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Leicester and Leicestershire Trailblazer Local Skills Improvement Plan

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Introduction

The Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) for Leicester and Leicestershire presents an opportunity to **think differently** around how education and training offerings align with the needs of business.

The Plan, created in collaboration with a broad range of stakeholders, adopts a new approach to **understanding and framing** the requirements of employers. It makes recommendations for improvements and presents a series of practical actions to get us there.

The plan is detailed in four sections:

- 1. Strategic Overview**
- 2. Specification of Employer Needs**
- 3. Recommendations**
- 4. The Roadmap for Delivering Change**

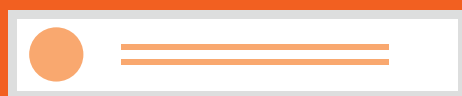
This Trailblazer LSIP for Leicester and Leicestershire has been produced by the East Midlands Chamber, one of eight employer representative bodies testing an employer-led approach to skills planning. This will help the Department for Education (DfE) determine how best to rollout LSIPs across the country. It is the DfE's intention that the employer voice articulated in this plan should help inform the decisions of local skills providers and inform relevant future funding bids. This LSIP will be a starting point for any future Plan produced under a national roll out of the programme.

Introducing the Collective Intelligence Skills Observatory

Sitting behind this LSIP is a new tool that brings together the latest supply- and demand-side skills data. The tool is automated – updating every time a new dataset is released – and consists of primary and secondary source data. The data is presented in a series of reports and dashboards that have been designed for ease of navigation and interpretation. The findings have been tested and verified by businesses and other stakeholders, with the journey through the findings tailored depending on the user perspective.

This tool is called the Collective Intelligence Skills Observatory (CISO) and is intended to be used alongside this document to provide a full and interactive picture of the current state of play for skills in the region. It has been designed to support educators, advisors, funders, awarding bodies, businesses and citizens in making better decisions when it comes to their role within the skills landscape in Leicester and Leicestershire.

1. Strategic Overview



1. Strategic Overview

1.1 Approach

The LSIP for Leicester and Leicestershire takes a new approach to understanding and mapping the needs of employers:

- Rather than attempting to quantify specific roles, it focuses on the **Knowledge, Skills and Behaviour** areas (KSBs) that businesses identify as priorities to meet growth aspirations.
- As far as possible, the data gathering has been **automated** and brought together into a single place where it will continue to be automatically updated as the source material is refreshed. New techniques for primary data gathering have been developed, with **app-based surveying** used to engage a greater range of businesses over a continued period of time.
- The approach to developing recommendations and actions emphasizes **Collective Intelligence** – shared or group intelligence arrived at via a collective effort.

Collaboration across stakeholders has been a central tenet behind the production of the LSIP as has the democratisation of this process – using technology to make engagement as accessible as possible and automating the process of displaying the results of that engagement.

As a Department for Education Trailblazer, the Plan focuses on three broad sectors: Manufacturing; Logistics; and Sport & Health. A representative Project Steering Group has provided insight, challenge and perspective to the LSIP development. This included members from all parts of the education system and those that exist to support them, including Employer Representative Bodies, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Funders and Awarding and Professional Bodies.¹

1.2 Creating a Collective Intelligence Skills Observatory

The LSIP is supported by a new Collective Intelligence Skills Observatory (CISO). The CISO makes accessible the evidence underpinning the recommendations, allowing users to interrogate it through the lens of their own priorities, target interventions accordingly and map changes over time.

➔ The CISO can be viewed at www.insight-unlocked.co.uk

¹Steering group membership is shown in Annex A.

1.3 Objectives

The LSIP has three objectives:

- To identify the KSBs required to meet employers' growth aspirations, the relative importance of these and how current provision is meeting needs.
- To automate the process of evidence gathering and take a user-led approach to its presentation.
- To identify barriers in the LSIP geography to ensuring training and education meets the needs of employers, make recommendations for how these can be overcome and present an action plan for doing this.

In working to these objectives the following principles have been adopted:

- To **collaborate** with all relevant stakeholders and learn from what has gone before.
- To **innovate** and challenge current ways of working where a better way might exist.
- To ensure activity is **user-led** and easily accessible.
- To develop a model that can be both **sustainable and scalable**.
- To seek **continuous improvement** in the methodology behind this plan.²

1.4 Rationale behind our Approach and Objectives

1.4.1 Why focus on KSBs?

In its simplest terms, a well-functioning economic geography needs to ensure the requirements of the demand-side (employers) are met by the provision of the supply-side (those providing training and education). One of the difficulties in getting this right is the lack of a common taxonomy across both sides, with the word 'skills' often being used as a catch-all term to cover different facets of people-needs.

