

Marches Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)

Progress Report June 2025 – Annex A



ANNEX A

PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS (THE ROADMAP) - PUTTING EMPLOYERS AT THE HEART OF THE SKILLS AGENDA

The 25 priorities arose from the results of extensive research with employers across the Marches focusing on four key employment sectors. Manufacturing & Engineering including Food & Drink Manufacture, Construction including Green (Environmental) Construction Skills, Health & Social Care and Professional Services. Over 600 employer interviews were conducted by the Marches LSIP Team for report, the results were analysed, alongside extensive research of existing skills and employment data, while liaising with a wide array of key stakeholders to ensure a clear picture was achieved. Though key skills shortages, and therefore training needs, were discovered, the research highlighted a collection of other attributes that employers found difficult to find when recruiting, especially with new entrants to the world of work, as well as other activities or actions the employers felt would aid recruitment, decrease skills shortages and increase productivity. These priorities, some harder to define than others, showed a need to not only address specific job role skills, but a much broader spectrum of needs, and many are common across all sectors, not just the four, and need to be woven into many elements to make improvements. Though some priorities have already been met very successfully, much still needs to be done to ensure further milestones are reached and actions are embedded to give longevity and value. The Marches LSIP directly and indirectly caused many positive actions to happen and continues to do so. Following pages highlight the activities, achievements and ongoing actions.



TERMINOLOGY KEY

2021 Census	National Population Census for England & Wales	LA	Local Authority
BID	Business Improvement District	LSIF	Local Skills Improvement Fund
C&Eco	Careers & Enterprise Company	LSIP	Local Skills Improvement Plan
DfE	Department for Education (UK Government)	Marches	Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin
DWP	Department for Works & Pensions	MEP	Marches Education Partnership
ERB	Employer Representative Body (Shropshire Chamber)	MLSIP	Marches Local Skills Improvement Plan
FE	Further Education	MSPN	Marches Skills Provider Network
HCA	Hereford College of Arts	NMITE	New Model Institute for Technology and Engineering
HE	Higher Education	NOMIS	Part of the Office for National Statistics
HLNSC	Hereford, Ludlow and North Shropshire College	SAP	Skills Advisory Panel
HTQ	Higher Technical Qualifications	SCG	Shrewsbury Colleges Group
HWGTA	Hereford & Worcester Group Training Association	SLT	Senior Leadership Team
ITP	Independent Training Provider	T level	Technical Levels
ICS	Integrated Care System	UKSPF	UK Shared Prosperity Fund

The Marches Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) focused on four main sectors.



Selected as they are high employment sectors for the Marches Area – Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin

- ❖ Manufacturing & Engineering including Food & Drink
 - ❖ Construction including Green and Retrofit
 - ❖ Health & Social Care
 - ❖ Professional Services

To date over 850 companies, primarily but not exclusive, from the four sectors above, have been interviewed to understand their skills needs. The [Marches LSIP 2023 Report](#) highlighted the top three/four skills shortages for each of the four sectors, as well as a further 13 cross sector soft and work skills that employers require. Technology and Government plans have moved on since 2023 and this has been reflected in certain choices made for additional courses, such as Air Source Heat Pump installation, however still within those key sectors but crucial to keep pace with the green advancements.

The Key Roles Required as shown in the Marches LSIP Report 2023.

The list is not exclusive but reflects the highest needs reported by employers in 2023.

Manufacturing & Engineering including Food & Drink – Basic Factory and Production Skills / Fabrication & Welding / Manufacturing Maintenance Engineers

Construction including Green and Retrofit – Green Construction Skills (solar, EV, heat pumps etc) / On-Site Construction Supervisors / Carpentry (Factory/Site) / Plumbing

Health & Social Care – Entry Level Care Staff / Cleaning and Hygiene Technicians / Health Care Assistants

Professional Services – Administration / In-House IT Technical Support / Customer Service

These skills shortages are being addressed by various stakeholders. Below is a snapshot of some of those involved in supporting the skills agenda.

The Marches Education Partnership consisting of three Further Education Colleges and three Private Training providers, have created over 66 new courses to date, to meet the needs, both of those above, and also others who expressed interest during the research into construction and manufacturing/engineering.

The Local Authorities through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund have concentrated on supporting the upskilling of current staff and bringing those not in employment, back into employment. Covering areas such as Leadership & Management and Standard Office Skills, delivered at varying levels from entrant to university.

Specialist Sector organisations such as Skills for Care, using a revised funding mechanism, are providing a wide range of courses to the Health & Social Care Sector, alongside our colleges who all work closely with the NHS and the Integrated Care System (ICS).

Construction is also supported by the Construction Industry Training Board, our colleges and private providers to ensure training meets need.

