

# Marches Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)

## Progress Report – Annex F

**June 2025**





# Marches LSIP

## Local Skills Improvement Plan

### An Employer Building a Strong Skills Pipeline

A Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) is an employer focused plan to better match training provision to local employer skills demands through research, engagement and collaboration.

The following pages are provided to help the reader understand, in more detail, the action and activities that have been carried out, or are to be carried out.



### 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                          |



**Case Study: An Employer Building a Strong Skills Pipeline...** though working with partners, while nurturing and mentoring staff. Aiding the companies skills pipeline, retaining staff and growing the business. Based in Market Drayton, Shropshire.

**Website:** [Custom Made Steel Frame Buildings | Shropshire - Fowler & Gilbert](#)



*“WE DON’T JUST PRODUCE OUTSTANDING BUILDINGS;  
WE BUILD ON FUTURE CAREERS”*

**Introduction** Fowler & Gilbert Ltd is a privately owned business and a leading specialist in agricultural & industrial building fabrication and installation across the UK. Established in 2011, the company has rapidly grown, earning a strong reputation for quality and innovation.

With a team of over fifty skilled professionals, Fowler & Gilbert is committed to continuous growth, driven by experience and technological expertise. This dedication is reflected in its investment in future talent through apprenticeships, T-Levels, and work placement schemes. By working closely with schools and colleges, the company offers initiatives such as open events, teacher experience programs, taster sessions and is a member of Shrewsbury College Engineering Skills Advisory Panel.

These initiatives have had a significant impact on learner development, providing young individuals with valuable industry insights while helping Fowler & Gilbert identify emerging talent. Through these programs, the company not only supports the local community, but also strengthens its workforce for the future.



## Work Experience

At Fowler & Gilbert Ltd, we take pride in nurturing young talent and providing opportunities for individuals to develop their skills within our industry. Offering work experience placements allows us to introduce students to potential career paths while helping them develop essential workplace skills.

We actively collaborate with local schools and colleges, organising familiarisation visits, site-specific tours, mock interviews, networking events, and career fairs. These initiatives help young individuals understand the industry's demands and the opportunities available at Fowler & Gilbert.

Beyond technical skills, we recognise the importance of soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and adaptability. Some individuals may struggle in these areas, and when this occurs, we assess our approach to ensure we provide the right support without compromising our workplace expectations and standards.

Over the past three years, we have accommodated over 30 work experience placements. Most participants have demonstrated strong engagement and potential, leading to ongoing relationships and career opportunities.



## Work Experience Success Story: Josh's Journey



Shrewsbury College approached us regarding a work placement opportunity for Josh, a student looking to enhance his educational pathway. Before starting placements, we invite students and their families for an introductory visit—typically on a Saturday when operations are quieter—to provide an overview of our working environment and understand their aspirations.

Josh had a solid foundation in welding but faced challenges with social interaction and communication. He quickly made an impression with his welding abilities and progressed well during his placement. Recognising the positive impact of his experience, we extended his placement beyond its original duration in coordination with Shrewsbury College.

Eager to continue learning, Josh requested part-time work during academic holidays, which we were happy to accommodate. He remained dedicated to his studies, often seen revising techniques in the break room. Understanding his long-term goal to join us full-time, we encouraged him to complete his college pathway first. After successfully finishing his studies and exams, Josh secured a full-time position at Fowler & Gilbert Ltd.

Now, two years later, Josh is a key member of our team, managing one of our fabrication units with great care and consistently meeting quality expectations. His journey has strengthened our relationship with Shrewsbury College and reinforced our commitment to developing young talent.



## T-Level Success at Fowler & Gilbert Ltd

# T-LEVELS

At Fowler & Gilbert Ltd, we are proud to be a T-Level provider for Reaseheath College and Shrewsbury College. Over the past few years, we have supported six T-Level students, helping them gain valuable industry experience and develop their skills.

One of our recent success stories is Rhyce, who joined us just before Christmas as part of his T-Level placement through Shrewsbury College. Since joining our team, Rhyce has grown in confidence and capability, exploring various aspects of welding and fabrication. This hands-on experience has given him a deeper understanding of our processes and the industry.