KSBs provide a well-understood framework amongst educators for the design and development of courses. For businesses, KSBs are less used in understanding requirements. When needs are broken down into Knowledge, Skill and Behaviour areas, this enables a more granular understanding of what is specifically required along with a comparison of the relative importance between these areas.

2. A lessons learned log can be found in Annex B.

By developing a common taxonomy across both the demand and supply side, this allows existing provision to be better mapped against current and future need and any gaps to be easily identified.

1.4.2 Why the emphasis on automation?

Automation enables a real-time picture of KSB supply and forecast demand as opposed to an historical snapshot of a moment in time. This means the impact of actions taken, along with other changes in the economy, can be rapidly assessed and further actions shaped accordingly. This also allows for an iterative and continued approach to improvements over time.

1.4.3 Why choose Manufacturing, Logistics and Sport & Health sectors?

As a trailblazer project the decision was made to take a narrower sectoral focus, with an emphasis on innovation in the approach to understanding business needs as opposed to trying to reach all sectors of the economy. Sectors were selected based on their importance to the Leicester and Leicestershire economy (as evidenced by the Local Enterprise Partnership), existing networks and activity, and the links with the associated Strategic Development Fund bid. Pre-existing LEP research suggests that these businesses collectively employ in the region of 185,000 people and contribute approximately £10bn Gross Value Added to the local economy.

A focus on KSBs has identified cross-cutting areas that are common across all sectors and there is high confidence that they will remain relevant across other sectors also. The automated approach to accessing and analysing data also means that the activity can be readily scaled to incorporate further sectors and geographies as required.

1.5 Process of engagement

1.5.1 Engaging Businesses

A representative LSIP Business panel of 121 businesses was created consisting of 42 Manufacturers, 52 Sports and Health businesses and 28 from the Logistics sector, with an emphasis on those that previously have not engaged in similar exercises. Further details on business size and geography are provided in the Business survey report.³

Individuals from each of the businesses were encouraged to download an app onto their mobile phones where they received short daily questions (Monday-Friday) throughout January and February 2022. Questions were themed around business confidence, investment, required knowledge, skills and behaviours. Latterly, the questions were used to test emerging findings and shape recommendations, followed by roundtable discussions with participants.

Taking this approach enabled sustained engagement over a longer period as well as the ability to compare trends across time and seek further information on emerging issues. The use of technology enabled the analysis and presentation of the findings to be automated in line with the project objectives.⁴

3. www.insight-unlocked.co.uk/business-survey-report.html

4. A list of businesses engaged can be found in Annex C.

1.5.2 Engaging Further Education Colleges and Providers

Further Education Colleges and other providers were engaged with via a range of mechanisms including a series of one-to-one meetings, collective meetings and through membership on the Steering Group. Further Education College representatives for specific sectors attended sector project groups, held on a regular basis. In addition, the LSIP project team have spoken at several Association of Colleges Network events, as well as National Conferences, Webcasts and local Provider groups.

1.5.3 Engaging Wider Stakeholders

In line with the principle of being transparent, sustainable and scalable a number of stakeholders outside of the immediate area were engaged in the production of this Plan, including the neighbouring D2N2 LEP and the Midlands Engine.

Potential future partners for continued development of the CISO were also engaged, including LinkedIn and EMSI Broken Glass at a strategic level, along with other third-party representation groups via British Chambers of Commerce.

In addition to the businesses directly engaged with the project, the work was also engaged with several Employer Representative Bodies including the Federation of Small Business (FSB), Make UK, the local branch of the Institute of Directors (IoD) and the Confederation of British Industry (CBI).⁵

5. A full list of stakeholder engagements can be found in Annex D.

2. Specification of employer needs



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2.1 Exploring the evidence base

↻ The assessment of employer needs has taken into account the following evidence bases, all available at www.insight-unlocked.co.uk

- New data accessed from daily surveying of the LSIP Business Panel over a five-week period. The data covers the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviour requirements of the employers over different time periods along with current and future investment intentions, and confidence in existing provision.
- A new analysis of the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviour (KSB) requirements of businesses, mapped against those that are currently on offer. The raw supply-side data was provided by DfE and the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education and the raw employer data by EMSI. The analysis created a common taxonomy of the KSBs within both the qualifications on offer and being attained and those that the different job titles require.
- Data scraped from ONS and DfE sites detailing current qualifications and attainment levels within Leicester and Leicestershire and presented via a new interactive dashboard.

Analysis of the above has been validated with the LSIP Business Panel via further daily surveys and in-person discussions with those businesses.

2.2 A Summary of current and future Knowledge, Skill and Behaviour needs of employers and how they are accessed

↻ Please visit www.insight-unlocked.co.uk to explore the Business Survey Report and Dashboards for further evidence on the needs of employers. The below provides only a summary of the findings.

