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OXFORDSHIRE LOCAL SKILLS IMPROVEMENT PLAN

ANNEX B

Contents

Our methodology followed the LSIP statutory guidance.

Introduction
This section demonstrates how we have identified the priorities (rationale), engaged a range of providers and local stakeholders to gain their buy-in, engaged a reasonably representative sample of employers, utilised and built on data and analysis to articulate employer skills needs, shared, and discussed priorities with providers and local stakeholders and identified how they can support delivery.

There was an iterative process between all three stages.

Stage A – Articulating Employers' Skills Needs

1.0 Identification of Strategic Priorities

At the start of the project, we established a series of regular written briefings. The first, in October 2022 **(Appendix 1)** was sent to FE Colleges, Private Training Providers, trade bodies, other General Employer Representative Bodies and Strategic Partners such as the local authorities and the Oxford Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP). This raised the profile of the LSIP work and invited important Partners to contribute.

We identified the priority sectors through an iterative process, working with employers and strategic partners such as Education & Training providers, other ERBs and Trade Bodies, LEP, Local Authorities and Careers Providers, and sense checking our findings throughout with reference to robust, up-to-date data.

Our Priority Sectors were initially established through a review of the recently published OxLEP Local Skills Dashboard[1] and the Local Skills Report 2022[2] which identified those sectors with volumes of vacancies that are expected to increase; long-term structural barriers to recruitment, retention, and progression issues; and those that are important in providing opportunities for employment in key growth areas such green jobs[3] and science and technology. These were Construction, Health and Care, Life Sciences, Hospitality & Visitor Economy, Manufacturing and ICT.

In November/December 2022, we distributed a second briefing **(Appendix 2)** with this information to over 6,000 organisations- employers and partners.

Through a process of 1-1 meetings in November and December 2022 with employers and Partners, including Trade Bodies, other General Employer Representative Bodies and Strategic Partners responses to the initial sectors identified were invited. This feedback, combined with our analysis of up-to-date data resulted in changes to the priority sectors; Manufacturing became Manufacturing (Science & Innovation) due to the recent, rapid growth of innovative companies in pharmaceutical sectors, space, and new technologies such as fusion. Health & Life Sciences combined due to many of the hard-to-recruit roles and skills overlapping and we added 'Built Environment' to 'Construction'. We also included Haulage & Logistics because of strong feedback from employers and providers regarding demand in areas such as north Oxfordshire, driven by growth around towns such as Bicester and Banbury. This feedback was triangulated with secondary data to confirm that the sector has grown significantly- (2,200 (116%) increase in the number of Oxfordshire jobs within 'Freight Transport by Road and Removal Services'). In conversations with employers, it became clear that the additional cross cutting themes of Leadership & Management and Business & Professional were of critical importance.

The finalised priority sectors in Oxfordshire, formally agreed by our employer-led Advisory Panel in January 2023, are:

- Construction and Built Environment,
- Health and Life Sciences,
- Care,
- Hospitality & Visitor Economy,
- Manufacturing (Science and Innovation),
- Haulage and Logistics,
- ICT

[1] https://www.oxfordshirelep.com/skills/labour-market-information

[2] https://www.oxfordshirelep.com/sites/default/files/uploads/8724%20Local%20Skills%20Report%20%26%20Plan%20v2%20final.pdf

[3] We have adopted the national definition of Green Jobs as employment in an activity that contributes to protecting or restoring the environment, including those that mitigate or adapt to climate change.

To ensure the process for determining the priorities with local partners including the resolution of any disagreements, we established an Employer-Led Advisory Panel covering both Oxfordshire and Thames Valley Berkshire LEPs to ensure that synergies and joint benefits are realised **(Appendix 3- Terms of Reference)**. This also included representation from the LEPs, Local Authorities, FE Colleges, and Private Training Providers.

As per the LSIP guidance, all members of the Panel signed up to a Conflict-of-Interest Policy **(Appendix 4**) and a Register of Interests was held. In addition, the Terms of Reference included clear guidelines for impartiality and ensuring agreement and consensus was reached:

The Panel is responsible for:

- *Providing independent, impartial oversight*
- *Fostering collaboration*
- *Maintaining the focus of the project on the agreed scope, outcomes, and benefits*
- *Providing direction and support delivery*
- *Review and comment on implementation and delivery plans and progress*
- *Ensuring activity covers the requirements of the LSIP Guidance*

The membership of the Panel will commit to:

- *Represent the interests of the range of stakeholders and, in particular (where this applies) the Group(s) they represent, and to feed back to those groups.*
- *Support the LSIPs' Project Team in identifying and mitigating key relevant delivery risks.*
- *Wholeheartedly champion the LSIPs' projects*
- *Provide effective, impartial, and independent oversight of both LSIPs, regardless of which area they have an affiliation with and regardless of their own business or sector interests.*
- *Make timely decisions and take action so as to not hold up the project.*
- *Attend all meetings and if necessary, nominate a proxy.*

The emerging priority sectors were formally agreed by the Advisory Panel in January 2023. Further detail was reviewed in meetings in March 2023 and May 2023. At each meeting, the Panel was given opportunity to scrutinise the findings and feedback in breakout groups. For example:

Group 2 noted the need for more flexibility in adult education funding and building an awareness of specific opportunities within sectors outside of the 'known'. It was suggested that resources be directed to workforce development and 'Train the Trainer', as well as drawing people from the business community to help co-develop solutions. It was noted that Micro and SMEs would benefit from coming together in groups or networks to ensure training resources were used efficiently. There was a need for short, sharp, career upskilling workforce development- this will also provide awareness of career opportunities.

Extract from Minutes LSIP Advisory Panel March 13th, 2023.

2.0 Process of Employer Engagement

We designed and instigated a new team- the Thames Valley Skills Unit- to drive forward the LSIPs' work. This Unit comprised of a mix of expertise from local skills development, employer engagement, skills and education, and communications.

Thames Valley Skills Unit Team Positions:

- LSIP Project Lead (PT)
- LSIP Employer Engagement Officer
- LSIP Provider Engagement Officer (PT)
- LSIP Stakeholder Engagement Officer (PT)
- LSIP Marketing and Events Officer
- LSIP Administrator (PT)
- LSIP Strategic Project Consultant
- LSIP Senior Project Consultant

Our work was guided by a set of values and behaviours that were approved by our employer-led Advisory Panel.

As referenced above, we formed a new employer led LSIP Advisory Panel to oversee the LSIP process. We ensured the Panel included employers, such as small firms, who had not previously engaged in similar activity.

How We Engaged

We developed a three-stage process of engagement. Our engagement work was shaped and informed by an externally commissioned research study by the University of Reading across both Berkshire and Oxfordshire. This study gave us information regarding broad themes of interest to employers as well as

helping to identify and refine the questions that elicited the most meaningful feedback from employers. The research underpinned our findings with academic rigour **(Appendix 6)**.

Initially, our focus was on the volume and spread of engagement. However, as we moved beyond this phase of work, our attention turned to how best to elicit meaningful feedback from employers. In simple terms we focused on the quality of our conversations. In our latest discussions we are planning how we will change our approach from June 2023 onwards, when we will focus on turning conversations into meaningful action.

A number of LSIP events were open to employers from Berkshire and Oxfordshire. These included the following sectors: Care, Construction & Built Environment, Digital, Haulage & Logistics, and Health & Life Sciences. They reflect the nature of these two neighbouring areas with similar economic activities and growth potential and many comparable skill requirements. They also reflect a theme within both LSIPs of the usefulness of cross-border working, welcomed by many employers. Equally, there were events that were unique to one or other LSIP, reflecting sectors that are a priority in that area, such as Manufacturing (Science and Innovation), and Hospitality & Visitor Economy in Oxfordshire. These events recognise the important points of difference in each area and ensure that these are addressed.

Ensuring Breadth of Engagement

We developed sufficient capacity in our team to maximise engagement as shown above by the explanation of the Thames Valley Skills Unit Team positions.

To develop effective ways to engage a broad range of employers and optimise our reach, we purchased a comprehensive mailing list of all Oxfordshire employers (comprising 6,325 employers).

We implemented a series of employer engagements through a variety of communication channels including:

- Development of the Oxfordshire LSIP website Oxfordshire LSIP Website
- An on-line video, promoting the LSIP OxfordshireLSIPvideo
- A month-long radio campaign.
- Monthly newsletter to over 6,000 companies Monthly Newsletters – Oxfordshire
- Extensive range of 1-1 employer meetings with a member of Thames Valley Skills Unit
- Attendance at stakeholder events
- On-line focus groups
- Sector specific events run by Thames Valley Skills Unit, with many jointly for both LSIPs.
- Joint events run in conjunction with providers.

We also secured agreement from partner ERBs including FSB and CBI who sent out our newsletters and event invites to ensure wider reach.

We established Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which were regularly reported to the Advisory Panel. These were set with reference to the average engagement levels of the LSIP Trailblazers in 2022.

ENGAGEMENT	Number of Engagements
Employer Engagements via electronic survey, email or LSIP Communications.	**8,452**
Employer attendance at 1-1 meetings or events	**475**

An indicative list of employers who were actively engaged is appended **(Appendix 8).**

We targeted SMEs, as these companies were typically less likely to have been involved in skills planning before. As of May 2023, 73% of our actively engaged companies have been SMEs.

Business Size	% of total engagements
Micro 0-9 Employees	24%
Small 10-49 Employees	23%
Medium 50-249 Employees	26%
Large 250+ Employees	27%

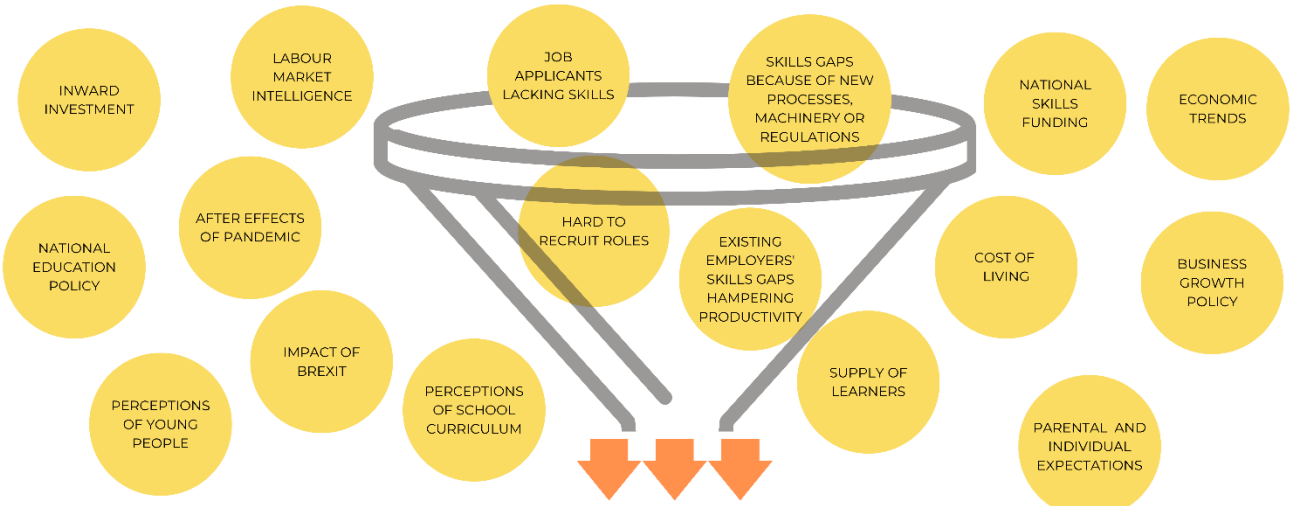
We also actively targeted non-Chamber members and 64% of actively engaged companies are non-members.

Ensuring Depth of Engagement

Our approach is people-based. We have prioritised conversations and dialogue as our primary and most important source of information.

Engaging employers in conversations about skills development is not easy. It is all too easy to become despondent and overwhelmed with the difficulties of recruitment. We have developed the 'LSIP Hopper' to illustrate our methodology and the complexities of discussing skills. There are a myriad of issues, interdependencies, and considerations- bouncing balls if you will-, many of which are not in the gift of the Plan to solve. However, all these issues must be heard and evaluated before the important details are bounced directly into the LSIP Plans and Actions.

'LSIP Hopper'



As a Team we have learned that we often receive the most detailed and useful feedback in 1-1 or small group meetings. We are therefore prioritising these interactions. However, we are also aware that the engagement and interaction in group events may spark thinking and insights that might not otherwise come to light. We have tried to bring a diverse mix of people together in these events for this reason including, for example, an apprentice speaking at the Manufacturing and Engineering Event in May 2023.

We developed a **template** to guide all our interactions **(Appendix 5)**, learning from feedback from our ongoing work and the University of Reading's research. This template/meeting prompt is designed to delve into the detail and elicit the appropriate feedback that we need for the LSIP to be meaningful.

The template is under constant review and is regularly tweaked to make sure it is as effective as it can be. We also build in bespoke items depending on the event.

We intend to build upon this approach in Phase 2 through developing a **Guide for Working Together on Shaping the Workforce** which will offer guidance to both employers and providers in navigating the local skills system and working collaboratively to help shape the workforce for the future.

