

Worcestershire's Local Skills Improvement Plan 2025 Progress Report

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Purpose of report

This progress report has been prepared in accordance with Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIP): Stage 2 Guidance (dated November 2023) and is intended to review progress against the local skills improvement plan published in August 2023.

This report is for all employers, partners and stakeholders within the county of Worcestershire who produce, consume and deliver skills. It highlights the progress we have made with our delivery plan in the second year of LSIP delivery, the benefits of activity, as well as our plans for future activity.

Co-designed with our employers, education and training providers, and wider skills stakeholders, the Worcestershire LSIP aims to better equip Worcestershire's workforce (both present and future) with the skills that employers really need. Central to this is fostering stronger collaboration between employers and providers. As the Employer Representative Body (ERB) for the Worcestershire LSIP, it has therefore been our mission at Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce to ensure that we, our education and training providers and employers are more visible to each other in order to strengthen connections and help unlock the potential of our local workforce.

In the [first year of LSIP delivery](#), our focus was on creating the structures and partnerships required to create the conditions for the long term outcomes articulated in our LSIP. Over the past 12 months, we have built on this momentum, strengthening the foundations of collaboration between employers, providers and wider stakeholders, while translating insight into action. We have evidenced the critical need for digital and work-readiness skills, delivering impactful training that has supported hundreds of individuals and employers across the county.

In collaboration with our Further Education (FE) colleges to leverage Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF) funding, we have expanded technical provision in priority sectors, enhancing our ability to respond to evolving workforce demands. Together with the colleges and Worcestershire County Council, we have also strengthened shared messaging around the strategic importance of workforce development. As we look ahead, our focus is on targeted engagement with our business community to identify emerging skills demands and ensure our workforce is equipped for the future.

Summary of the LSIP

[Worcestershire's LSIP](#), covering the districts of Bromsgrove, Malvern Hills, Redditch, Worcester, Wychavon and Wyre Forest, builds on pre-existing strong partnerships between our training providers and clear leadership on skills development needs in the local economy from Worcestershire County Council (WCC) and Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). Engagement with employers and skills stakeholders in Worcestershire revealed that while training is available, employers face challenges accessing it in a suitable format, lack strategic planning for skills needs, struggle with a lack of common language around skills, and require a balance between addressing immediate skills gaps and fostering long-term workforce development. These shape the five priorities across three themes in the LSIP. Details of the underpinning actions linked to the key priorities and outcomes is provided in Annex A. The [2024 progress report](#) can be read here.

Table 1. Worcestershire LSIP summary

Themes	Resolving short-term priorities				Developing long-term plans		Building partnerships	
	Acting on short-term priorities to address employers' current, pressing skills needs				Putting in place long-term plans which enable employers to actively plan skills needs for the future		Building effective skills partnerships and working together to identify and address skills needs	
Priorities	1 Equipping workers with technical skills & knowledge needed to alleviate employers' skills shortfalls and enable individuals to progress in their career		2 Developing the common skills and workplace behaviours that will promote employability and progression opportunities		3 Promoting a culture where business leaders recognise the strategic importance of proactively developing people & talent to the productivity of their businesses		4 Developing the workforce planning capabilities of managers to enable businesses to identify their skills needs and providers to adapt training accordingly	5 Encouraging a collaborative skills system in which provision can be tailored to the needs of employers
Outcomes	Employers can identify training solutions that meet their needs, both in terms of content and delivery format	Individuals can identify training opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge to meet current employer demand for skills	Employers no longer identify a lack of common skills and appropriate workplace behaviours as a problem amongst new recruits and education leavers	Individuals understand the common skills and behaviours they need to deploy alongside technical skills and knowledge to enable progression	Employers recognise the benefits to their business of developing the skills and knowledge of their workers	Employers can articulate the different skills they need currently and how this is likely to change over the coming years	Providers can develop curriculum content that will mean future workers have the relevant core skills	Employers actively participate in the skills system and there are clear mechanisms through which employers and providers engage to shape and co-design training provision
Actions	Support our FE, HE and IT providers in the modification of courses to open access to existing training, in preferred delivery formats		Support our employers to develop the skills of their employees Making available specific training courses/programmes to support the development of these skills Embedding development within educational pathways and/or as part of 'transition' support between education and work and job moves		Establish an awareness raising campaign to communicate the importance of training staff and workplace culture to business owners around the County		Link in with WCC's workforce planning offering, referring as many as businesses as possible to this scheme	Put in place purposeful partnerships and collaboration mechanisms which enable the skills system to respond to and anticipate skills needs

Strategic and economic context

Despite substantial changes in policy and governance at the national level, the landscape in Worcestershire remains largely unchanged since the 2024 progress report. Our LEP function has been retained as part of WCC, and the county continues to benefit from a strong provider network made up of our high performing FE colleges and a diverse range of Independent Training Providers (ITPs). Worcestershire is not part of the Government’s devolution priority programme. However, in response to plans to abolish the two-tier system of district and county councils in England set out in the [2024 Devolution White Paper](#), Worcestershire is in the early stages of exploring the reconfiguration of the roles and responsibilities of local authorities as part of the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) process. An interim proposal for a single authority was submitted in March 2025, with the full proposal due for submission to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) by November 2025. As such, the full implications for the LSIP and local skills ecosystem are not known at this stage.

Overall, our local economy continues to demonstrate long-term resilience and steady growth, supported by a diverse sectoral base and a collaborative business environment.

As noted in the [Worcestershire Economy Report 2025](#), we have already exceeded many of the targets set in our [Plan for Growth to 2040](#), including key jobs, economic growth, and housing measures. However, over the course of this LSIP period, local businesses have faced mounting challenges, from inflation and shifting labour markets to the legacy of the Covid-19 pandemic and Brexit, which have contributed to a decline in the size of the business base since 2021. Despite the local employment rate dipping below 80% and claimant numbers remaining above pre-pandemic levels, Worcestershire’s labour market continues to outperform national trends as illustrated below:



Home to 263,000 jobs and 26,000 businesses. However, both employment and business numbers are down since 2021.



High employment rate of 79.4% (75.7% nationally) and unemployment remains low at 3.2%.



Creation of over 28,000 workplace jobs between 2013 and 2022 but a decline of 5,000 jobs between 2022 and 2023.



The economy has grown by 1.4% a year since 2013 to 2023, however growth slowed to 0.5% between 2022 and 2023.