2.2.1 Knowledge Areas

- Across all sectors, technical and vocational knowledge areas are the **most important** to a business's success. The next four top areas are: Basic literacy; Basic numeracy; Health & Safety; Basic IT.
- The areas **least important** to a business are: Marketing theory; Advanced IT; employment rights; Financial knowledge; Social media, although it is noted that responses would vary more if you drill down into different levels.

- With regards to the types of qualifications, the **most relevant** for logistics businesses are professional body qualifications, apprenticeships and GCSEs. For manufacturers these are degrees, apprenticeships and GCSEs and for Sport & Health businesses, professional body qualifications, degrees and GCSEs.
- Word of mouth, online platforms and recruitment agencies are the **most popular** forms of accessing people with the right knowledge areas. The Sports & Health sector also makes more use of universities. The top reasons given are the volume and breadth of candidates, a deemed high capacity of the provider to meet their needs, cost and convenience.
- Schools, Careers Fairs, ITPs and job centres are the **least popular** forms of accessing people with the right knowledge areas. A perceived low level of training is the main reason for this.

2.2.2 Skill Areas

- Team working is the **most important** skill across all sectors, followed by; verbal communication, specific occupational skills, written communication and time management.
- The areas **least important** are; industry software skills; coding and programming, sales, project planning & management and leadership.
- With regards to the types of qualifications, the **most relevant** for logistics businesses are; professional body qualifications, apprenticeships and non-accredited courses. For manufacturers they are; degrees, apprenticeships and BTECs. For Sport & Health businesses they are; professional body qualifications, apprenticeships and degrees.
- The **most popular** forms of accessing people with the right skills areas are; word of mouth, online platforms and recruitment agencies. The top reasons given is; volume and breadth of candidates, a deemed high capacity of the provider to meet their needs, cost and convenience.
- The **least popular** are; schools, job centre, careers fairs, FE colleges and independent training providers. These are deemed to have; low capacity, low levels of training and a poor volume and breadth of candidate.

2.2.3 Behaviour areas

- Being a team player is the **most important** behaviour, followed by; being hard working, reliable, resilient, and honest.
- The areas **least important** are; being assertive, innovative, polite, eager to learn and self-motivated.
- With regards to the types of qualifications, the **most relevant** for Logistics businesses are; apprenticeships, non-accredited courses, BTECs and professional body qualifications. For Manufacturers they are; apprenticeships, degrees, professional body qualifications. For Sport & Health businesses they are; professional body qualifications, apprenticeships and degrees.
- The **most popular** forms of accessing people with the right behaviours are; word of mouth, online recruitment platforms, face-to-face recruitment agencies and universities. The main reasons given are; good volume and breadth of candidates, high capacity to provide good candidates and convenience.

- The **least popular** forms are; careers fairs, job centre plus and schools. The main reasons given are; low capacity to provide good candidates, low level of training and poor volume and breadth of candidates.

2.2.4 The relative importance of Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours

- Having people with the right Behaviours is deemed the most important for a business's success. This is particularly so for logistics businesses.
- Having people with the right Skills was deemed slightly more important than knowledge.
- In terms of the importance of recruiting Behaviours, Knowledge and Skill areas (as opposed to training them once in post), the gap was larger between the three areas, with behaviour again deemed most important, followed by Skills and Knowledge, suggesting that businesses feel more able to train recruits with the appropriate Knowledge and Skill areas than behaviours.
- In terms of ease of recruitment all areas scored lower than previous answers. Behaviours are deemed to be the easiest to successfully recruit for, followed by Skills and Knowledge areas, however, these latter two scores are both pulled down by Manufacturing businesses, who averaged significantly lower.
- Overall, skills-based qualifications were deemed to be the most important when recruiting, followed by knowledge and then behaviours, with the latter deemed to be less aligned to any specific qualification.

2.2.5 Other observations

All sectors have relatively low levels of confidence when asked about their ability to recruit the people they need to meet their ambitions, with Manufacturers the least confident, followed by Logistics and Sport & Health businesses.

- Approximately one-third believe publicly-funded courses don't meet their KSB needs very well if at all, while just under three in 10 believe they meet their needs quite well or very well.
- When asked how much of the cost they should pay towards investing in training staff there is a wide variation among respondents, although a consistent average across all three sectors of approximately two-thirds.
- When asked how any remaining cost should be covered four in 10 feel Government should fund this compared to three in 10 who thought there should be a specific tax/levy and one-fifth who felt the individual should cover the cost.
- The majority of businesses plan future investment in recruitment over a 6-24 months timescale, although approximately a third plan over a 0-6 months timescale. Very few plan over 24 months in advance.
- When investing in training, the majority plan when or just before the training is needed.