Work Ready or Soft Skills were mentioned regularly during the research, by all sectors and at all qualification attainment levels. A very big task to turn this around as some is societal. However, much work has and is still being done to enhance those vital skills, both by those delivering full-time training, apprenticeships and T'levels (Technical Levels) etc., as well as those supporting employers and individuals to upskill or retrain. For those priorities not directly related to a specific job role, there has also been a great deal of work, which is ongoing.

Key areas that were felt to be lacking in new entrants to the workplace were:

- ❖ Work readiness including understanding the realities of the workplace prior to employment.
- ❖ Business etiquette and colleague etiquette.
- ❖ Improved communication skills.
- ❖ Improved basic IT applications skills.

Not all the 13 elements mentioned by employers related to soft or work skills. These are other elements they felt needed addressing.

- ❖ Careers advice that is equal for all sectors and does not promote university as the main route. Advice that helps showcase the world of work.
- ❖ Language barriers, the difficulties employers have understanding public sector language, especially education language.
- ❖ Difficulty understanding the local training offer, how to access and how to understand funding.
- ❖ Courses need to be more flexible, short, modular, to reduce learning duplication and ensure least time lost for the employer.

In addition, there were priorities that require collaboration to achieve:

- ❖ Engaging employers to support training providers to create the right course, help the teaching staff stay current and support careers staff to have the insights they need to deliver first rate careers advice to the future workforce.
- ❖ Tackling the rural nature of much of the Marches, using innovative solutions to reach those more isolated or having poor IT infrastructure.
- ❖ United working, ensuring that all stakeholders work in unison to ensure the best solutions, reduce duplication and engage the broadest range of businesses, cohorts such as the unemployed, to ensure skills gaps can be filled.
- ❖ Support better retention of young people in the Marches.

The Detail

Over the next pages you will find the list of the 25 priorities, each numbered, and then following that, tables - each table explains which priority or priorities it relates to and what the skills topic is.



From this you can then read across to understand a snapshot of what actions or activities have taken place to address the priority, who was involved, the timescales, methodology, monitoring and progress. These tables can only highlight some of the key work being done to meet the 25 priorities. There are many other activities running alongside that support the work and the findings of the Marches LSIP.

The key highlights must be the enhanced collaborative working to strengthen training, reduce duplication and simplify activities. The creation of multiple new courses, in formats that suit employers for skills they clearly need, has been productive and very well received.

The Marches LSIP work continues, working to support employers to obtain the skills they need, for now or into the future. To continue to collaborate, share and involve all those, including employers who can benefit from working as one to improve or create the skills our businesses need to flourish.

The Priorities List – Sector Skills

1	Skills	Manufacture & Engineering	Basic Manufacturing Skills
2	Skills	Manufacture & Engineering	Fabrication and Welding Level 3
3	Skills	Manufacture & Engineering	Manufacturing Maintenance Engineers
4	Skills	Construction	Plumbers
5	Skills	Construction	On-site Construction Supervisors
6	Skills	Construction	Carpentry
7	Skills	Health & Social Care	Entry Level Social Care
8	Skills	Health & Social Care	Health Care Cleaning and Hygiene Technicians
9	Skills	Health & Social Care	Health Care Assistants
10	Skills	Professional Services	Administration
11	Skills	Professional Services	In-House IT Support
12	Skills	Professional Services	Customer Service



The Priorities List – Other Elements

13	Other	Careers Advice	Promote all employment sectors fairly and routes to employment. Highlight local opportunities in sectors with high skills needs.
14	Other	Language Bridge	Difference in language / culture between public & private sectors.
15	Other	Employer Engagement	Encourage employers engagement in shaping the skills agenda.
16	Other	Geographical Expanse	Delivering training in a large geography.
17	Other	Terminology & Explanations	Employer understanding of qualifications, funding, provider limitations, and course flexibility.
18	Other	Spreading the Word	Helping employers to understand local training offer.
19	Other	Inward Investment & Retention	Retaining the local workforce. Highlighting opportunities.
20	Other	Training Confusion	Reduce and simplify the number of messages to employers.
21	Other	United Working	Councils, 3rd sector and providers working to provide training in rural areas. Using UKSPF funding to upskill or retain. Collaborative working arrangements to add value.
22	Other	Specialist Hard to Reach	Programmes to support more into work.
23	Other	Digital Age Issues	Rural tech issues. Access to tech. Emerging technologies.
24	Other	Flexibility	Modular courses or flexible learning.
25	Other	Employer Knowledge Share	Using employer panels to support training providers.





