membership, decision making and Secretariat

The LSIP Board will act as a sub-committee of the Shropshire Chamber of Commerce Board with delegated authority for decisions relating to the LSIP project.

The LSIP Board will report into the Shropshire Chamber of Commerce Board via the Chief Executive Officer.

The Board will be formed of up to 15 members and consist of senior decision-making representatives from the following organisations:

- a. 5 Employer Representative Organisations
- b. 1 Further education college – LSIF lead
- c. 1 Higher education organisation
- d. 1 Independent Training Provider
- e. 1 Communities representative / LEP representative
- f. 3 Local Authority representatives
- g. 2 Shropshire Chamber representatives
- h. 1 ERB from another Chamber

Recruitment of the LSIP 2 Board will be based on the make-up and effectiveness of the Stage 1 board and the needs of the Stage 2 project.

A Chair will be the Project Director, alongside a deputy chair CEO of Shropshire Chamber of Commerce. At least 50% of Board members will need to be present to be quorate for decision making.

Other external experts may be invited to present and to report on specific agenda items on an ad hoc basis.

If voting is required at meetings, decisions will be made by a majority of the number of members present. In the event of a drawn vote, the Chair will make the casting vote. Where decisions are required outside meetings, these can be made via written procedure (email) with the agreement of the Chair and vice chair, any decisions made in this way will be reported at the next LSIP board meeting and reviewed.



# Marches LSIPs

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## Local Skills Improvement Plan

The Board will be supported by a project team who will provide the Secretariat for meetings, ensuring that papers and reports are completed and shared with members on time and actions and activities are completed in between meetings.

Board members will be expected to operate with the Nolan Principles of Public Life. A conflict of interest's policy will be developed, and a register of interests will be maintained by the Secretariat. These will be published on the Shropshire Chamber of Commerce website. All members of the Board must complete the declaration documents including listing any conflict of interests. Where needed an NDA may need to be signed by individual Board members.

3. The Board will meet quarter yearly: Virtually where possible and at 4.30pm.

10<sup>th</sup> October 2023

9<sup>th</sup> January 2024

9<sup>th</sup> April 2024

9<sup>th</sup> July 2024

8<sup>th</sup> October 2024

14<sup>th</sup> Jan 2025

8<sup>th</sup> April 2025

Board members are expected to attend all meetings. By exception, where this is not possible, and by written agreement, members may send a previously nominated substitute that has the power to vote and make decisions.

Requests should be made to the Secretariat at least three days before the meeting. [lsip@shropshire-chamber.co.uk](mailto:lsip@shropshire-chamber.co.uk)

Following the completion of the Marches LSIP Stage 1 a review of the Board, its terms of reference, membership and frequency of meetings will take place. This will also apply in March 2025, sooner if deemed necessary. This may result in it continuing in this current guise or adapting or pivoting into implementation and evaluation of the actions which may require a different membership or terms of reference.

LSIP Working Groups. The LSIP Board will seek the views of individual employers, stakeholders and providers through workshops and sub-groups which will feed the development of the LSIP and report into the Board, as required. These may be formed to meet the need or accessed through the use of existing groups, to ensure no duplication of work being carried out by other stakeholders.

# Marches LSIPs

## Local Skills Improvement Plan

### Marches LSIPS Acronyms & Terminology

General	
CEIAG	Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance
ERB	Employer Representative Body
FE	Further Education
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
LEP	Local Enterprise Partnership
LSIF	Local Skills Improvement Fund
LSIP	Local Skills Improvement Plan
LSIP's	Local Skills Improvement Plans
POR	Point of Reference
SAP	Skills Advisory Panel
SDF	Strategic Development Fund
SLA's	Service Level Agreements
Trailblazers	Pilot for LSIP's - selected Chambers

Organisations	
BCC	British Chambers of Commerce
BID (Shrewsbury, Oswestry)	Business Improvement Districts
CBI	Confederation of British Industry
CIPD	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (HR)
CITB	Construction Industry Training Board
Derwen College	Specialist FE
DfE	Department of Education
DWP	Department of Works and Pensions
ECITB	Engineering Construction Industry Training Board
ESF	European Social Fund
ESFA	Education and Skills Funding Agency
FAME	Company Data information (paid service)
FSB	Federation of Small Businesses
GLA	Greater London Authority



# Marches LSIPs

## Local Skills Improvement Plan

HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
IER (Warwick)	Warwick Institute for Employment Research
IfATE	Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education
IOD	Institute of Directors
ITT	Institute of Travel & Tourism
JCP	Job Centre Plus
LA's (local authorities)	Shropshire
LA's (local authorities)	Telford & Wrekin
Lightcast	HE/FE stats and research (paid service)
LinkedIn	Job Vacancy research (paid service)
Made in the Midlands	Manufacturing Group - promote, upskill, local sourcing
Marches Centre of Manufacture & Technology	Advanced Engineering & Automotive Training Centre.
Marches LEP	Marches Local Enterprise Partnership
MCA	Mayoral Combined Authority
MSPN	Marches Skills Provider Network - private trainers & colleges
NCS	National Careers Service
NCSC	National Cyber Security Centre
NESTA	National Endowment for Science, Technology & the Arts
NFU	National Farmers Union
NHS sustainability and transformation plan team	Coordinating, expanding, and improving the provision of care to the more frail and vulnerable patients in our communities.
NMITE	New Model Institute for Technology and Engineering - (Hereford)
NOMIS	Census & Labour Market Stats (ONS)
ONS	Office for National Statistics
Skills for Care	The strategic workforce development and planning body for adult social care in England
SMC	Social Mobility Commission
Stat-Xplore	DWP statistics database
Unit for Future Skills (Dashboard)	Part of the DfE (new dashboard Autumn 2022)
WMCA	West Midlands Combined Authority



# Marches LSIPs

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## Local Skills Improvement Plan

### List of Annexes Following

#### Annex 1: Application for Stage 2

Application for Stage 2 – funding and process

#### Annex 2: DfE Statutory Guidance Stage 2 May 2023

May 2023 Statutory Guidance for Stage 2  
(please note in Stage 1 a revised guidance was issued several months into the project)

#### Annex 3: Marches LSIPS Risk Register August 2023

The proposal is to review the risks quarterly and updated to meet the risk at each point. The risk register will be controlled by the Chamber Secretariat. [lsip@shropshire-chamber.co.uk](mailto:lsip@shropshire-chamber.co.uk)

#### Annex 4: Marches LSIPS Key Dates

Basic layout of dates for reporting and other milestones through Stage 2

#### Annex 5: Organogram

Staffing within Stage 2

#### Annex 6: Meeting Dates

All Board meetings will be virtual unless otherwise agreed.





# Marches LSIPs

Local Skills Improvement Plan

## Annex 1

### Stage 2 Application



# Local Skills Improvement Plans Stage 2 Funding Application Form

## Purpose of this application

This application is for completion by designated Employer Representative Bodies (ERBs) leading the development of a Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) for a specified local area. The contents of the form and any related material will support DfE to understand how designated ERBs plan to utilise the stage 2 funding and enable the department to assess applications.

Designated ERBs should complete the application form in accordance with the “Local Skills Improvement Plans Stage 2 Guidance – Objectives and Funding” and return it in electronic format to [LSIP.Programme@education.gov.uk](mailto:LSIP.Programme@education.gov.uk) by 23.59 on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

If an ERB has been designated to lead the development and review of a LSIP in more than one geographical area, separate applications must be submitted for each specified local area.

Information provided in this application form, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes, primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

## LSIP Stage 2 funding

Designated ERBs were allocated funding of up to £550,000 for each LSIP area and could bid for up to £365,000 as part of stage 1. For stage 2, ERBs may bid for the remaining amount of funding up to the £550,000 to support the ongoing review and development of the LSIP for the period up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025. This includes any known underspends from stage 1<sup>1</sup>. The total (including the £50,000 mobilisation costs) for both stage 1 and stage 2 must not exceed £550,000 except in the case of Greater London, where the total costs (including mobilisation costs) should not exceed £1.1m.

**This application covers funding for the period from the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.** The exception is costs associated with the production and publication of the annual progress report and the production of the annual certification of expenditure in June 2025, where costs may extend to the end June 2025<sup>2</sup>.

## How applications will be assessed

DfE will assess applications against the following criteria:

- the costs set out are eligible, as defined in the “Local Skills Improvement Plans Stage 2 Guidance – Objectives and Funding”;
- the costs set out represent value for money;

---

<sup>1</sup> Where looking to claim from any known underspends, this should be made clear in this application form..

<sup>2</sup> For further information see sections 3.3 and 4.4.4 of the Local Skills Improvement Plans Stage 2 Guidance – Objectives and Funding.

- the rationale for the costs is clearly expressed and reasonable; and
- the costs relate to a clear and credible project plan that proves that the designated ERB has the capacity and capability to deliver stage 2.

## Categorising costs and providing assumptions

Any funding applied for via this application must be in line with the requirements set out in the “Local Skills Improvement Plans Stage 2 Guidance – Objectives and Funding”.

