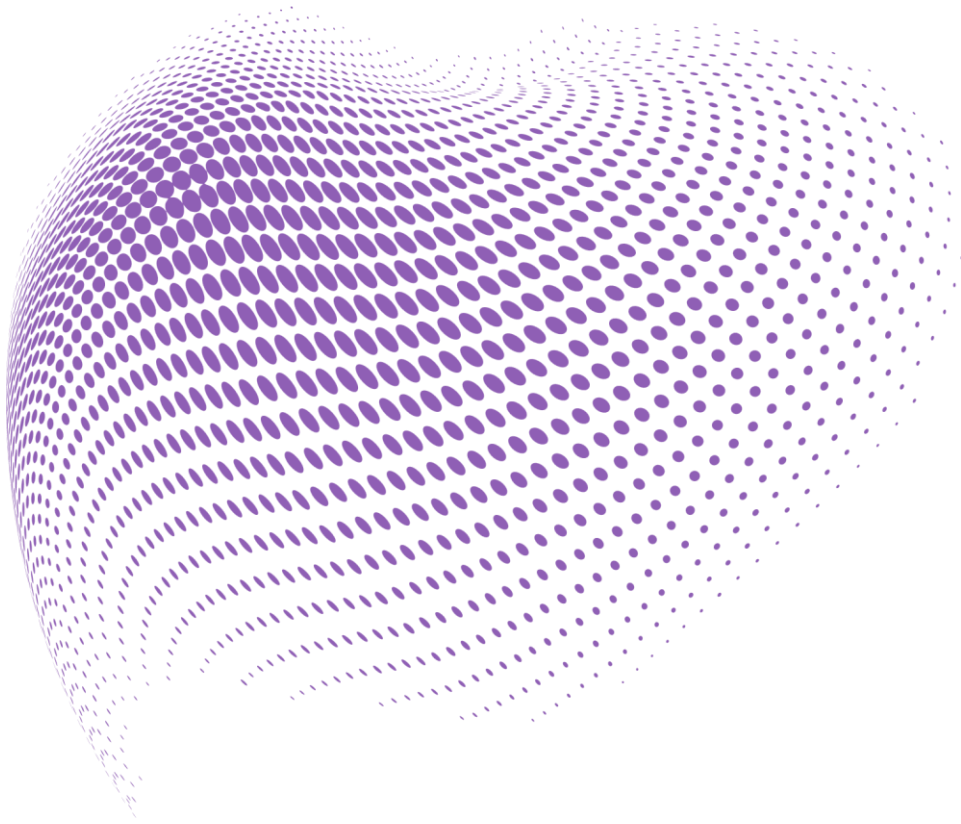




Local Skills Improvement Plan

Insights | Skills | Growth



Progress Report

June 2024

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

This report was produced in June 2024 but publication was delayed due to the pre-election period.



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**Norfolk
Chambers of
Commerce**

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1. Who is the Publication for?

Purpose of the Report:

This yearly report for the Norfolk and Suffolk Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) aims to review the progress made in enhancing skills in Norfolk and Suffolk. It assesses the effectiveness of the initiatives implemented thus far and outlines areas for further development in the second phase of the plan to June 2025. This will provide an overview of achievements to date within the plan as well as how local and nationally important catalysts in the skills system help shape a direction of travel for the coming months, providing opportunities for further involvement for all stakeholders and employers.

Target Audience:

This report is directed towards employers, further/higher education providers, independent training providers, and stakeholders within Norfolk and Suffolk who have been actively involved in the LSIP or wish to engage with the project. It informs these key stakeholders within the skills system about the ongoing efforts and results of the skills improvement plan to enable them to align their strategies and resources effectively, helping to shape the curriculum and workforce training needs across the region.

Interest to the Target Audience:

The report will be of great interest to the target audience as it provides a detailed update on the impact and future direction of the LSIP. Employers can adapt their workforce planning, providers can develop training programmes, and stakeholders can evaluate the plan's relevance and effectiveness in addressing local skills needs and shaping policy.