Our research methodology was underpinned and enhanced by a separate research study by the University of Reading (focus groups, 1-1s and survey) **(Appendix 6)**. The insights gained from this piece of research resonated with findings from our own primary research.

The feedback from employers was comprehensive and specific job roles and skills gaps were identified due to the structured approach to employer conversations on a 1-1 basis and at events. This can be seen in the Event Reports **(Appendix 7)**.

Throughout Stage 1 of the LSIP programme the Thames Valley Skills Unit met on a weekly basis to review progress, discuss insights, and identify areas requiring change. This ensured our primary research strategies remained clearly aligned to the project aims.

We communicated and engaged with a wide cross section of relevant stakeholders and partners. This included attending Local Authority Economic Development monthly meetings and arranging 1-1 meetings with other partners. The opportunity to continually share our developing insights provides further confidence that our findings are representative of Oxfordshire employers.

Employer Representative Bodies and other strategic stakeholders

Organisation type	
General Employer Representative Bodies	Banbury Chamber of Commerce Confederation of British Industry Federation of Small Business Institute of Directors
Sector-based Employer Representative Bodies	Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT) Civil Engineering Contractors Ass (CECA) Cogent Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) Electrical Contractors' Association Home Builders Federation Institute of Sales Professionals Logistics UK Road Haulage Association Skills for Care Springboard The Chartered Institute of IT, BCS
Strategic Partners	Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) Oxfordshire County Council Cherwell District Council Oxford City Council South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse District Council West Oxfordshire District Council Department of Work and Pensions Adviza Careers and Enterprise Company Careers Hub Oxfordshire CXK Education Business Partnership

3.0 Confidence in Findings

We ensured we were confident in our findings in three ways: a) Ensuring reach- engaging employers with appropriate breadth, including the unusual suspects (see above) and b) ensuring depth- that our conversations were meaningful, and provided insights that would help the LSIP mission (see above) and c) triangulating our findings with the secondary data.

We are confident that we have reached a substantial number of representative employers, the majority of which are SME (73%) and non-Chamber members (64%). Through Phase 2 we will continue to strive to engage with 'hard to reach' employers.

We are confident that our engagement has been meaningful for the purposes of the LSIP as we have designed methodology that has elicited granular and specific information which our providers have reported is useful:

"…the inclusion of the specific 'hard to fill roles' and skills needs are really helpful and give us a level of detail we've not always had when doing our own engagement work with businesses." ***Activate Learning***

We are confident that our findings are backed up by the data analysis. We triangulated the roles and skills highlighted by employers with the secondary data (see below).

4.0 Data Sources

We formed a joint LSIP Data Working Group with OxLEP to help steer the secondary data analysis to ensure currency and relevance and gain a broader perspective of the local labour market and local economic priorities.

The data shared through the LSIP Data Working Group was used to triangulate and test employer feedback, particularly concerning hard to recruit roles to ensure a robust analysis of data took place.

The full analysis of data, its sources and reports used to inform the development of the LSIP are included in **Annex A**.

The data sources provided have enabled us to cross reference and confirm primary research findings on hard to recruit roles described by employers. This has given credibility and allowed us to add-value to our findings by highlighting in the main report (in yellow) where hard to recruit roles, as mentioned by employers, correlate with potential shortages identified by secondary jobs data.

The occupations were highlighted by employers as those in which they were experiencing recruitment difficulties. These roles have been checked against the secondary jobs data (SOC Code) in Oxfordshire and nationally. Where there are a much lower number of roles in Oxfordshire, these are highlighted in yellow in **Annex A** and the **main report** as a guide to inform where there may be shortages. As an example:

Recruitment Difficulties Reported by Employers	SOC Code (Highlighted if also a Priority Occupation According Secondary Data)
Drivers	8211/00 Large goods vehicle drivers
Maintenance	5231 Vehicle technicians, mechanics, and electricians
Custom Clearing Agents	1133 Managers in logistics

Stage B: Translating Employer Skills Needs

1.0 The Process of Engagement with Providers

From November 2022, we began a process of structured dialogue between providers (see below), employers and ourselves. These providers engaged in several ways during our period of research and report writing. This was an iterative process which built trust and genuine consultation around the development of the priorities for change. Providers feel involved and listened to and consequently are able and willing to contribute to achieving these priorities. This engagement process took several forms:

1-2-1 Engagement Interviews

We undertook 40 engagement interviews with providers, both face to face and via online meetings. We were able to use these to:

- Elicit responses to the initial identification of priority sectors.
- Engage providers in the LSIP process and feedback to them what we were hearing from employer engagements.
- Discuss possible changes to provision to better meet employer needs.
- Elicit feedback from them on early drafts of the report to ensure it would be as relevant and useful as possible to them in making the curriculum changes needed to meet the employer needs identified.

Evidence from these fed directly into the priorities for change:

Extracts from Provider Feedback received.

"The development of greater carbon literacy might be a useful lens for students to view net zero through".

"The shortage of vocational teachers is a live issue and greater employer involvement in solving this is vital".

"Colleges need ever more industry links, both for opportunities for students and also for help with expertise in areas like the very latest developments in computer science".

"There is also a real need to get people interested in both green and digital careers much earlier".

"More flexible leadership and management programmes are needed".

Attendance At One or More LSIP Engagement Events:

We organised, promoted, and led a number of high-profile events. The links below lead to more information on the LSIP website.

- Building a Sustainable Future in Construction and Building Services
- Growing Talent in the Transport and Logistics Sectors
- Future Skills for the Care Sector – Get Your Voice Heard
- Growing Talent in the Health and Life Sciences Sector
- Recruitment and Skills Needs in the IT/Digital Sector
- Growing Talent in the Hospitality and Tourism Sectors
- Growing Talent in the Engineering and Manufacturing Sectors

These events saw us bring a mixture of 114 employers, providers, and strategic partners together in structured discussions guided by the following questions:

- What specific roles are you/your employer partners finding it hard to recruit to?
- Why do you think that's the case?
- What could be done to improve this?
- What specific skills and training needs do you/the employers you work with currently have?
- Are you /your employer partners able to source the skills development and training they need?
- Are training providers able to run the provision they want to?
- What future skills and training needs might you/your employer partners require in the next 3-5 years?
- What future roles might you need to be recruiting to?
- What skills and roles might be needed to get to a net zero economy in your sector?
- What training may be needed for these/how will this be delivered/what are the barriers and solutions to this?
- Do new employees in your sector/students leaving training need more employability skills? If so, what are these?
- How might these be further developed?

A summary of findings from these events can be seen below in **Appendix 7.**

Monthly Updates and Engagement via Skills Development Fund Meetings

We were able to meet monthly with all the FE/6th Form Colleges through their joint Strategic Development Fund project meetings. We had a regular 'LSIP update' item on their agendas where we were able to keep them appraised of developments across both LSIPs and receive feedback on these.

The feedback and outcomes of this engagement included:

- Engaging teaching staff and students in the Construction and Manufacturing & Engineering LSIP events
- The sharing of college employer contacts with the LSIP team to facilitate engagement.
- The benefit of early LSIP updates, in advance of the May 31st deadline, to help with the development of Accountability Agreements
- Early joint discussions on LSIF funding, to make sure project bids align with LSIP priorities.

Direct Consultation on Emerging Themes

Providers were sent a summary of the emerging themes from our employer engagements at the end of March.

We gathered feedback from them to help us further develop the report and establish the priorities for change. This feedback included:

- The importance of the capital investment required to adequately develop the priority emerging skills, including those for a green economy and to meet digital skills needs.
- The benefit of including specific 'hard to fill roles' and skills needs for each priority sector
- The provision of cross-cutting themes, which are helpful in shaping broad curriculum changes.

- The need for further capital development to help providers meet the needs of the haulage and logistics priority sector.
- The importance, in the final report, of detail on the roles and skills development for the 16-19 pipeline, where the lion's share of skills funding is available.
- An appreciation of the ‘ongoing dialogue’ with providers

Workshop with College Leaders to Review Possible LSIF Funding Priorities, Based on the Emerging Themes and Solutions in the LSIP

We gave further updates to FE Colleges on the development of the LSIP at a workshop in April 2023, including:

- Our values and behaviours
- Our emerging strategic priorities
- Sectors
- Cross-sector transferable skills
- Changes to the local skills system

This enabled the LSIP team and providers to discuss the emerging shape of the LSIP. We were able to have further discussions around the emerging priorities for change and begin to discuss, in outline terms, how LSIF monies might be used to help achieve these priorities. We also established the importance of the Thames Valley Skills Unit and the LSIF Project Management Group working closely together to drive forward the priorities for change.

Attendance at the LSIP Findings, Solutions and Actions Provider Workshop

We invited all providers to an online LSIP Findings, Solutions and Actions Workshop in May 2023. There were 21 providers present (or in subsequent follow up meetings) and we used this opportunity to:

- Share the findings of the LSIPs in Oxfordshire (and Berkshire)
- Share the recommended solutions and actions proposed in the Plan.
- Invite feedback to help influence the Plan before submission at the end of May.
- Explore how their organisations could get involved.

We gathered a range of feedback both during and after the workshop including:

- The possible need for alternative training pathways to apprenticeships in some priority areas such as Engineering
- A lack of understanding of the role of draughtsperson amongst young people, and the consequent difficulties in filling apprenticeships in this area
- The need to make upskilling resources for mature workers accessible to them, appropriate to their needs and well publicised.
- Consideration of how employers might help with the shortage of vocational teaching staff.

An Informative and User-Friendly Approach for Providers

We developed a comprehensive understanding of provision already in place through analysis of FE data. This has enabled us to identify technical, higher technical and professional occupation standards which would help meet recruitment difficulties reported by employers and in short supply in Oxfordshire. By colour coding these, providers can see at a glance the provision which is likely to be most in demand from employers, based on their feedback and secondary jobs data (colour coded in yellow). They can also see the provision for which there is a high likelihood of demand, but which is not currently available in Oxfordshire (colour coded orange). Provision linked to jobs defined as green occupations are also coded

green. This is repeated for all priority sectors, making the LSIP as informative and user friendly as possible for providers when doing their curriculum planning.

Details of the Providers Engaged

Provider Type	Provider Names
FE Colleges	Activate Learning*: Banbury and Bicester College City of Oxford College Abingdon and Witney College Ruskin College (Part of University of West London)
6th Form Colleges	The Henley College
Local Authorities (Adult Education)	Oxfordshire County Council
Independent Training Providers	Engineering Skills Academy Equal Engineers Henley Business School JTL Training Learning Curve Group New Meaning Training Oxfordshire Advanced Skills Oxford Business College QA Seetec Plus Sofea Springboard Sylo HR STEM Learning STEM Returners The Engineering Trust
Higher Education Institutions	Oxford Brookes University
Multi-Academy Trusts	Activate Learning Education Trust*: UTC Oxfordshire The Bicester School

*Campuses in Oxfordshire

Stage C: Addressing Learner Demand and Employer Engagement

1.0 The Process for Engaging with Wider Delivery Partners

From November 2022 onwards we have consulted wider delivery partners (see list below) in several ways across our period of research and report writing. This has been a process of genuine consultation around the development of solutions and the roadmap within the LSIP. All the various engagement methods used have ensured that partners have felt involved and listened to and will be actively involved in the delivery of the changes required to deliver the LSIP priorities.

This engagement process took several forms:

1-2-1 Engagement Interviews

We undertook 22 engagement interviews with wider delivery partners, both face to face and via online meetings. The purpose of these meetings was:

- To provide information on the LSIP, emerging themes and progress
- To ascertain and capture interest in contributing to the LSIP.
- To capture any emerging themes and opinions about what the LSIP could do or recommend.

We structured these around a guiding set of common questions, used by the whole team, as below:

1. What do you think are the main barriers to developing skills for the workforce?
2. Have you any suggestions for potential solutions?
3. What do you think are the main opportunities for developing skills for the workforce?
4. What do you think the LSIP could achieve/recommend?
5. What role (if any) would you like to play in the LSIP?
6. Have you any partners (employers or providers) that you could recommend to us that you feel would be able to contribute to the LSIP?
7. Would you be willing to be involved in a focus group or event for a particular sector/theme?
8. Would you be able to host or provide a venue for a meeting or event?

These initial engagement interviews were ideal for publicising the LSIPs, garnering support for our work, building relationships with key partners and helping to spread our reach more widely across the county.

Attendance by Partners at One or More LSIP Engagement Events

Events were organised covering all the priority sectors. Wider delivery partners were invited to all and present at 4 out of 7 events. A summary of the outputs of each of these can be seen in **Appendix 7**. They were able to contribute their views on current and future skills and employment needs, and the employability skills of the current and future workforce in Oxfordshire, and how all of these could be better met.

Direct Consultation on Emerging Themes

Wider delivery partners were sent a summary of the emerging themes from our employer engagements at the end of March. These covered:

- Transferable skills
- The nature of employer demand
- The tight and tightening employment market

- Promoting aspirational career routes
- The emerging recruitment difficulties, skills gaps, and upskilling needs of each of the priority sectors

We were able to gather feedback from them to help us further develop solutions and the roadmap. This feedback included:

- The need to build better links between providers and employers.
- The need to improve progression from classroom-based learning into trades.
- The opportunities provided by smart home technologies.
- The importance of upskilling and reskilling to meeting skills needs.
- The need for more green technical skills across priority sectors
- The growing importance of automation, robotics, and AI across a number of sectors including haulage and logistics, digital, manufacturing & engineering and health and life sciences.