Manufacturing & Engineering including Food & Drink Manufacture



Priority	Action / Activity / Milestone	Partners involved	Timescales	Method of implementation and outcomes expected	Monitoring arrangements	Progress Status
<p>Priorities Main 1-3 Additional 15, 16, 18, 19, 21, 23, 24, 25.</p> <p>Manufacturing & Engineering including Food & Drink Manufacture.</p> <p>Enhancing skills to fill skill shortages, facilitate automation and to drive productivity.</p> <p>Skills England Priority Sector Advanced Manufacturing.</p> <p>Further detail available in the annex documents.</p>	<p>To add or enhance courses, facilities and equipment to enable automation and other process skills to be taught.</p> <p>Upskilling staff is crucial to keep pace with technology especially automation, to retain current skilled staff and to maintain or increase productivity levels.</p> <p>Marches Education Partnership courses running, completions already achieved and strong positive levels of employer feedback received.</p> <p>New T levels (Technical Levels) / HTQ's Higher Technical Qualifications) have been introduced by the colleges in this broad subject area.</p>	<p>Local Skills Improvement Fund Project 1 led by Telford College partnering two Colleges and three Private Training Providers.</p> <p>The multi sited / partner approach is enabling delivery right across the Marches area.</p> <p>Colleges & Private Training Providers, Employer led Skills Advisory Panels & LSIP Team</p>	<p>Funds allocated October 2023, courses commenced 2024 and 2025. Initial project concludes summer 2025.</p> <p>Courses continue and through using other funding streams, and maximising the use of the facilities, it is benefitting a wide array of students.</p> <p>Modular, short and bespoke courses facilitated.</p>	<p>The Marches Education Partnership used employer intelligence to ensure the correct equipment was purchased, and the course content met the needs of employers.</p> <p>Facilities and courses came on stream, as premises were completed, course planning completed, and teaching staff recruited during 2024/5.</p> <p>Extensive marketing activities to promote.</p>	<p>The c Operational Development Group meets monthly, strategic board bi-monthly. The Marketing Group met monthly until all facilities open, and the Marches Education Partnership promotional activities are complete and website live.</p> <p>The LSIP Team sit on all boards and attend all meetings, as well as attending all the Employer led Skills Advisory Panels to observe the high levels of employer interaction.</p>	<p>7 new or refurbish facilities in use.</p> <p>33 new courses started (more to follow).</p> <p>Forecast in this academic year alone that 742 students from a wide range of courses will have accessed and benefitted from the new equipment and facilities.</p>



Construction



Priority	Action / Activity / Milestone	Partners involved	Timescales	Method of implementation and outcomes expected	Monitoring arrangements	Progress Status
<p>Priorities Main 4-6 Additional 15, 16, 18, 19, 21, 23, 24, 25.</p> <p>Construction</p> <p>Enhancing skills to meet the needs of modern methods of construction and retrofit.</p> <p>Skills England Priority Sector Construction.</p> <p>Further detail available in the annex documents.</p>	<p>To add or enhance courses, facilities and equipment to enable construction green skills to be taught.</p> <p>Upskilling staff such as plumbers and electricians to be able to fit the new technology as well as ensuring current students have access to training in these newer technologies as well as traditional construction skills.</p> <p>Courses running, further courses starting. All facilities now open. Providing training in new technologies previously unavailable in area, risking skills falling behind or reducing staff retention.</p> <p>New T levels (Technical Levels)/ HTQ's (Higher Technical Qualifications) have been introduced by the Colleges in this subject area.</p>	<p>Local Skills Improvement Fund Project 2 led by Hereford Ludlow and North Shropshire College partnering with</p> <p>two Further Education Colleges</p> <p>The multi sited / partner approach is enabling delivery right across the Marches area.</p> <p>Colleges & Private Training Providers, Employer led Skills Advisory Panels & LSIP Team</p>	<p>Funds allocated October 2023, courses commenced 2024 and 2025. Initial project concludes summer 2025.</p> <p>Courses continue, and using other funding with the new facilities, it is benefitting wide array of students.</p> <p>Modular, short and bespoke courses facilitated.</p>	<p>The Marches Education Partnership used employer intelligence to ensure correct equipment was purchased, and the course content is meeting the needs of the employers.</p> <p>Facilities and courses came on stream, as premises were completed, course planning completed, and teaching staff recruited during 2024/5.</p> <p>Extensive marketing activities to promote.</p>	<p>The Local Skills Improvement Fund operational development group meets monthly, strategic board bi-monthly. The marketing group met monthly until all facilities open, and the Marches Education Partnership promotional activities complete and website live.</p> <p>The Marches LSIP Team sit on all boards and attend all meetings, as well as attending all the Skills Advisory Panels to observe the high levels of employer interaction..</p>	<p>7 new or refurbish facilities in use. Including a dedicated Low Carbon Technology Training Centre in Herefordshire.</p> <p>33 new courses started (more to follow).</p> <p>Forecast in this academic year alone that 739 students from a wide range of courses will have accessed and benefitted from the new equipment and facilities.</p>