To access the Norfolk and Suffolk LSIP report, published in August 2023, and its supporting Annexe, please follow the links below or scan the QR Codes.

[LSIP - July 2023](#)

[LSIP Annexe - July 2023](#)



LSIP – July 2023



Annexe – July 2023



2. Summary of the LSIP

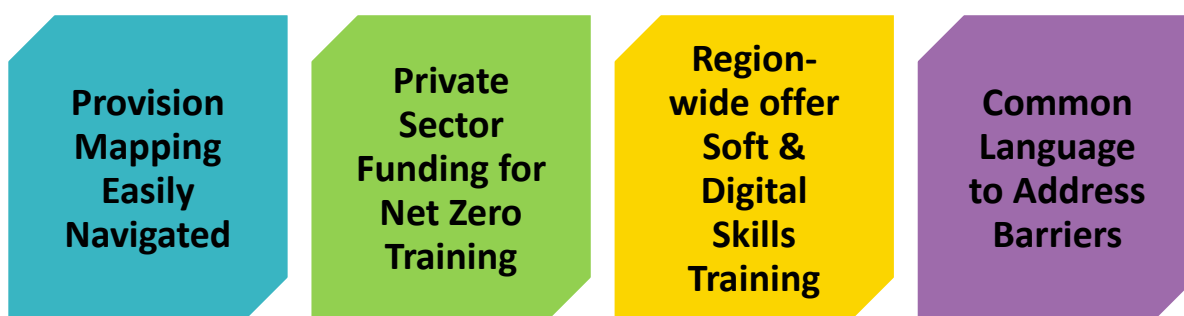
The Norfolk and Suffolk Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) plays a crucial role in the strategic skills landscape of Norfolk and Suffolk by aligning skills development with the region's economic priorities. With a rapidly evolving skills agenda both locally and nationally, having a skilled workforce is essential for driving growth and innovation. The LSIP aims to bridge the gap between the skills employers need, those that individuals possess and the provision available through local FE/HE colleges and independent training providers.



The priorities for the Norfolk and Suffolk LSIP were Agri-tech, Net-Zero, with cross-cutting themes of Workforce Digital Skills and Soft skills. All are areas that are vital for the region's growth in terms of skills and productivity. Addressing skills shortages and ensuring that the workforce is equipped with the necessary skills to meet industry demands are essential components of economic development strategies. The plan's emphasis on soft and digital skills as well as continuous training opportunities reflects the importance of upskilling and reskilling the workforce for Norfolk and Suffolk to remain competitive.

Leading on the Local Skills Improvement Plan, Norfolk and Suffolk Chambers of Commerce utilise key stakeholder involvement to underscore the collaborative approach to skills development within the region. Engaging with employers and Further/Higher Educational provision in shaping the skills agenda not only benefits individual employers, but also their employees which also contributes to the overall economic resilience and growth of the Norfolk and Suffolk economy.

In summary, the Norfolk and Suffolk LSIP created the following priorities:



The LSIP's legacy will be a system that is able to articulate, to the education system and local authorities, the skills needs of employers across the region. It will further bridge the gap between industry, education providers and stakeholders to address the above priorities whilst continually adjusting a direction of travel, as the needs of businesses in the region change.

3. Strategic & Economic Context Update

The ever evolving strategic, economic and skills landscape can provide both opportunity and uncertainty for businesses. The LSIP's position within all of this is to ensure that the business voice is consistent and represented in way that is 'good for business'. This is achieved by articulating skills priorities, identifying workforce development needs and playing the role of convener between businesses and local authorities, the Freeport and Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) relevant to the region.

Proposed Norfolk Devolution

Norfolk Devolution is a process that aims to empower Norfolk by transferring powers and funding from central government to Norfolk County Council. It allows them to have more control over key decisions that directly impact the region, including skills development and employment opportunities.



Norfolk
County Council

One of the potential impacts of Norfolk Devolution on skills in the region is the ability to shape education and training programmes to meet the specific needs of the local workforce. With increased control over funding and policies related to skills development, Norfolk can implement initiatives that address the unique challenges faced by its residents, such as creating specialised training programs for industries that are vital to the region's economy.