LSIP Team Attendance at a Range of Delivery Partner Meetings and Events

A sample of these meetings and events included:

OxLEP

Logistics UK Freight Council

ECA Regional Meeting

Oxfordshire Business Growth Hub

Oxfordshire County Council

Banbury Chamber of Commerce

Oxford University NHS Trust

In addition, there were meetings with all the Trade Bodies listed below.

Data Working Group

This was an example of direct consultation and joint working with OxLEP (and Thames Valley Berkshire LEP).

It was established to review secondary data sources from the LEPs for both Oxfordshire and Thames Valley Berkshire LSIPs. It had 8 members in the group and met at approximately 6 weekly intervals between October 2022 and March 2023.

As well as the formal working party meetings there were also ad hoc meetings and discussions in between for group members to clarify the data being used, as required.

2.0 Developing Solutions and the Roadmap to Change

The methods of engagement cited above helped develop a strong platform for developing solutions and the roadmap to change. This engagement with wider delivery partners has influenced the roadmap in a number of ways. For example, the inclusion of partnership work with the Social Contract programme led by OxLEP.

Strengthening Collaborative Working Between Employers and Providers

It became clear that if we want to succeed in increasing learner demand for the provision identified in the LSIP, we first need to ensure that employers, providers, and wider strategic partners work together directly on this agenda. The key suggestions to enable this is for the ERB to produce a **'Guide for Working Together on Shaping the Workforce'** and enable and facilitate **'Workforce Development Partnerships'** in the priority sectors.

The Guide will offer advice to both employers and providers in navigating the local skills system and working collaboratively to help shape the workforce for the future.

The Workforce Development Partnerships will:

- Provide a forum and focus for employers to gain insights into skills, and providers to gain insights into priority sectors.
- Generate resources and advice for signposting employers to skills, for example, the planned **Guide to Working Together to Shape the Workforce**
- Strengthen relationships between attending providers and employers to generate further partnership solutions.
- Make use of trade bodies to help facilitate these partnerships and engage employers to play an active role within them.
- Involve careers organisations, to help to grow learner knowledge and understanding of the roles most in need and the provision which will best lead to these.

The need to strengthen collaborative working became abundantly clear through our engagements both with employers and wider delivery partners, with a number of these partners commenting on:

- The need to strengthen links between local FE Colleges, training providers and employers.
- A lack of knowledge for some people about how to get into industries, e.g., appropriate entry qualifications.
- The need for education providers to work more closely and strategically with major employers across a region.

Promoting Careers in Priority Sectors

Careers organisations and government agencies see the importance of the promotion of careers in priority sectors. They have spoken of the need for the LSIP to lead to more and earlier engagements with FE and training providers around skills needs and high priority vacancy areas. The plan sets out a detailed description of the job roles and skills that Oxfordshire employers have reported are difficult to find.

Ensuring Employers and Training Providers Collaborate to Provide Curriculum Provision that is Flexible and Accessible to Working Learners for Upskilling

Wider delivery partners emphasised the importance of upskilling the existing workforce in order to meet skills needs more successfully. This was very clear from engagement meetings with trade bodies. For example, they recognise this need in a tight labour market, in areas such as leadership and management, with staff being promoted early in their careers, without the skills to be successful.

Establishing the Need for a Framework of Underpinning Employability Skills

Many employers support this need as do several wider delivery partners, particularly careers organisations who regularly see the need for the development of broader, career-related skills such entrepreneurialism, innovation and problem-solving. They recognise that the 'Skills Builder' programme does some of this work, but they also see the value in a transversal skills framework/qualification.

Sector Specific Roadmap Actions

Close consultation with trade bodies has facilitated the development of sector specific roadmap actions. Some examples include:

- Working with the Life Sciences Roundtable to convene a Workforce Development Partnership in the Health and Life Sciences sector.
- The ERB will facilitate a Workforce Development Partnership in the Hospitality and Visitor Economy sector, to partner and add value to existing structures, developing a work programme to connect employers to skills and improve the skills provision in the local area.
- Working with the Construction Industry Training Board, The Home Builders Federation and The Electrical Contractors Association to convene a Workforce Development Partnership in the Construction and Built Environment sector.

Wider Delivery Partners Engaged

Partner Type	Partner Names
Careers Organisations	Adviza Careers and Enterprise Company Careers Hub Oxfordshire CXK Education Business Partnership
Local Economic Partnerships (LEP)	OxLEP
Local Authorities	Oxfordshire County Council Cherwell District Council Oxford City Council South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse District Council West Oxfordshire District Council
Other Agencies	Department of Work and Pensions Oxfordshire Business Growth Hub (OxLEP)
Trade Bodies	Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT) Civil Engineering Contractors Ass (CECA) Cogent Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) Electrical Contractors Association Home Builders Federation Institute of Sales Professionals Logistics UK Road Haulage Association Skills for Care Springboard The Chartered Institute of IT, BCS

3.0 Green Skills

Green Skills have been at the heart of the LSIP throughout. There was a focus on low carbon as a cross-cutting theme from the start of the research. The need for this theme was clear from local economic data and the Skills Report from OxLEP. This developed into skills for a net zero economy as our research base

grew. It was clear that these were a key cross-sector theme, emerging strongly from engagements with all priority sector employers.

Giving Consideration to Green Skills

- Our engagements with employers, providers and wider delivery partners made specific reference to green skills. The question template we used for initial engagements asked: What future skills needs do you see developing? The importance of green skills emerged in virtually all early engagements. We then updated the template to ask: What skills and roles will be needed to get to a net zero economy in your sector?
- There is a focus on the need to provide opportunities for employment in key growth areas such as green jobs, defined as: 'employment in an activity that contributes to protecting or restoring the environment, including those that mitigate or adapt to climate change'.
- The need for providers to treat skills for a net zero economy as a key transferable skill to be embedded in the curriculum as appropriate is highlighted.
- Recruitment difficulties and skills gaps reported by employers include reference to those that are defined as green jobs by IfATE.

Specific Green Skills Priorities Identified in the LSIP

Priority Sector	Specific Reported Green Skills Gaps	Green Occupations Identified
Manufacturing, Science, and Innovation		Process Leader Engineering Manufacturing Technician Engineering design and draughtsperson – Control & Instrumentation or Mechanical Science Manufacturing Process Operative Science Manufacturing Technician Lean manufacturing operative - Inspection/Quality
Construction and the Built Environment	BEMs- Building Energy Management Systems (energy efficiency) Installers and engineers for other heating systems which provide an alternative to traditional gas/oil boilers – these are due to be phased out by 2027. Ground and air source heat pumps – installation and repair Retrofitting	Plasterer- Solid Plastering Commercial Thermal Insulation Operative Roofer- Roof Sheeter & Cladder Low Carbon Heating Technician Plumbing & Domestic Heating Technician- Environmental Technologies

		Refrigeration, air conditioning and heat pump engineering technician Dual fuel smart meter installer Smart Home Technician Domestic Electrician
Haulage and Logistics	Key legislation, policies and procedures that influence the supply chain including those concerning environmental impact and sustainability	Supply chain leadership professional Large Goods Vehicle Driver Heavy Vehicle Service and Maintenance Freight Forwarding Specialist

Cross-Sectoral Skills for a Net Zero Economy

A number of cross-sectoral skills for a net zero economy have been identified, along with applicable apprenticeship standards:

- Meet energy and cost reduction objectives and targets within the context of wider sustainability commitments.
- Sustainability Awareness (Carbon Literacy)
- Understand and improve energy consumption and sustainability issues, and the role of the organisation in tackling them.
- Analyse sustainability performance data and develop the appropriate business response in line with legislation.
- Retrofitting, retraining, and responding to new technologies in industries such as utilities, ICT, motor vehicle, engineering, and construction.
- Plumbing and Domestic Heating Technician
- Low Carbon Heating Technician

Road-Map Actions to Address Green Skills Needs

Description of Change and Expected Benefit	Actions
Build relationships with employers, to help businesses understand their responsibilities and actively develop green skills strategies.	Work in partnership with the planned Sustainability Knowledge Transfer Partnership led by the University of Reading. Identify resources and support for businesses seeking help with Green Skills.
Training providers, working in partnership with the ERB should set out a 'rapid response' service to design and deliver local, non-accredited and/or modular provision to address urgent **Green Job skills needs** in the existing workforce.	Employers and training providers to collaborate to provide curriculum provision that is flexible and accessible to working learners. Using the **Information on Cross-Sector, Skills for a Net-Zero Economy,** education,

	and training providers should review curriculum planning to include these skills where possible and appropriate. Education & Training Providers to use LSIF, Innovation Fund as alternative sources of funding for development of non-accredited and accredited short courses for part-time and full-time learners to improve their knowledge and understanding of the identified skills. Provide staff development for FE Teachers in identified green skills that are valued by employers. Invest in capital resources identified as essential in delivering Green skills identified (as above). e.g., Retrofitting and retraining in industries such as utilities, motor vehicle, engineering, and construction.

Appendix 1 Briefing 1 October 2022

The Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce LSIP: Oxfordshire

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce (TVCC) has been designated by the Secretary of State for Education as the Employer Representative Body (ERB) for Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) for the area of Oxfordshire. It has also been designated as the ERB for Thames Valley Berkshire. The areas are defined by Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) boundaries.

Our areas encompass rich and diverse business eco-systems with Oxford, once again, ranked first in PwC's Good Growth for Cities Report as one of the highest performing cities in the UK. Elsewhere, the University of Oxford retains top spot in world rankings for sixth consecutive year; Lambert Smith Hampton's (LSH) Vitality Index (2022) placed Oxford 9th highest of the UK's best-performing location; Oxford scored highly in an array of categories for the annual fDi Magazine report on Europe's Top Cities and Regions of the Future for 2022/23 and Oxfordshire's sector strengths have been highlighted in Department for international Trade (DIT) sector propositions – including artificial intelligence, medical technology and space;

We are the home to innovative and resilient businesses, based in the UK's key high-growth sectors, and are well placed to be a key contributor to the future economic success of the UK economy – see Why Thames Valley. However, there are challenges and risks to growth and productivity as the labour market continues to tighten and acute and chronic skills needs continue.

Now in its sixth year, the TVCC's Business Manifesto (BM), sets out a dynamic, business-led, strategic work programme with clear and ambitious goals and objectives that speak for many across the region. The BM is supported by a local policy priority statement for Oxfordshire which in 2022 placed an emphasis on skills, including the ambition to

Foster stronger business-focused relationships with all levels of education, to build a greater understanding of the world of work and the skills and knowledge required of business for its future workforce

Our plans and work have impact and demonstrate that TVCC is successfully providing the independent voice of business. The Business Manifesto has delivered – and will continue to deliver - a clear, articulate, business-led set of policy priorities that can continue to help drive real change for the better.

1.1 TVCC Business Manifesto Priorities and the Role of the LSIPs

The TVCC's 2023 BM, as yet unpublished, will set our four main priorities for the Chamber's work programme:

1. **Secure investment in resilient infrastructure and utility networks**: promote the continued investment in key digital and transportation networks to ensure they remain resilient to the future needs of business.
2. **Expand the depth of our support and services to enable trade and inward investment flows to continue:** provide our members with the relevant, direct, practical support and policy information required to operate efficiently and effectively.
3. **Delivering regional leadership:** support initiatives and promote the contribution our members are making to deliver the region's future sustainable economic well-being, productivity growth and pathway towards net-zero.
4. **Put employers at the centre of the skills system and build a stronger and more dynamic partnership between employers and further education providers**: through our leadership of two Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs).

The 'working Thames Valley' theme within the BM outlines further the TVCC priorities across the important skills agenda for our members, wider business community and the economic growth and potential of the Thames Valley – our workforce remains our greatest asset.

1.2 LSIP Guidance

The LSIPs are a process for change as well as a report. In developing the LSIP, the DfE stipulates that Employer Representative Bodies (ERBs) should engage all the relevant local stakeholders including local employers, providers, LEPs and other agencies.

The Skills for Jobs White Paper set out an ambitious employer-led approach aimed at making FE provision more responsive to local skills needs and ultimately local economic needs. As part of this new approach,

HMG are introducing LSIPs to give employers a stronger voice in shaping local skills provision working closely with FE providers and engaging effectively with local leaders and other stakeholders.

The aim is to forge a stronger and more dynamic partnership between employers and FE providers that will enable provision to be more responsive to skills needs of employers in local labour markets. LSIPs will do this by providing a clear articulation of future skills need and setting out the priorities for change in local provision that will help people develop the skills they need to get good jobs and increase prospects.

The development of the LSIP in Oxfordshire will build on the effective collaborative network of stakeholders and engagement with employers that benefits from the strengths of the Chamber as well as the specific LSIP engagement work led by the Chamber since 2021.

2.0 OUR LSIP AMBITIONS AND APPROACH

The most important word in the LSIP programme title is ***improvement.*** The Chamber values the strength and current successes of Oxfordshire's existing policy and skills strategy infrastructure and provider networks. The LSIPs are an opportunity to add value.