Our strong partnership with Shrewsbury College has been instrumental in Rhyce's development—not only in his academic progress but also in essential soft skills. He has become more reliable, communicative, and self-assured, demonstrating the real-world benefits of industry placements. Rhyce's journey highlights the importance of collaboration between businesses and education providers. While T-Level courses are widely available for construction, carpentry, and electrical trades, we hope to see greater uptake in the welding and fabrication sector to help meet industry demand.

At Fowler & Gilbert Ltd, we remain committed to nurturing future talent and supporting the next generation of skilled professionals.



## Apprenticeships

# Apprenticeships

In 2022, we were approached by Reece Morris, a young individual eager to pursue an apprenticeship in welding and site operations. As this was our first direct request for an apprenticeship, we partnered with Total People, a reputable apprenticeship provider, and registered with the government apprenticeship system. After reviewing available courses, we selected the Engineering Operative Level 2 pathway, specialising in fabrication. This course provided Reece with exposure to all aspects of our business, from sales and drawing to fabrication and site erection. Encouraged by his progress, we later welcomed two additional apprentices onto the same course.



However, during the second year, challenges arose due to changes in Total People's staffing and curriculum. Apprentices reported concerns about missing elements, particularly the removal of the welding component. To address these issues, we implemented a daily work log for all apprentices to document their experiences, reflections, and completed tasks.

Upon seeking clarification from Total People, we were informed of staffing changes and the inclusion of an electrical component to replace welding. This unexpected change caused significant delays and frustrations. To ensure our apprentices met the new course requirements, we collaborated with our electrical contractor to provide additional training sessions.



For Reece, these changes resulted in a 16-month delay in completing his apprenticeship. This setback not only affected his professional progression but also had financial implications, as he remained on an apprenticeship wage until course completion. Despite these challenges, Reece persevered and successfully completed his apprenticeship.

Recognising the need for a more reliable training provider, we transitioned our other apprentices to Shrewsbury College. This change has greatly benefited our apprentices, allowing us to align training with the needs of Fowler & Gilbert Ltd and the industry. Shrewsbury College offered a Level 3 Fabrication Course, ensuring our apprentices met both the college's and our company's standards.

Shrewsbury College places learners at the heart of their programs, providing a supportive learning environment tailored to their needs. This approach has significantly enhanced the apprenticeship experience. We have since introduced a new apprentice onto the Shrewsbury College program, reinforcing our commitment to structured and effective apprenticeship training.

### Success Story: Reece's Journey from Apprentice to Future Leader



At Fowler & Gilbert, we take pride in nurturing talent and providing opportunities for growth. One such success story is that of Reece, whose dedication and hard work has paved the way for a promising career.

Reece embarked on his apprenticeship journey with Total People, committing himself to learning and developing his skills within our team. After a rigorous assessment process, we were thrilled to receive official notification in March 2025 that he had achieved a **Distinction** in his End Point Assessment—an outstanding accomplishment that reflects his commitment and expertise.

His success doesn't stop there. Recognising his potential, Reece has chosen to continue full-time with Fowler & Gilbert. Under the mentorship of Lee Gilbert and our experienced site teams, he is undergoing further on-site training, equipping him with the leadership skills necessary to take charge of his own team. With his drive and determination, Reece is on track to progress even further within the company.

Reece's journey is a testament to what can be achieved with hard work, dedication, and the right support. We are incredibly proud of his achievements and excited to see what the future holds for him at Fowler & Gilbert.

## Conclusion

Fowler & Gilbert Ltd remains dedicated to developing the next generation of skilled professionals through work experience, T-Levels, and apprenticeships. By working closely with educational institutions and adapting to challenges, we continue to provide valuable opportunities that benefit both young individuals and our industry. Through these efforts, we aim to cultivate a strong, capable workforce that upholds our standards of quality and innovation for years to come.

# Marches LSIP

## Local Skills Improvement Plan



### Contact information:

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