Furthermore, Norfolk Devolution can lead to greater collaboration between local government, educational providers, and employers to ensure that skills training aligns with the demands of the local labour market. A collaborative approach, as taken by the LSIP, can identify skills gaps, develop relevant training programmes, and support lifelong learning initiatives to enhance the employability of Norfolk's residents.

Overall, Norfolk Devolution presents an opportunity to drive innovation and growth in the region's skills sector by enabling tailored solutions that address the specific needs of the local workforce. Ultimately this can lead to a more skilled and competitive labour market in Norfolk. Subject to full Council vote in July 2024, adult skills funding is due to go live in Norfolk for the 2025/26 academic year (August 2025). In the planning and design of Adult Skills funding/commissioning Norfolk County Council are making direct reference to the LSIP and utilising recommendations for future training provider delivery, especially informing plans for Adult Skills Funding. Further reading can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/norfolk-devolution-deal>

Proposed Suffolk Devolution

The proposed devolution deal for Suffolk involves the potential transfer of decision-making powers and greater local control of funding in areas such as adult education, house building, regeneration, and skills. If the devolution deal is finalised, Suffolk County Council would receive new authority over these key areas, including the ability to future-proof the skills offer and drive demand for skills provision within the region alongside the launch of a new business board.



Suffolk
County Council

The landmark devolution deal in Suffolk places both money and power over skills development into the hands of local leaders, aiming to level up opportunities and growth within the county. The intention behind Suffolk's devolution is to ensure that residents can fully utilise their skills to enhance productivity and drive growth in the region.

Through the devolution of skills, Suffolk County Council seeks to focus on the skills needed within Suffolk, while also aiming to increase the profile and influence of the county with government. Devolution across England is a process involving the transfer of powers and funding from national government to local authorities, allowing decisions to be made at a more localised level.

Overall, if it proceeds, devolution in Suffolk is expected to have a significant impact on education, skills, and training delivery in the region, aiming to empower communities and put them in control of their own development. This shift in governance holds the potential to bring about positive changes in how skills are developed, utilised, and supported within Suffolk in the future.

With the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in place between the LSIP and the Skills Hub, there is plenty of opportunity for the LSIP to help shape the skills landscape post-devolution. Further reading can be found here - <http://suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/devolution>



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Freeport East

Freeport East is one of 12 freeports in the United Kingdom, positioned on the east coast of England and encompassing parts of Suffolk and North Essex, two counties of high quality of life.



The Freeport area covers over a thousand square kilometres in total, stretching from Felixstowe and Harwich down through to Clacton and Jaywick, out around Colchester and Sudbury, Stowmarket and Woodbridge. Investors and business operators have access to a diverse pool of highly skilled employees across various sectors such as, offshore renewables, manufacturing, logistics, agriculture, financial services, insurance, and digital technology. As the local economy expands, it is crucial to collaborate with local communities to enhance their skills in alignment with business requirements, ensuring inclusive growth. This is a key priority for Freeport East.

Fostering sustainable employment through targeted skills development will be instrumental in revitalising and advancing the local economies, narrowing inequalities, and offering communities increased access to diverse, sustainable job opportunities. Visit the Freeport official website at: <https://freeporteast.com>

Freeport East is represented on the LSIP Board and the LSIP continues to provide input into the Freeport's proposed Skills Accelerator Programme.

NSIPS – Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects

Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) in Norfolk and Suffolk are large-scale developments governed by the Planning Act 2008 and determined by Government. These projects typically fall under categories such as transport, energy, water, or waste. The Technical Skills Legacy Report, commissioned by Norfolk & Suffolk County Councils anticipates that NSIPs across the region between 2024 – 2027 including some 220+ projects at a cost of £70 billion at current prices will require an additional 10,000 technically skilled staff in both counties. Such projects are essential for significant economic growth, housing, and job creation in the region. The NSIPs process involves a strategic planning approach aimed at delivering projects that contribute to the development and prosperity of Norfolk and Suffolk.