- In terms of how future needs will be met, when asked to rank on a scale of 1-10 how important training, recruitment and automation will be, training scored 7.9 out of 10, recruitment 6.8 and automation 5.9, although this final figure was pulled down by Sport & Health businesses who scored it significantly lower.
- With regards to having the right digital knowledge and skills in place over the next 6 months, 24 months and beyond 2 years, the logistics sector was the most confident, followed by manufacturers then sport & health, although no sector scored more than 6.8 out of 10 overall for any timeframe.
- With regards to having the right environmental knowledge and skills in place over the next 6 months, 24 months and beyond 2 years, the logistics sector was again the most confident, followed by manufacturers then sport & health, although no sector scored more than 7.7 out of 10 overall for any timeframe.

3. Recommendations



3. Recommendations

This section of the LSIP begins by outlining the main issues identified through the evidence review process before moving on to make a series of specific recommendations for changes within the Leicester and Leicestershire skills system. This LSIP has taken a data-led approach to understanding the issues and in doing so there have been separate learnings associated with the current state and accessibility of the data. In line with local and national ambitions, to support the development of this approach in the future a set of data recommendations have been made separately.⁶

3.1 Emerging issues

Issues identified through the evidence review have been grouped under six broad headings:

- **Local Accountability**
- **Curriculum**
- **Structure**
- **Understanding the offer**
- **Continual Professional Development**
- **Capital Investment and Funding**

These have been validated with businesses through a democratised approach using technology and face to face engagement.

3.1.1 Local Accountability

Accountability, and identifying and empowering those well placed to hold the skills system to account, is considered imperative to ensuring improvements in the above areas can be made. However, it is felt that where businesses have been involved previously the measures used to hold others to account, particularly Colleges, are ineffective. Accountability around skills development currently focusses on apprenticeships when in reality these are a small part of what some Colleges do.

Employers are also confused about accountability. Local Enterprise Partnerships had previously had some of this responsibility but they were perceived to have had minimal impact. Ofsted is viewed as the accountability body that had the greatest impact, however, it was felt that inspectors do not understand local business or their needs. Indeed, some of the support required or sought from Colleges is not in scope for Ofsted inspections.

3.1.2 Curriculum

When considering future skills needs few businesses plan more than 24 months in advance, and awareness of future needs around issues such as digital or sustainability agendas is relatively low. A lack of strategic resources within the SME community and continuing external

6. See Annex E.

pressures means that this is difficult to change. This creates challenges for the forward planning of curriculum and training delivery among skills providers, impacting curriculum development, staff recruitment and business and learner engagement.

The relevance of Further Education College curricula content is also an area where some employers feel the offer doesn't align to their needs. Nine out of ten of businesses feel that Further Education Colleges are not in the top three places they would look to recruit from. If Colleges are to better meet business needs, they will need to improve curricula, in some if not all occupational areas. They will also need to make sure that behaviours sit at the heart of training, rather than an add-on or enrichment activity.

As well as technical and vocational Knowledge and Skills, employers still highly value basic numeracy and literacy, along with other more transferable Knowledge and Skill areas, for example, team working. Employers also value the right Behaviours in their employees more than Knowledge and Skill areas.

With regards to types of qualification valued by businesses, there is a fair level of variation across sectors. Apprenticeships are deemed to be relatively more effective when it comes to giving people the Skills and Behaviours required by businesses, but less so for Knowledge. Professional Body qualifications are deemed to be best at providing the right Knowledge for Logistics and Sport & Health businesses, while for Manufacturers, degrees are deemed to be the best across all three areas. For Logistics businesses degrees score relatively poorly for both Skills and Behaviours, whereas Apprenticeships come out strongly.

BTECs were consistently in the middle of the ratings for all sectors when looking at KSB areas, meanwhile, T-Levels are rated poorly across the board, however, this will likely reflect both availability and awareness due to their newness.

3.1.3 Structure

With the exception of elite sport in and around Loughborough, there is little evidence of joined up progression planning between institutions by locality. Recent developments between Leicester College and De Montfort University in delivering part of Office for Students Higher Education Short Course Trial demonstrate how local partners can work together more effectively supported by employer input. However, trials and pilots do not go far enough. Joined up work to provide progression pathways locally should be the norm.

To help and challenge Further Education Colleges to develop an up-to-date and industry-valued training proposition and curriculum, the bodies and structures currently in place are not perceived to be robust or challenging enough. The same structures that are put in place to challenge Colleges could also be used for businesses to better support the development of relevant curricula.

The involvement of small and medium sized businesses in the future arrangements has also been identified as a potential issue unless appropriate and flexible methods of engagement are in place.