The LSIP in Oxfordshire will:

- **Engage businesses directly and through their networks to input needs and insights to the shaping, implementing, and updating of the LSIP plans**
    - To undertake a range of agreed activities, communications, and interventions to engage businesses for discovery, learning and analysis of the needs, obstacles, and solutions for improving skills take up and development.
    - Through such activity to seek to understand the underlying causes of any lack of skills progression and productivity within the businesses.
    - To agree gaps in skills needs and provision.
    - To collaboratively design solutions with providers and businesses
    - And engage the business community and providers in effective feedback loops throughout the stages of the LSIP project and report publication.

The LSIP programme will utilise the Chamber's unique position as the ***regional independent voice of business*** and its ability to use the strength of the Chamber network through, for example, Local Chamber Advisory Groups (LCAGs), business-led sector groups, specific consultation responses, events, digital events and inclusive engagement with employers through our partnerships with other agencies and organisations.

As the designated ERB, the Chamber will drive a process that will sense-check what we already know (or think we know) and find out what we do *not* know about skills and the barriers or obstacles for employers to identify improvements, broker collaboration and design solutions.

To do this, we will establish a new ***Thames Valley Skills Unit (TVSU) within the TVCC***. This will be a new resource, charged with the responsibility of impartially leading the LSIPs for both Thames Valley Berkshire and Oxfordshire. We will ensure each area's distinct needs are met, as well as identify when collaboration across borders can bring greater benefits and economies of scale. Ultimately, the Skills Unit will serve employers and broker strong engagement with business, providers and other stakeholders.

The work of the LSIPs and the new TVSU will be overseen by the Oxfordshire and Thames Valley Berkshire LSIP Advisory Panel. This will be employer-led and include provider, LEPs and other stakeholder representatives. Each LSIP will be overseen and interrogated separately. It is intended to convene one LSIP Advisory Panel to aid identification of congruences and collaboration across sectors as well as respond to the providers across Berkshire and Oxfordshire who are coming together as one Project Meeting, across county borders, to manage the Strategic Development Fund (SDF) work.

The aim is to reach employers, not just communicate- so that employers engage and feel engaged- to create a ***shared understanding of skills challenges and solutions*** across the business and skills provider communities. This also means strong engagement with providers and other stakeholders. This shared understanding will not be simple or easy. It will consist of many conversations, debates and feedback loops. From our work with business-led sector groups, experience informs TVCC that we anticipate assumptions may be challenged, myths will be busted and not everyone will agree all of the time.

Improvements and change will only come about when we come together as ***communities of practice*** and develop strong relationships that can identify practical and real solutions.

Phase 1

We intend to drive an ***intensive period of engagement*** over the next few months to June 2023. This first phase of the LSIPs will include secondary research to assimilate and evaluate the excellent work and intelligence that already exists as well as primary research to engage with employers of all sizes, across our sectors. This engagement work will use a variety of methodology (digital and face-to-face) and will approach employers and businesses in a range of innovative ways informed by best-practice research, benefitting from existing Chamber fora as well as partners.

This initial piece of work will culminate in the publication of the Oxfordshire LSIP in June 2023.

Phase 2

During the second phase, from June 2023 to March 2025 the new Thames Valley Skills Unit will lead work to ***keep the LSIP relevant and used***, forging relationships and conversations to implement skills solutions that arise from the LSIP.

The work does not finish with the publication of the LSIPs. The Skills Unit will help to accelerate improvements, identifying the practical and financial obstacles and resulting solutions to ensure employers are able and willing to take up skills opportunities from providers.

3.0 THAMES VALLEY SKILLS UNIT- THE LSIP TEAM

The LSIP Team will jointly work on both Berkshire and Oxfordshire LSIPs. As such, economies of scale and efficiencies have been planned.

Phase 1

The team will be augmented in Phase 1 by consultant support and strategic advice to ensure the project can be put into operation as soon as possible, and that the work can flex to meet the intensive demands of the first few months.

This consultant support will also be directed to coach and develop the new Skills Unit Team as the LSIP work matures in both Oxfordshire and Berkshire.

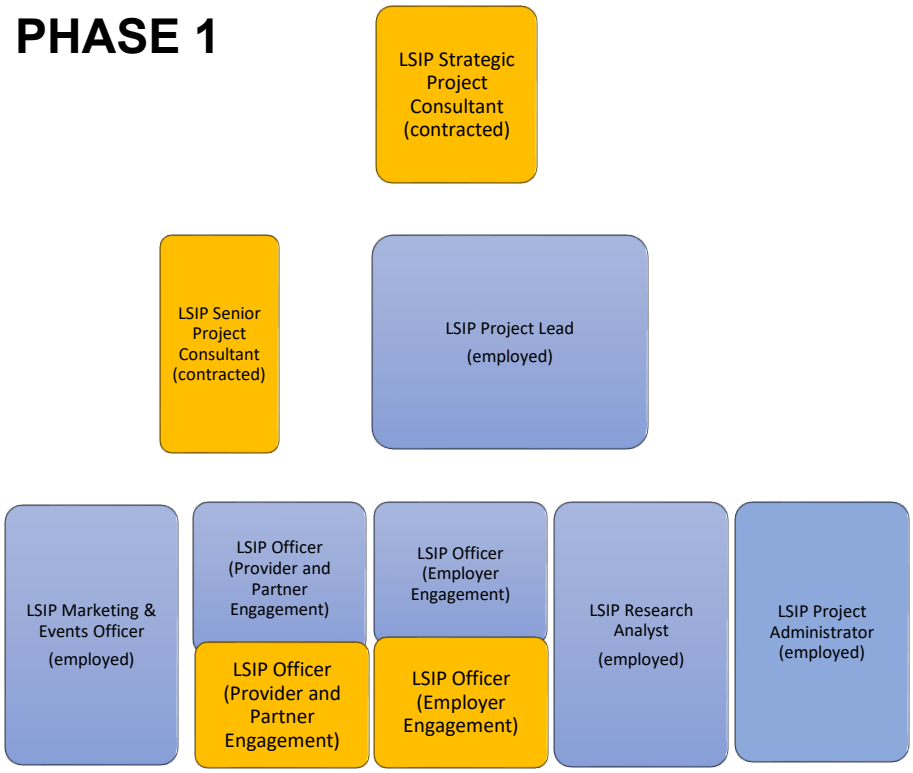
The directly employed team will be recruited as soon as possible and be in place, fixed-term for the duration of the project until March 2025. These comprise in summary:

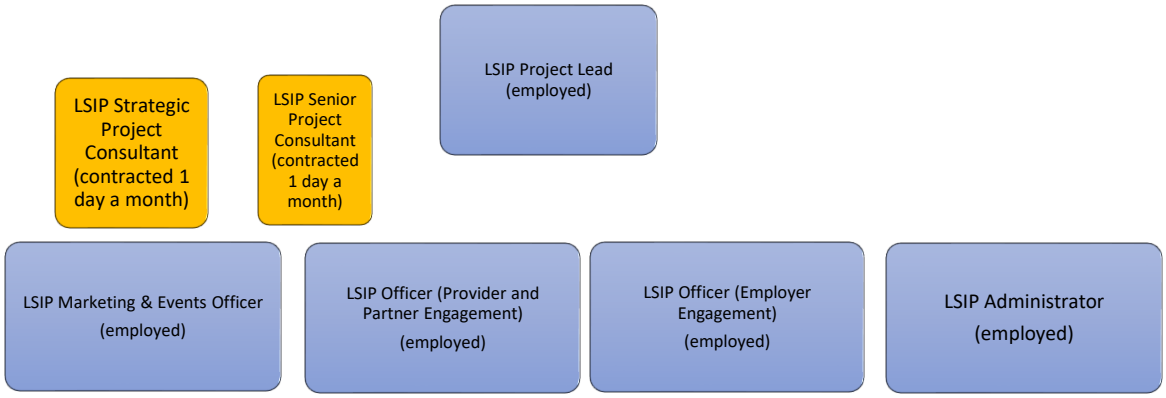
- LSIP Project Lead
- LSIP Marketing and Events Officer
- LSIP Officer (focus on provider and partner engagement)
- LSIP Officer (focus on employer engagement)
- LSIP Research Analyst
- LSIP Administrator

In addition, contracted consultants and resource will be used to augment the intensive period of Phase 1. These comprise in summary:

- LSIP Strategic Project Consultant
- LSIP Senior Project Consultant
- LSIP Officer (focus on provider and partner engagement)
- LSIP Officer (focus on employer engagement)

The following organogram does not illustrate line-management relationships. It sets out the roles and responsibilities in relation to the LSIP project only during Phase 1 and Phase 2.





Roles and Responsibilities

In summary, the contracted senior consultants (LSIP Strategic Project Consultant and LSIP Senior Project Consultant) will provide strategic advice, support and direction to design and implement the LSIPs. This includes the input of specialist expertise in skills, curriculum and workforce development, and project management, funding and audit compliance. In addition, these roles will provide coaching and mentoring support to the other members of the LSIP Project Team to build capacity and knowledge in the new Thames Valley Skills Unit. These contracted roles will focus on Phase 1 work and provide much reduced support during Phase 2.

The Chamber will recruit an experienced Project Lead and recruit new employees to fulfil the operational aspects of the project including employer, provider and partner engagement. These roles will be part of the new Thames Valley Skills Unit and the postholders will benefit from the coaching, support and strategic leadership of the consultant support.

In addition, during Phase 1, and to provide sufficient capacity and flexibility during this intensive piece of work, further contracted resource will augment the capacity of the Unit. These contracted roles will be discontinued in Phase 2 (except for a small number of continuing days).

4.0 PROJECT PLAN AND WORKSTREAMS

4.1 Deliverables Year 1 (based on published LSIP guidance)

Stage A- Articulating employers' skills needs

Identification, aggregation and prioritisation of the skills and training needs of employers.

Broader perspective on local economic needs and drivers

Stage B - Translating employer demands into provision

These should be aligned, where appropriate, with Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) occupational routes and pathways.

Providers to understand how these can be taken forward.

Identifying existing provision of which employers are unaware

2023 LSIP only – need to use draft priorities to feed into Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF) proposals and Accountability Agreements/plans

Stage C: Addressing learner demand and employer engagement:

Developing the demand on the learner side through Careers Education Information Advice & Guidance providers (CEIAG), Job Centre Plus (JCP) and employers' offers

LSIP Report

Part 1: LSIP priorities

Part 2: Taking forward the LSIP priorities

Part 3: Delivering the LSIP Priorities

Annex: Background and Method

4.2 Sub-Plans

Following considerations of these deliverables that have been stipulated by the project funder, the DfE, a delivery plan is in place and the following workstreams will be implemented in Phase 1:

- **Governance and Compliance**
- To establish and agree credible and meaningful governance structures through the Advisory Panel that ensure the independent voice of business
- To ensure coherence with existing Chamber governance structures and compliance with the funder's requirements
- To create and embed strong processes to ensure adherence to audit and funding requirements.
- **Research**
- To establish a baseline position sourced from secondary research of available reports and data
- To test assumptions and establish skills priorities
- To establish robust design principles for the engagement and research that will inform the LSIPs
- To design and test credible and innovative methodologies to engage hard-to-reach businesses in a meaningful dialogue
- **Marketing and Business Engagement**
- To promote the role of the LSIPs across Berkshire and Oxfordshire to stimulate interest in engagement
- To engage a wide range of businesses in a community of practice for the LSIPs
- To design and implement a wide range of activities and events, based on the design principles established in the research workstream, to ensure meaningful feedback and dialogue are gathered from businesses and employers.
- To undertake a range of agreed engagements and interventions working with employers and partners to provide discovery, learning and analysis of the needs, obstacles, and solutions for improving pertinent skills delivery.
- To engage employers in effective feedback loops throughout the stages of the LSIP project and report publication
- **Provider Engagement**
- To design and implement a wide range of activities and events, based on the design principles established in the research workstream, to ensure meaningful feedback and dialogue are gathered from providers
- To undertake a range of agreed engagements and interventions working with skills delivery partners to provide discovery, learning and analysis of the needs, obstacles, and solutions for improving pertinent skills delivery.
- To engage skills delivery partners in effective feedback loops throughout the stages of the LSIP project and report publication.

The following diagrams illustrate the responsibilities and outputs of the delivery plan, and a logic change model for the LSIP process.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND OUTPUTS FOR THE DELIVERY PLAN

OVERSIGHT AND QUALITY ASSURANCE:

THE LSIP ADVISORY PANEL- The role of the Advisory Panel will provide strategic oversight and direction to ensure that both the Oxfordshire LSIP and the Berkshire LSIP achieves their objectives as set out by the DfE guidance.

CONTRACT COMPLIANCE, MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

Senior Project Consultant

DELIVERY PLAN LEADERSHIP, QUALITY ASSURANCE AND MONITORING

Strategic Project Consultant

PLANNED OUTPUTS

To ensure all plans and funding claims are eligible and related to the LSIP programme and are managed effectively for the benefit of employers and the area

SUB-PLAN: GOVERNANCE

Senior Project Consultant

SUB-PLAN: RESEARCH

Senior Project Consultant

SUB-PLAN: EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT AND MARKETING

Project Lead

SUB-PLAN: PROVIDER AND PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

Project Lead

PLANNED OUTPUTS

LSIP ADVISORY PANEL ESTABLISHED

To oversee mobilisation and engagement of a range of relevant employers, providers, and other stakeholders to take forward the actions as outlined in section 5 of the guidance and to develop the LSIP report as set out in section 6.