Health & Social Care



Priority	Action / Activity / Milestone	Partners involved	Timescales	Method of implementation and outcomes expected	Monitoring arrangements	Progress Status
<p>Priorities Main 7-9 Additional 13, 16, 19, 21, 22, 24, 25.</p> <p>Health & Social Care</p> <p>Large employment sector. Wide range of skills needed. Offers good entry level opportunities.</p> <p>Skills England Priority Sector Health & Social Care.</p> <p>Further detail available in the annex documents.</p>	<p>The large Further Education Colleges have all increased provision in this area.</p> <p>Close co-operation between colleges and Local Authorities with the two Independent Care Strategy Boards causing enhanced reactions to training needs.</p> <p>Telford College to work directly with Keele University to provide nursing programmes. Vital to the Marches after Chester University withdrew from the area.</p> <p>Initiative Example: DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks funded by colleges to enable students study at entry level social care.</p> <p>New T levels (Technical Levels) / HTQ's(Higher Technical Qualifications) have been introduced by the colleges for Health & Social Care</p>	<p>Colleges</p> <p>Local Authorities</p> <p>Regional Independent Care Strategy Boards Skills for Care Partners in Care</p> <p>Private Training Providers (UK Shared Prosperity Fund funded)</p> <p>Department for Works & Pensions (DWP) /Job Centres (connect to work and other programmes)</p> <p>Employer led Skills Advisory Panels</p> <p>Councils Skills Boards</p> <p>Supported by Marches LSIP Team</p>	<p>On-going. The Colleges have worked for many years with the NHS (National Health Service), but the Independent Care Strategy Boards have brought a wider collective perspective allowing an expansion in provision to meet needs.</p> <p>Additional courses start September 2025.</p>	<p>New nursing courses - Telford. Historic data shows nurses trained in the Marches are more likely to remain, critical for retention.</p> <p>UK Shared Prosperity Fund funded funding being used to provide specialist short courses to Social Care staff. Example Hoople Training – Herefordshire.</p> <p>T levels (Technical Levels) and HTQ's (Higher Technical Qualifications) introduced at the Further Education Colleges in Health and Social Care, extending the range of training now available.</p> <p>Courses across the area range from Level 1 (entry) to Higher Education giving a wide variety of career options for new entrants or those wanting career advancement.</p> <p>More online courses being offered by the Colleges increase training in rural areas and reduce staff having to be released. Topics such as Mental Health. Short and long courses available.</p> <p>New use of the medical mobile classroom to provide 'live' career advice to school children.</p>	<p>Reporting to the LSIP comes via the Colleges. Regular meetings with relevant staff to discuss new courses, actions and initiatives. LSIP latest research or anecdotal evidence shared.</p> <p>Other intelligence gathering is via the Marches LSIP Team working with sector specialist organisations such as Skills for Care. Informing stakeholder discussion and actions, to avoid duplication.</p>	<p>Though some delivery has been completed this is an ongoing set of courses, actions and outcomes.</p> <p>Careful monitoring of the two areas of Health and Social Care – NHS and non-NHS – (National Health Service) are allowing for a wider variety and methods of education to be offered to increase local skills.</p> <p>Connect to Work scheme plans being created by Councils in conjunction with Department for Work and Pensions. This work supports the need for entry level social care staff as highlighted in the LSIP priorities. LSIP working with the lead Council for the Marches, Shropshire Council on the plans creation.</p>