Designated ERBs should categorise their costs according to the following seven headings, which will be treated as funding lines:

- Employees of the designated ERB (including travel and subsistence and other clearly evidenced additional costs);
- External staff (including travel and subsistence and other clearly evidenced additional costs);
- Analysis, data and research;
- Events, marketing and production;
- IT and equipment;
- Professional support services (legal and audit); and
- Other<sup>3</sup>

DfE recognises that costs provided are assumptions. Designated ERBs must supply as much detail as possible against each cost assumption in the application form. In order to demonstrate value for money and the reasonableness of the assumed costs, quotes should be obtained where applicable<sup>4</sup>. Where quotes are not possible, the value of the assumed cost should be clearly explained in the cost assumption field. When providing cost assumptions related to staffing (including employees of the designated ERB and external staff), designated ERBs should provide the role, how many days/FTE it is needed for and the cost per day.

## Varying spend

DfE understands that it may be difficult for designated ERBs to pin down precisely how they will use the funding to March 2025 at this stage and that some changes to the profiled activities and costs may be required during the lifetime of the grant. As long as proposed activities meet all the requirements set out in the associated guidance and do not substantially differ from activities originally proposed and agreed or increase the cost of the funding category, designated ERBs will have the flexibility to vary activities **within a funding category** (e.g., “employees of the designated ERB”) without seeking explicit agreement from DfE. Examples of changes that would not require DfE sign off, include:

- where there is a change to the profile and/or mix of employees of the designated ERB working on the project;

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<sup>3</sup> The “Other” category should only be used in limited circumstances where designated ERBs are certain that a cost cannot fit under one of the six named categories.

<sup>4</sup> Designated ERBs should detail which assumptions are based on quotes within the cost assumption template. However, there is no requirement to submit the quotes to DfE as part of the application process, unless DfE requests this information. DfE also recognises that exact costs may change before being incurred.

- where different types of data need to be purchased to that set out in the application; and
- where a different number and profile of events and engagements are required (provided the per-person rates set out above are adhered to).

In making any such changes the designated ERB should ensure that their costs remain proportionate and value for money and the overall cost must remain within the agreed grant funding total.

## **Value Added Tax (VAT)**

Eligible activities/costs should only include VAT if VAT is not recoverable. The total must not exceed the remaining amount of the £550,000 funding except in the case of Greater London where the total costs must not exceed the remaining amount of the £1.1m.

## Section 1: Applicant details

<b>Designated ERB name</b>	Shropshire Chamber of Commerce & Enterprise Ltd
<b>Specified local area</b>	The Marches
<b>Designated ERB address</b>	Trevithick House, Stafford Park 4, Telford, Shropshire, TF3 3BA
<b>Contact name and job title</b>	Ruth Ross, CEO
<b>Contact telephone</b>	01952 208 200
<b>Contact email</b>	r.ross@shropshire-chamber.co.uk
<b>Estimated available funding</b>  To calculate this figure, designated ERBs should use the following formula: £550,000 - (claimed funding + projected spend in June and July).	£271838.34

## Section 2: Summary of approach to Stage 2

Please use the space below to provide a high-level summary of the approach you plan to take to meet the objective of the Stage 2 funding (as set out in section 3.1 of the “Local Skills Improvement Plans Stage 2: Guidance – Objectives and Funding” and sections 5 and 6 of the [Local Skills Improvement Plans - Statutory guidance for the development of local skills improvement plans](#)).

The summary should reflect how the project will adapt to deliver the aims and objectives of this next stage; highlighting what will be done differently compared to stage 1 of the LSIP process.

*Up to 500 words – 498 words*

*The approach for Stage 2 funding of the Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIP) will build upon the progress made in Stage 1 while implementing new strategies to adapt and deliver the objectives more effectively. The following summarises the key aspects of the approach for Stage 2:*

- 1. Leveraging Successful Stakeholders: Building on the valuable input received in Stage 1, particularly from organisations like CITB and will continue to engage with those stakeholders to gather further insights. This will involve conducting focused research and utilising desk research to identify changing needs and emerging sectors.*
- 2. Enhancing Collaboration: Recognising the diverse issues and varying economies within the Marches region, the project will foster collaboration by establishing sub-regional groups. These groups will address the specific challenges faced by different areas, such as the contrast between urban and rural. The aim is to work collectively across the Marches while ensuring sector coverage even if the LSIP projects do not span all industries.*
- 3. Streamlined Governance Structure: Instead of a large and unwieldy board, the project will rely on a smaller board with greater employer representation. Additionally, sub-working groups will be formed to provide useful feedback to the LSIP team, providers, and other stakeholders.*
- 4. Timely and Actionable Reporting: To support the Accountability Statements (AS) of lead providers and other stakeholders, the project will ensure that data is provided by 31st March each year. This data will offer strong indications of progress and inform the AS, supplementing the final annual report published each June.*
- 5. Strengthening Relationships: Working to break down barriers between providers and employers, to promote stronger bonds. Extensive employer engagement will continue, with an emphasis on supporting employers to understand and engage with provision, providing solutions, and involving them in the skills process. Trust will be built to foster collaboration and encourage employers to offer support through placements, equipment provision, and industry advice.*
- 6. Other Collaborations: The project will be aware of complementary initiatives, such as bootcamps, that align with the LSIP objectives. By identifying synergies and leveraging additional funding streams, the project can support initiatives that contribute to the overall skills improvement framework.*



- 7. Inclusion and Accessibility: Attention will be given to engaging smaller providers, and the hard-to-reach. Collaboration with specialist stakeholders like DWP, will be pursued to understand local needs and potential support and funding opportunities.*
- 8. Adapting to Changing Requirements: The project will maintain flexibility to respond to evolving requirements and support needs. It will continuously monitor demographic, geographic, and economic factors to inform decision-making and ensure the LSIP remains relevant.*
- 9. Net Zero Focus: Recognising the importance of addressing climate change, the project will prioritize the role of Net Zero in the region's future. Employers will be supported in accessing training related to Net Zero and other relevant subjects.*

*Through these strategies, the Stage 2 funding of LSIP aims to strengthen connections between providers and employers, address specific local needs, encourage collaboration, and adapt to evolving requirements, ultimately facilitating effective skills development in the Marches region.*

## Section 3: Cost assumption template

Please complete the Excel **cost assumption template** issued alongside this application form.

To add extra sub rows within a funding category (where required), please click on a row number to highlight the full row, right click and select 'Insert Rows'.

Please ensure that the AutoSum function remains activated so that the total of each category and the overall grand total is correctly calculated.

## Section 4: Funding profile

### Financial Year 2023 - 2024

Please provide a monthly profile of expected spend between August 2023 and March 2024:

<i>Period</i>	<i>Amount</i>
<b>August 2023</b>	£21757.86
<b>September 2023</b>	£14257.86
<b>October 2023</b>	£12293.07
<b>November 2023</b>	£12293.07
<b>December 2023</b>	£12293.07
<b>January 2024</b>	£12293.07
<b>February 2024</b>	£13493.07
<b>March 2024</b>	£12743.07
<b>Total</b>	<b>£111424.14</b>

### Financial Year 2024 - 2025

Please provide the expected spend from April 2024 to March 2025. A more detailed monthly breakdown will be requested in advance of the financial year 2024-2025.

<i>Period</i>	<i>Amount</i>
<b>April 2024 to March 2025</b>	£156494.20
<b>April to June 2025 where related to the production and publication of the annual progress report and the production of the annual certification of expenditure only.</b>	£3920.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£160414.20</b>

## Section 5 – Project plan

Designated ERBs must provide a project plan for the period August 2023 to March 2025<sup>5</sup>. The project plan must contain all the elements set out in the table below. There no specific format required. Designated ERBs may choose to submit an updated version of the plan they have been using to manage their project locally. This could include links to materials published on their websites. In all cases the materials should be easy to understand and clearly related to the assumed costs set out in the cost assumption template.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Location of evidence</u>
<p><b>Organogram</b></p> <p>A clear explanation of the governance and organisational structure that will be used to deliver the project. This should relate to the staffing (ERB employees or external staff) detailed on the cost assumption template.</p>	<p>Attached or published? <b>Both</b></p> <p>The Stage 1 governance is still currently in place, please see below links.</p> <p><a href="https://www.shropshire-chamber.co.uk/policy-representation/local-skills-improvement-plan">https://www.shropshire-chamber.co.uk/policy-representation/local-skills-improvement-plan</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.shropshire-chamber.co.uk/images/content/policy/pdf/MLSIPs-Board-members-V3-25-11-22.pdf">https://www.shropshire-chamber.co.uk/images/content/policy/pdf/MLSIPs-Board-members-V3-25-11-22.pdf</a></p> <p>We are considering tweaking the Main Board, to create a greater balance between employers, providers and LA's and others, along with creating sub-groups split regionally and by sector, with a mix of closed and open meetings – see attached draft thinking...</p> <p><b>Annex - Marches LSIP Governance Organisational Chart</b></p>
<p><b>Timeline</b></p> <p>A chart / table that clearly identifies the different phases of work/activity and the major milestones of the project. It should clearly relate to the assumptions set out in the cost table.</p>	<p>Attached or published? <b>Attached</b></p> <p><b>Annex – Marches LSIP Stage 2 Timeline</b></p>

<sup>5</sup> In the case of activity related to the annual progress report and the annual certification of expenditure in 2025, the plan should extend to June 2025.