For Norfolk, developments like the Norwich to Tilbury project, a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Proposal by National Grid Electricity Transmission, are crucial for enhancing the region's infrastructure and connectivity. In Suffolk, similar forward-looking projects are in progress to meet the size and scale criteria laid out in the Planning Act 2008. These projects represent substantial opportunities for skills development in the region, as they require expertise in various fields such as engineering, construction, project management, and environmental planning.

The ongoing approval of NSIPs in Norfolk and Suffolk highlights the region's commitment to sustainable growth and progress. As these large-scale infrastructure projects offer significant potential for upskilling the local workforce, attracting talent, and nurturing innovation in key sectors, they have a positive role in impacting skills development and enhancing opportunities for residents in Norfolk and Suffolk.

NSIPs have specific skill requirements due to the complex and large-scale nature of these projects. The successful delivery of NSIPs depends on a skilled workforce equipped with diverse expertise. Highlighted below are some key areas for consideration for the future skills requirements for the region:

- **Engineering Expertise:**

Energy infrastructure projects such as Sizewell C or major transportation developments, such as the A47 improvements, require a significant engineering workforce. Civil, mechanical, electrical, and structural engineers are essential for designing, implementing, and overseeing the construction of these projects.



- **Project Management Skills:**

Effective project management is critical for the successful delivery of NSIPs. Project Managers with experience in large-scale projects, knowledge of regulations, and the ability to coordinate multi-disciplinary teams play a crucial role in ensuring project milestones are met within budget and on time.

- **Environmental and Sustainability Skills:**

With a growing emphasis on sustainability and environmental impact, NSIPs in Norfolk and Suffolk require professionals with expertise in environmental planning, sustainability assessments, and mitigation strategies to ensure projects comply with regulations and minimise environmental footprint.

- **Legal and Regulatory Compliance:**

Understanding the legal framework surrounding NSIPs is essential for compliance. Legal experts specialising in planning regulations, environmental laws, and public consultation processes are necessary to navigate the complex legal environment of NSIPs.

- **Construction and Trades Skills:**

Skilled tradespeople such as electricians, plumbers, carpenters, and construction workers are crucial for the physical implementation of NSIPs. Their expertise in building, installing infrastructure, and ensuring quality workmanship is essential for project success.

- **Innovation and Technology Skills:**

With advancements in technology shaping infrastructure projects, professionals with expertise in digital technologies, data analysis, and innovation play a crucial role in optimizing project performance, efficiency, and sustainability.

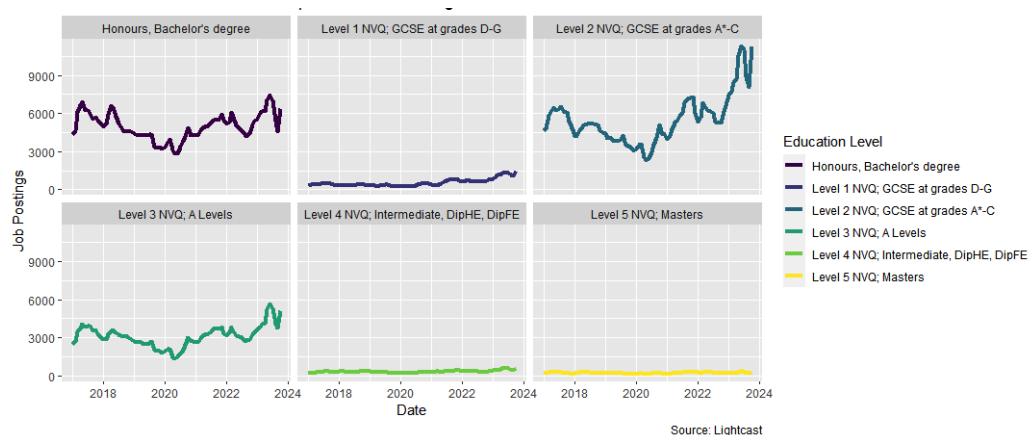


By having a diverse and skilled workforce that encompasses these various expertise areas, NSIPs in Norfolk and Suffolk can successfully address the complex challenges and requirements of large-scale infrastructure projects, contributing to the region's development, long-term prosperity and attractiveness for investment. The LSIP will ensure that employers are fully engaged within the skills system to deliver the required skills sets needed for such important projects.