Positively, FE skills participation and achievements in Worcestershire have returned to pre-pandemic levels in the 2023/24 academic year. However, the proportion of 16- and 17-year-olds not in education, employment, or training (NEET) has increased from 1.9% in 2019 to 3.5% in 2024, slightly above the regional and national averages of 2.8% and 3.2% respectively. Addressing this challenge will require a proactive approach, including

capitalising on new measures announced in the [Get Britain Working White Paper](#). These include the transformation of jobcentres into a national careers service, the introduction of the Connect to Work programme, and reforms to the Apprenticeship Levy aimed at giving employers greater flexibility to invest in skills development

Worcestershire demonstrates strong alignment with the priority sectors identified in the National Industrial Strategy and by Skills England, positioning the county well to attract strategic investment and targeted support.

Professional and Business Services, Health and Social Care, and Construction are our cornerstone sectors, collectively accounting for over a third of all jobs and businesses in Worcestershire. Complementing these are key opportunity sectors - Advanced Manufacturing, Cyber Security and Defence, and Agri-Tech - which offer strong potential for future growth and investment. A summary of our key sector strengths is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Worcestershire’s sector strengths

Sector	Key information
Professional and Business Services	Biggest employing sector in the county with 53,000 jobs (20.2% total employment) and almost a quarter of businesses at 6,300 businesses.
Health and Social Care	The county is home to 2 NHS Trusts which cover 3 acute hospitals in Worcester, Redditch, and Kidderminster. 33,000 jobs (12.5% total employment) and 970 businesses (3.7% total businesses) across the wider sector.
Construction	Strong growth in business numbers with the sector accounting 14% of total businesses (3,660) and 13,000 jobs (4.9% total employment). Large employers include Grafton Merchanting GB and Speller Metcalfe.
Advanced Manufacturing	Strong manufacturing heritage forms base of growth. There are 12,000 employed – 4.6% of employment, double the proportion nationally. Key employers include Worcester Bosch and Titan Europe.
Cyber Security & Defence	Worcestershire is home to one of the biggest cyber security clusters outside of London. 3% of employment in Worcestershire across the wider technology sector, growing by 17% since 2015.
Agri-Tech	One of Worcestershire’s fastest growing sectors. There are an estimated 15,000 people and 2,000 businesses working within Agri-Tech. Key employers include CP Foods and Prima Fruit.

Whilst not as prominent in the local economy, Worcestershire’s creative industries are emerging as a strength, with employment growing by 50% over the past year to 9,000 jobs

and a 6% increase in the number of businesses. Our green economy is also gaining momentum, recording annual growth of 9.8% between 2020/21 and 2023/24.

Despite easing inflation, high costs persist, and continued political and economic uncertainty has reduced business confidence.

The [Q1 2025 Quarterly Economic Survey \(QES\)](#) indicates that fewer businesses anticipate growth in turnover and profitability over the coming year, with taxation (44%) and inflation (38%) being the most commonly cited concerns amongst businesses. Additional pressures are faced by those trading internationally, particularly to the US, with a blanket 10% tariff placed on most goods entering the US from the UK.

Other challenges reported by business in the QES are summarised as follows:



One in four businesses reducing capital investments and 26% expecting profitability to decline



Nearly half of local employers attempted recruitment in the past quarter, and 43% reported skilled manual and technical roles as the hardest to fill



Mental health-related absenteeism is also on the rise, cited as the most common reason for absence by 26% of firms



Many small businesses lack long-term workforce plans, making it harder to anticipate future needs or work effectively with training providers

Insights from economic research and our engagement with business confirm the continued relevance and need for the objectives set out in the LSIP.

Employers continue to face persistent challenges in finding the right talent, driven by several key factors. Most notably, there is a significant shortage of manual and technical skills as reflected by 60% of 2024 Q4 QES respondents citing a lack of practical skills as a barrier to hiring. Common skills and behaviours are another key gap, with around 50% citing candidates lacking the behaviours to fit their organisation and there continues to be demand for transferable skills, particularly in relation to the adoption of new technologies and automation.

These findings validate the outcomes we are collectively working to achieve through our LSIP. At the heart of our vision is a collaborative, demand-led skills system in Worcestershire: one where employers take a proactive role in workforce planning and engage meaningfully with training providers to shape and inform provision. By fostering stronger employer-provider relationships, we aim to ensure that training is relevant, responsive and accessible, meeting both current and future business needs while supporting individuals to build the skills, knowledge, and behaviours required to thrive in the labour market. This integrated approach is essential to closing skills gaps, boosting productivity, and unlocking inclusive growth across the county.

What has been achieved so far?

Objective 1: Equipping workers with the technical skills & knowledge needed to alleviate employers' skills shortfalls and enable individuals to progress in their career

Engagement with employers as part of LSIP development and delivery has highlighted that there are few skills needs for which there is not already some form of provision. Rather, the complexity of vocational pathways and the volume of courses and providers can make it challenging for employers to identify suitable solutions to meet organisational needs, and difficult for individuals to navigate the training options that align with both their aspirations and labour market demands.

Bridging the gap between learners and provision

Over the last 12 months, our efforts under this objective have centred on developing a common language and shared tool which enables the key skills actors – employers, providers and learners – to more effectively articulate training needs and communicate provision. Working together with the WCC and the FE colleges, we are in the early stages of developing ‘**Think Skills Worcestershire**’: an AI-powered platform which analyses an individual’s skill and career history to provide an instant overview of the employability skills they already possess. Based on this analysis, it recommends suitable career paths and the most relevant courses - either to upskill within their current profession or to reskill for an entirely new career which is aligned to their existing skill profile. It will then list all the training provision available locally to move them towards their career aspirations.

Think Skills Worcestershire will be hosted by the ERB and WCC along with Kidderminster College, Heart of Worcestershire, and WCG Group Colleges. The platform will produce a detailed diagnostic report of individuals current skills set, aspirations, and training needs. Therefore, Think Skills Worcestershire will not only support individuals, both learners and those already in work, to be able to identify training opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge to meet employer demand for skills – a core LSIP outcome - but it will also serve as a valuable data source for providers, offering insights into training motivations and demand trends to inform curriculum content and design.

Objective 2: Developing the common skills and workplace behaviours that will promote employability and progression opportunities

As reflected in the strategic and economic context, employers have reiterated the need for the workforce to have a mix of manual and technical skills, matched with common skills and behaviours. As such, a substantial focus of LSIP delivery has been supporting job seekers and employees to have the right combination of technical and transferable skills, along with attitudes and behaviours aligned to the needs of the workplace and industry context by creating applicable workplace training programmes. This has been a key achievement of the LSIP, demonstrating how the ERB has directly created provision which addresses employer demands.