<p><b>Risk register</b></p> <p>This should set out the anticipated risks for the project and how they will be managed.</p>	<p>Attached or published? <b>Attached</b></p> <p><b>Annex - Marches LSIP Risk Register 2023 - LSIP Project Stage 2</b></p>
<p><b>Conflict of interest policy and a register of interests</b></p> <p>The policy and register must meet the specification set out in the terms and conditions of designation, here:  <a href="#">Terms and conditions of designation - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a></p>	<p>Attached or published? <b>Published</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.shropshire-chamber.co.uk/images/content/policy/pdf/BoardStakeholderPack_V3_-_Website70.pdf">https://www.shropshire-chamber.co.uk/images/content/policy/pdf/BoardStakeholderPack_V3_-_Website70.pdf</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.shropshire-chamber.co.uk/images/content/policy/pdf/Marches_LSIPS_-_Declaration_and_Conflict_of_Interest_Register_website_5122022.pdf">https://www.shropshire-chamber.co.uk/images/content/policy/pdf/Marches_LSIPS_-_Declaration_and_Conflict_of_Interest_Register_website_5122022.pdf</a></p> <p>All documents will be updated to reflect Stage 2 when it commences and the relevant updated information is received.</p>

Also attached is the **Cost Assumption Spreadsheet**

## Section 6: Declarations


### Declaration by designated ERB for specified area

I confirm that it is the intention of (Shropshire Chamber of Commerce) to continuing acting as the Designated ERB for (The Marches).

I further confirm that:

- I have read the LSIP statutory guidance and the “Local Skills Improvement Plans Stage 2 Guidance – Objectives and Funding.” and I agree to the rules and principles within it.
- All the information included in this application is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.
- Any funding secured will only be used to cover eligible costs to deliver the LSIP, as outlined in the “Local Skills Improvement Plans Stage 2 Guidance – Objectives and Funding.”.
- Spend outlined in this application form does not duplicate funding received from other DfE funds for local skills development, such as Strategic Development Fund (SDF) and Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF).
- The proposed commitments made in this application have been approved at a level within the organisation that has the authority to make the commitments set out in the application.

I acknowledge that this application may be rejected should any information be deliberately withheld or misrepresented that is later found to be material in considering the application.

Name of Employer Representative Body	Name and role of signatory (must be person with appropriate authority)
Shropshire Chamber of Commerce & Enterprise Ltd	Ruth Ross, CEO
Date (DD/MM/YYYY)	Signature
20/07/23	

# Marches LSIPs

Local Skills Improvement Plan

## Annex 2

DfE Statutory Guidance

Stage 2 May 2023





# **Local Skills Improvement Plans Stage 2 Guidance:**

## **Objectives and Funding**

**May 2023**

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# 1 Summary

This document provides guidance on the funding that is available to Employer Representative Bodies (ERBs) designated to lead Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs). It sets out the objectives of the “Stage 2: ongoing review and development” funding, what activities are eligible to be supported and how designated ERBs can apply.

## 1.1 Expiry date

The stage 2: ongoing review and development funding runs until March 2025, which coincides with the end of the current comprehensive spending review period. This guidance is intended to support designated ERBs to apply for and to use the funding.

## 1.2 Who is this publication for?

This guidance is primarily for ERBs designated to lead a LSIP for a specified area (referred to as ‘designated ERBs’). Only designated ERBs may apply for funding.

This guidance may also be of interest to providers including Further Education (FE) Colleges, Sixth Form Colleges<sup>1</sup>, Designated Institutions<sup>2</sup>, Independent Training Providers (ITPs) and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) that deliver English-funded post-16 technical education and training in carrying out the duties placed upon them in respect to LSIPs.

Additionally, it may be of interest to other organisations who can play an important role in the ongoing review and implementation of LSIPs including, but not limited to:

- Mayoral combined authorities (MCAs) and the Greater London Authority (GLA), given their devolved functions including for the adult education budget;
- Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and local authorities (LAs);
- other providers not subject to the duties such as schools, 16 - 19 academies (also known as ‘sixth form college academies’), local authority providers and supported employment providers;
- other employer organisations, sectoral bodies and centres of innovation such as Catapult centres;
- the Jobcentre Plus network and career, education, information advice and guidance (CEIAG) providers; and

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<sup>1</sup> Institutions run by sixth form college corporations.

<sup>2</sup> Institutions designated under S28 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992.

- other organisations that understand the needs of employees and learners, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds and with special educational needs and disabilities.

## 2 Introduction

The Department for Education (DfE) has made available up to £550,000<sup>3</sup> of programme funding to support designated ERBs during the development, implementation and reviews of a LSIP for each specified area. The grant funding has been made available in two stages.

### 2.1 Stage I: Initial development funding (September 2022 – July 2023)

This funding runs between September 2022 and July 2023<sup>4</sup> supporting the initial development of the LSIP up to and including the period that it is submitted to the Secretary of State for approval and publication. The objectives of this funding were to support designated ERBs to mobilise and engage with a range of relevant employers, providers and other stakeholders, to take forward the role, as outlined in stages A, B and C in section 5 of the statutory guidance<sup>5</sup>, and to develop the LSIP report as set out in section 6 of the statutory guidance.

### 2.2 Stage 2: Ongoing review and development funding (August 2023 – March 2025)

This funding runs from August 2023 until March 2025 following the initial development of the LSIP. The objective of this funding is to monitor and support the realisation of the LSIP and to keep the LSIP under review to ensure that it is still relevant and reflects the skills needs of the specified area, as set out in section 6 of the statutory guidance. Further information is provided in Section 3 of this guidance.

The total of the funding from both stages (i.e., stages 1 and 2) must not exceed £550,000.

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<sup>3</sup> The sole exception is the Greater London area where funding must not exceed £1,100,000.

<sup>4</sup> The ERB for Cheshire and Warrington was designated later than in all other areas and will submit their LSIP for approval at the end of June 2023. Their Stage I funding will therefore cover the period to the end of August 2023.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-skills-improvement-plans>

## 3 Policy objective

### 3.1 Expectations of designated ERBs

The objective of stage 2 is embedding the LSIP process in the local skills system. Designated ERBs will be expected to galvanise collaborative action with employers, providers and local stakeholders to support the delivery of the actionable priorities and the roadmap set out in the LSIP, keep the LSIP reviewed and report annually on progress. This will help to achieve better alignment of the local skills system with employers' needs and help to sustain the alignment in the longer-term.

### 3.2 Activities

To achieve the objective and expectations set out above, designated ERBs may undertake the following activities. The list is provided as a guide only. It is non-exhaustive, and we recognise that some activities may be more relevant to some designated ERBs and to some areas than others.

Activities related to reviewing and articulating employers' skills needs:

- where further demand signals are needed, the designated ERB may conduct deep dives to gain further intelligence into the sectors and skills issues that were identified in the approved and published LSIP. The outcome should result in more specific and granular information that providers will find useful and be categorised and aligned with IfATE occupational routes and pathways (as set out in the LSIP statutory guidance), where relevant and possible;
- support employers to better articulate their skills needs and aggregate demand in a way that translates into stronger demand signals for providers. This includes engaging with hard-to-reach small and medium enterprises (SMEs) that may have had limited engagement with the development of stage 1 of the LSIP;
- gather up-to-date labour market intelligence, especially where employers' skills needs change as a result of new/evolving industry or government requirements (including those related to net zero targets, adaptation to climate change, and other environmental goals);
- engage with any new significant sectors and/or industries that may develop or move into the area; and
- to aid in the development of the annual progress review (see section 3.3), to seek feedback from relevant employers on the effectiveness of any changes that are being/have been implemented locally as a result of the LSIP.

Activities related to promoting employer engagement in the local skills system:

- ensure that employers are fully utilising the provision already available and are able to navigate the local skills system. This could include signposting to relevant provision, brokering dialogue between employers and providers and facilitating best practice sharing among employers regarding how best to engage with the local skills system;
- galvanise employers to support the delivery of Local Skills Improvement Funded-projects once they are approved by DfE (see section 3.5);
- support employers to take up apprentices, learners on work placements (e.g. T Level Industry Placements) and to promote learning and training programmes for upskilling and reskilling existing employees (e.g. Skills Bootcamps);
- encourage the use of apprenticeship levy transfers, supporting large employers to make greater use of their levy and for small and medium sized employers to take on apprentices; and
- encourage employers to offer work placements for FE college teachers, second industry staff to support curriculum design and delivery, and contribute facilities and specialist equipment;

Activities related to providers' response:

- work with providers to ensure they understand the asks set out in the LSIP and the contents of the subsequent annual progress reports;
- work with providers to identify how any existing or additional employer skills needs can be articulated in ways that are as meaningful and actionable to them as possible;
- engage with smaller providers, especially independent training providers (ITPs), that may not have been involved in stage 1 of the LSIP;
- support providers in developing their applications to the Local Skills Improvement Fund (see section 3.5);
- engage with providers on curriculum planning and delivery, which includes the accountability agreements that providers will submit to DfE in May each year; and
- seek updates and feedback from providers on progress they and others are making/have made on delivering the changes set out in the LSIP.