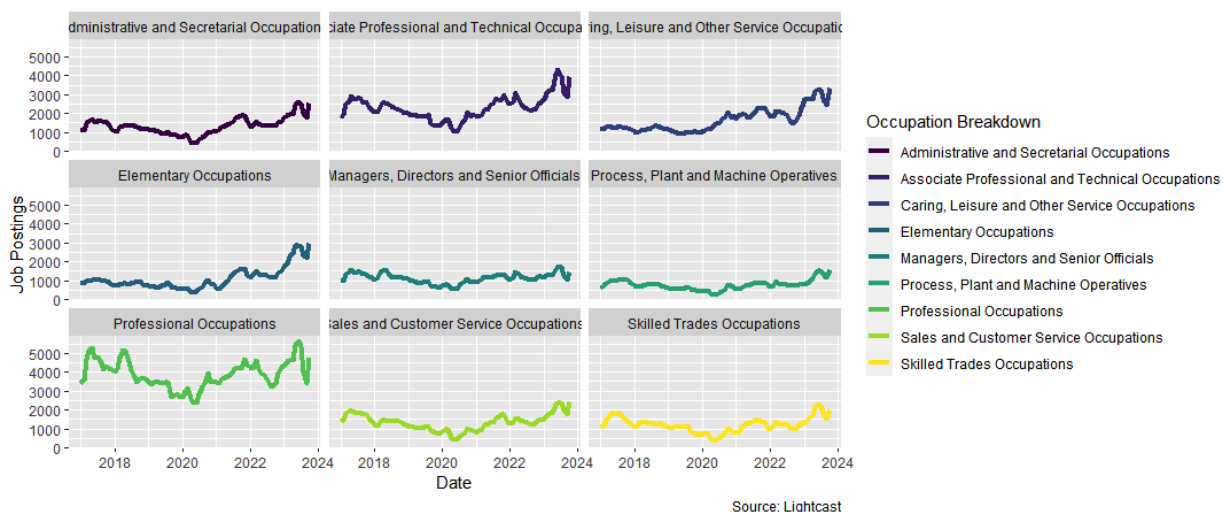
Local Skills in Figures

The latest education data shows an encouraging trend suggesting a rise in skills attainment in the region. However, with the increase of job postings, more needs to be achieved in terms of the right skills for the right jobs. The LSIP should be a catalyst for more workforce development and curriculum reform. By developing a more reactive skills system for training it will enable greater emphasis on a skilled workforce fit for the jobs available.

The following image shows a series of line graphs representing the Estimated Education Level Required in Job Postings from Norfolk spanning January 2017 to October 2023. Five different education levels are being tracked, which correspond to different qualifications from the UK education system:



The categories below show distinct trends in job postings. Administrative and Secretarial Occupations are on the rise, while Associate Professional and Technical Occupations remain stable. Caring, Leisure, and Other Service Occupations are steadily increasing, as are Elementary Occupations. Managers, Directors, and Senior Officials have a consistent demand, with Professional Occupations seeing overall growth. Sales and Customer Service Occupations are relatively stable, as are Skilled Trades Occupations. Data on Plant and Machine Operatives is limited but suggests stability in job postings.



4. Priorities & Actions (Roadmap)

Priority	Action / Activity / Milestone	Partners involved	Timescales	Method of implementation and outcomes expected	Monitoring arrangements	Progress Status
Project 1st A programme of short bite-sized courses in digital and green skills. Delivered consistently across all 5 Norfolk & Suffolk FE Colleges and ITPs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create bite-sized standardised courses in digital and green skills. Procure an ITP to write the content. Provide details to FE Colleges. Provide details to ITP's. Create marketing for Employers. Digital Passport Created 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suffolk New College as LSIF Lead. Switch Direction (Training Provider) to create content. East Coast College West Suffolk College College of West Anglia East Norfolk Sixth Form College University of Suffolk Univeristy of East Anglia City College Norwich VCSFE Organisations Independent Training Providers 	January 2023: ITT for ITP's July 2024: First iteration of courses to be published & marketed.	Marketing using all social media channels through Norfolk and Suffolk Chambers of Commerce. Marketing to 1,900 business members, representing, 180,000 employees. Employers will have easy access to courses both virtually and physically. Delivered by all the providers and showcased on the LSIP/LSIF webpages. 17	Suffolk New College will manage the project under the LSIF via a monthly review.	Delivery timescales all on track. In Progress

Cont...