Making available specific training courses and programmes to support the development of common skills

As ERB, the Chamber secured UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) funding to deliver free training programmes designed to address skills gaps which employers have frequently cited

as gaps – digital and workforce readiness skills. The courses were initially designed for in-person delivery over two consecutive days, covering the following content:



Professional Skills for the Workplace: covering the fundamentals of communication, the importance of work ethic and time management, and building confidence and assertiveness by identifying personal strengths.



IT for the Workplace: covering computer navigation and basic functions, internet safety and security, social media and exploring Microsoft packages (Teams, Excel, Word and Outlook).

Feedback from beneficiaries and employers has praised the quality and effectiveness of the training, highlighting the following elements of good practice that have helped the ERB exceed UKSPF delivery targets and upskill 490 individuals across Worcestershire:

- **Responsive design:** despite positive feedback from beneficiaries, early take up of the UKSPF courses was slow with businesses citing releasing employees for two consecutive days of training as a barrier to engagement. In response, we condensed the programme to one day of learning which resulted in a sharp increase in demand.
- **Flexible delivery:** where there was sufficient interest, we partnered with employers to deliver training on-site, helping to remove barriers to participation. We also worked closely with employers to tailor session content to address specific skills needs within their workforce, ensuring the training was both relevant and impactful.
- **Quality of the trainer:** The trainer's ability to pitch content at a range of levels ensured that participants with differing levels of prior knowledge were all able to engage effectively. As a result, learners were able to take away practical skills applicable to both their current roles and future job searches.

Evaluation evidence suggests the sessions have effectively improved basic digital skills and addressed workplace readiness gaps, including communication, time management, and adaptability. Beneficiaries and employers reported the following benefits from their engagement:

- **Increased confidence:** beneficiaries have reported a significant boost in confidence through the acquisition of new skills. As one participant noted, the learning experience not only enhanced their abilities but also improved their professional credibility:

“Small things like knowing how to create an email signature, format word documents and effectively communicate with potential customers has made a huge difference to my confidence. I feel more credible as a small business because I can present myself professionally which in turn helps build trust with clients and partners. I couldn't recommend the courses more, they were excellent!” – Course beneficiary

- **Improved productivity:** employer feedback indicates that businesses have seen incremental productivity gains following employees' completion of the courses, particularly the IT for the Workplace training, which has equipped learners with Excel shortcuts and other skills that have reduced reliance on manual processes.
- **Supporting jobseekers into work:** we have worked closely with Seetec to deliver the Professional Skills for the Workplace training sessions to their clients. While not solely attributable to this training, our partners at Seetec report that many beneficiaries have

successfully applied their enhanced understanding of work-ready behaviours, along with improved written and verbal communication skills, to secure local employment opportunities.

Building on the success and strong demand for the programme, we are currently exploring how the Chamber can sustain and expand this provision in the future. As the case study below illustrates, our partners are actively delivering against this LSIP objective by helping young people understand the skills employers value and how their studies are equipping them with the knowledge and behaviours required.

Heart of Worcestershire (HoW) College: 5Cs initiative.

Created in collaboration with students, staff, local employers, and the Chamber of Commerce, the 5 Cs is a framework which aims to equip students with the core skills most valued by businesses: Critical thinking, Creativity, Communication, Collaboration and Company behaviours. The framework has been embedded into modules where activities or training content align with its themes. For example, when a student completes a presentation, this is identified as evidence of a communication skill. This is then highlighted to students as an example they can refer to in their CV and when speaking with potential employers

“The 5 Cs framework has been a big success. Feedback from employers has been positive, suggesting that potential employees are more easily able to communicate with confidence relevant examples of how they have applied the skills we’re looking for in both their studies and work experience.”

Supporting transitions between education and work and job moves

The ERB is actively supporting transitions for those moving from education into work through initiatives like the Young Professionals Forum, which offers students and early-career professionals valuable networking opportunities, direct insights into local employment, and exposure to real-world workplace expectations. This forum helps participants build confidence, develop networking skills, and better understand employer needs. Additionally, we have worked with Kidderminster College to directly deliver sessions that communicate employers’ skills requirements and available support, helping students better prepare for the job market.

Objective 3: Promoting a culture where business leaders recognise the strategic importance of proactively developing people & talent to the productivity of their businesses

A common message from businesses over the last two years is that new recruits are not always fulfilling employer expectations. An aim of the LSIP has been to shift the culture of the skills system, where employers recognise their role as both a consumer and producer of skills, and where employees understand and deploy the right behaviours to meet employer needs.

Establishing an awareness raising campaign to communicate the importance of training staff and workplace culture to business owners around the county

The LSIP committed to establishing a business culture campaign - a call to action focused on senior leaders and owners to stimulate demand amongst businesses to engage in the skills system. To ensure the campaign is grounded in evidence and uses messages which will resonate with employers, as ERB, we commissioned research into incentives and benefits of

skills investment to help articulate the case to employers. This found that workforce development is often reactive, driven by legal or regulatory requirements, with limited strategic planning due to business uncertainty and the complexity of the local skills landscape.

Upskill Your People

The findings of the incentives and benefits research have been used to develop the [Upskill Your People](#) campaign – a call to action which asks employers to commit to:

1. Proactively engaging staff members about their career aspirations and explore development requirements to support them to reach their potential;
2. Co-develop personal development plans with employees, linked to these aspirations as well as the skills needs of the business; and,
3. Openly communicate business and workforce plans with employees to demonstrate shared goals and potential rewards of achieving them.

A dedicated webpage with information and case studies has been launched and promoted via LSIP marketing, Chamber channels, and partner networks. We will maintain promotion of the Upskill Your People campaign to ensure consistent messaging and clear signposting to resources. Early feedback from employers and stakeholders has praised the strong focus on employer voice and real-life case studies, highlighting it as an example of good practice:

“It’s great to see local employers actively contributing to the campaign and being involved in its creation. It makes it feel more authentic, and it’s really engaging to watch case studies of employees speaking passionately about development opportunities.”

Engagement with local employers indicates a growing recognition of the importance of developing the workforce to growth and productivity. This is seen as a long-term cultural shift that will require time to embed and create impact within the local skills system. LSIP activity is helping to unify skills stakeholders and strengthen shared messages on people development:

“An important impact of the LSIP this year has been uniting the message on workforce development. While the Council and colleges have long championed this, the LSIP has sparked new momentum and brought these efforts under one targeted campaign.”