Professional Services



Hereford Cyber Centre



Telford Station Quarter



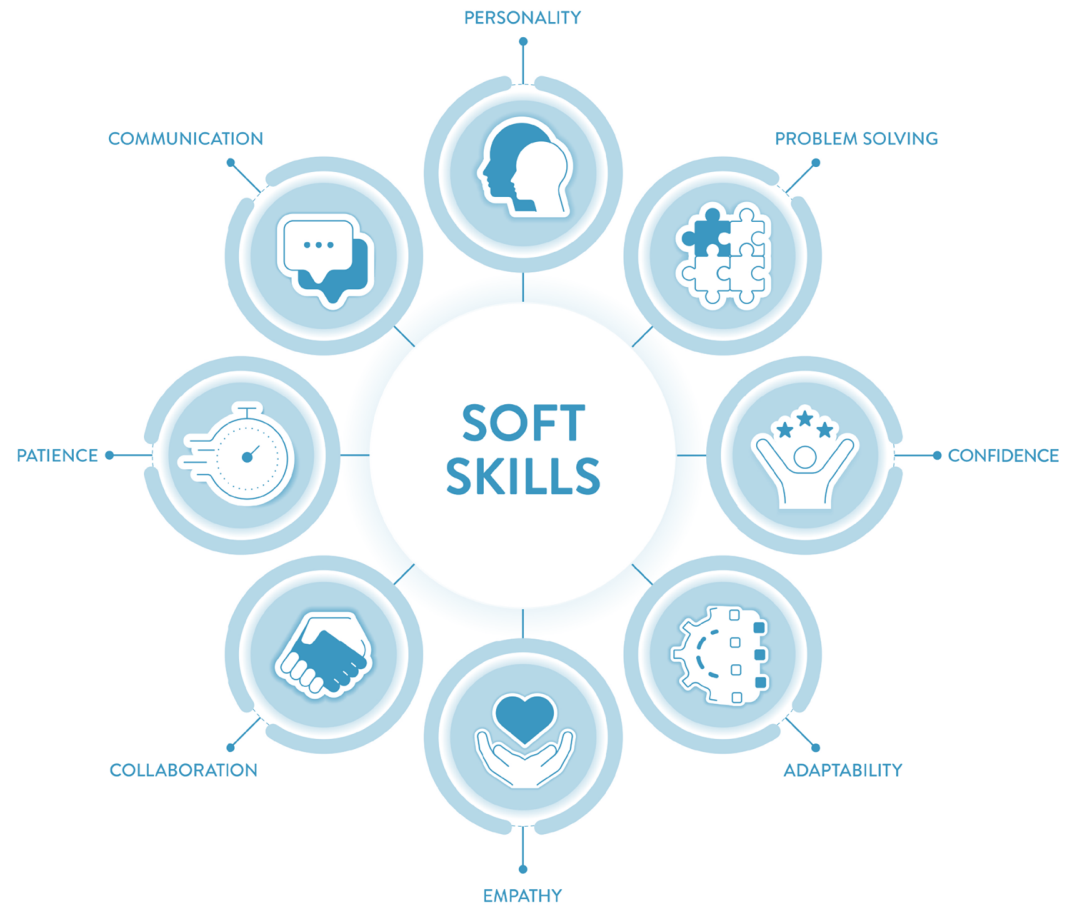
Shrewsbury Business Park

Priority	Action / Activity / Milestone	Partners Involved	Timescales	Method of implementation and outcomes expected	Monitoring arrangements	Progress Status
<p>Priorities Main 10-12 Additional 15, 16, 18, 19, 21, 24.</p> <p>Professional Services</p> <p>Many of our professional services (in the narrow sense) are Law, Accountancy and Insurance, requiring some specialist qualifications which cannot always be met locally due to the cohort sizes. We therefore worked with a broader brief taking in private sector companies in areas such as Consultancy, Marketing and Administrative Services.</p> <p>Skills England Priority Sector Professional & Business Services.</p> <p>Further detail available in the annex documents.</p>	<p>Increased range of courses provided by colleges to encourage more interest in Professional Services, especially administration and customer service.</p> <p>T levels (Technical Levels) and HTQ's (Higher Technical Qualifications) have been introduced by the colleges.</p> <p>UK Shared Prosperity Fund funded Example: Telford & Wrekin Council funded (staff of local businesses) employed individuals to train in: 15 completed Leadership & Management training 20 completed Project Management Training Courses run by Harper Adams University.</p>	<p>Colleges</p> <p>Harper Adams University</p> <p>Local Authorities using UK Shared Prosperity Fund funding</p> <p>Colleges Skills Advisory Panels</p> <p>Private Training Providers</p> <p>Supported by Marches LSIP Team</p>	<p>On-going.</p> <p>New college courses commencing in 2025.</p> <p>Wider range of short courses being introduced through distance learning.</p> <p>New T levels (Technical Levels/ HTQ's Higher Technical Qualifications have been introduced by the colleges in these subject areas.</p>	<p>Via Colleges - New Professional and Business courses and broader qualification levels are being offered to meet the requirement for vocational style training, as well as short, modular and online courses.</p> <p>Range of levels offered: Extended Certificate (after GCSEs) A'levels T level foundation (Preparing for a T Level course) T levels(2 yr vocational course, alternative to A'levels) HNC (1st Yr university level) HND (2nd Yr university level) HE Level 5 (2nd Yr university level) HTQ's Levels 4 & 5 (1st & 2nd Yr university level)</p> <p>The pilot Modular Acceleration Courses (MAP) have proved very successful. A need highlighted in the LSIP.</p>	<p>Reporting to the LSIP comes via the colleges. Regular meetings with relevant staff to be updated on new courses, actions and initiatives. For LSIP latest research or anecdotal evidence to be discussed.</p> <p>Other monitoring and intelligence gathering is through continuous LSIP employer engagement. Informing discussion and actions to avoid duplication.</p>	<p>UK Shared Prosperity Fund Funding.</p> <p>Each local Authority was charged with allocating UK Shared Prosperity Fund funds to suit their local needs.</p> <p>Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin funded numerous upskilling courses, including Leadership & Management and Project Management.</p> <p>The fund has been extended so courses continue.</p> <p>As offered for the first time, the results from 2024/2025 courses will help shape the addition of other professional services courses.</p>

SOFT SKILLS, WORK READY SKILLS AND WAYS OF WORKING

The next sections cover the following topics.

- ❖ CAREERS ADVICE
- ❖ LANGUAGE BRIDGE
- ❖ UNITED WORKING
- ❖ DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY
- ❖ FLEXIBLE WORKING



Other – information on Priorities 13-25 in addition to the information mentioned in the previous pages.