3.1.4 Understanding the Further Education offer

One of the strongest messages received has been that businesses do not understand the local Further Education offer, how it is relevant, and how it supports career progression in their sector. The different programme requirements, the commitment and involvement required and benefits of each type of programme are generally not clear to businesses.

The way information is presented by the skills sector, and Further Education Colleges in particular, is felt to be learner centric, and shaped by funding streams, rather than designed to provide employers with an overview of what is available to support the development of their future and current workforces by sector or occupation. Very little understanding of College courses outside of Apprenticeships is evident.

In the cases where businesses have tried to engage with Colleges, communication of the wider offer and its relevance to their business was reported to be relatively ineffective, despite some examples of great customer service and account management of specific programmes.

3.1.5 Continual Professional Development

There is a lack of confidence in the quality of College's training staff, and them having the up-to-date skills to develop the quality or quantity of staff required by industry. However, there is currently limited funding, time or capacity for Colleges to support more CPD for their staff, or the recruitment of educators with the most up to date skills for more advanced and technical roles. Businesses also report having low levels of confidence in Colleges developing the right behaviours in young people, and in some cases it is felt that Colleges reaffirm inappropriate behaviours as being acceptable.

These challenges are compounded by the requirement for Colleges to deliver the statutory training required in the education sector such as Safeguarding and Prevent, putting further pressure on the CPD time available to improve the technical knowledge and skills of educators.

3.1.6 Capital Investment and Funding

Funding levels and rates do not always provide the resources at the right level or in the right places to effectively support the skills sector to meet the needs of businesses and their workforces, or to provide young people with the employability skills or experiences that will prepare them for their future careers. Businesses are largely supportive of sharing the financial cost of developing their workforce, however, this doesn't translate into the current funding mix in the region.

Capital investment in Colleges is perceived historically to have been aligned to their own priorities rather than locality driven or to business or industry priorities. The issue of learner travel and broader connectivity across the region is also often overlooked. To better align investment to either business ambitions or predicted skills gaps and shortage, a clear vision for a locality is required. Strong evidence of a shared and commonly held vision for the city or county is not evident through the research undertaken in developing this LSIP.

Joint local capital investment is seen by many to be key, however, this requires more strategic partnerships between businesses and Educators.

3.2 Recommendations for change

The following recommendations have been created to support the development of candidates better prepared with the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours to meet the needs of employers, and for the Leicester and Leicestershire skills system as a whole to better meet the workforce development needs of businesses.

The LSIP, its recommendations, and those stakeholders it encompasses do not exist in a policy bubble. Some of the recommendations will require additional or redirected external funding for the full impact to be realised. Some also have an interplay with broader policy developments. As far as possible, the recommendations have considered wider activity and developing legislative agendas, while noting not all of this is yet in place.

The skills system locally is not broken and does not require drastic reform. Instead, these recommendations build on the existing Local Enterprise Partnership Skills Strategy and should be viewed alongside this. The recommendations outline a series of specific actions and approaches to ensuring more collaborative, better joined up, responsive provision across Leicester and Leicestershire.

The Recommendations are:

- 1. Create an employer-led Local Skills Accountability Framework and Board for Leicester and Leicestershire**
- 2. Ensure a comprehensive vision for the Leicester and Leicestershire economy is understood and supported**
- 3. Review curriculum design and delivery in line with the local Knowledge, Skills and Behaviour requirements of businesses as evidenced in the CISO**
- 4. Develop a new structure to support greater collaboration among education and training providers**
- 5. Ensure the needs of businesses are reflected in well-communicated local educators' offerings**
- 6. Strengthen educator enrichment activities by linking these with wider place-building activity and funding streams**
- 7. Coordinate Employer Representative Bodies to produce a common set of tools and resources for businesses to better engage with Educators and support Colleges to adopt best business practice**
- 8. Create a new Local Continuing Professional Development Framework for Leicester and Leicestershire educators**
- 9. Align Capital Investment and Funding applications with the future Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours requirements of business**
- 10. Establish a Future Skills Unit for Leicester and Leicestershire**

Further detail on each recommendation is given in the following pages:

Recommendation 1: Create an employer-led Local Skills Accountability Framework and Board for Leicester and Leicestershire

For Leicester and Leicestershire to realise the full benefits of the LSIP and its recommendations, a new Local Skills Accountability Framework, overseen by a Local Skills Accountability Board, must be created. This needs to be employer-coordinated, led by an Employer Representative Body, with the aim of supporting and challenging Educators – and specifically FE Colleges – to establish and further develop their relationships with businesses. This new structure should build upon the existing LLEP Skills Advisory Panel and the membership of this LSIP Steering Group.