Priority	Action / Activity / Milestone	Partners involved	Timescales	Method of implementation and outcomes expected	Monitoring arrangements	Progress Status
Project 1 st cont...				<p>Categories of courses with 50 different courses on offer.</p> <p>Digital Passport has 24 training videos available on topics such as Microsoft Teams, Offices 365, Cloud Storage, GDPR, Powerpoint, Word, Excel and Using Browsers.</p>		
Priority Provision Mapping Map provision and provide an online portal for Employers to navigate the skills training available.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LSIP/Skills Hub colleagues to compile. Marketed through Social Media channels. Website updated as content is available/created. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LSIP to update webpages on an ongoing basis. Independent Training Providers & FE/HE Colleges to provide ongoing content. LSIP / Skills Hub – continually review skills landscape and remap where necessary. 	<p>December 2023: Mapping Undertaken.</p> <p>April 2024: First Version Uploaded.</p> <p>July 2024: Additions to provision to be updated.</p> <p>Ongoing quarterly updates to</p>	<p>Sector Groups and Events will provide insight, as well as New Anglia Learning Provider Forum for Training Provision</p> <p>Research through web-pages.</p> <p>Online portal & Social Media coverage</p>	<p>Monitored through bi-weekly updates with LSIP Operational meetings.</p>	<p>Initial Mapping Completed.</p> <p>Ongoing mapping to be reviewed with input from FE/HE/ITPs.</p> <p>Cont...</p>

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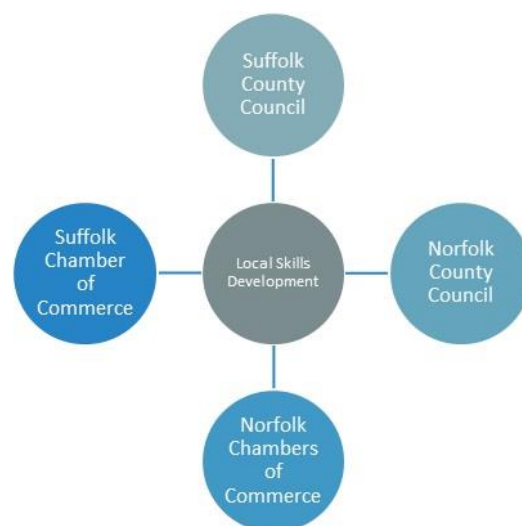
Priority	Action / Activity / Milestone	Partners involved	Timescales	Method of implementation and outcomes expected	Monitoring arrangements	Progress Status
Net Zero Private Sector Funding Community benefit from NSIPS, providing skills development programmes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage Private Sector to ascertain scope of funding. Work with sector leads to encourage greater collaboration. Liaise with sector bodies to ascertain best use of funding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Businesses Community Fund Organisations Local Authorities Sector Bodies. NSIPs, such as Sizewell C, Offshore Renewables. 	October 2023: Work Commenced Work is ongoing until March 2025.	Coordination with local authorities to explore community benefit funds. Outcome: Clearly understood upskilling and training opportunities in the region.	Stakeholder involvement in the various sector groups to report on progress. Net Zero Sector Groups meet regularly approx. every 6 weeks.	Ongoing work to deliver.

5. What has been achieved so far?

All of the above actions and work which is being developed and delivered are underpinned by a shared vision for the LSIP and the local authorities. Therefore, to consolidate this a formal Memorandum of Understanding has been signed by both County Councils and both Chambers of Commerce. See Annex 1.

This sets out a clear commitment for all parties to ensure the LSIP activity is continually delivered in collaboration including sector working groups and ongoing employer engagement aligned with skills priorities.