Priority	Action / Activity / Milestone	Partners involved	Timescales	Method of implementation and outcomes expected	Monitoring arrangements	Progress Status
<p>Priorities Main 13 Additional 18, 19, 25.</p> <p>Careers Advice Marches Careers Advice Service is run through the Careers & Enterprise Company (C&Eco.) Local Team.</p> <p>Marches C&Eco support schools and colleges to deliver careers advice, providing tools, business interactions and more. Working with volunteers from the business world.</p>	<p>Careers Advice.</p> <p>Careers & Enterprise Company– Supporting good careers advice. Encouraging employers involvement either through work experience, working with a single institution or multiple giving industry insights etc.</p> <p>LSIP – highlighted the opportunity to engage with the Marches Careers & Enterprise Company Team to over 100 businesses in 2025 (highlighted along with other activity opportunities for businesses, outside of Career & Enterprise Company, that related to skills) This is to support their current focus.</p>	<p>Shropshire Council lead for the Marches. Working alongside Herefordshire Council and Telford & Wrekin Council to deliver the skills contract via the Careers & Enterprise Company (C&Eco).</p> <p>Local Authorities Growth Hubs (promoting the Marches C&Eco).</p> <p>LSIP role - raise employer awareness of the opportunity to engage with the Careers & Enterprise Company</p>	<p>On-going.</p> <p>Await the 2025 Careers & Enterprise Company programme update report via Shropshire Council to understand progress.</p>	<p>By engagement with schools, colleges and specialist providers to support staff to deliver careers education. The Careers & Enterprise Company provides training, resources and tools and opportunities to network to career advice givers, to aid the value of the careers advice they deliver.</p> <p>LSIP support - All Marches LSIP reports, including Employer Voice, are shared with the Local Authorities and their Growth Hubs, as well as being available publicly online to aid understanding of local business views, needs and shortages.</p>	<p>Progress is measured by KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) set by the Careers & Enterprise Companies Lead Team in London and monitored by Shropshire Council on behalf of all three Local Authorities across the Marches.</p>	<p>This is an ongoing contract.</p> <p>The Careers & Enterprise Company focus for 2024 for the Marches team was to grow “Employer willingness to offer opportunity.” Results not yet available.</p> <p>New for 2024/2025 Marches Careers & Enterprise Company Team was Teacher Encounters, where employers host a group of teachers to understand better a business sector. Employers willing but hard to have teachers released to attend reducing the impact.</p> <p>We await the given theme for 2025/6.</p>

Other – information on Priorities 13-25 in addition to the information mentioned in the previous pages.

Priority	Action / Activity / Milestone	Partners involved	Timescales	Method of implementation and outcomes expected	Monitoring arrangements	Progress Status
<p>Priorities Main 14 Additional 15, 17, 18, 20, 25.</p> <p>Language Bridge Due to the Marches LSIP extensive research and employer interviews it became very clear that private sector employers struggle to understand the local training offer or course terminology. Clear in the main they do not have a good grasp of what can be offered realistically, and what cannot, or knowledge of funding opportunities. Many are also unaware of where to access business support, support that could easily signpost them to training or funding.</p> <p>Clear also from the research that many employers take a 'just in time' approach to finding training, often meaning that their expectations cannot always be met due to timing.</p>	<p>Direct employer interviews carried out; over 850 now completed clearly showing a break in employers understanding of the culture and language of the public sector, especially educational terminology. Causing issues and misinformation for both parties, hampering progress. Rurality adds to the issue.</p> <p>Data shared with all stakeholders using Employer Voice reports.</p>	<p>Marches LSIP Team</p> <p>Colleges</p> <p>Private Training Providers</p> <p>Local Authorities</p>	<p>On-going interviews as this has, and still proves, a vital information source for all stakeholders, especially with the changes in the global economy, post Covid working practices etc. Vital to continue to understand skill shortages locally and their causes and fluctuations.</p> <p>This is quite a deep-seated issue and will take time and willingness to overcome. Actions already being taken and headway being made.</p> <p>This will require a long-term drive by all partners to help ensure that the realities are known, whilst using language that can be deciphered by employers.</p> <p>Employers are already supportive and engaging in the LSIP, this is being harnessed to capture employer driven examples, as this is a messaging style that resonates most with employers.</p>	<p>The Marches LSIP Team research provides the interview results to stakeholders to support their drive to improve messaging to employers.</p> <p>The Marches LSIP Team have created and launched a simplified portal to help businesses find local training providers.</p> <p>Promotion of this and other supportive employer focused tools are being promoted at all employer facing events and will continue to do so.</p> <p>Best practice from Private Training Providers adding value.</p>	<p>Continued Employer Voice interviews will reveal if employers are starting to find the messaging from stakeholders more appropriate.</p> <p>Marches LSIP Team's regular meetings with the Colleges and Local Authorities are helping to explain the issue and offer ideas for solutions.</p>	<p>Ongoing promotion of the portal is vital to start to filter the message out to businesses.</p> <p>Plans are being formed by the Marches LSIP Team to create a more simplistic guide not only to understand that there is a large training provision out there, but to tie this in with other elements such as joining a Skills Advisory Panel, supporting careers advice or where to head for business support. 2025/6.</p> <p>Colleges are working hard to split out the information directed at employers, over students, as in the past this has not always been clear.</p>

Other – information on Priorities 13-25 in addition to the information mentioned in the previous pages.