Objective 4: Developing the workforce planning capabilities of managers to enable businesses to identify their skills needs and providers to adapt training accordingly

We have continued referring employers to WCC’s [Strategic Workforce Planning Platform](#), launched in summer 2024, while sharing LSIP research and engagement findings with the Worcestershire Growth Hub and WCC Skills Team to support its implementation and ensure alignment to the Upskill Your People campaign.

The platform provides comprehensive guidance on the purpose and process of **Strategic Workforce Planning**, including step-by-step tools and techniques to create, monitor, and adjust workforce plans. It also offers insights on which plans best suit different business needs, supported by information and reports throughout the planning stages.

Feedback on the platform has been positive, with businesses appreciating the flexibility to engage iteratively in developing their people plans. Stakeholders anticipate that as the benefits of fostering a culture of talent development continue to be promoted, more businesses will engage with the platform’s content.

Objective 5: Encouraging a collaborative skills system in which provision can be tailored to the needs of employers

The underpinning driver of the LSIP is to build a more collaborative skills system - one in which employers, training providers, and stakeholders work in partnership to ensure that skills provision is better aligned with current and future labour market needs.

Prioritising employer voice

The LSIP Board, led by the ERB, has continued to play a vital role in overseeing delivery and serving as a strategic sounding board. Its strong business representation has ensured that the employer voice remains central to all activities, directing resources towards areas with the greatest impact for local organisations. Communication through the ERB produced LSIP newsletter has remained a key channel for sharing updates and opportunities, successfully engaging the wider local business community. Notably, **77% of businesses we have engaged in Phase 1 of our deep dives were non-members**, reflecting our success in reaching beyond existing Chamber and partner networks.

Strengthening collaboration mechanisms

In November 2023, Worcestershire colleges received £2.5 million in LSIF funding to deliver capital projects supporting technical education in priority sectors, aligned with LSIP aims. As shown in the case study below, the new facilities are strengthening the region's reputation for skills and talent, while acting as hubs for employer engagement. As the ERB, we have promoted events and resources at these sites and encouraged employer involvement, including hosting LSIP events to connect businesses with spaces designed to bridge the gap between providers and employers. A summary of LSIF projects and their alignment with LSIP priorities is provided in the Roadmap in Annex A.

Kidderminster College secured LSIF funding to create a **Leadership and Sustainability Hub within the new Green Technology Centre**, opened in September 2024. In addition to enabling the expansion of the College's construction and automotive technical provision, the Green Technology Centre has become a key meeting space for collaboration among local employers, providers, and broader skills stakeholders. For example, it has hosted the Sustainability Forum and, in partnership with the Chamber, has supported wider events that showcase local employment opportunities and training pathways:

"It is increasingly recognised as a valuable community asset and a strong addition to the College estate. This investment has positioned Worcestershire as a centre for construction skills, boosting the area's reputation and attractiveness as a hub of construction excellence."

Building stronger skills partnerships across the region

Alongside fostering a collaborative skills system within Worcestershire, we have also focused on engaging with other LSIPs to strengthen regional collaboration and share best practice. This includes presenting insights at a West Midlands regional LSIP event and participating in quarterly cross-LSIP sector groups linked to Worcestershire's cornerstone and opportunity sectors. These activities have improved knowledge exchange at both local and regional levels, supported greater alignment of employer engagement approaches, and helped identify opportunities for joint action across shared sector priorities which will be explored in future LSIP delivery.

What still needs to be achieved?

As noted in the 2024 progress report, the desired outcomes of the LSIP are long term and qualitative in nature. Our emphasis remains on the depth and quality of engagement and activity, rather than purely on headline quantitative metrics.

At the heart of our approach is a commitment to ensuring the LSIP remains responsive to evolving employer skills needs, while staying true to the original aims of the plan. Together with the oversight of the LSIP Board and in collaboration with our provider base, we have embraced a flexible approach and retained a focus on outcomes – ensuring our collective resource is responsive to new challenges whilst still delivering on the outcomes we've consistently heard are important for curating a local skills system which works for all. The following section looks at what still needs to be achieved, new activities identified to deliver against our outcomes and upcoming opportunities for employers to participate in.

Changes to LSIP activity

As reflected in the strategic and economic context section, over the past 12 months, businesses in Worcestershire have faced a persistently challenging economic operating environment, shaped by rising costs, ongoing inflationary pressures, recruitment difficulties, and uncertainty around future policy and investment. These conditions have placed significant strain on capacity, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises, forcing many to prioritise day-to-day resilience over longer-term planning as evidenced in a recent response to the quarterly LSIP employer pulse survey:

“Our priorities for the next 12 months are just to survive. The business is turning 20 in the summer, and I honestly can't think of a time where it's been such a challenging operating environment and for so long. We're a family run outfit, but we're proud to be a good employer, offering a competitive wage, development opportunities, interesting work, a good work life balance etc etc. This uncertainty is crippling. We can't be proactive in the market so we can't invest. Everyone has to be focused on bringing new work in. Training is not on anyone's radar. We can't afford the time away from the business and it's too risky to spend money on something for which there might not be a market for in six months' time.” – Employer Pulse Survey respondent

While there is a growing recognition of the importance of skills development, employer appetite and availability to engage with skills initiatives have fluctuated – a trend which our partners and providers have also witnessed. This variability highlights the need for a flexible, responsive approach to employer engagement that meets businesses where they are and aligns with their evolving priorities. As a result, the LSIP has paused or concluded certain elements of planned activity earlier than intended, recognising the limited capacity many businesses have to engage. Alongside progressing other workstreams, our focus is now on delivering targeted, tailored support that addresses immediate workforce challenges and provides practical value to employers in a demanding operating environment. The key changes to LSIP activity are highlighted below.

Pausing Industry Skills Councils

An early success of LSIP delivery noted in the 2024 progress report was the development and launch of four Industry Skills Councils: Manufacturing & Agri-Tech; Construction; Health and Social Care; and Business Services. These were designed to be county-wide in reach, bringing together industry leaders, education and training providers, and where possible, sector representative bodies to collectively reflect on strategic drivers of future skills needs whilst providing the opportunity for 'skills surgeries' to help address current issues. Early feedback from employers were that these were valuable forums for improving professional networks and awareness of the skills system, as well as an important mechanism for training providers to better understand employer needs. In some cases, the Industry Skills Councils led directly to adaptations in existing provision - such as a stronger focus on sustainability in construction curriculum - and fostered stronger employer-provider relationships, resulting in more hands-on work experience opportunities for students.