STAGE A- ARTICULATING EMPLOYERS' SKILLS NEEDS

A broad perspective of the labour market

A set of high-level outcomes reflecting the priority skills needs

STAGE B- TRANSLATING EMPLOYERS' DEMANDS INTO PROVISION

Providers to understand how these can be taken forward.

Identifying existing provision of which employers are unaware

2023 LSIP only – need to use draft priorities to feed into LSIF proposals and Accountability Agreements/plans

STAGE C- ADDRESSING LEARNER DEMAND AND EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

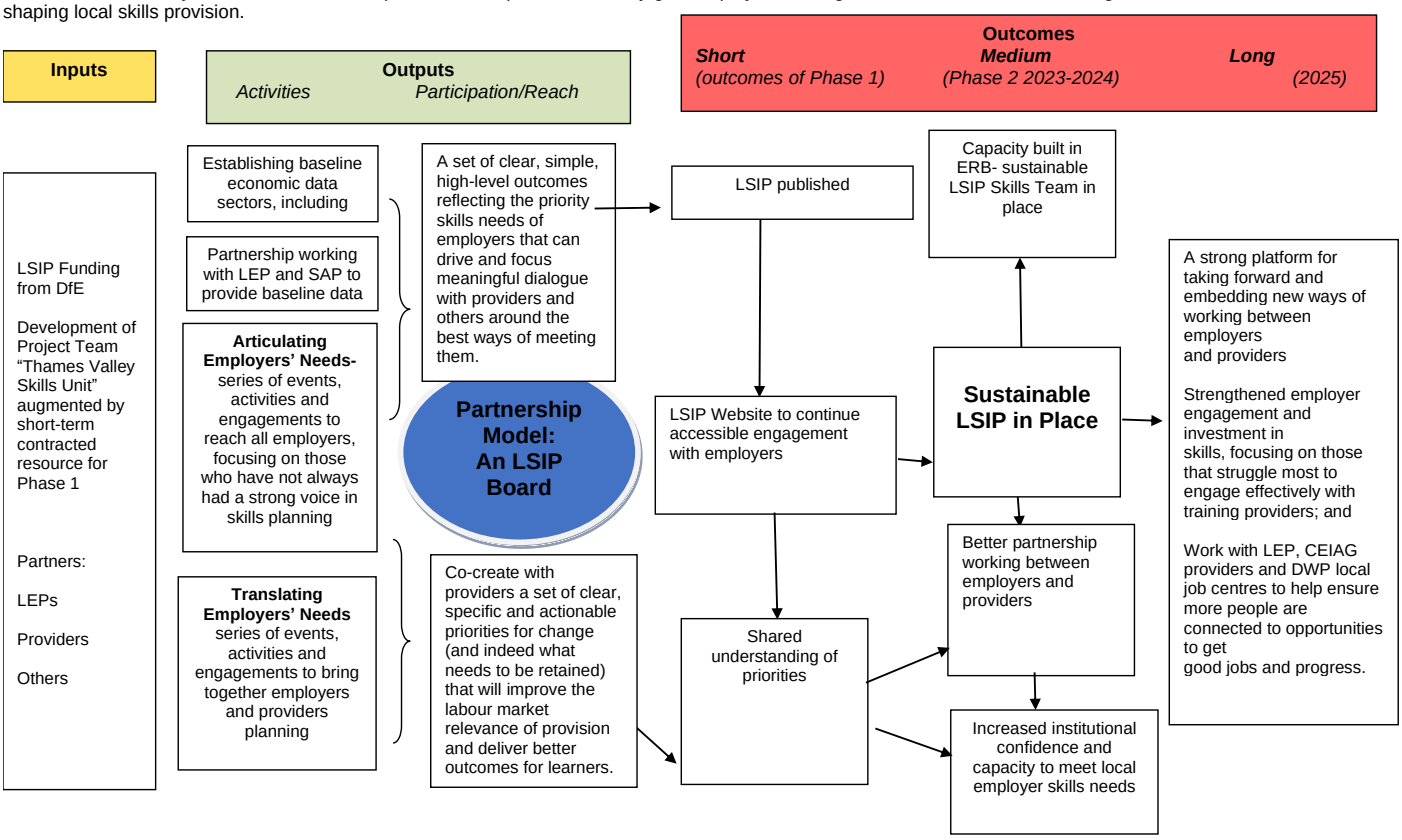
Developing the demand on the learner side through CEIAG, JCP and employers' offers

Phase 1 Output (June 2023)- establishing strong platform of relationships

LSIP REPORT PUBLISHED JUNE 2023

LOGIC MODEL OF CHANGE: The Berkshire LSIP (Phase 1)

Situation: LSIPs will set out the key priorities needed to make technical education and skills provision more responsive to the changing needs of employers and the local economy. LSIPs are different to previous skills plans in that they give employers, through local ERBs, a clear and strengthened role in shaping local skills provision.



Rev. 7/09

Appendix 2 Briefing 2 November/December 2022

The Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce LSIP: Oxfordshire

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2022 UPDATE

We are pleased to announce that Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce has been chosen to run the Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIP) across Berkshire and Oxfordshire until March 2025.

This is our second briefing document.

Introduction

The Berkshire and Oxfordshire Local Skills Improvement Plans are a three-year review of skills provision against the current and future needs of businesses, funded by the Department of Education (DfE).

We will work with employers, education and training providers and other local partners to identify priorities for change to ensure post-16 technical education and training better prepares employees for the modern workplace. We are inviting employers to actively shape their future workforce.

The Oxfordshire and Thames Valley Berkshire LSIPs Advisory Panel

We are delighted to announce that an employer at a leading Pharmaceutical and biotechnology company, has agreed to chair The Oxfordshire and Thames Valley Berkshire LSIPs Advisory Panel, a governance group to oversee the development of the Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) and ensure that the process and report is truly employer led.

The purpose of the LSIPs Advisory Panel is to oversee and support successful development and delivery of the LSIPs for both Oxfordshire and Thames Valley Berkshire, working with the Project Team in the new Thames Valley Skills Unit, providers, and other stakeholders.

The intention is for the LSIPs to be developed and implemented in a way which takes stakeholders with us, working in genuine collaboration and cooperation in the best interests of both areas, and ensuring that it is genuinely employer led, while working constructively with the range of stakeholders.

The Thames Valley Skills Unit

To drive forward the LSIPs, the Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce has established a new Skills Unit. We are delighted to introduce our new team members:

- LSIP Project Lead
- LSIP Marketing & Events Officer
- LSIP Administrator
- LSIP Engagement Officer
- Strategic Project Consultant
- LSIP Senior Project Consultant

We are still recruiting and will be announcing more exciting news in this space soon.

Emerging Skills Priorities

This brief document sets out our emerging identified skills priorities that we are currently exploring with partners.
The Berkshire and Oxfordshire Local Skills Improvement Plans are a three-year review of skills provision against the current and future needs of businesses, funded by the Department of Education (DfE).

The first areas we will be focusing on in Oxfordshire are:

- Construction
- ICT
- Health and Care
- Life Science
- Hospitality and Visitor Economy
- Low Carbon
- Digitalisation

Priorities will be refined further over the coming months according to feedback.

How to Get Involved

You can choose to feedback via a short chat with our Engagement Officers, participating in our research (more details to be announced shortly) or by attending one of our events.

Your answers will be passed on anonymously as part of the process of change to help build talent and skills for your sector and business.

How can I find out more?

Please contact us on tvberkslsip@tvchamber.co.uk or tvoxonlsip@tvchamber.co.uk

Appendix 3 Terms of Reference- Advisory Panel

The Oxfordshire and Thames Valley Berkshire LSIPs Advisory Panel

Terms of Reference

The Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce (TVCC) has been designated the Employer Representative Body for Oxfordshire and Thames Valley Berkshire areas. The TVCC has established this Panel to provide direction and support the development of the Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIP).

The Panel will oversee the development of the LSIPs in both Oxfordshire and Berkshire.

The purpose of the Panel is to provide feedback from an employer perspective to oversee and support successful development and delivery of the LSIPs for both Oxfordshire and Thames Valley Berkshire.

The intention is for the LSIPs to be developed and implemented in a way which takes stakeholders with us, working in genuine collaboration and cooperation in the best interests of both areas, and ensuring that it is genuinely employer led, while working constructively with the range of stakeholders.

1. **Purpose**

The Panel will provide feedback, oversight, and direction to ensure that both the Oxfordshire LSIP and the Berkshire LSIP achieve their objectives as set out by the DfE guidance.

Engage businesses directly and through their networks to input needs and insights to the shaping, implementing, and updating of the LSIP plans

- To undertake a range of agreed activities, communications, and interventions to engage businesses for discovery, learning and analysis of the needs, obstacles, and solutions for improving skills take up and development.
- Through such activity to seek to understand the underlying causes of any lack of skills progression and productivity within the businesses.
- To agree gaps in skills needs and provision.
- To collaboratively design solutions with providers and businesses
- And engage the business community and providers in effective feedback loops throughout the stages of the LSIP project and report publication.

The secondary role of the Panel will be to oversee and direct collaborative effort and work across borders, aided by its oversight of both LSIPs. This will drive collaborative working, synergies, and economies of scale.

LSIP Governance

- To form a Panel that oversees and influences the recommendations and content of the Oxfordshire and Berkshire LSIPs
- To recommend the final draft LSIP reports for approval and publication to the designated Employer Representative Body (ERB) via the Chamber Board and Department for Education.
- To monitor both project plans
- To monitor agreed milestones to develop the LSIPs, including the publication of the LSIPs in June 2023
- To monitor impact measures for the LSIPs including:
  - ✓ Relevance – does the project effectively connect with all relevant stakeholders in the region with the desired potential benefits
  - ✓ Effectiveness – have the LSIPs effectively identified skills gaps, opportunities, and priorities in both areas, as well as potential remedies to be considered
  - ✓ Impact – have the LSIPs effectively identified potential remedies to be considered
  - ✓ Sustainability – identifying the key aspects of making change and following through with oversight of action and implementation
  - ✓

2. Term

This Terms of Reference is effective from January 2023 and continues until the completion of the LSIP projects- March 2025.

3. Membership

The Panel will be chaired by an employer representative

The Panel will comprise of:

8-12 Representative employers (including both areas, SME and corporate, and representing priority sectors). NB these will be Chamber members and non-members

1 representative of the designated ERB- the Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce

1 Representative of the statutory FE sector (SDF Project Group)

1 Representative of Private Training Providers

1 Representative of the Thames Valley Berkshire LEP*

1 Representative of the OxLEP*

1 Representative of Berkshire Local Authorities

1 Representative of Oxfordshire Local Authorities

* The LEP representatives will be asked to form a link with the continuing Skills Advisory Panels (SAPs).

Where applicable, members are expected to represent the views of the group they represent, while ensuring that any potential conflict of interest is effectively managed. During the meetings and in their Advisory Panel role all members are expected to operate in the best interests of the LSIPs.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce is the contract holder for both LSIPs and the designated ERB and has full financial responsibility for the LSIPs' contracts. As such, this is an advisory panel and, while the Chamber will take full cognisance of the views of the Panel, final decisions will always lie with the Chamber.

The Panel is responsible for:

- Providing independent, impartial oversight
- Fostering collaboration
- Maintaining the focus of the project on the agreed scope, outcomes, and benefits
- Providing direction and support delivery
- Review and comment on implementation and delivery plans and progress
- Ensuring activity covers the requirements of the LSIP Guidance

The membership of the Panel will commit to:

- Represent the interests of the range of stakeholders and, in particular (where this applies) the Group(s) they represent, and to feed back to those groups
- Support the LSIPs' Project Team in identifying and mitigating key relevant delivery risks
- Wholeheartedly champion the LSIPs' projects
- Provide effective, impartial, and independent oversight of both LSIPs, regardless of which area they have an affiliation with and regardless of their own business or sector interests
- Make timely decisions and take action so as to not hold up the project
- Attend all meetings and if necessary, nominate a proxy

Members of the Panel will expect:

- That each member will be provided with complete, accurate and meaningful information in a timely manner
- To be alerted to potential risks and issues that could impact the project, as they arise
- Open and honest discussions

5. Meetings

All meetings will be chaired by the appointed employer representative

A meeting quorum will be 4 members

Meeting agendas and minutes will be provided by the Strategic Project Consultant and Project Lead. This includes:

- preparing agendas and supporting papers
- preparing meeting notes and information

We will aim to circulate papers at least five working days in advance of meetings but given the short timescale for the project this will not always be feasible.

A note of each meeting (recording key points of discussion, decisions made, and actions agreed) and an action log will be produced and maintained by the Project Team.

6. Meeting Frequency

The intention is that meetings will take place around every 8 weeks until June 2023. The frequency of meetings may then decrease after the publication of the LSIPs.

6. Conflict of Interest

It is the policy of Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce (TVCC) to maintain principles of openness, fairness, and impartiality and to avoid conflicts of interest in relation to the Thames Valley Berkshire and Oxfordshire Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs).

Although the Panel does not have any direct financial decision-making responsibilities, it does have a significant influence on the LSIPs' reports, project activities and recommendations. It is therefore essential that any member who may have a pecuniary or non-pecuniary benefit from any discussions or decisions declares those at the outset (through the Register of Interests) and again prior to any relevant discussion to enable potential conflicts to be recognised and managed appropriately.