This unique partnership strengthens the LSIP's position within the skills system and further solidifies the voice of business within key sectors. By sharing resources and with a clear workplan, it shows the level of impact the LSIP is having locally and demonstrates that it is firmly embedded in the local skills system, thus giving confidence to employers and providing them with the motivation to engage further.



Employer Engagement

The work of the LSIP has been responsible for shaping the local skills eco-system and providing a catalyst for change across the region by working collaboratively with stakeholders, the change for the future is starting to take shape and a bedrock foundation has been established to place businesses at the heart of the skills agenda. Many employers have engaged with the work of the LSIP and its stakeholders as a result.

As well as engaging with hundreds of businesses to understand, signpost and support skills interaction, both Chambers have utilised its employer networks to embed skills conversations as part of existing forums and focus groups. These forums encourage the sharing of knowledge and the building of relationships helping to bridge the gap between training priorities and other business management priorities.

The LSIP continually adds value by working in collaboration to shape the local skills agenda, driving change in the region and placing employers at the heart of skills conversations. Through collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders including local authorities, DWP, and the VCSFE sector, the LSIP has laid a strong sustainable foundation for the future. All of which is predicated on continual engagement from numerous businesses.

By utilising the Chambers' networks and facilitating skills interactions, the LSIP and its stakeholders is effectively bridging the gap between businesses and FE/HE providers and ITP's. This approach not only supports skills development but also strengthens relationships, showcases programs, and promotes networking opportunities, ultimately benefiting the overall skills landscape and business community. See Annex 2 for the employer engagement events delivered and due to be delivered.

Employer & Provider Case Studies:

Many businesses have engaged with the work of the LSIP and its stakeholders. The below case studies demonstrate how the LSIP's change of vision has put employers at the heart of the skills agenda and is working in real time with businesses and FE providers. These case studies provide a flavour of the work which has been undertaken by the LSIP and our stakeholders.

Digital Workforce Skills – The Employer Voice

Jason Carleton, Managing Director of Uptech Ltd, King's Lynn, Norfolk said:



"As soon as we found out about the Chambers involvement in the Local Skills Improvement Plan and its proposed thinking for the shaping of skills development in the local area, we knew, as an IT provider business, that we wanted to get involved, having struggled with recruitment and ongoing upskilling. Initially we thought that this would provide a big shift in the colleges' thinking to work closer with local businesses. Although this was true, the work of the LSIP has highlighted some of the challenges which the local provision has and it has forced us to change our own thinking within the business."

"It (the LSIP) provided an opportunity for us to understand skills development processes and the funding available. It really highlighted to us as a business that we need to do more. It is not just about waiting for the training/courses to come to us, we needed to be active in our pursuit of our business goals aligned with the skills required."

"Since working with the LSIP team we have actively taken part in working groups and roundtable events to promote the work to other businesses. We are happy as a business to showcase the work we now undertake with a local college, our commitment to upskilling new and existing members of the team and being open to different types of training interventions ranging from work experience placements, internships, apprenticeships and potentially skills bootcamps."

"Our business now is more resilient to a changing economy, is able to attract staff differently and importantly keep existing staff motivated and retained, stability has come by widening our own thoughts about how we interact and engage with local training offers."

Soft / Impact Skills – The Employer Voice

Carrie Barrett - L & D Manager for Gressingham Foods, Diss, Suffolk said:



"I joined the Soft Skills Working Group, delivered by Suffolk Chamber of Commerce in Phase 1 of the LSIP, in recognition of my proactive approach and my interpretation of the struggles in the current skills market within food manufacturing."

"I have fully supported the LSIP and helped influence a large number of other employers in various events that the Chamber has delivered around skills, such as Place Forums by giving practical ideas and initiatives to develop the attraction and skills into the business."

"As an existing CIC 'Cornerstone Employer', I already have a passion for skills development from school age upwards and a commitment to embracing the industry changes. In Phase 2 of the LSIP, I was delighted to join the main LSIP board to further enhance the employer representation and share my passion for making things happen. I look forward to being a crucial part of the LSIP future skills delivery and will continue to enhance my connections with collaborative partners that I have developed on this journey."