Activities related to engaging other stakeholders relevant to the skills system:

- sustain networks and forums that bring employers, providers and other relevant stakeholders together so that dialogue is increased and information barriers are broken down;
- continue to engage constructively with MCAs/GLA, LEPs and LAs, so LSIPs can dock into local strategies in ways that are mutually reinforcing;
- continue to work closely with JCP, CEIAG providers and other stakeholders who will be key to raising learners' demand for new skills;
- identify and engage new stakeholders (e.g., recruiters and sector specialists) that haven't been part of stage 1 of the LSIP's development that could be useful partners in delivering the changes required;
- engage with investment projects (including Freeports and Investment Zones) funded by HMG; and
- engage with Ofsted inspectors (when requested at the time of an inspection) who will draw evidence from designated ERBs about providers' engagement in the LSIP process and their contribution to meeting local skills needs.

Activities related to data and analysis:

Designated ERBs will want to use relevant data and analysis to monitor the progress that is being made on delivering the changes set out in the LSIP and to underpin any new actions or priorities that are identified (see sections 3.3 and 3.4). They should:

- continue to work with the relevant MCA/GLA and/or LEP to gain access to available analysis and labour market information<sup>6</sup>;
- utilise the dashboards available on the Unit for Future Skills website<sup>7</sup>. Additionally, where there is a specific purpose, DfE may be able to share further information through a data sharing agreement;
- utilise other skills trends data, including that provided to designated ERBs by LinkedIn; and

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<sup>6</sup> The Skills Advisory Panels grant that funded MCAs and LEPs to provide analysis to LSIPs ended in March 2023. However, where relevant data, labour market information and analysis continues to be produced or purchased by the MCA or LEP, it should be made available to the designated ERB for the purposes of reviewing and developing the LSIP, where it is possible.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/unit-for-future-skills>



- purchase or commission access to data and/or specific analytical services where it is necessary and not already available in the local system.

Activities related to project management:

- manage the delivery and reviews of the LSIP;
- ensure good governance and adherence to relevant terms and conditions and guidance issued by DfE and HMG. This includes submitting regular monitoring reports and attending meetings with DfE officials;
- manage the LSIP grant in accordance with the agreement and this guidance – including submitting regular claims and responding to any queries DfE may have on the use of LSIP grant funding;
- manage staff and/or contractors and commission any new activities as required;
- monitor and measure the impact and benefits of the LSIP (including on provision and on employers);
- develop and publish an annual report on progress (see section 3.3);
- attend LSIP-focused webinars or roundtable sessions hosted by DfE; and
- share best practice and key learnings with other designated ERBs and wider stakeholders.

### **3.3 Reporting on progress and sharing updated intelligence**

Designated ERBs are expected to produce and publish a progress report in years two and three (2024 and 2025). The report should be no longer than 20 pages and should contain:

- which of the actions/changes set out in the LSIP have been achieved;
- what has the impact and benefits of the actions/changes been; and
- what still needs to be achieved, including any new or more granular intelligence and/or more specific actions that will help achieve this.

The report should be signed off by the LSIP's own local governance structures. It should be published on the designated ERB's website and be shared via other relevant communication channels so that all relevant stakeholders are made aware of its

publication. The designated ERB should share the link with the department so that it can be accessed from the designated ERB page on GOV.UK<sup>8</sup>.

The progress report should be published by the end of June in 2024 and 2025.

Although the progress report is not approved or signed off by DfE, it is a key condition of stage 2 funding. If it is not produced and published to the specification and timescale set out above, the DfE may take action to terminate the grant agreement and/or clawback a portion of the funding.

### **3.4 Ongoing review and circumstances where a replacement LSIP will be required**

LSIPs aim to set out a limited number of priorities that resonate with local stakeholders to gain traction and maximise impact. Frequent updates to the priorities are likely to cause confusion to providers and other actors in the local skills system. We therefore expect designated ERBs to focus their attention on implementing and reviewing the changes and actions that relate to the priorities identified through stage I and detailed in the approved and published LSIP report.

As part of keeping the LSIP under review, designated ERBs may look into new sectors or issues that were not looked into previously and/or engage with additional employers that were not part of the LSIP. Designated ERBs do not require sign off from the Secretary of State to do this, as the undertaking of further engagement and research does not change the published LSIP.

Where the outcome of the reviews produces more granular level intelligence, or proposed actions that are linked to the actions outlined in the LSIP, they should be shared with providers and included in the annual progress report. This would cover circumstances where the identified needs of the newly researched sector are the same as the sectors already covered in the LSIP.

Where the outcome of the reviews produces wholly new priorities that relate to newly researched sectors and cross cutting themes and cannot be considered linked, and/or more granular versions of actions in the LSIP, then a replacement LSIP might need to be developed and submitted to DfE for reapproval by the Secretary of State. In order to be approved, the updated LSIP must follow the processes set out in the Statutory Guidance and provide the evidence required (although only with regard to any sections that have been added or updated).

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-employer-representative-bodies>

The circumstance of producing a replacement LSIP is considered exceptional. Designated ERBs should discuss with DfE the possibility of producing a replacement LSIP and the approach they should take to changing the published document before they start to do so.

### **3.5 The role of designated ERBs in the Local Skills Improvement Fund**

In relation to the Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF), designated ERBs will be expected to:

- endorse the expression of interest (EOI) application put forward by the lead provider before it is submitted to DfE<sup>9</sup>. As part of this, the designated ERB will be expected to confirm that the skills priorities set out in the EOI application reflect those identified by the designated ERB and shared with providers at the end of March 2023, and in the draft LSIP produced by the designated ERB by end May 2023<sup>10</sup>.
- work with the lead provider and the collaboration partners to help develop the full LSIF application and the various projects within it. This includes encouraging relevant employers to support and feed into the development of the application. This could include advising on the specification of new industry standard equipment and provision required as part of the projects identified within the application, as well as identifying where employers can support delivery, including supporting the development of teacher knowledge and expertise i.e., through offering industry placements to teaching staff; and
- once LSIF-funded projects have been approved by DfE, we would expect the designated ERB to continue to support the lead provider and collaboration partners in the delivery of the LSIF projects and to galvanise local employers to do the same. The designated ERB will not manage or oversee the LSIF projects. This is the responsibility of the provider identified in the LSIF application as leading the specific project or projects.

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<sup>9</sup> In circumstances where there is more than one proposed application in a specified area, the designated ERB should not endorse either, but ask the relevant providers to work together to submit a joint bid.

<sup>10</sup> In Greater Manchester and the West Midlands, where trailblazer deeper devolution deals have been agreed, the arrangements for signing off the LSIF application will be slightly different. In these areas a new governance board involving the MCA and the designated employer representative body will have a role in signing off the local skills improvement fund application from the lead college to ensure alignment of LSIF funded projects with the LSIP and wider labour market strategies.

### 3.6 Changes resulting from devolution

Designated ERBs should be aware of government's aim to agree devolution deals with all areas of the country that want one by 2030. The process is currently ongoing, and in some areas of the country the devolved structure (including an elected mayor) will be established in 2024. While the devolution process could result in some boundary changes that may not align with current LSIP specified areas, we do not envisage making changes to LSIP areas before March 2025 (the end of this grant funding period).

Designated ERBs will need to work with the newly created devolved structure(s), and follow the process set out in the statutory guidance if/when developing a new LSIP. As part of the devolution deals, areas will agree to work with the designated ERB and support and provide input into the LSIP(s) that corresponds with their area.

As noted in section 3.5, in Greater Manchester and the West Midlands, where trailblazer deeper devolution deals<sup>11</sup> have been agreed, the relationship with the MCA will be strengthened through the establishment of a new governance board, which will include both the MCA and the designated ERB. This is being set up to provide oversight of post-16 technical education and skills and ensure the link between the technical education offer and labour market intelligence in each area.

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<sup>11</sup> [Greater Manchester Combined Authority: "Trailblazer" deeper devolution deal - GOV.UK](#) and [West Midlands Combined Authority: "Trailblazer" deeper devolution deal - GOV.UK](#)

## 4 Eligible spend

### 4.1 Eligible recipients

Only the designated ERB for a specified area can apply for the LSIP funding and make claims to the DfE. All other organisations and individuals incurring costs (agreed with the designated ERB) must make their claims to the designated ERB.