However, employer engagement with the Industry Skills Councils declined into the second year of the LSIP with businesses reporting a lack of time to participate in meetings on a regular basis. In response to this feedback, we trialled less frequent meetings but found they were less effective without the momentum of regular engagement. The LSIP Board therefore decided to discontinue the Industry Skills Councils and instead leverage existing groups, such as the [Chamber Forums](#), to maintain employer engagement and facilitate solution-focused skills discussions. Meanwhile, the ERB continues to participate in cross-LSIP sector groups, enabling the sharing of approaches to common skills shortages and responses to national policy within Skills England's priority sectors. We will maintain engagement with these groups, reporting insights to the LSIP Board and Chamber Forums to guide local workforce development and, where appropriate, direct businesses to national funding and training opportunities.

The Industry Skills Councils are viewed by LSIP Stakeholders as a successful pilot of a new collaborative approach, and we remain open to reinvigorating the Councils if there is sufficient business appetite or need, and it is aligned with the objectives of future delivery.

Repurposing Skills Innovation Labs

As a result of concluding the Industry Skills Councils early, the Skills Innovation Labs have not been progressed at this stage. These Labs were envisioned as collaborative spaces to test new approaches to curriculum design and delivery, aimed at addressing both immediate and future skills needs while generating insights to inform local training development. The decision not to proceed was also shaped by provider feedback, which highlighted that current funding and regulatory constraints could limit the feasibility of meaningful curriculum adaption. We have repurposed LSIP funding allocated to this workstream to the 'Think Skills Worcestershire' platform.

We will work with Worcestershire County Council and the three colleges to promote Think Skills Worcestershire across our networks to ensure maximum coverage of the new platform.

Looking ahead

Mobilising Think Skills Worcestershire

Following contract signing, the colleges have begun populating the platform with detailed information on available adult skills provision. This is an important exercise which will ensure

the robustness of the platform, but also serve to highlight any potential gaps in provision which may be addressed through future LSIP activity.

Once the platform development is complete (expected July 2025), we will organise a launch event aimed at raising awareness among key stakeholders, employers, and potential learners. The ERB will lead a coordinated programme of engagement activities designed to maximise the platform's reach and impact. This will include close collaboration with the Colleges and WCC to ensure that potential learners are not only made aware of the tool but also receive hands-on, guided sessions. These sessions will focus on navigating the platform effectively, understanding how to interpret the results, and using the insights to make informed decisions about skills development and career progression.

Promoting the Upskill Your People and strategic workforce planning platform

In collaboration with Worcestershire Growth Hub, we have developed a free Talent and Skills HR series for businesses. These sessions will guide employers through key elements of the Strategic Workforce Planning platform, helping participants understand its content and practical applications. The series will also promote the core messages of the Upskill Your People campaign, playing a vital role in achieving the outcomes of LSIP objectives 3 and 4. Sessions are available to [book online](#) and will run until the end of July 2025 and will cover:

- **Boost your Business - Practical Planning for Success:** this workshop will help businesses identify key growth priorities, align people with business goals, develop success measures, and build sustainable operations. Attendees will receive practical tools, actionable tips, and fresh insights to create tailored business plans that improve performance and retention.
- **Achieve Together - Creating High Performance Teams:** participants will explore the benefits of high-performing teams by examining leadership traits, team member roles, and organisational culture, structure, and processes. The session will conclude with an action planning exercise to embed learning.
- **Empower & Excel - Mentoring and Coaching for Team Success:** this session will cover the differences between coaching and mentoring, introduce effective techniques, explain how to select the right coaches or mentors, and provide strategies to overcome resistance to change and feedback.
- **Diverse Hiring – Building Stronger Teams through Inclusive Practices:** attendees will learn about diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, and how these concepts translate into practice. The workshop will guide participants through a seven-step inclusive hiring framework and methods to measure success.
- **Building Continuity - Workforce Development across the Board:** using tools and case studies, this session will demystify succession planning, showing how to protect your business, support your people, and plan for the future. Participants will draft a simple succession plan and learn to identify and grow internal talent using practical templates.
- **Welcome Onboard - Inclusive and Effective Onboarding:** this seminar will focus on the importance of effective onboarding for employee retention, engagement, and inclusion, providing practical tips to help new employees feel welcome and connected for the long term.

Promoting 1:1 engagement

In order to ensure employer voice remains at the heart of delivery, we are embarking on a targeted programme of one-to-one engagement with businesses over summer 2025. The ERB will coordinate the conversations, using semi-structured interview guides to ensure consistency in our research but with the flexibility for businesses to share broader challenges for which the Chamber and WCC can offer support. To date, we have 19 meetings booked in to be held over the course of June and July.

The primary focus of these discussions will be to gain an in-depth understanding of current workforce needs, skills gaps, and recruitment challenges faced by local businesses. We will explore how these needs are evolving in response to economic, technological, and policy changes, as well as uncover emerging trends that could impact workforce development in the near future. In addition, conversations will examine how businesses are adapting their training and development strategies and what barriers they encounter in upskilling and retaining talent.

This rich, frontline intelligence will directly inform the next stage of LSIP delivery which will be developed in Autumn 2025. It will enable us to tailor initiatives and resources more precisely to the realities of the local labour market and serve as a platform to connect businesses with existing support, training opportunities, and collaborative initiatives available through the Chamber, WCC, and wider LSIP partners. This proactive outreach will help further strengthen employer relationships and improve the relevance and impact of the skills system in Worcestershire.

Annex A: priorities and actions

Progress against the priorities and actions contained in the LSIP is shown in Table 1. A ★ has been used to denote new activity planned or underway since the 2024 progress report.