7. Publicity and Speaking on Behalf of the LSIP Projects

All publicity and comment relating to the LSIPs must be agreed by the Strategic Project Consultant, Project Lead or Chamber CEO in advance to ensure that we meet Department for Education requirements and reflect the best interests of the LSIPs' projects.

8. Confidentiality

Feedback and comments provided by individual groups, organisations, or businesses in developing the LSIPs should be treated as confidential unless clearly stated otherwise. While this is intended to be an open and inclusive activity, we need to be aware of potential sensitivities and so only drafts provided for sharing should be shared.

Appendix 4 Conflict of Interest Policy

Funded by Department for Education

THAMES VALLEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE GROUP

LSIP OXFORDSHIRE SHAPING THE FUTURE WORKFORCE

LSIP BERKSHIRE SHAPING THE FUTURE WORKFORCE

LOCAL SKILLS IMPROVEMENT PLANS' CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

Policy statement

It is the policy of Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce (TVCC) to maintain principles of openness, fairness, and impartiality and to avoid conflicts of interest in relation to the Thames Valley Berkshire and Oxfordshire Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs).

Why is a policy necessary?

This policy is to protect the interests of TVCC and its work as the designated Employer Representative Body for the Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs).

It is a requirement of the DfE LSIPs' Grant Funding Agreement Terms that formal procedures are set up to manage conflicts of interest.

In the regular course of business, agents, Advisory Panel members and TVCC employees may have the opportunity to advance their own personal interests with or against the interests of the LSIPs. Acting in such a manner is unacceptable and must be avoided.

This policy seeks to ensure that all relevant interests are disclosed and that all individuals working for or on behalf of TVCC on the LSIPs for Thames Valley Berkshire and Oxfordshire comply with this policy and raise any matters of concern.

Scope and applicability

This policy applies to all individuals working for or on behalf of the TVCC whether permanent, fixed term or temporary, and wherever located, including consultants, associates, contractors, seconded staff, casual staff, agency staff, volunteers, agents, sponsors, and any other person who performs services for or on behalf of the Chamber, (collectively referred to as "Workers" in this policy). In the context of the LSIPs this also includes members of the Thames Valley Berkshire and Oxfordshire LSIPs' Advisory Panel and any other employers and stakeholders' organisations undertaking work on the LSIPs, whether paid or unpaid.

What is a conflict of interest?

A conflict of interest is any situation where TVCC, as Designated Employer Representative Body, or one of our Workers, engages in any activity or obtains any financial, economic, or other personal interest (directly or indirectly), which might (or might be perceived to) compromise their impartiality and independence in the context of performing the LSIP activity.

A conflict of interest can occur when an individual or organisation is put in a situation or circumstance that impacts their ability to apply impartial and independent judgement or act in their role in relation to the LSIP, or could be, impaired or influenced by a secondary interest. Even if the individual or organisation does not actually benefit, a conflict can still occur if it appears a decision may have been influenced. The perception of competing interests, impaired judgement or undue influence can also be a conflict of interest.

Some examples of what could constitute a conflict of interest to be declared by a participant are as follows:

- A family member being employed by the DfE
- a close relative being a member of a stakeholder on the Advisory Panel
- Any gifts or hospitality offered and received in connection with the Grant Activities
- The provision of training or other training interests or relevant activity in the local area

This list is not exhaustive.

Communication of the Policy and Record keeping

This policy will be circulated to all of those in Scope above, together with a *Register of Interests Form*. We will request all of those listed in Scope, to complete a *Register of Interests Form* at least annually and to update this immediately should anything change. They should also raise any concerns or potential issues as they arise.

These Registers of Interest will be retained by the TVCC. As the Designated Employer Representative Body, we will publish this Conflict-of-Interest policy and maintain a Register of Interests.

Managing conflicts of interest

We will take all reasonable steps to avoid conflicts of interest while at the same time achieving the most effective engagement with and input into the Berkshire and Oxfordshire LSIPs, taking advantage of the knowledge and expertise available.

The terms of reference for the Advisory Panel clearly articulate the position as follows:

“Although the Advisory Panel does not have any direct financial decision-making responsibilities, it does have a significant influence on the LSIP reports, project activities and recommendations. It is therefore essential that any member who may have a pecuniary or non-pecuniary benefit from any discussions or decisions declares those at the outset (through a Conflict-of-Interest form) and again prior to any relevant discussion to enable potential conflicts to be recognised and managed appropriately.”

We will not therefore necessarily exclude people or organisations from a discussion, depending on the nature of and outcomes sought from that discussion. We will monitor to ensure that no one uses their position inappropriately and will ensure that actions agreed do not give them an unfair advantage.

People may be excluded from a discussion or decision making, however, in certain cases.

Responsibilities and raising concerns

The prevention, detection, and reporting of actual, potential, and perceived conflicts of interest is the responsibility of all those working on the LSIP. All Workers are required to avoid any activity that might lead to, or suggest, a breach of this policy.

Workers must notify the TVCC, as soon as possible if it is believed or suspected that a conflict of interests exists, may exist, may be perceived to exist, or may occur in the future.

All Workers are aware that they are responsible for the success of this policy and should ensure they use it to disclose any suspected danger of or actual wrongdoing.

If any Third Party is aware of any activity by any Worker which might lead to, or suggest, a breach of this policy, they should raise their concerns with the TVCC.

As the Designated Employer Representative Body, the TVCC must notify the Department for Education "without delay of any situation constituting or likely to lead to a conflict of interest". TVCC must also immediately take all necessary steps to rectify the situation. As the Designated Employer Representative Body, we must also comply with any additional measures that the Department for Education may require.

Sanctions

Any employee or contractor who breaches this policy may face disciplinary action. We reserve our right to terminate our contractual relationship in terms of the LSIP with non-employee Workers if they breach this policy. This includes non-contractual relationships in terms of work on the LSIP.

If, as Designated Employer Representative Body, we are unable to reasonably satisfy the Department for Education, in respect of a conflict of interest, the Department for Education may remove the designation.

Communication

All Workers will be briefed on this policy, which will also be made available publicly on the Thames Valley Berkshire and Oxfordshire LSIPs' websites.

Monitoring and review

TVCC monitors the effectiveness and reviews the implementation of this policy at appropriate intervals, considering its suitability, adequacy, and effectiveness. Any improvements identified are made as soon as possible. Internal control systems and procedures are also subject to regular review to provide assurance that they are effective in countering any risks of issues arising from actual or potential conflicts of interest.

Appendix 5 Template for Guiding Employer Conversations

Template Guiding Employer Conversations

What specific skills and training needs do you currently have?
(Skills they can't get and training they can't access which providers need to be running)

What roles are you finding it hard to recruit to?
(Get to specific occupational level – see Priority Occupational Roles and Skills – Meetings and Engagements folder on Teams)

What future skills and training needs might you require in the next 3-5 years?
Try to get to the courses they feel providers should be running in the future)

What future roles might you need to be recruiting to?

What skills and roles will be needed to get to a net zero economy in your sector?
(What training will be needed for these)

What digital skills needs do you have now or might have in the future?
(What training will be needed for these)

Do new employees in your sector need more employability skills? If so, what are these?
(possible ideas: Critical and innovative thinking /Inter-personal skills e.g., presentation and communication/ Intra-personal skills e.g., self-discipline, enthusiasm, perseverance, self-motivation, etc./ Global citizenship (e.g., tolerance, openness, respect for .../ Media and information literacy such as the ability to locate and access information, as well as to analyse and evaluate media content)

Appendix 6 University of Reading

Introduction

- This summary presents the findings from a 3-month research project, commissioned by the Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce (via KWP) to help inform and develop appropriate Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) for FE providers in the Thames Valley (Berkshire and Oxfordshire).
- The overall aim of the project was to investigate the perceived skills that employers think are essential for workers to have gained through further education, training, and prior experience for employment. Through this research, it is hoped to highlight whether employers think these skills are lacking, identify any perceived obstacles and offer solutions for improving skills take up and development in the further education sector, as well as seeking to understand the underlying causes of any lack of skills progression and productivity within the business sector in Berkshire and Oxfordshire.
- To achieve these aims, data were collected from focus groups with employers (n=17), an online survey (n=100), and follow up interviews with a range of employers from the Thames Valley area (n=14).
- The findings suggest that, in general, technical job related skills are not perceived to be as important as more generic transversal skills such as communication, time management, and team working.
- The majority of employers felt that prospective and current employees did not have the necessary skills to meet current business objectives. The reasons for this can be grouped into key areas such as employees needing more work experience, requiring a better up to date curriculum and better career advice from educational and training providers, and needing better developed transversal skills such as people and time management, resilience, and more positive attitudes to work.
- For mid-level employees, as well as technical skills highlighted for specific roles, transversal skills were highlighted as being important including leadership and project management skills, compassion and understanding, reflecting the more senior nature of mid-level employees which may include supervisory positions.
- For both entry and mid-level roles, it is clear that employers overwhelmingly think that these skills should be gained through a mix of both education and prior experience.
- While employers perceive the unresponsiveness of educational institutions or a lack of suitable courses/training on offer to be a key for both groups, for entry level employees they perceive barriers relating to the attitudes, perceptions and expectations of individuals as being almost equally important.
- For both entry and mid-level roles, the majority of employers felt that there needs to be closer collaboration between employers and educational establishments to help overcome the barriers identified above.
- In exploring what skills employers felt would be important for the future, key themes emerged around what can broadly be termed technical digital skills (including artificial intelligence and software engineers), social media engagement (marketing etc), construction/engineering skills, managing different views in a diverse society, and the ability to manage time and work remotely (flexible working practices).

Aims and Research Questions

The research project aimed to investigate the skills that employers think are essential for workers to have gained through further education, training, and prior experience for employment.

Therefore, the main research question (RQ) was:

- What are Berkshire and Oxfordshire employers' perceptions and experiences of the essential skills workers should have gained through further education, training, and prior experience for employment, including obstacles to attainment and possible solutions?

To answer this main RQ, the following sub-questions were posed:

1. What skills do employers think that workers should have gained through further education, training, and prior experience for employment ?
2. Do employers think that these skills are lacking and, if so, what obstacles do employers think prospective workers face in attaining these skills and what solutions do they have for improving skills take up and development.
3. Do these perceptions differ between employers from different types and sizes of organizations, and, if so, how?

Research Design

To address the research questions highlighted above, the study used a three stage, mixed methods research design:

- **In stage one, we undertook online focus groups (via Teams) with a range of business leaders (n=17) in the Berkshire and Oxfordshire areas to identify key themes and emerging issues to be explored with a wider sample in stages two and three of the project.**
    - A total of 12 focus groups were offered in January 2023 for each of the Berkshire and Oxfordshire areas:
        - 2 x micro business/sole trader (0-9 employees)
        - 2 x SME (10-249 employees)
        - 2 x large business (250+ employees).
            - Final uptake/ participants: n=17
                - <u>Oxfordshire:</u>
                    - *micro business: 1*
                    - *SME: 2 (incl. 1 training provider)*
                    - *large business: 2 (inc. 1 training provider)*
                - *<u>Berkshire:</u>*
                    - *micro business: 1*
                    - *SME: 2*
                    - *large business: 9*
    - Questions were developed from an initial literature review and from discussions with stakeholders (see appendix 1 for a copy of focus group schedule).
    - The focus group interview schedule was piloted before use.
    - Data were analysed using established thematic analysis techniques to highlight key themes to be explored through stage two and three of the project (see below).
- **In stage two, we surveyed just over a hundred business leaders throughout both regions (n=100) using Online Surveys:**
    - The survey questions were developed from the findings from stage one of the project (see appendix 2 for a copy of the online survey).
    - The survey was fully piloted before distribution.
    - At the end of the survey, participants indicated whether they are prepared to volunteer to be interviewed as part of stage three of the research project (see below).
    - The survey data sets were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics to allow for key patterns and trends to be identified (for example between different types and sizes of businesses) and followed up in stage three of the project (see below).
- **In stage three, we conducted follow-up individual online interviews with a range of business leaders (n=14) to explore further emerging themes and issues highlighted through the survey analysis**:
        - Final participant breakdown:

        - Oxfordshire:
            - *micro business: 1*
            - *SME: 5*
            - *large business: 2*
        - *Berkshire:*
            - *SME: 4*
            - *large business: 1*
        - *Berks/Oxon*
            - *Large business: 1*
        - *Greater London*
            - *Micro: 1*
    - These participants were identified from the survey.
    - These interviews were semi-structured and carried out via Teams (see appendix 3 for interview schedule).
    - These data were analysed using established thematic analysis techniques.
- The data from stages two and three were then compared and analysed.
- The study adhered to the normal ethical principles that guide educational research: prior to data collection, a full application was made to the University of Reading Ethics Committee. Following ethical approval being granted, all participants were also given an information sheet which set out the aims of the project and highlighted key ethical concerns such as informed consent and anonymity. Furthermore, all interviewees were asked to sign a consent form beforehand, agreeing to the interview and for it to be recorded. The survey also included a detailed front sheet highlighting the aims of the project and key ethical concerns to ensure informed consent.