### 4.2 Eligible activities and costs

Designated ERBs can only apply for funding for costs that are related to the non-exhaustive list of activities set out in section 3.2 of this guidance. Designated ERBs cannot use the funding for any activity or cost unrelated to the LSIP programme.

Designated ERBs can only submit bids for costs that will be incurred up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025<sup>12</sup>, which coincides with the current comprehensive spending review period.

For the purposes of stage 2, eligible costs fall into the following categories:

- **Staffing (including travel and subsistence and other clearly evidenced additional costs):**
  - Employees of the designated ERB
  - External staff
- **Non-staffing costs:**
  - Analysis, data and research
  - Events, marketing and production
  - IT and equipment
  - Professional support services (legal and audit)

### 4.3 Staffing:

It is anticipated that the majority of costs related to the delivery of activities set out in section 3.2 will be staffing. To build the capacity of designated ERBs, DfE would prefer that staff working on the LSIP are employees of the designated ERB, where possible. That said, DfE recognises that there may be circumstances where a designated ERB may choose to use external staff (including contractors, secondees and employees of partner ERBs).

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<sup>12</sup> The exception is costs associated with the production and publication of the annual progress report (see section 3.3) and the production of the annual certification of expenditure (see section 4.4.4) in June 2025, where costs may extend to end June 2025.

### 4.3.1 Employees of the designated ERB

If employees of the designated ERB will be undertaking a role in the review and delivery of the LSIP, either as their sole role in the organisation or as a part of their role in the organisation (e.g. 20%, 33% or 50% of their time), then the salary costs for their time spent on the LSIP will be eligible costs, subject to the following conditions:

- staff costs should be proportionate for the grade of the activity. It is expected that staff will be employed at a working level and on commensurate rates. When recruiting new staff, we would expect the rate paid to be commensurate with their role. This might be evidenced through comparison with other similar level roles in the designated ERB's organisation or similar roles advertised locally;
- National Insurance and superannuation contributions are eligible costs but should be identified separately from the base salary;
- CEO time should be kept to a minimum. We would not expect to reimburse more than 6 days of CEO time per month. Any more days than this would require discussion and agreement with the DfE in advance;
- where a member of staff is working part-time on the project, designated ERBs can use their own approach to calculate hourly rates, provided the methodology is clear and justifiable. However, an approach that designated ERBs may wish to use is: annual salary (i.e. Pay + ERNIC + Superannuation) divided by the number of working days in a year and then divided by net daily hours;
- where it is aligned with the package used for its other employees, the designated ERB may claim for costs associated with employee benefits (including sick pay, parental leave and salary supplements). If only part of an employee's time is spent on the LSIP, these costs would need to be pro rata;
- where the normal hours spent on LSIP work for a staff member are the same every week or month and are set out in a signed HR letter, then timesheets would not be necessary as evidence each month with the claim. If they fluctuate each week or month, DfE would require timesheets with the monthly claim; and
- the LSIP funding cannot be used for staff whose regular role would have required them to undertake activities related and relevant to the LSIP (e.g., where an employee attends meetings that have some connection to the LSIP but they would have attended these meetings as part of their regular role).

### 4.3.2 External staff

External staff (including contractors, secondees and employees of partner ERBs) may be used to deliver the LSIP where it is necessary or where it presents better value for money than the designated ERB employing the same resource. For the purposes of this application, the external staff category would not include externally provided legal or audit services, which should be categorised as professional support (see section 4.4.4).

There are two methods for remunerating external staff:

- where staff are seconded to the designated ERB, or where partner ERBs are used to deliver the LSIP, the designated ERB may reimburse the staffing costs following the same conditions set out for designated ERBs above. In such circumstances, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) should be used to formalise the agreement and invoices and/or timesheet information should be collected by the designated ERB; or
- where contractors are employed to deliver certain aspects of the project (e.g., a project manager working 3 days a week, an analyst working one day a week, or a writer drafting the annual progress report for 3 weeks each year), day rates may be used. DfE recognises that day rates can vary dependant on location and other factors, however, expected day rates are between £300-£600 per day (inclusive of VAT). Rates above £600 per day will only be agreed and reimbursed in exceptional circumstances with DfE's prior agreement and with evidence of the highly specialised nature of the work.

### 4.3.3 Travel and subsistence and other clearly evidenced additional costs

Travel and subsistence costs are eligible where they are reasonable and proportionate, where they are wholly for the purposes of delivering the outcomes of the grant and where a face-to-face meeting is conducive to the required activity. While designated ERBs may follow the travel and subsistence policies they have for their other employees, we would expect them to be broadly aligned with the following rules that DfE applies to its staff (DfE may query or refuse to reimburse costs that are strongly unaligned):

- mileage and fuel rates and allowances should be no higher than those set by HM Revenue and Customs<sup>13</sup> ;
- where public transport is used, travel should be via standard class (unless there is an option to choose a different type of ticket offering better value for money at the time of purchase); and
- where there is a period of absence from the normal workplace, subsistence will be paid via receipted actuals up to the following rates: £5.00 for over 5 hours, £10.00 for over 10 hours, £13.80 over 12 hours and £21.25 for over 24 hours (where breakfast is included with the accommodation tariff).

Where a designated ERB can demonstrate a clear additional cost to them of delivering the LSIP, other additional costs may be eligible.

Given the longer lead-in time for stage 2 compared to stage 1, the use of recruitment agencies for the hire of new staff (employees of the designated ERB and external staff) is unlikely to be necessary. However, in exceptional circumstances where the use of

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<sup>13</sup> As set out in HM Revenue and Customs' guidance here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rates-and-allowances-travel-mileage-and-fuel-allowances/travel-mileage-and-fuel-rates-and-allowances>



recruitment agencies cannot be avoided and costs are appropriate, reasonable and proportionate, it may be considered an eligible spend subject to DFE's prior agreement.

For the purposes of the funding application, the estimated value of travel and subsistence and other additional costs should be included alongside the categories of staffing (i.e., "employees of the designated ERB" and/or "external staff") to which they relate.

## **4.4 Non-staff costs:**

### **4.4.1 Analysis, data and research**

As set out in section 3.2, where there are gaps in the available data and evidence, designated ERBs may purchase data or commission additional research, data collection and analysis. In most cases, it is expected that the analysis of the data and research will be undertaken by staff (i.e., employees of the designated ERB or external staff). However, in circumstances where it represents better value for money, the designated ERB may choose to commission the analysis of data alongside its purchase.

### **4.4.2 Engagement, promotion, production**

As part of their engagement strategy, designated ERBs may wish to host events with employers, providers and wider stakeholders. Venue hire can be covered where engagement needs to be face-to-face and the designated ERB, employers or providers cannot provide a suitable space in their own estate. If an event has more than one purpose, event costs may be claimed for the appropriate proportion which pertains to LSIPs. This would not be the case if LSIPs was only marginal to an event which would have happened anyway.

Refreshments may be included at events of more than two hours but must be capped at £12 per head (inclusive of VAT). Refreshment costs at shorter events will not be eligible. If venue hire and refreshments are both included in a package, the total cost must not be more than £48 per head (inclusive of VAT). The organisation and management of events would usually be undertaken by staff (employees of the designated ERB or external staff), unless it represents better value for money for those costs to be included in the venue hire package.

The costs associated with promoting the LSIP are eligible but must be proportionate. In most cases promotional activities will be undertaken by staff (employees of the designated ERB or external staff) and therefore included in one of the categories listed above. However, where additional costs are faced (including marketing collateral) it should be included in this category.

The costs associated with the production of the annual progress reports are eligible. In most cases the content of the reports will be compiled by staff (employees of the



designated ERB or external staff) and therefore included in one of the categories listed above. However, where additional costs are faced (including design, artwork and printing) it should be included in this category.

#### 4.4.3 IT and equipment costs

It is expected that any IT, equipment or software (phones, laptops etc) purchased with stage 1 funding will be utilised during stage 2. This includes circumstances where different staff may now be involved in reviewing and delivering the LSIP.

On an ongoing basis designated ERBs will be expected to conduct a reasonable assessment of the health of IT and equipment purchased with LSIP funding and consider options such as reusing and refurbishing equipment for any new staff that may start working on the LSIP. In exceptional circumstances (e.g., where equipment breaks or reaches the end of its lifecycle), the designated ERB may acquire new/additional IT, equipment or software. In all circumstances, costs should be proportionate and in line with the designated ERB's own accounting policy.

#### 4.4.4 Professional support services (including legal, audit)

Legal fees associated with the development and review of the LSIP and/or the employment of staff working on the LSIP are eligible costs but should be appropriate, reasonable and proportionate.

External auditors will be required to sign an "Annual Certification of Expenditure" after carrying out sampling work and reviewing that the spend is in line with the DfE grant agreement. We would normally expect the Certificate to be returned by 30<sup>th</sup> June, but the exact date will be confirmed each year. Any additional fees associated with the audit are an eligible cost.