Table 3. Summary of LSIP progress

Priority	Activity	Partners involved	Timescales	Method of implementation and outcomes expected	Monitoring arrangements	Progress Status
Equipping workers with technical skills & knowledge needed to alleviate employers' skills shortfalls and enable individuals to progress in their career	ifATE Skills Mapping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ERB co-ordination of inputs. • Employers to complete survey on skills needs. • Training providers to complete training audit. • External consultant analysis of skills gaps. 	<p>Original timescales: January 2024 - March 2024</p> <p>Revised timescales: March 2024 – June 2024</p>	<p>Implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employers issued with a survey to report known skills gaps • Training providers issued with form to audit training provision against key skills • Analysis of findings according to the Deploy, Adapt, Import and Develop framework through Industry Skills Councils • Changes to training pilot through Skills Innovation Lab where relevant <p>Core outcome: Employers can identify training solutions that meet their needs, both in terms of content and delivery format.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome monitored as part of quarterly employer pulse survey. 	<p>Completed but at a reduced scale than anticipated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills mapping process more time intensive than initially anticipated, with business engagement has been low across ISCs and lags in providers completing training audits. • Findings from the returned forms were shared with providers to inform curriculum design. However, the LSIP Board agreed not to take the exercise further, as funding for Skills Innovation Labs was redirected to other workstreams in response to employer feedback.
	Think Skills Worcestershire ★	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSIP Funding (£15,000). • ERB co-ordination of inputs and promotion of platform. • Training provider promotion. 	September 2025 -	<p>Implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think Skills Worcestershire will be an AI platform which will enable individuals to explore career options to best suit current skillset and aspirations, and the training solutions available locally. • The Chamber and WCC will host 'neutral' versions of the platform, whilst each FE College will host a version which directs users to the specific offer of the respective training providers. • All stakeholders to promote platform to learners to increase uptake. <p>Core outcome: Individuals can identify training opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge to meet current employer demand for skills.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative feedback from users. • Outcome monitored as part of the quarterly employer pulse survey. 	<p>In progress and likely to complete as planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contracts signed by all relevant partners. Providers are uploading detail of their provision as part of the platform build stage. • Expected launch of the platform by September 2025 and will be promoted through all relevant stakeholder channels. • Take up of platform and trends in demand for provision to be monitored by ERB, WCC and Colleges to inform wider LSIP activity.
Developing the common skills and workplace behaviours that will promote employability and	Reinvigorate the Young Professionals Forum to support transitions between education and work and job moves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ERB to coordinate and deliver events. • FE colleges to promote events. • Employers to promote events. 	March 2024 –	<p>Implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restarting the Chambers existing Young Professionals Forum. • Quarterly meet ups to practice networking and presentations on key common skills. <p>Core outcome: Individuals understand the common skills and behaviours they need to deploy alongside technical skills and knowledge to enable progression.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative feedback from event attendees. 	<p>In progress and likely to complete as planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sessions run approximately every quarter, alternating between Herefordshire and Worcestershire. 24 attendees at January 2025 meeting; 30 young people booked onto June 2025 meeting. • To spread awareness of the forum and highlight key messages around the importance of common skills, the ERB has

Priority	Activity	Partners involved	Timescales	Method of implementation and outcomes expected	Monitoring arrangements	Progress Status
progression opportunities						delivered talks at Kidderminster College, engaging directly with young people. Discussions are underway with the College to make this a regular event, and to explore opportunities to offer similar talks and events in partnership with other education providers.
	Win and deliver UKSPF: An Introduction to Basic Digital Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ERB to submit bid and oversee programme delivery. • External teachers to deliver training courses. • ERB to collect individual and employer feedback. 	May 2024 – April 2025	<p>Implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UKSPF funding to deliver a two-day course targeted to employees living in Wychavon, Worcester City and Wyre Forest. Courses delivered every two weeks. • The course covers basic IT administration, internet safety and security, Microsoft packages and an introduction to social media. <p>Core outcome: Individuals understand the common skills and behaviours they need to deploy alongside technical skills and knowledge to enable progression; Employers no longer identify a lack of common skills and appropriate workplace behaviours as a problem amongst new recruits and education leavers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UKSPF claim forms. • Course feedback forms issued and reviewed by ERB. • Qualitative engagement with linked employers. • Employer outcome monitored as part of quarterly employer pulse survey. 	<p>Completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course duration reduced to 1 day to encourage business take up. • Exceeded delivery targets across both UKSPF projects, with 490 beneficiaries receiving support (target of 481). This rises to 522 beneficiaries when accounting for course completions by employees outside of target areas. • Evaluation demonstrates value of courses, with benefits including improved knowledge of IT systems, improved confidence and improve productivity. • ERB to explore continuing provision due to strong employer feedback and demand.
	Win and deliver UKSPF: An Introduction to Professional Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ERB to submit bid and oversee programme delivery. • External teachers to deliver training courses. • ERB to collect individual and employer feedback. 	May 2024 – April 2025	<p>Implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UKSPF funding to deliver a two-day course targeted to employees living in Wychavon, Worcester City and Wyre Forest. Courses delivered every two weeks. • The course covers assertiveness and confidence, work ethics and professionalism, interview and presentation skills, time management and communication skills. <p>Core outcome: Individuals understand the common skills and behaviours they need to deploy alongside technical skills and knowledge to enable progression; Employers no longer identify a lack of common skills and appropriate workplace behaviours as a problem amongst new recruits and education leavers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UKSPF claim forms. • Course feedback forms issued and reviewed by ERB. • Qualitative engagement with linked employers. • Outcomes monitored as part of quarterly employer pulse survey. 	<p>Completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course duration reduced to 1 day to encourage business take up. • Exceeded delivery targets across both UKSPF projects, with 490 beneficiaries receiving support (target of 481). This rises to 522 beneficiaries when accounting for course completions by employees outside of target areas. • Evaluation demonstrates value of courses, with benefits including improved confidence, improved communication skills and reduced presentational failings. • ERB to explore continuing provision due to strong employer feedback and demand.
	Work with the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) to develop an	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC to create toolkit. • ERB to support piloting through connections to businesses. 	January 2024 – March 2024	<p>Implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC to produce set of standards framed around inspiring young people for the next step, preparing young people to be career ready and collaborating for success. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC to monitor take up of self-assessment tool. • Outcomes monitored as part of quarterly employer pulse survey. 	<p>Complete:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer Standards and self-assessment tool available on CEC website.