Conclusions

Skills for employment

- Our findings suggest that for **entry level employees**, technical job-related skills are not perceived to be as important as more generic transversal skills such as communication, time management, and team working. Other important skills identified were linked to specific roles such as driving, machinery maintenance, and software development, alongside more generic themes which can be grouped under the umbrella term of transversal skills such as problem solving and self-awareness.
- Only 6% of employers felt that prospective and current employees for **entry level positions** have the necessary skills to meet current business objectives. The reasons for this can be grouped into key areas such as employees needing more work experience, requiring a better up to date training and better career advice from educational and training providers, and needing better developed transversal skills such as people and time management, resilience, and more positive attitudes to work. Resilience was the skill that most employers perceived **entry level employees** were lacking.
- For **mid-level employees,** as well as technical skills highlighted for specific roles, transversal skills were highlighted as being important including leadership and project management skills, compassion and understanding, reflecting the more senior nature of mid-level employees which may include supervisory positions.
- Only 17% of employers felt that prospective and current employees for **mid-level positions** have the necessary skills to meet current business objectives. The reasons for this can be grouped into key areas such as employees needing more continuous updating/upskilling, leadership development in preparation for taking on more supervisory roles, and developing transversal skills such as confidence and emotional intelligence in order to take on such roles successfully. Employers perceive **mid-level employees** are lacking key technical skills but leadership and related skills were also highlighted as needing development.

- There were relatively few statistically significant differences between types of organisations, but those that did exist largely involved the 'Manufacturing' group. Employers in that area tended to rate more people-focused or 'soft' skills less highly than other groups.

Where should these skills be gained from?

- For both entry and mid-level roles, it is clear that employers overwhelmingly think that these skills should be gained through a mix of both education and prior experience. They also highlighted the importance of schools, FE colleges, or other education providers in this process for entry level roles, and professional development/training through work for mid-level roles.

Barriers

- While employers perceive the unresponsiveness of educational institutions or a lack of suitable courses/training on offer to be a key for both groups, for **entry level employees** they perceive barriers relating to the attitudes, perceptions and expectations of individuals as being almost equally important. Other barriers identified were related to the pandemic and not been given enough opportunities to experience what workplace expectations might be.
- Reasons for this for **entry level employees** can be grouped around educational providers needing to prepare young people for the work place (e.g. curriculum not appropriate, inflexibility of training), and key transversal skills that need to be developed such as confidence, self-esteem, commitment and having a positive attitude. For **mid-level employees**, key themes emerged around skills needed in workplace, a lack of appropriate in house CPD/training, family/home life related issues impacting on job roles, and leadership development required for supervisory roles.

Solutions

- For both entry and mid-level roles, the majority of employers felt that there needs to be closer collaboration between employers and educational establishments to help overcome the barriers identified above. Other key themes emerged around more up to date/relevant content in education/training, more flexible ways of gaining appropriate skills, allowing for more work experience opportunities, and developing more regular meetings/communication between education and business.

Skills for the future

- For the future, employers felt that IT skills would be the most important skill, with transversal skills such as time management/organisation, communication, and resilience still being perceived as key. Key themes emerged around what can broadly be termed technical digital skills (including artificial intelligence and software engineers), social media engagement (marketing etc), construction/engineering skills, managing different views in a diverse society, and the ability to manage time and work remotely (flexible working practices). Interestingly, green skills were not especially highlighted across all three data sets.

Appendix 7 Sample Notes From Engagements

Summaries of Findings from Employer, Provider and Partners Engagement Events, Berkshire

Construction and the Built Environment

Roles Employers are Finding it Hard to Recruit

- Plastering (both traditional and using new materials which plaster and insulate simultaneously)
- Bricklaying
- Ground maintenance
- Electricians
- Plumbers
- Business Admin

Technical Skills and Training Needs

- Retrofitting – there's a need for an apprenticeship in this, not just shorter qualifications like NVQs.
- The management of retrofit projects
- Fire and security systems training for electricians.
- Need for a wider range of traineeships to prepare some people for apprenticeships.
- Mentoring/Ambassador training
- Training on End Point Assessment
- Domestic insulation and cladding installation
- Equality and Diversity awareness training
- Health and Safety training e.g., SSST and SMST
- Site Management training
- Conversion courses for foreign workers (e.g., Ukrainians)
- Clearer progression to degrees in construction for apprentices
- Leadership and management skills training
- Coaching skills
- Use of Artificial Intelligence
- Digital skills such as the use of tablets on site, use of digital platforms for capturing work, remote working, working in the 'metaverse', ability to access and use on-line training packages.
- Energy efficiency/carbon literacy so that tenants can then be advised in this.
- Ground and air source heat pumps – installation and repair.
- Installers and engineers for other heating systems which provide an alternative to traditional gas/oil boilers – these are due to be phased out by 2027.
- Thermal imaging
- Scaffolding
- Professional development programmes for current staff – e.g., mentoring skills, teaching skills, might encourage more of them to come into training.
- Could there be more built into construction apprenticeships, such as employability, mentoring, E&D, managing upwards.
- There's a real need for IT and Business skills in the sector – these students need to be made aware of the opportunities that exist for them.
- Training providers and employers need to work closely enough to ensure students get the specific skills needed for their current and future roles. Secondments for teaching staff might help here, to keep training fully up to date.

Employability Skills Needs

- Numeracy and literacy – particularly for those on electrical training programmes
- Social skills – communication, dealing with the public.
- Team working
- Use of social media in a work context
- Working independently
- Problem solving
- Interviewing well/job applications/presentations

Wider Discussions

- Work needs to be done on making the industry more appealing to a much wider range of students.
- The culture of the industry needs to move forward, to better meet the needs of current and future generations. This includes work on wellbeing, mental health support, more flexible working, wider benefits.
- Need for better careers advice around the range of opportunities available in the industry.
- T-Level work placement difficulties – health and safety concerns/taking a worker out to look after the student.
- Brexit and its impact on worker availability, transport/logistics and availability/wait times for materials.
- Need for greater flexibility in training programmes, so new techniques can be built in, and wrap-around modules added, as new processes come on-line.
- Physical nature of the work and the possibility of greater robotics to help with this in the future and the implications of this.
- Need for the industry to get much better at promoting itself and attract a wider range of skills.
- Need for continuing and much more frequent collaboration and communication between providers and employers – this needs facilitating in some way as soon as possible.
- Providers are in real need of more teaching staff, particularly those with up-to-date industry skills. They also need greater flexibility to meet the training needs of a fast-moving industry. They'd like to be able to collaborate directly with the relevant trade bodies to create programmes which meet their needs.
- Larger companies are increasingly providing their own training in house, both to keep people up to speed and to help develop and so retain them.
- There could be value in a 6-monthly skills summit for each county – a formal way of bringing employers/ERBs together with providers for updating on local skills needs and provision.

Transport & Logistics

Roles Employers are Finding it Hard to Recruit

- Custom Clearing Agents
- General labouring – clearing containers.
- Roles that allow products to get from A to B – HGV drivers.

Technical Skills and Training Needs

- Digital skills
- Knowledge of Excel
- Use of Artificial Intelligence
- There's a real need for IT skills in the sector – these students need to be made aware of the opportunities that exist for them.
- Big data, Edge computing, data production and translation for use

- Mentoring/Ambassador training
- Equality and Diversity awareness training
- Health and Safety training
- Leadership and management skills training
- Coaching skills
- Professional development programmes for current staff – e.g., mentoring skills, teaching skills, might encourage more of them to come into training.

Employability Skills Needs

- Basic digital literacy skills
- Knowledge of Excel
- Social skills – communication, dealing with the public.
- Problem solving
- Interviewing well/job applications/presentations

Wider Discussions

- Want local employers to be more engaged - careers fairs, work experience etc.
- Less use of unknown acronyms/jargon in the industry – or a crib sheet for providers/lay people to better understand the industry and its needs.
- Better visibility from employers – routes/pathways through the sector
- Employers to promote the opportunities, training, and progression available within the sector.
- Low Carbon - All agreed that having a published policy is good for recruitment, though the industry itself is on a journey but must demonstrate a meaningful agenda.
- Importance of educating parents/careers advisors so they have current/up to date knowledge/information about the sector.
- Health & Safety/liability insurance – won't/can't have those under 17 in warehouse distribution.
- More understanding of the sector from earlier age – in school.
- More work experience programmes to highlight sector earlier, show possibilities.

Care

Roles Employers are Finding it Hard to Recruit

- Support workers – for adults with complex needs
- Support workers for residential social care
- Chefs
- General Maintenance role – require multi skilled people.
- Care Home Activity coordinator
- Nurses
- Managers – with all necessary skills rather than people being over promoted.
- Office staff

Technical Skills and Training Needs

- Modular training to support specialist skills such.
- Diabetic training
- Training to support residents with epilepsy
- Midazolam injections
- Registered Manager Training
- CPD Modules to ensure Registered Managers understand continued developments and changes instigated by Care Quality Commission
- 'Cultural awareness training' for overseas recruits

- One employer has recruited 20 employees on the Health and Care Visa scheme, these employees have excellent language skills and are often qualified nurses but require training on cultural awareness (local colloquialisms).
- Oliver McGowan training to better support people with a learning disability and autistic people
- Changes in needs (residents getting older – different skills needed)
- Mobility training
- Fall Management
- IDDSI training
- Drug and Alcohol training (tackling substance abuse) level 3 and above
- Need to respond to changing requirements of CQC (raised above with regards to Registered Managers this was raised across all employees)

Employability Skills Needs

- Emotional Intelligence/compassion
- Communication skills
- De-escalation training
- Perception
- Observations
- Report writing skills.
- Self-awareness training
- Mental Health first aid
- General digital skills
- Customer services – understanding customers with complex needs.
- Resilience
- Flexibility

Wider Discussions

- Funding for Registered Manager training is ending in May 2023. Who will provide and fund the training in the future?
- Currently not using local colleges for CPD training, some is delivered online, or they bring in 3rd parties or delivered internally. One employer is accessing remote training through Frimley Integrated Care Board, but view is that CPD training was not available locally (both Berkshire and Oxfordshire)
- Change in age profile of residents is changing the skills required of employees.
- Concern by one employer that FE Colleges are not promoting career routes in adult social care or residential care but focused on routes through NHS.
- FE College curriculum should be developed to include:
- Mental health first aid
- Situation management – managing emotive situations.
- Creative thinking
- Texture modification (the employer noted that this is taught in catering courses delivered by the FE College)
- Food Hygiene certificate
- Delivering meaningful activities in social/residential care setting
- One employer had had students and work placements in, however even when students are being used there are many things they are unable to do – insurance?
- People withdrawing after jobs offers.
- People wanting to work from home.
- Issue of people being overpromoted or being appointed into roles which they are not ‘qualified’ for in terms of experience.
- Challenge of recruiting people who then move very quickly once they can demonstrate experience – moving into roles with LAs and NHS which pay more.

- How can we work with NHS and LAs to all promote vacancies across the wider sector?
- Mixed response on digital skills but some desire for training in basic IT skills for older workers (more around inputting information)

Health and Life Sciences

Roles Employers are Finding it Hard to Recruit to

- Cell biologists
- Engineers
- Sample managers
- Health and Safety roles
- Digital Engineers
- Data Programmers
- Dispatch & Logistics Roles
- Production Scientists
- Vector Scientists
- Containment (level 5)
- Cryogenics
- Nurses
- Entry level roles
- Higher level roles in STEM
- Data Analytics
- Cardiology
- Good chemists with practical skills
- Employees with good line management skills
- Accountants
- Facilities management
- Immunologists
- Lab technicians
- Machine technicians/maintenance
- Bio Safety
- Security staff
- Cleaners
- Process Engineers
- Diagnostic equipment practitioners
- Data analysts
- Recognition from employers that they are talking here about roles which are traditionally graduate roles. Also, recognition that not all these roles need graduate entry and that employers should to be encouraged to review job and person specifications. Could employers work with FE to develop entry level training routes for some of these roles.

Technical Skills and Training Needs

- Stat skills
- AI – knowledge and benefits of use
- Automation
- Intermediary Digital training
- Diagnostic equipment usage
- Employer spoke about the challenge of sourcing specialist training locally. Recognition that more generic training like business admin is easy to source but specific life science training is difficult to source.
- Example given that the degree apprenticeship in Chemistry delivered in Greenwich will now be delivered in Kent.
- RSSL are using Nottingham University for Food Science Apprenticeships

- Oxford University Hospital Trust had previously used Oxford Brookes but now sourcing training out with Oxfordshire.
- ‘We need local universities to offer the degrees that the NHS needs’.
- Oxford Brookes does a Bio medical degree, but could they offer this as an apprenticeship
- Need for the sector to work collectively as the challenge can be making this kind of training viable for providers.
- Most roles above are graduate or somewhere between A level and degree status so not much of an issue with relevant courses for those applying, new to the workplace.
- The word ‘apprenticeship’ can turn people off from upskilling, despite some levels being equivalent to degree. Not enough use of apprenticeships within companies to upskill sufficiently.
- Point was made that FE providers offer courses to address the management and business skills to follow process post grad, but companies weren’t necessarily aware that colleges can deliver to all ages without the absolute need to be in a classroom scenario.