### 4.5 Value Added Tax

VAT may be claimed but should only be included within eligible spend where designated ERBs are unable to recover this separately. Designated ERBs should include the unrecoverable VAT against the relevant item on their application form. The total funding of £550,000 (£1,100,000 for Greater London) includes any non-recoverable VAT. **Where VAT has not been included in the original claim it will not be paid.** It is, therefore, imperative that all non-recoverable VAT is added to the claim.

The LSIP funding is through a grant and therefore **VAT should not be added to the designated ERB's own costs.**

## 5 Ineligible costs

### 5.1 Ineligible activities and costs

All costs not included in the eligible costs (section 4 of this guidance) are ineligible costs. Where the designated ERB is uncertain as to whether a cost is eligible, it should contact the DfE at [LSIP.programme@education.gov.uk](mailto:LSIP.programme@education.gov.uk) before committing to spend.

In addition, and for the sake of clarity, the following are not eligible costs:

- capital expenditure including estate and large equipment purchases/leases
- international events;
- general networking events not directly linked to the LSIP;
- any costs which are already, or expected to be, funded through other HMG grants; and
- notional overhead costs.

### 5.2 Duplicate funding

There must be no duplication between applications for LSIP funding and other DfE-funded programmes such as the Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF).

The DfE funding cannot be used to support designated ERBs' other activities with employers and costs must:

- solely relate to the delivery of the LSIP programme and be within the parameters set out in the eligible costs (section 4 of this guidance); and
- not relate to activities that would have been undertaken in the course of the normal running of the designated ERB.

## 6 Categorising spend and variations to funding lines

### 6.1 Categorising spend

DfE needs to understand how designated ERBs plan to utilise the stage 2 funding so that it can assess bids against the following criteria.

- the costs set out are eligible, as defined by this guidance;
- the costs set out represent value for money; and
- the rationale for the costs is clearly expressed and reasonable.

However, DfE also understands that it may be difficult for designated ERBs to pin down precisely how they will use the funding to March 2025 at this stage and that some changes to the profiled activities and costs may be required. With this in mind, we require designated ERBs to agree to the principles set out in this guidance and provide as much detail as possible; however, we are allowing designated ERBs to categorise their spend in broader funding lines than we requested for stage 1 funding.

### 6.2 Varying spend

#### 6.2.1 Moving spend within a funding line

As long as proposed activities meet all the requirements set out in this funding guidance and do not substantially differ from activities originally proposed and agreed or increase the cost of the funding line, designated ERBs will have the flexibility to vary activities within a funding line (e.g. “employees of the designated ERB”) without seeking explicit agreement from DfE.

Examples of changes that would not require DfE sign off, include:

- where there is a change to the profile and/or mix of employees of the designated ERB working on the project;
- where different types of data need to be purchased to that set out in the application; and
- where a different number and profile of events and engagements are required (as long as the per-person rates set out above are adhered to).

In making any such changes the designated ERB should ensure that their costs remain proportionate and value for money and the overall cost must remain within the agreed grant funding total.

## 6.2.2 Moving spend between funding lines

In cases where a designated ERB needs to move costs between funding lines they must complete the change to funding use template and submit it to DfE's LSIP programme mailbox for approval. A clear rationale must be provided for the requirement to move agreed funding from one budget line to another.

Before any money is spent on a new cost or over the current agreed total for a particular budget line, permission should be sought. Where permission has not been sought in advance, spend is at the designated ERB's own risk. And in any scenario, the overall cost must remain within the agreed grant funding total.

The template can be located on the Portal for Designated ERBs on Microsoft Teams:

[https://educationgovuk.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/sites/EXTERNAL-PortalforDesignatedERBs/Shared Documents/4. Key LSIP Programme documents \(inc. funding\)/Forms and Templates/Template for changes to funding use.docx?d=w5982ec503b484410b0b356171d85717d&csf=1&web=1&e=Xu9WIL](https://educationgovuk.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/sites/EXTERNAL-PortalforDesignatedERBs/Shared Documents/4. Key LSIP Programme documents (inc. funding)/Forms and Templates/Template for changes to funding use.docx?d=w5982ec503b484410b0b356171d85717d&csf=1&web=1&e=Xu9WIL).

## 7 Application process and claim arrangements

### 7.1 Application process

Designated ERBs will need to complete the LSIP Funding application form. This sets out planned spend for the Stage 2: Ongoing review and development phase (up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025). The total spend across stages 1 and 2 should not exceed £550,000.

A webinar dedicated to the topic of stage 2 funding will be held in June 2023 (date to be confirmed). This will provide an opportunity for designated ERBs to ask questions about eligible and ineligible spend.

There must only be **one application per LSIP area** to be submitted by the designated ERB.

**ERBs designated for more than one local area will need to submit separate applications for each specified area.**

**Applications can only be accepted if submitted using the funding application form.** All mandatory sections of the application form must be completed.

Applications must be submitted to [LSIP.Programme@education.gov.uk](mailto:LSIP.Programme@education.gov.uk) by 5pm on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> June. The DfE will assess applications against the following criteria:

- the costs set out are eligible, as defined by this guidance;
- the costs set out represent value for money; and
- the rationale for the costs is clearly expressed and reasonable.

Where the application meets the criteria above, the designated ERB will be issued a grant variation letter. The grant variation letter must be signed and returned within 5 working days of issue. Where the application cannot be approved, the designated ERB will have an opportunity to make necessary changes and resubmit.

### 7.2 Claim arrangements

The grant variation letter will have several annexes. Annex C is a form to claim funding in arrears. Each item claimed must have a related invoice or other supporting evidence submitted. Annex C and associated invoices/evidence should be sent to [LSIP.Programme@education.gov.uk](mailto:LSIP.Programme@education.gov.uk) by 17.00 on the first working day of each month. If there is a bank holiday on the day it would usually have been submitted, it should be sent in by 17.00 on the following day. This will allow payment to be made on the last working day of the month.

Any costs that designated ERBs are unable to claim due to not having the evidence in time may be claimed the month following receipt of the invoice.

Funding cannot be made in advance of need. Payment can only be made by the DfE upon receipt and review of an Annex C claim form and appropriate evidence of expenditure, such as a receipt or invoice (as set out in the grant offer letter). The DfE reserves the right to delay or withhold payments if data is inaccurate or incomplete. In the event of any variances, the DfE reserves the right to ask designated ERBs for explanations of the variances and to seek further information.

## 8 Timeline and contacting the DfE for support

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Date/s</b>
DfE issues LSIP Stage 2 Objectives and Funding Guidance	4 <sup>th</sup> May 2023
DfE issues application form	w/c 15 <sup>th</sup> May 2023
Deadline for applications to be submitted to the LSIP inbox	30 <sup>th</sup> June 2023
DfE panel assesses applications and completes necessary questions & clarifications with ERBs	July 2023
DfE issues grant variation letters	w/c 7 <sup>th</sup> August 2023
Designated ERBs sign and return grant variation letters	August 2023
Designated ERBs can submit a funding claim form for spend in August	1 <sup>st</sup> September 2023

### Contacting the DfE for support

Designated ERBs in need of support or advice should contact: .

## Annex A: Glossary

<b>Term</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
CEIAG	Careers, Education, Information, Advice and Guidance
The department	The Department for Education
ERB	Employer Representative Body
GLA	Greater London Authority
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IfATE	Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education
LA	Local Authority
LEP	Local Enterprise Partnership
LSIF	Local Skills Improvement Fund
LSIP	Local Skills Improvement Plan
MCA	Mayoral Combined Authority





Department  
for Education

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write to Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London, TW9 4DU

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# Marches LSIPs

Local Skills Improvement Plan

## Annex 3

### Marches LSIPS Risk Register August 2023





## LSIP PROJECT RISK LOG 2023 - Updated 1st June 2023

Explanation of any changes to risk scores, can be found on page 4.