Priority	Action / Activity / Milestone	Partners involved	Timescales	Method of implementation and outcomes expected	Monitoring arrangements	Progress Status
<p>Priorities Main 21 Additional 16, 22, 23.</p> <p>United Working Collaboration is not only effective and cost saving, as shown in the MEP collaboration. Collaborations bring great value to the area by supporting many individuals into work, look at broader career paths or to upskill.</p> <p>The Marches has a very expansive geography, often with low population density or areas of deprivation as highlighted in the Marches LSIP. This requires a multi stakeholder approach to overcome the obstacles.</p> <p>Multiple ways have been, and are being found, to address this. With new programmes such as Connect to Work starting.</p>	<p>UK Shared Prosperity Fund has brought training and upskilling to many, right across the region in many different forms. The LSIP Priorities were used in conjunction with sub area priorities to allocate the funds or initiate activities accordingly to upskill, support more to access employment, or embrace wider career paths.</p> <p>Upskilling was highlighted as key by many employers creating a workforce fit for the changes in work practices and modern technology. Work readiness was also something employers felt could be improved. The work of our Councils and their stakeholder partners and businesses is helping to address these issues.</p>	<p>Colleges Private Training Providers Universities</p> <p>Local Authorities</p> <p>Local Authority Skills Boards</p> <p>Third Sector</p> <p>Department for Works & Pensions</p> <p>Businesses</p> <p>Supported by the Marches LSIP Team</p>	<p>2024 and ongoing.</p> <p>Current UK Shared Prosperity Fund funding has been extended till Autumn 2025.</p> <p>Further detailed updates awaited after the Government's Spending Review.</p> <p>Other funding pots are also being utilised to extend the work, as is volunteering and business (Corporate Social Responsibility) support.</p>	<p>Each Council uses locally appropriate methods to upskill, broaden career paths and to support the economically inactive into work or training. Examples:</p> <p>Telford & Wrekin - Upskilling courses. Basic digital skills. New digital skills hub opens.</p> <p>Shropshire Council – Upskilling courses. Basic Digital Skills. NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) initiatives. Increased training offer from Growth Hub.</p> <p>Herefordshire Council - Dedicated Youth Employment Hub created. Supporting the high numbers of creative students to embrace wider career paths and employers to understand their beneficial attributes such as confidence, resilience, creativity.</p>	<p>Councils monitor the progress of each initiative to understand value and outcomes. Using this intelligence alongside demographic and economic data to decide on new programmes and how best to deliver those programmes. They engage partners as required to fit the need of the programme.</p> <p>Where appropriate, also monitored by their own skills or other boards.</p>	<p>Examples of Progress: Telford & Wrekin Council 36 businesses with 99 employers gained upskilling training. 650 residents were supported to get employability skills.</p> <p>Shropshire Council Supported 333 to obtain increased employability skills. 161 businesses upskilled staff. 409 economically active residents got a vocational qualification.</p> <p>Hereford Council Supported 155 to obtain increased employability skills. Support 654 to gain a qualification or complete a course.</p>

Other – information on Priorities 13-25 in addition to the information mentioned in the previous pages.