Priority	Activity	Partners involved	Timescales	Method of implementation and outcomes expected	Monitoring arrangements	Progress Status
	Employer Standards pilot			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ERB recruitment of local businesses to pilot standards self-assessment tool. <p>Core outcome: Employers no longer identify a lack of common skills and appropriate workplace behaviours as a problem amongst new recruits and education leavers; Employers recognise the benefits to their business of developing the skills and knowledge of their workers.</p>		
Promoting a culture where business leaders recognise the strategic importance of proactively developing people & talent to the productivity of their businesses	Undertake research into the incentives and benefits of staff training and workforce planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ERB co-ordination. External consultants to undertake research. Employer engagement. ERB to share findings with relevant stakeholders. 	<p>Original timescales: January 2024 - March 2024</p> <p>Revised timescales: March 2024 – June 2024</p>	<p>Implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk-based review of existing research on incentives and benefits of investing in skills training, triangulated by engagement with local employers to gain local insights. Report of findings shared with LSIP stakeholders and used to inform Business Culture Campaign. <p>Core outcome: Employers recognise the benefits to their business of developing the skills and knowledge of their workers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of report outputs. Outcome monitored as part of quarterly employer pulse survey. 	<p>Complete:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk-based research and employer engagement completed, and summarised into a key findings report. Research findings have been incorporated into the business culture campaign.
	Develop and launch Business Culture Campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ERB to coordinate campaign. External comms agency to lead on campaign branding. Employers and training providers to engage with campaign events. 	<p>Original timescales: January 2024 - March 2024</p> <p>Revised timescales: March 2024 -</p>	<p>Implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of campaign branding and resources based on incentives and benefits research findings. Ongoing marketing and promotion of campaign resources and events. <p>Core outcome: Employers recognise the benefits to their business of developing the skills and knowledge of their workers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Campaign tracking analytics. Outcome monitored as part of quarterly employer pulse survey. 	<p>In progress but behind schedule:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upskill Your People campaign launched in November 2024 via social media channels. Continue to promote via complementary LSIP workstreams, such as the workforce planning platform promotion, and in partnership with the WCC Skills Team via the Inclusive Worcestershire work.
Developing the workforce planning capabilities of managers to enable businesses to identify their skills needs and providers to adapt training accordingly	Refer employers to Worcestershire Growth Hub (WGH) Workforce Planning Platform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worcestershire Growth Hub to develop workforce planning platform. ERB to make referrals to platform as part of broader LSIP engagement. 	December 2023 -	<p>Implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worcestershire Growth Hub development of tool, including hosting two workshops with employers to inform tool design as supported by the Chamber of Commerce. Platform launch. Referral of employers to the platform and any associated events/training provision. <p>Core outcome: Employers can articulate the different skills they need currently and how this is likely to change over the coming years.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of referrals made by the ERB. Outcome monitored as part of quarterly employer pulse survey. 	<p>In progress but behind schedule:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growing uptake and engagement with the platform. Feedback is positive – the platform is robust and helpful, and businesses like being able to dip in and out of resources when needed. A series of seminars to raise awareness of the platform and the Upskill Your People campaign are planned for Summer 2025.
	Share learnings from incentives and benefits research to help shape Worcester County Council's Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ERB to share findings of research. WCC delivery and oversight of CDF. 	<p>Original timescales: March 2024 – March 2025</p> <p>Revised timescales:</p>	<p>Implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharing LSIP insights through monthly meetings between ERB and WCC WCC delivery of CDF – provision of capital and revenue funding to support training providers to meet employer skills demands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WCC monitoring of CDF outcomes. 	<p>Complete:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research used to inform business culture campaign and shared with WCC and the LEP.

Priority	Activity	Partners involved	Timescales	Method of implementation and outcomes expected	Monitoring arrangements	Progress Status
	Development Fund (CDF)		September 2024 – July 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CDF funding to be used to support Skills Innovation Labs to support LSIP activity <p>Core outcome: Providers can develop curriculum content that will mean future workers have the relevant core skills.</p>		
Encouraging a collaborative skills system in which provision can be tailored to the needs of employers	LSIP mobilisation and promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ERB to create LSIP Board and co-ordinate meetings. LSIP Board members to attend quarterly meetings. 	September 2023 –	<p>Implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly meetings to review LSIP progress and seek stakeholder input into activities. Board members composed of employer, training providers and wider stakeholder representatives <p>Core outcome: Employers actively participate in the skills system and there are clear mechanisms through which employers and providers engage to shape and co-design training provision.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board member attendance at meetings. 	<p>In progress and likely to complete as planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly meetings launched in September 2023. 24 Board meetings to date. Continued strong engagement from Board members, including business representatives to ensure strong employer voice.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ERB to deliver 2 launch events. 	October 2023 -	<p>Implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two events to introduce the LSIP and promote broad employer engagement. Events held in the North and South of the county. A local MP attended the launch to encourage take up. <p>Core outcome: Employers actively participate in the skills system and there are clear mechanisms through which employers and providers engage to shape and co-design training provision.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance at launch events. Outcome monitored as part of quarterly employer pulse survey. 	<p>Complete:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two launch events held, which were well attended by employers and training providers. Qualitative evidence indicates events were a useful mechanism for supporting early connections between skills stakeholders.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ERB to produce LSIP Newsletter. 	December 2023 -	<p>Implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly Newsletter to communicate progress and upcoming opportunities linked to LSIP priorities and activities. <p>Core outcome: Employers actively participate in the skills system and there are clear mechanisms through which employers and providers engage to shape and co-design training provision.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of newsletter recipients. Total opens of newsletters. Outcome monitored as part of quarterly employer pulse survey. 	<p>In progress and likely to complete as planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newsletter remains an important mechanism for engaging businesses in LSIP activities and raising awareness of funding and training opportunities. The frequency of newsletters has been adapted to highlight key activities and will continue to be flexed to align with programme milestones and engagement needs.
	Establish Training Provider Steering Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ERB co-ordination and facilitation. Training provider attendance. 	September 2023 –	<p>Implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly meetings with training providers to share insights from employer engagement and explore skills challenges. <p>Core outcome: Providers can develop curriculum content that will mean future workers have the relevant core skills.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance at steering group meetings. 	<p>In progress and likely to complete as planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in meetings between January and March as providers concentrate on delivery of other LSIP workstreams. Providers continue to meet informally to share progress and intelligence.
	Establish Industry Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ERB co-ordination. External consultant facilitation. 	Original timescales:	<p>Implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Six-weekly sector specific meetings (alternating in person and online). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employer attendance at Industry Skills Council meetings. 	<p>Paused:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 13 Industry Council meetings held to date.