Risk areas identified		Risk Score				Mitigating action Actions to mitigate the risk e.g. reduce the likelihood.	Contingent action Action to be taken if the risk happens.	Person Responsible / Accountable	Review			Risk Rating Comparison
		Likelihood	Impact	Total	Target Risk Score				Last Reviewed	Next Review	Review Frequency	
1	Project purpose /delivery plan is not well-defined, communicated or understood by the team or stakeholders (Executive Group(s))	2	5	10	10	Ensure purpose is well defined in all communications (meetings, social media, emails etc). Define the plan with input from SMT and key 3rd parties. Identify stakeholders, agree meeting frequency, goals and Terms of Reference. Build in lead time in the schedule where possible, despite tight timescales. Communicate schedule early. Check in with stakeholders regularly. Take note of stakeholder and 3rd party needs. Hold scheduling meetings so that team members and key 3rd parties understand the plan and likelihood of missed tasks is reduced. Ensure project milestones and required outputs are clearly understood. Distribute a simple version of the project plan.	Escalate to Chamber SMT and DfE. Discuss communications that are perceived as ill-defined and remove from scope. Share the plan and go through upcoming tasks and comms at each project progress meeting. If necessary, project plan re-written with clear deliverables and submitted to SMT for approval. Hold team, stakeholder and 3rd party meetings with feedback to ensure clarity. Correct misunderstandings immediately. Clarify areas that are not clear swiftly using assistance from SMT if needed.	Project Director / Project Manager	01/06/23	01/07/23	M	➔
2	Issues with staff recruitment & retention and lack of clarity on roles across Chambers	3	5	15	10	Identify project needs, develop JD's for external recruitment and identify back ups for each human resource on the project. Clarify roles and communicate project structure, outputs and deliverables internally.	Escalate to Chamber SMT and bring in back up resource.	Project Director / Project Manager	01/06/23	01/07/23	M	➔
3	Delays in contracting with 3rd parties (consultants or contractors)	3	5	15	10	Communicate needs and outputs clearly in SLA's. Outputs from each contractor built into the project schedule. Contracts signed. Identify additional contractors/consultants as back-up	Escalate to Chamber SMT and bring in back up resource.	Project Director / CEO	01/06/23	01/07/23	M	➔
4	Estimating and/or scheduling errors (inc. unplanned work that must be accommodated) - i.e. added workload or time requirements because of new direction, policy, Board requirements or statute	2	5	10	10	Track schedules, milestones etc and include schedule review as an agenda item in every project team meeting. Flag forecast errors and/or delays to SMT early. Check all plans and emails from DfE. Document all assumptions made in planning and communicate to SMT before project commencement. Review regularly to ensure any slippage is identified and dealt with.	Escalate to Chamber SMT. Raise change request for change to budget or schedule to DfE. Contingency agreed by Project Team.	Project Manager	01/06/23	01/07/23	M	➔



Risk areas identified		Risk Score				Mitigating action Actions to mitigate the risk e.g. reduce the likelihood.	Contingent action Action to be taken if the risk happens.	Person Responsible / Accountable	Review			Risk Rating Comparison
		Likelihood	Impact	Total	Target Risk Score				Last Reviewed	Next Review	Review Frequency	
5	Project milestones or deliverables delayed - ie. finalising report, employer event, data gathering or claims etc.	2	3	6	10	Ensure delivery plan is as accurate as possible. Review regularly. Use Tracking Gantt and Baseline to identify schedule slippage early. Ensure the focus is on the plan and delivering it.	Escalate to Chamber SMT. Raise change request for change to budget or schedule to DfE. Regularly review the plan with the DfE and highlight any distractions / unreasonable requests, to request their guidance.	Project Director / Project Manager	01/06/23	01/07/23	M	➔
6	Inadequate engagement or support from stakeholders (employers, Local Authorities, training providers, ERB's, JCP, Trade Bodies, LEP etc)	2	5	10	10	Identify where issue is. Raise with SMT to support engagement with relevant stakeholder(s). Revisit the comms, project deliverables and planned stakeholder intervention schedules at regular intervals to check all stakeholders are managed. Gain feedback to check project is delivering. Provide, at reasonable intervals and where appropriate, progress results for Employer Engagement, so stakeholders can see comparative performance, with data protection adhered to by the recipients.	Raise risk immediately and raise issue with Chamber SMT and/or DfE.	Project Director / Project Manager	01/06/23	01/07/23	M	➔
7	Issues around data gathering and analysis	2	5	10	10	Liaise with data provider(s) to ensure project questions, needs and outputs etc are very clear. Communicate dates for sign-off points up front.	Escalate to Chamber SMT and recommend action e.g. to pause the project. If necessary, escalate to DfE.	Project Manager / Service Supplier	01/06/23	01/07/23	M	➔
8	Ensuring communications to employers include their understanding that this is a long term strategic project and results change wont happen quickly	2	5	10	10	Ensure the marketing and all communications make it clear that this is a long term project, that change will not happen over night, however it will highlight areas where change may be required, and this will be reported, so action can be taken.	Raise risk immediately and raise issue with Chamber SMT and/or DfE.	Project Director / Project Manager / Marketing	01/06/23	01/07/23	M	➔
9	Parallel research risk	3	5	15	5	Parallel research in the same vein by a 3rd party covering part or all of the same geographical area and time frames, would be a risk in that it could hinder our progress with getting interviews and contributing to survey fatigue. Work with partners to understand their needs and try to work in collaboration, where possible.	Raise risk immediately and raise issue with Chamber SMT and/or DfE.	Project Director / Project Manager / Marketing	01/06/23	01/07/23	M	➔
10	Issues due to Cashflow	1	3	3	3	Ensure claims are correct. Communicate contract expenditure evidence requirements internally and check with DfE that they are correct. Liaise with all staff involved across both Chambers. Communicate claim dates schedule early	Escalate to DfE	Project Director / Finance	01/06/23	01/07/23	M	➔

Risk areas identified		Risk Score				Mitigating action Actions to mitigate the risk e.g. reduce the likelihood.	Contingent action Action to be taken if the risk happens.	Person Responsible / Accountable	Review			Risk Rating Comparison
		Likelihood	Impact	Total	Target Risk Score				Last Reviewed	Next Review	Review Frequency	
11	Changes in Economic conditions	1	3	3	3	Business become more inward focused. Need then to highlight the importance of the research, the difference it can make for the future no matter what the business environment is, as people will still need the skills. Help and support businesses as best we can through our other Chamber work and partners' projects. Accept some businesses we are using for LSIP's research, into skills needs, may cease trading, so alternatives may need to be sourced to continue our research.	Raise risk immediately and raise issue with Chamber SMT and/or DfE.	Project Director / Project Manager	01/06/23	01/07/23	M	➔
12	Software / data malfunction	1	3	3	3	An IT malfunction or hack that could lose data, be compromised, or require 3rd party intervention – stopping or slowing the process. Latest security protection used and IT systems maintained by IT Company. Back up of data taken at regular intervals during the day of data that has changed.	Raise risk immediately and raise issue with Chamber SMT and/or DfE.	Project Director / Project Manager	01/06/23	01/07/23	M	➔
13	Acts of God for example, extreme weather, leads to loss of resources, materials, premises etc.	1	5	5	5	Ensure insurance in place. Familiarise project team with contingency plan.	Follow contingency plan	Project Director / CEO	01/06/23	01/07/23	M	➔
14	Legal action delays or pauses project.	1	5	5	5	Ensure all contracts signed before starting the project. Follow all regulatory requirements.	Escalate to Chamber SMT who will notify legal department. Follow instructions from legal.	Project Director	01/06/23	01/07/23	M	➔



# Marches LSIPs

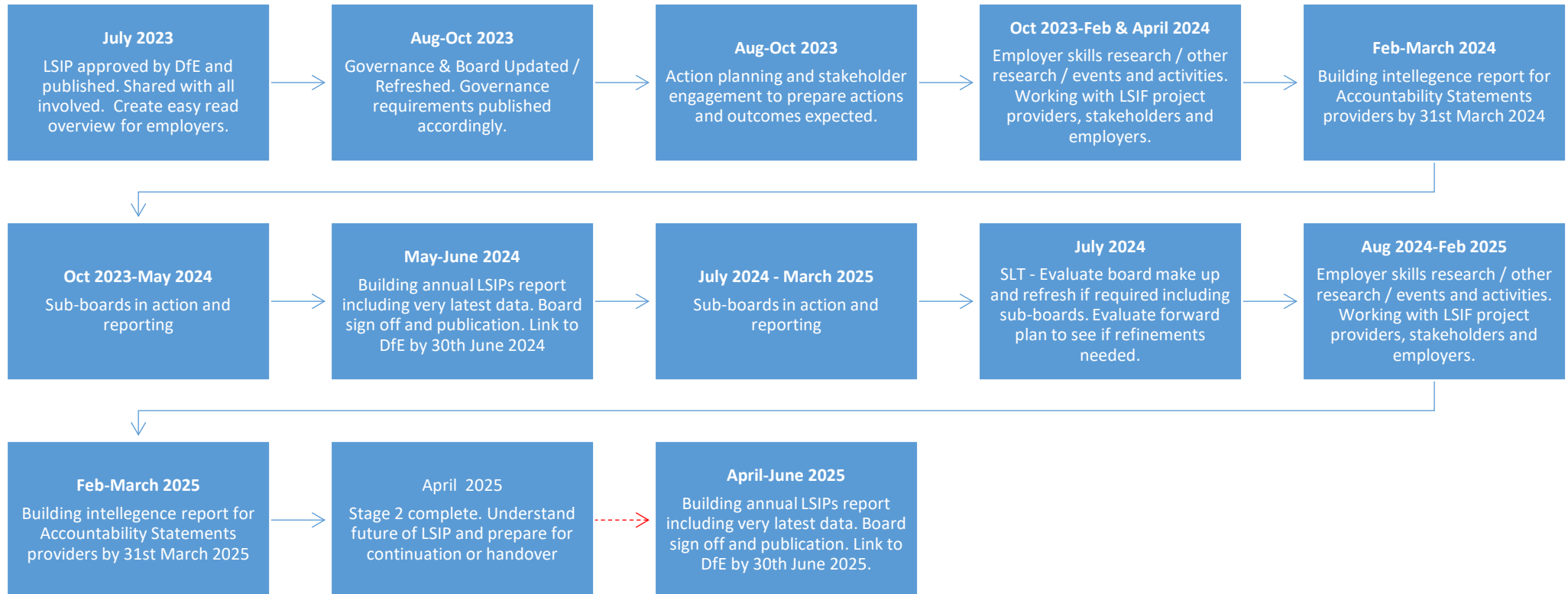
Local Skills Improvement Plan

## Annex 4

### Marches LSIPS Key Dates



## Marches LSIPS – Timeline Key Dates



Meetings, routine checks & webinars as and when required by/with DfE & OFSTED

Main Board to meet quarterly. Subgroups to meet as required and report into the main board.