To support Colleges and others in responding to this LSIP, it is suggested that new Sector Accountability Boards (SABs) are established. These will form an integral part of the Framework, with a single Board of Employers challenging and supporting Colleges in the development of their sector specific training offer. SABs would replace individual College Advisory Groups or similar arrangements; however, individual Colleges may choose to continue group engagement to support their approach to business development.

The Local Skills Accountability Board should take advice, findings and judgements from the SABs, giving these Boards a mechanism to affect change.

Inclusion of all sizes and types of employers in each SAB is crucial. To support SMEs and microbusinesses to engage, the use of technology must be maximised wherever possible, with the app-based business engagement process used in the production of this LSIP providing a template for this. Technology should also be used to support the challenge process, as well as aid communication with business leaders.

While the development of the Framework aims to drive greater collaboration, collective responsibility remains an important principle within the arrangements.

Recommendation 2: Ensure a comprehensive vision for the Leicester and Leicestershire economy is understood and supported

To support a broadening of the focus of this LSIP trailblazer, a comprehensive vision for the type of economy we want to achieve in Leicester and Leicestershire must be agreed and understood by all relevant stakeholders. Better use of data must underpin this activity. Good work has already been done on this – the LLEP Economic Growth Strategy has previously set out Beacon and Growth Sectors, as well as Key Sectors of Interest. This work needs to be more widely recognised, and the impact of how it plays out at local labour market and town level understood and reflected in local plans.

Recommendation 3: Review curriculum design and delivery in line with the local Knowledge, Skills and Behaviour requirements of businesses as evidenced in the CISO

A more effective and efficient process for developing and reviewing curriculum is required, involving a broader range of businesses than currently exists. This work can build upon lessons learned from the associated Strategic Development Fund pilot activity led locally by Loughborough College. Exploration of the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviour requirements of businesses as presented in the CISO must inform this process and educators should be able to demonstrate how they have reflected this in their offerings. Schools should build their curricula not only around the national curriculum, but ensure the transferable Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours that will be needed in the future locally are developed as far as possible through the school journey. It is acknowledged that for many the 2022/23 curriculum has already been designed, with only minimal tweaks possible. In such cases the priority should be for 2023/24 academic year and Ofsted should be encouraged to refer to the CISO as part of their inspection processes. In the case of Schools, continued work towards the Gatsby benchmarks supported by the Careers Hub will support this.

The mode and type of delivery should also be designed with business and learner accessibility in mind – the current Office for Students Short Course Trial in Leicester provides a good template for doing this.

Colleges should come together with local Universities to agree progression pathways, with consideration given to the preferential selection criteria given to local students keen to follow such pathways. Those pathways and curriculum reviews should be led by the Sector Accountability Boards. Literacy and numeracy for the workplace must feature as part of these pathways.

To help support the development of the behaviours sought by employers, businesses should come together to set up sector-specific mentoring schemes, with business leaders or representatives mentoring a single or group of students to help develop wider business-related and interpersonal skills. In order for such approaches to have the maximum impact, it is recommended that challenges or projects sponsored by local businesses are 'hard wired' into the assessment and grading process for College courses wherever possible. Such an approach has previously been successful in Universities outside the county and overseas to great effect. Examples include the Institute of Directors £10 Plus Challenge delivered in partnership with Nottingham Trent University.

Where certain Professional Body-led sector-specific courses effectively offer a licence to operate, these should be aligned to Bootcamp type provision, with accreditation sponsored or funded by local employers for deployment in their businesses and in their supply chains. In sectors dominated by SMEs, larger local businesses should be asked to sponsor these as part of their corporate and social responsibility.

At a national level, it is essential that T-Levels mirror the structure of Apprenticeships and explicitly have Behaviours as part of the assessment criteria.

Recommendation 4: Develop a new structure to support greater collaboration among education and training providers

Local skills provision needs to better respond to the needs of all parts of the city and county, as many sectors as possible, and for all learners. Clearer local career pathways must be provided to prepare learners for opportunities based on local current and forecast need, according to data trends. The Collective Intelligence Skills Observatory information should be used to inform this process on an ongoing basis, with Further Education Colleges, Schools, Universities and Providers working collaboratively to achieve common goals aligned to the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours needs of businesses.

To enable this to happen, a Local College, University and Provider Network should be established, with a view to improve collaboration based around themes such as civic responsibility and pride in place. Such a network must also link with the work of the local Careers Hub, providing opportunities for schools to build stronger relationships with local vocational and academic providers alike.

Recommendation 5: Ensure the needs of businesses are reflected in well-communicated local educators' offerings

Further Education Colleges, Universities and other Providers are constantly looking to engage with businesses to provide more opportunities for their students, be they placement, apprenticeship, or progression opportunities. These organisations must do more to ensure their offer to businesses is better targeted, understandable, and more accessible than is currently the case, where presentation of courses is often driven by the needs of the learner, funder, or assessor. It is recommended that communication channels are modified to set out opportunities by sector, including workforce progression pathways.