Priority	Activity	Partners involved	Timescales	Method of implementation and outcomes expected	Monitoring arrangements	Progress Status
	<p>Councils linked to key sectors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manufacturing; • Construction; • Health and Social Care; and, • Business Services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer attendance. • Training Provider attendance. • Sector bodies (CITB, Skills for Care and Make UK) attendance. 	<p>November – March 2025</p> <p>Revised timescales: January 2024 – March 2025</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rolling agenda to inform other LSIP activities (i.e. mapping and Skills Innovation Labs) and respond to ad-hoc skills challenges. <p>Core outcomes: Employers can identify training solutions that meet their needs, both in terms of content and delivery format; Employers actively participate in the skills system and there are clear mechanisms through which employers and providers engage to shape and co-design training provision; Providers can develop curriculum content that will mean future workers have the relevant core skills.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcomes monitored as part of quarterly employer pulse survey. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision at stop manufacturing, construction and health and social care ISCs agreed at September 2024 board meeting due to low business engagement. • Continue to use existing Chamber channels and sector body meetings (such as CITB and Skills for Care) to communicate LSIP opportunities. • ERB participation in cross LSIP sector groups to discuss nationwide skills needs. • Prioritising 1:1 conversations with businesses to ensure they are being connected to the right opportunities. • 77% of businesses engaged in Phase 1 of our deep dives were non-members, reflecting our success in reaching beyond existing Chamber and partner networks.
	<p>Support the submission of the LSIF and signpost to projects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kidderminster College to lead application submission and overall delivery of LSIF. • ERB share LSIP insights to inform LSIF submission. • ERB to feedback on LSIP progress to encourage project linkages. 	<p>September 2023 – March 2025</p>	<p>Implementation:</p> <p>LSIF application submitted in September 2023 linked to LSIP priorities, notably increased skills provision in key sectors (advanced manufacturing, agri-tech, construction, business services, and health & social care) as well as a demand for place-based collaboration with employers. As well as the development of sector-leading physical infrastructure, the projects will also have a legacy in creating innovative training resources that will support businesses to grow and invest in Worcestershire by meeting their skills needs. Projects include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kidderminster College to deliver Leadership and Sustainability Hub, which includes new construction and automotive workshops. • Heart of Worcestershire College to deliver Digital Leadership Hub. • Warwickshire College Group to deliver Agri-Food Sector Sustainability Hub. • Creation of the Colleges Worcestershire Resource Hub in response to LSIP priorities. <p>Core outcome: Employers actively participate in the skills system and there are clear mechanisms through which employers and providers engage to shape and co-design training provision.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kidderminster College responsible for LSIF monitoring and evaluation. • ERB and Kidderminster due to meet monthly to report on progress. 	<p>Completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worcestershire Colleges awarded £2.5m of LSIF funding in November 2023. Capital projects completed include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Leadership and Sustainability Hub as part of the Green Technology Centre at Kidderminster College ○ The Digital Leadership Hub at Heart of Worcestershire College ○ Warwickshire College Group’s Sustainable Agri-Tech Hub. • As ERB, we have informed LSIF proposals that respond to identified sectoral needs (e.g. digital, engineering, agri-tech, construction). We have acted as an intermediary between providers, employers and wider stakeholders by facilitating forums in new facilities and ensuring that LSIF projects are visible to employers and positioned as part of the broader LSIP implementation narrative.

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	Develop Skills Innovation Lab	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ERB co-ordination. • External consultant to support facilitation. • Providers to participate in pilots. • Employers to engage with relevant pilots. • WCC to provide funding to support pilots. 	<p>Original timescales: March 2024 – March 2025</p> <p>Revised timescales: September 2024 – March 2025</p>	<p>Implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review results of ifATE mapping and broader skills insight and prioritise skills needs to be addressed. • WCC and LSIP funding to pilot new training formats. • Employer and training provider co-design of solution, collective review of impacts and decision regarding longer term implementation. <p>Core outcome: Employers actively participate in the skills system and there are clear mechanisms through which employers and providers engage to shape and co-design training provision.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of adaptations made to provision. • Qualitative feedback. • Outcome monitored as part of quarterly employer pulse survey. 	<p>Not progressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low employer engagement with the IFATE skills mapping/Industry Skills Councils suggest limited business appetite for piloting skills adaptation/new provision. • Training providers note numerous barriers to piloting skills adaptation – notably funding and staff resource. • Decision at September LSIP Board not to progress this workstream. • Funding allocated to this workstream has been reassigned to the Think Skills Worcestershire platform.
	Engage in cross-LSIP skill groups ★	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ERB attendance at cross sector groups. • ERB sharing of key messages and opportunities to training partners and local businesses. 	September 2024 -	<p>Implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ERB project manager attendance at quarterly cross-LSIP sector groups. These include: Agriculture, Land Based & Food Production; Construction; Engineering & Manufacturing; Health Care & Social Care. • Learnings shared with LSIP Board and providers to inform future workforce planning discussions and training solutions for Skills England’s 10 priority sectors. <p>Core outcome: Providers can develop curriculum content that will mean future workers have the relevant core skills.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative feedback of learnings at quarterly LSIP Board meetings. 	<p>In progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ERB project manager has engaged in sector groups when available. Recent attendance at the Construction group enabled contributions to discussions on how to stimulate skills pipeline to meet government housing targets. • Common themes across sectors include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workforce development & retention: All sectors face challenges in recruiting and retaining skilled professionals, especially in FE teaching and technical training roles. There is a shared emphasis on dual professionalism, CPD, and mentorship to address tutor shortages Data & evidence gaps: Across sectors, participants highlighted the need for better regional and national data to inform skills planning, particularly in land-based industries and manufacturing. Construction sector key messages: urgent need to build capacity in the FE workforce through CPD, mentorship, and the integration of industry professionals. Health and Social Care key messages: Concerns over underrepresentation of social care in T Levels.

Priority	Activity	Partners involved	Timescales	Method of implementation and outcomes expected	Monitoring arrangements	Progress Status
	Targeted business engagement ★	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ERB to coordinate and deliver meetings with local businesses. • Partners to support research and share intelligence on employer skills needs • External consultant to support development of briefing note. • ERB to share key messages with relevant stakeholders. 	May 2025 – September 2025	<p>Implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ERB to schedule programme of 1:1 conversations with businesses across Worcestershire. This will include contacting recipients of the LSIP newsletter and Chamber of Commerce members and proactively reaching out to employers who are yet to engage with the LSIP • Conversations will be used to understand current employer challenges and skills needs, explore the perceived suitability of current training to address identified skills gaps and signpost employers to provision and wider resources such as WCC’s workforce planning toolkit • Findings from engagement will be captured and shared via a briefing paper which will be published on the LSIP webpage. These findings will inform future LSIP activities and contribute to strategic planning <p>Core outcome: Employers actively participate in the skills system and there are clear mechanisms through which employers and providers engage to shape and co-design training provision; Providers can develop curriculum content that will mean future workers have the relevant core skills.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of businesses engaged • Number of business interactions. • Referrals and signposting. • Production of briefing which summaries key messages and needs from employers. 	<p>In progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research tools for engagement designed • Scheduling of meetings and site visits of employment sites underway by ERB. 19 meetings included to date.