Events to take place as and when required to obtain the research and intelligence required to ensure good and growing cross-working between employers and providers. These may be in several forms such as roundtables or focus group. Desk research and working with 3<sup>rd</sup> party data ongoing.

Progress evaluation carried out throughout.



# Marches LSIPs

Local Skills Improvement Plan

## Annex 5

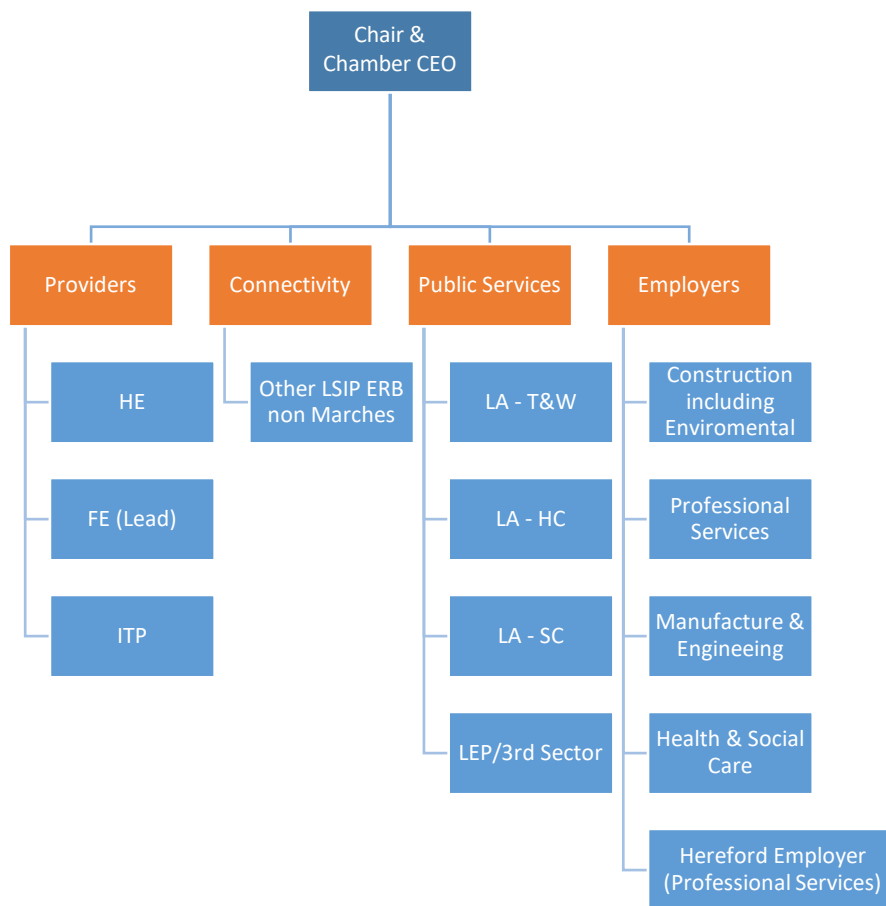
### Organogram





## Marches LSIPS – Stage 2 Governance & Subgroups

During August – October the main board will be complete and in place. Many already approached and agreed, with others yet to confirm or put forward the person most suited. Some were on Stage 1 Board but for Stage 2 it was felt a board with greater employer emphasis and altered in makeup to suit the differing challenges of Stage 2



**Steering and Engagement Subgroups – as and when required, other stakeholder groups will be tapped into rather than create new as suitable to ensure no overlap or double funding.**

Groups may consist of Providers, ERBs, sub–Regional Panels made up of LA, HE, FE and local businesses from the sectors above, reporting via panel Chair to main board.

- Herefordshire
- Shropshire
- Telford & Wrekin

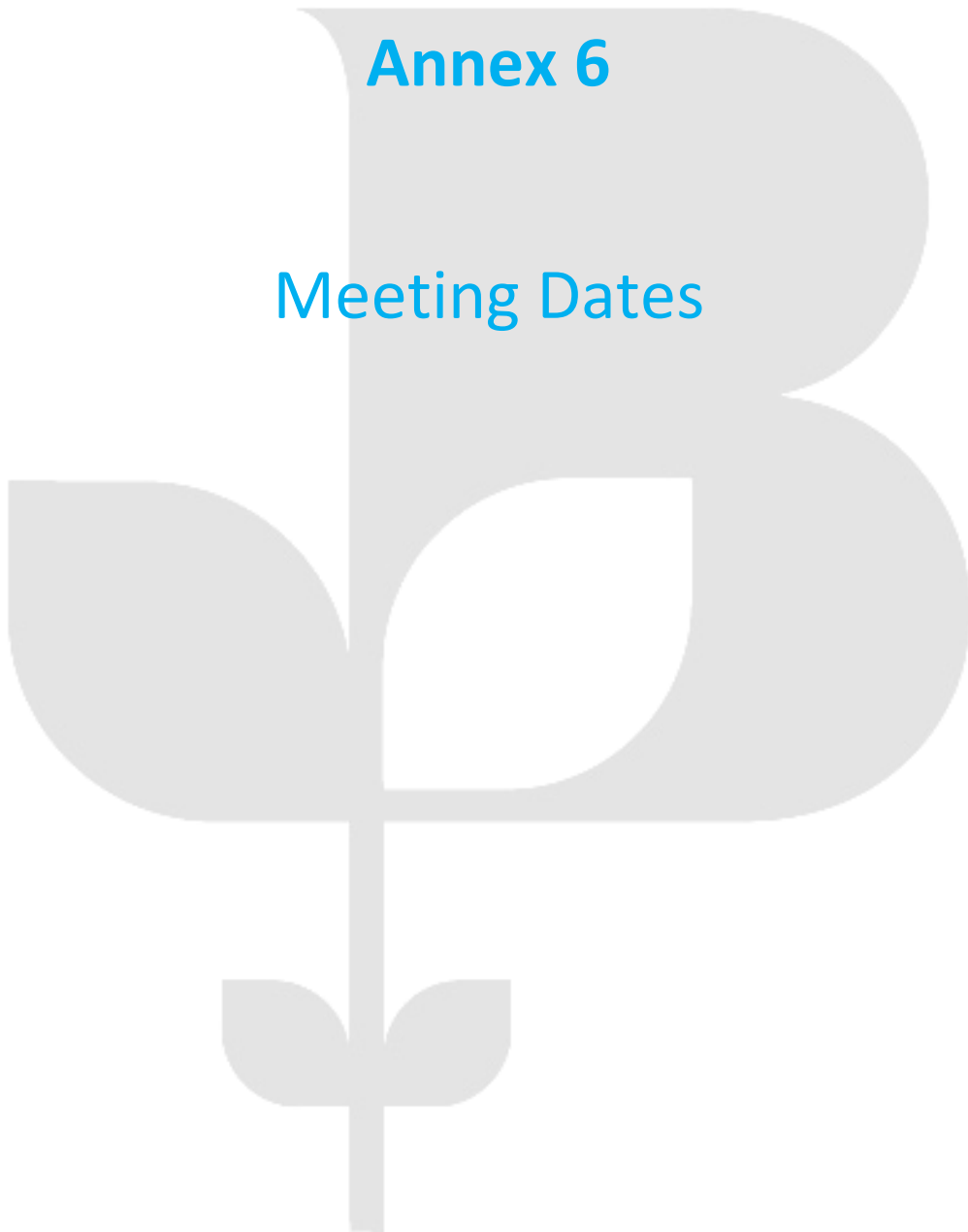
Additional Board Attendees where relevant: Project Manager, CEO of Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber and other stakeholders or specialists as deemed necessary.

# Marches LSIPs

Local Skills Improvement Plan

## Annex 6

### Meeting Dates





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## **Marches LSIPS Stage 2**

### **Main Board Dates**

**10<sup>th</sup> Oct 2023, Tue 16:30 – 17:30**

**9<sup>th</sup> Jan 2024, Tue 16:30 – 17:30**

**9<sup>th</sup> Apr 2024, Tue 16:30 – 17:30**

**9<sup>th</sup> Jul 2024, Tue 16:30 – 17:30**

**8<sup>th</sup> Oct 2024, Tue 16:30 – 17:30**

**14<sup>th</sup> Jan 2025, Tue 16:30 – 17:30**

**8<sup>th</sup> April 2025, Tue 16:30 – 17:30**