Priority	Action / Activity / Milestone	Partners involved	Timescales	Method of implementation and outcomes expected	Monitoring arrangements	Progress Status
<p>Priorities Main 23 Additional 16, 19, 21, 22.</p> <p>Digital Technology</p> <p>The pace at which technology moves is difficult for businesses to keep in line with. Weak skills can reduce productivity or create barriers to employment.</p> <p>The Marches LSIP research highlighted where the issues lay. From entry level staff not having digital skills or access to equipment, to manufacturers needing to upskill staff on machine programming and robotics to remain competitive.</p> <p>A wide range of actions have and are taking place to reduce the impact of the issues.</p>	<p>Local Authorities have and are running courses on basic digital skills and expanding this out across the geography.</p> <p>Large digital employers supporting careers education in digital skills.</p> <p>UK Shared Prosperity Fund funding being used to run courses on Cyber, AI, Leadership and Management in the digital world.</p> <p>Marches Education Partnership courses in both manufacturing and engineering, as well as green construction skills, are equipping employees with the digital, robotic and technology skills they need to be able to work with the new demands that fast-moving technology brings.</p>	<p>Colleges Private Training Providers Universities</p> <p>Local Authorities</p> <p>Local Authority Skills Boards</p> <p>Third Sector</p> <p>Department for Works and Pensions</p> <p>Businesses</p> <p>Supported by the Marches LSIP Team</p>	<p>2024 and ongoing.</p> <p>This is a longer-term project as training providers find ways to modify learning to ensure digital skills are more suited to the workplace.</p> <p>Though some programmes have, or are to complete shortly, many more are going forward. As different funding streams become available more activities can take place.</p>	<p>Working with those furthest from employment includes supporting those individuals to gain basic digital skills. Vital if they are to progress into work.</p> <p>Employers stated through the Employer Voice interviews that new entrants into work from education are not always equipped with digital skills that work in a professional environment. Colleges and other stakeholders working on ways to deliver these skills.</p> <p>Rurality can preclude some from getting local employment, such as in Social Care due to lack of digital skills. Local Authority and Charity activities in rural areas are helping address this issue.</p>	<p>The ongoing Marches LSIP interviews will show areas employers feel have improved. That data will be provided regularly through the Employer Voice reports to aid decision making.</p> <p>Individual programmes overseen by Local Authorities or Department for Works and Pensions, are monitored by those bodies.</p> <p>LSIP Team’s regular meetings with the Colleges and Local Authorities is helping to explain the issue and offer ideas for solutions.</p>	<p>Numerous UK Shared Prosperity Fund courses have been completed to upskill employees with a greater range of digital skills or to make best use of the latest technology such as AI in the workplace.</p> <p>Basic digital skills are being addressed by Local Authorities with their partners such as colleges.</p> <p>The Marches Education Partnership courses have ensured multiple employees have gained vital skills in modern automation, programming for manufacturing and engineering, fitting new technologies such as EV Charging (Electric Vehicle Charging) or Air Source Heat Pumps.</p>

Other – information on Priorities 13-25 in addition to the information mentioned in the previous pages.

Priority	Action / Activity / Milestone	Partners involved	Timescales	Method of implementation and outcomes expected	Monitoring arrangements	Progress Status
<p>Priorities Main 23, 24 Additional 16, 19, 21.</p> <p>Flexible Working & Staff</p> <p>The skills shortages have meant that employers are far less able to allow staff lengthy periods off the job to train. Modular and flexible training are seen as the answer. Upskilling current in this way was seen by employers as critical.</p>	<p>The Marches Education Partnership courses have embraced the need for short courses on specifics as required by employers.</p> <p>The introduction of Modular Acceleration Programme (MAP) worked well to meet the need of local employers and employees enhancing their skill sets. All three major Further Education Colleges offered of Modular Acceleration Programme courses in a range of subjects.</p> <p>An increase in the online learning offer by colleges and other stakeholders has proven popular, as it means staff do not have to go off site, which enables more to learn.</p> <p>LSIP analysis showed that most employees are willing to engage in training, only issue for a few employers was staff not keen to train outside working hours. Online can offer a flexible option. Live or interactive online preferred by employers over tick box online as felt it gave better learning outcomes.</p>	<p>Colleges</p> <p>Private Training Providers</p> <p>Industry Bodies such as Skills for Care</p> <p>Voluntary sector such as BRCS (British red Cross Society)</p> <p>LSIP Team's regular meetings with the Colleges and Local Authorities.</p>	<p>On-going.</p> <p>Colleges looking at further modular courses they could deliver where need is found.</p> <p>Working with employers directly through their Employer led Skills Advisory Panels to understand in detail the specifics of sectors or sub sectors.</p>	<p>Employers have praised the modular and bespoke offer that the Colleges have expanded to meet demand.</p> <p>Example: Staff now being able to repair the circuit board within process equipment had reduced time and therefore increased productivity.</p> <p>Quality online training has grown considerably and is proving important to employers for both statutory and non-statutory training. Releasing staff is still an issue for most employers.</p>	<p>The Marches Education Partnership courses are monitored by the MEP Board which includes the ERB/LSIP.</p> <p>Other courses and bespoke offer are monitored internally by the institution, as well as reporting to DfE etc.</p> <p>Employer feedback is gained by providers to understand how well provision is being received.</p> <p>The research work prior to courses being designed, though mediums such as Employer Skills Advisory Panels or industry bodies such as the CITB (Construction Industry Training Board) or Construction Excellence, is enabling providers to tailor provision.</p> <p>Locally provided online allows employers to have direct contact if needed and for providers to get meaningful in person feedback.</p>	<p>The Marches Education Partnership courses have already seen completions, with new entrants starting.</p> <p>Employer feedback to date has endorsed the value employers are seeing from the upskilling and short courses.</p> <p>The range of online is still growing both from public and private sector organisations, vital in such a rural geography; areas such as Social Care where staff shortages are at high levels, but training is crucial or mandatory.</p>

Please visit the additional annex documents for further information. To view all past Marches LSIP reports including the Employer Voice Reports please visit [Marches Local Skills Improvement Plan](#) and you will find the reports towards the bottom of the page.

Marches LSIP

Local Skills Improvement Plan



Contact information:

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