Employability Skills Needs

- Lower-level numeracy
- CV writing
- Application writing
- Interview skills – Don't need to give specific example of ‘caring’ for someone – employer wants to know about you (transferable skills such as speaking about working in shop shows –customer service skills)
- Teamwork
- Communication
- Critical thinking
- Younger employees have theory, but lack practical – due to covid/pandemic, employees struggle to do the job practically.
- Ability to follow protocol/process procedures.

Future Growth

- Growth of roles in wet labs
- None perceived as scientists are needed in person.
- Machine technicians

Barriers & Potential Solutions

- Easy access to work experience
- Better transport links
- Short/online courses to suit different lifestyles/ages.
- Better use of levy options
- Enthuse people to the science sector at primary school age.
- Lack of science teachers
- Cost of living in Oxon and Berks
- Recognition that employers will need to look at widening participation. Life Science companies need to look at alternatives to degrees.
- Apprenticeships are one solution but not the answer for everyone.
- Fast track courses that develop practical skills are needed.
- Do you need a degree to do certain occupations, comment from an employer was that sometimes it is easier to recruit people with no skills and then train them.
- On employability skills there was recognition that employers need to be part of the solution. Only 20% of students are getting industrial work placements.

Wider Discussions

- Affordability – in Oxfordshire many organisations have a pot that levy money is put into and it can then be used to support students – e.g. Given a £2,000 stipend towards studies, in this way those companies that don't have apprentices but pay towards the levy can 'gift/share' their contribution with those that need it.
- Graduates have been trained to work in the industry but when they get into the job, they need to be taught critical thinking skills.
- Developing knowledge younger would be beneficial –NHS Ambassadors
- A number of organisations spoke about the expansion of the sector.
- Harwell will grow from 6,500 employees to 15,000 employees.
- RSSL are looking at substantial growth.
- For higher level roles, they are often recruited more globally as people UK based find the area too expensive to live in.
- Struggling to fill spaces for PHD courses due to cost-of-living etc – stipends not enough.
- Develop knowledge of sector/roles earlier – interest children younger.
- More needs to be put in place to make the sector attractive to those with disabilities – some roles may not work, but employers could do more to work around/support disabilities to draw people into roles.
- Bootcamps for Digital/Life Sciences were discussed – these were employer driven – will run for 16 weeks. For NHS this will be 70% funded.
- Previously there were lots of groups e.g. LEPs, private trainers, etc offering the same/similar options, working towards each group focussing on a specific so that a range of skills/training was taking place and covered all gaps, but then Covid happened and it seems to be going back to same things covered by many groups.
- There are often vocational routes to many jobs – a degree/Ph.D. is not necessarily needed initially. The example was given of someone who had the 'right attitude/approach' taken on and worked his way up, then later when he could go no further went back and got the PHD much more easily as had the knowledge/exp to back it and could then continue to progress.
- Nursing Associates only need maths/English, this can then be converted/put towards next stage of training.
- Degrees that are broader and then specifics can be taught on the job.
- Thinking of the future – new ways/synthetic product development/research
- More work placements earlier -potentially in Year 10/12
- Medical apprenticeships are in place – how can they be moved/used in the local area.
- Questionnaire/quiz to help people find out what they may be good at.
- I am……. Returning to work, starting my first job, in my 30's, changing career….
- I like ……. Interest, hobbies, good attributes
- With links to employers, courses, knowledge etc to help you find a pathway.

<u>Carbon neutral</u>

- Not much to be said about this as it's a carbon heavy industry, though the sites themselves are working hard on usual measures.

<u>Digitisation/tech</u>

- Automation of, for instance, measurement of solutions, pipette transfer
- Potential AI for slide recognition/diagnostics though still unproven

<u>Digital Roundtable</u>

Roles Employers are Finding it Hard to Recruit

- Digital Marketing
- Digital Analyst

- Project Manager – doesn't need specific ICT skills.
- Project Co-ordinator – doesn't need specific ICT skills.
- Marketing Manager
- Riggers (in data centres)
- Electricians
- Project Managers with wireless experience
- Engineers

Technical Skills and Training Needs

- AI
- Python
- Titan
- PHP
- C Sharp
- React skills.
- Goal (programming language development by Google) - future

Employability Skills Needs

- Knowledge/Understanding of how to work from home/remote working.
- Home set up, sitting position.
- Need to be aware of the background/challenges that young people face – some are not work ready due to circumstances outside of their control – also the role of an employer to contribute to the readiness of the employee.

Wider Discussions

- Current recruitment issues include – employees not being trained to the right level, the industry is not seen as a 'female' industry' - very male dominated, people not wanting to leave their current employment, people wanting higher salaries than a role commands, niche roles that are difficult to fill.
- Only 10/15% are women.
- Data centres draw people from many organisations to 1 building – lots of opportunities there.
- Share data from council including results of DIG survey.
- Essentially the demand exceeds the supply for many roles and jobs.
- The workforce needs to represent the community it works within.
- Grow and develop the current workforce.
- There is a need to take knowledge out to the primary and secondary schools to broaden the knowledge of young people and the opportunities.
- More hybrid/remote working – in the future will this mean more or less people?
- How to get people trained to the right levels.
- Need to continuously educate people.
- Be on the pulse!
- AI – companies are beginning to ask for it already.
- Change and new technologies are happening at great speed, there is already a waiting list for certain things/training.
- Cloud deployment is a way of utilizing green skills.
- Businesses look to see how large companies such as Amazon and Microsoft are working towards net zero.
- Looking at the efficiency of the data centre and supply chains.
- Looking at those with environmental engineering background.

Hospitality and Tourism

Roles Employers are Finding it Hard to Recruit

- Waiters
- Chefs
- Chef de partie
- Assistant restaurant manager
- Spa manager
- Sommelier
- Front of house staff
- Night receptionists
- Maintenance
- Grounds/greenkeepers (allied)
- Drivers (allied)

Technical Skills and Training Needs

- Mentoring skills
- Managerial training
- Mental Health First Aid Training/Additional Needs Training

Employability Skills Needs

- Willingness to learn.
- Enthusiasm
- Being able to work in a busy environment.
- Time keeping
- Natural customer service
- Doing a role and smiling while doing it
- Communication
- Social skills
- Resilience
- Confidence

Wider Discussions

- Mindset of the parents often impacts young people – at careers fairs parents' direct children away from hospitality – it's seen as a 'short-term' job role rather than a career.
- CV – tell the history of a person not necessarily what they are looking to do now/next. A covering letter explaining why they've applied, what their next steps/passions are helps to make decision. – otherwise, someone looking at a career change might get pre-judged as not being the 'right' fit as people will expect them not to want to work weekends, etc. Having a direct email to send CV to is also useful.
- Perception of hospitality is - long hours, weekend work, stop gap job while looking /training for something else.
- There is always an issue with apprenticeship content keeping up with industry needs.
- Industry Maths pertinent to their particular role (e.g., chef weighing and measuring, front of house working out a bill, middle management/purchasing on profit v cost of produce). Less about quadratic equations or Pythagoras more real-life maths, even basic use of a spreadsheet would be helpful.
- There has been a lot of overpromotion in the industry, leading to shortages for lower level roles

- ‘Ding culture’ – skills are being lost where restaurants mainly use the microwave to reheat pre-made food. Chefs don’t know how to make a basic sauce.
- Work experience and industry placements should be compulsory for students so that they can build confidence and skills needed for workplace – this is more challenging now though as restaurants/hotels often work with reduced staff so don’t have the time to oversee a student.
- Curriculum needs to reflect what is ‘need to know’ in the industry. Maths and English requirements for apprenticeships can be a barrier to entry where the employee may have a learning difficulty. Maths and English tuition should be tailored to the needs of the industry.
- Lack of clear structure for career progression – driven by the individual (‘knocking on manager’s door’) rather than being something actively promoted by educators and employers.
- Suggested a partial relaxation of restrictions on employment permits for 15–16-year-olds as this limits their ability to get work experience in hospitality sector and could help fill shortages in lower-level roles.
- Education providers should work more closely with onsite cafes/bars/restaurants to secure work placements and part time roles for students.
- Lower-level roles are a struggle to recruit for.
- Employers value on the job training/experience most.
- Salaries/expectations of quick career progression are a challenge to recruiting good staff. Employee needs to put in time to reach next level, not expect to move up just because they have been there a while.
- Technical skills can always be taught.
- Employers to be more visible and engaged at younger levels to inspire and give real life examples e.g., “started as bar staff now GM of hotel manager”.
- Explain to students that whilst you may have a degree or qualification in xyz you still need the experience of every aspect of the industry in order to progress (realistic expectations)
- Employers to be more visible and ask the questions of local providers and Chambers.
- Potential for non-EU but rest of world candidates to fill pipeline via visa and sponsorship schemes.
- Employers to offer flexibility, to an extent, barriers being that not all needs can be encompassed.
- Stigma around the word apprenticeships which seems almost offensive to those looking to upskill at a more mature stage in life/career.
- Employer becomes interviewee – sustainability, values of the company.
- Better use of socials to engage with target audience for employment.
- Potential to work together with other hospitality employers – an employee may not be suited to 5star establishment but could work in a 2- or 3-star organisation very successfully.

Manufacturing & Engineering

Roles Employers are Finding it Hard to Recruit

- Production line operatives
- Mechanical and Electrical Engineers
- Mechanical Analyst
- R&D roles
- Process engineer
- Polymer Process technicians
- Embedded electronics engineers
- Maintenance/design operatives

Reasons for Shortages

- Tight labour market
- Salaries requested not sustainable.
- Cost of living in Oxfordshire
- Transport issues for young people
- Lack of trainers available to providers

Current Solutions Being Used to Fill Recruitment Gaps?

- International recruitment
- Reviewing Job descriptions to remove barriers to applications e.g., requirement of degree.
- Working with schools and colleges
- Recruiting on attitude/skills rather than experience
- Develop talent in-house.
- Remove semantics around the word ‘apprenticeships’.

As Employers Can You Source Relevant Courses?

- Generally, yes but would like more flexibility in provision e.g., shorter courses and evening options.
- No, SMEs are struggling with finding resources to dedicate to undertake searches on websites without a dedicated HR person for example, looking for a trusted ‘agent’ to point them in the right direction.

Barriers to Training

- Confusing landscape needs to be simplified and more flexible.
- Employability skills talked about were communication, listening, teamwork.
- Also mentioned were continuous improvement and leadership and management.
- Lack of teaching staff highlighted by Abingdon and Witney College
- Much discussion around the need for better careers advice around jobs in engineering – what types of roles are available, how to excite people to join the industry. The importance of stressing key skills of problem solving and having a curious mind rather than specific job roles.

Wider Discussions

- Apparently, the Irish education system works very well, they have adopted the American SAT system (essentially psychometric testing)
- Companies looking to keep a high risk (as in doesn’t fit the boxes) student, means that the provider loses funding if they leave traditional education even though the firm wants to keep them and train them.
- There should be a more menu-based approach. For instance, if an engineering company needs the core skills but can find a course that has also offered ‘working at height, working within a hospital, in a school environment’ which all need separate training and licenses, no other specific qualifications required other than core.
- Some companies are developing their own training plan because industry needs move more quickly than curriculum change.
- FE providers accept that the curriculum is a slow-moving beast but is written by the same big names who have the time and resources to add to the conversation, better funding to allow SMEs to engage in those conversations, given they are the ones who mostly take on the trainees, only to be poached by someone with bigger budgets, would be helpful in the region.
- Lobby for just one lesson a term on all things STEM.

- Get work experience earlier, to be funded by experience outside of school, to enthuse even last year of primary or first year at senior, sow the seed, early. Smaller companies can enthuse with their facilities, but schools cannot afford the minibus and staff per head.
- Could education providers consider bolting on industry accreditations, such as working at heights, safeguarding when working in schools, safeguarding when working in hospitals, all of which have different certifications.

Appendix 8 Sample List of Employers

Oxfordshire Employers Engaged in the LSIP

3BHire

Airdri

Aston Productions

Barclays Eagle Labs

Belmond

BP Collins LLP

Burgandy Computing Ltd

Cherwell Laboratories

Chris Lewis Group

Compound Eye Ltd

Darcica Logistics Limited

Darke and Taylor

David Medhall Surveying & Photography

Drone Major Group

Dynamic Coach

European Space Agency

EV Carshop Ltd

Frank Wright Ltd

Hays Accountancy

Home Instead Oxford

Jennings of Garsington

John Sisk & Son Ltd

Konnect Solutions Ltd

LCMB Build Performance

Leonardo Royal Hotel Oxford

Lions Logistics

Look Ahead

Lynn Palmer Architects Ltd

Moderna Biotech Uk LImited

NHS

OUH NHS Foundation

Oxford BioMedica Plc

Oxford Bus Company

Oxford Direct Services

Priddey Marketing

Raw Pictures

Sabe Technology Limited

Sanctuary

Sensyne Health

Skanska UK

Smith Robotics

Snowdon Consulting

STFC Innovations Ltd

SureCare Oxfordshire

Swanwood Productions

The Alchemist Oxford

The Close Care Home

The Order of St John Care Trust

Thomas Franks

Tokamak Energy Ltd

Ultraviolet films

Wild Property Consultancy

White & Company PLC

White Horse Plastics

Vertex Pharmaceuticals

Vodafone

Vorticity

Yarnton Home & Garden