Where Colleges are looking for specific business engagement or support, it is suggested that more innovative channels of communication are developed with the advice of the Sector Accountability Boards and building on local best practice of the Careers and Enterprise Company funded Enterprise Advisor Network.

The Apprenticeship Ambassador Network must be grown locally, with Apprentices made available to speak to other local businesses to inspire young people and help businesses understand the benefits of well-planned and delivered apprenticeships. A local Skills Show should be developed to showcase growth sectors, training solutions and workforce development opportunities. This would also provide a great opportunity to enthuse local school pupils to consider a wide range of vocational options alongside academic routes.

Recommendation 6: Strengthen educator enrichment activities by linking these with wider place-building activity and funding streams

Throughout the project, educators have reported how difficult it is to fund the enrichment activities that develop the Behaviours sought by employers. Additional funding sources are needed to support this activity. Where Behaviour development can be aligned to local place improvements or regeneration, alternative sources of funding to support this should be targeted. This will require educators to work closely with local authorities and business to ensure a collaborative approach is taken.

In addition to seeking new or additional public funding, businesses should also play a role in providing these opportunities as part of their corporate and social, as well as civic, responsibility. Public sector procurement across Leicester and Leicestershire should require suppliers to commit to skills development commensurate with the size of the contract using local providers and Colleges wherever possible, resulting in more opportunities to engage young people and those furthest from the workforce.

Recommendation 7: Coordinate Employer Representative Bodies to produce a common set of tools and resources for businesses to better engage with Educators and support Colleges to adopt best business practice

It is essential that employers fully understand the opportunities to engage with Educators and the different methods by which this can happen. Leicester and Leicestershire benefits from a strong cohort of existing Employer Representative Bodies (ERBs) as demonstrated through engagement with this LSIP. ERBs should be coordinated by the Local Skills Accountability Board to produce a common set of locally-focused business-facing resources, tools and advice to improve understanding of the skills system and knowledge of best ways to engage. These should be aligned with the priorities within the Local Accountability Framework.

With a tightening labour market, support should include a specific focus on engaging those furthest from the workforce, in particular individuals with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. The existing Careers Hub SEND Community of Practice meeting may provide a useful forum for developing these resources. Other content should cover Apprenticeships, T-Levels, work experience placements and capital investment, with relevant tax advice, along with explaining the role of the voluntary and community sector within the local skills system.

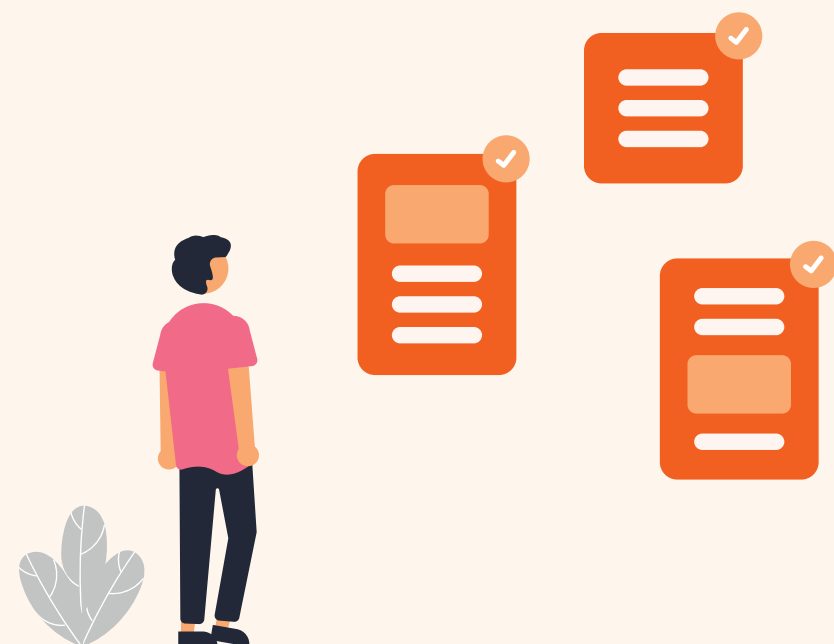
In addition to supporting employers, ERBs should also look for opportunities to support the Colleges with best practice through knowledge transfer in areas such as marketing, effective CRM usage and business processes.

Recommendation 8: Create a new Local Continuing Professional Development Framework for Leicester and Leicestershire educators

A collaborative approach to Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and staff development between Further Education Colleges, other education providers and local businesses is key to being able to develop effective delivery models. In some cases it will be appropriate to bring professional and membership bodies into these arrangements, however, this will vary by sector. Improved sharing of information, including staff training opportunities is crucial, with the use of technology also playing an important part of this. Local businesses must be encouraged to support such an approach and could include their contribution as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility commitments.

New models of CPD must be developed, and wherever possible these must avoid the need for excessive time out of the classroom. Technical and vocational CPD should be aligned to pupil enrichment activities, allowing both issues to be addressed without the need for time away from teaching duties.

All of the above should feed into a new Local CPD Framework for Further Education College and wider education sector staff, to complement programmes funded by central Government. The Framework should be supported by business, including through the introduction of requirements into local public sector procurement processes, and used as a vehicle to attract investment.



Recommendation 9: Align Capital Investment and Funding applications with the future Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours requirements of business

Capital investment for individual Colleges should be agreed with the Local Skills Accountability Board, with investment aligning to future Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours needs based on data and business research within the Collective Skills Intelligence Observatory. Where it is sector specific, Capital Investment should also be agreed with the relevant Sector Accountability Board. The next round of Strategic Development Fund bidding provides an immediate opportunity to do this.

Capital Investment should not be limited to the traditional DfE College Capital Funds, but opportunities to leverage other public funding, such as funding via Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Towns, should be actively pursued. Consideration should be given to where local Universities could support investment actions when these would result in improved progression pathways to meet local skills priorities and support longer-term needs. It is appreciated that the return on such investments may not be realised in the short-term, however, such an approach could significantly benefit local businesses when addressing skills shortage areas.

Revenue funding bids should also be developed to map to Local Accountability Framework geographies. While it is acknowledged that College Boards have a legal accountability to safeguard their own institutions, we believe a collaborative approach to bidding could be successful.

As part of the wider investment businesses should be approached and encouraged via procurement leverage to provide equipment and capital investment to support skills development, supply-chains and raise quality standards locally.

Recommendation 10: Establish a Future Skills Unit for Leicester and Leicestershire

Leicester and Leicestershire is currently benefiting from a surge in investment, including the creation of the new East Midlands Freeport in North West Leicestershire. New technologies and ways of working are also developing at a pace unmanageable by existing structures. Unsupported, the Collective Intelligence Skills Observatory is able to capture some, but not all of this.

To maximise the impact and value of the CISO, a new, agile Future Skills Unit should be created bringing together local authorities, Universities, ERBs and other relevant agencies to support horizon scanning and new investment opportunities. This Unit can also have a role in supporting businesses to understand their own future needs, including around the Digital and Sustainability agendas. Data-driven and acting as custodians of the CISO, this taskforce should provide a continued advisory role into the Local Skills Accountability Board and seek to align activity with Government's new Future Skills Insight Unit.

4. The Roadmap for Delivering Change



4. The Roadmap for Delivering Change

The following diagram details the Roadmap for Delivering Change – the structure required to deliver the LSIP recommendations, the lead stakeholders for each recommendation and an approximate timescale for delivery. Key to successful delivery of the recommendations is the creation of the Local Skills Accountability Framework and its Board. Without this, while other activity may still be taken forward, the overall coordination and impact of the LSIP recommendations as a collective risk being diminished.

To deliver effective change it is imperative that all partners recognise the contribution they are required to make and commit to doing so in a collaborative way. The tools for delivering the recommendations already exist. Analysis of the Collective Intelligence Skills Observatory will inform much of delivery, while the continued willingness to engage of those involved in the process to this point will help make the delivery a reality.

The Roadmap for Change 2022 - 2025



Insight Unlocked



Recommendations	Recommendations from LSIP	Lead Stakeholders	Project timeline 2022 - 2025		
			Short term	Medium term	Long term
	1. Create Framework & Board	ERB	ERB		
	2. Economic Vision supported	ERB, LAs, LLEP	ERB, LAs, LLEP		
	3. Review curriculum design & delivery	Educators, ERB	ERB, Educators		
	4. New Providers structure	Educators	Educators		
	5. Ensure business needs reflected	Educators	Educators		
	6. Strengthen enrichment activities	Educators, LAs, LLEP	ERB, LAs, LLEP		
	7. Coordinated ERBs	ERB	ERB		
	8. Develop CPD Framework	Educators, ERB	ERB, Educators		
	9. Align Capital Investment & Funding	Educators, LAs, LLEP	ERB, LAs, LLEP		
	10. Establish a Future Skills Unit	ERB	ERB		

- ERB
Employer Representative Bodies
- LAs
Local Authorities
- Educators
Schools, FE Colleges, Funded Training Providers, Universities
- LLEP
Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership



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East Midlands
Chamber
Derbyshire
Nottinghamshire
Leicestershire