Working Groups to Sector Skills Groups

The LSIP set out to create a fundamental change in the local skills landscape. To achieve this, we needed to ensure that all of the brilliant activity in the region was joined up. As a result of a shared workplan and in partnership with the local authorities via the MOU, the LSIP is now a critical cog to the sector working groups.

The LSIP has access to every sector group and provides support by having the employer's voice 'in the room' where employers are able to challenge and support key themes of the sector. Part of this work ensures both digital and soft skills are addressed across all sectors, as part of ongoing conversations. This added value provides a valuable mouthpiece to the business community where previously it has been difficult for businesses to engage.

As part of Phase 1 of the LSIP, the Chambers established Working Groups for each of the priorities. These have been instrumental in placing employers at the heart of the skill system where needs can be articulated and discussed with relevant stakeholders.

As a result, both our Digital and Net Zero groups have assisted in the transition to Sector Skills Groups which are supported by the LSIP project team and the secretariat is provided by the County Council teams in both Norfolk and Suffolk, via the Norfolk and Suffolk Skills Hub.

Bootcamps

The LSIP is instrumental in providing the employer voice in assisting with the shaping of the skills bootcamps, thus stimulating programmes to be delivered around the following areas across the region:

- Engineering
- Data Analysis
- Engineering
- Green Skills



These programmes are delivered by a range of providers and previously managed by the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP,) and now transitioned to Suffolk County Council. The Skills Bootcamps in Norfolk and Suffolk are part of the current Government's Lifetime Skills Guarantee and are funded through the Department for Education (DfE). These bootcamps aim to help individuals gain skills for life by offering free, flexible courses of up to 16 weeks in various sectors. The training courses provided are aligned directly with the LSIP to ensure they meet the specific needs of the region.

These bootcamps play a crucial role in shaping the delivery of skills in Norfolk and Suffolk by providing individuals with the opportunity to acquire in-demand skills and improve their job prospects. The government funding allocated to these bootcamps underscores the commitment to enhancing skills development in the region and aligning it with the LSIP. The LSIP can show instant impact for employers by ensuring that their voice helps shape the future development of the Bootcamp programme.

Skills Bootcamps provide employers with access to a pool of individuals who have received intensive, industry-focused training in 12 intensive weeks. Employers benefit from the tailored skills that participants acquire during the bootcamp, making them better equipped to meet the specific needs of the company or industry.

Additionally, employers can engage with potential candidates during the bootcamp, allowing them to assess skills, work ethic, and suitability for available roles. This direct engagement can streamline the recruitment process and reduce the time and resources required to find qualified candidates. Overall, Skills Bootcamps offer employers a valuable resource of trained individuals ready to contribute effectively to their organisations.

As part of the ongoing delivery of the Bootcamps, the next phase of the programme provides crucial skills to businesses across Norfolk and Suffolk. The below courses have already been approved by Suffolk County Council to be delivered regionally and have been shaped around the business needs, which were clearly identified by the LSIP.



Provider	Bootcamp Programmes	LSIP Priority
Lighbulb	Digital Marketing L3	Digital Workforce Skills
Anicca Digital	Digital Marketing L5	Digital Workforce Skills
Core AI Ltd	Data Career Accelerator L3-L5	Digital Workforce Skills / Net Zero & Agri-tech
City College Norwich	Electric/Hybrid Vehicle Maintenance L3	Net Zero
Alexander Mann	Associate Project Manager L3	Agri-tech / Net Zero
East Coast College	Engineering – Technical Operative L3	Agri-tech / Net Zero
The Lightbulb	First Steps to Management in Care L3	Soft Skills
Turning Factor	ILM Award in Management L3	Soft Skills
Turning Factor	ILM Award in Management L5	Soft Skills
West Suffolk College	Understanding Sustainability in Science L3	Net Zero / Agritech
West Suffolk College	Understanding Sustainability in Engineering L3	Net Zero / Agritech
West Suffolk College	Understanding Sustainability in Management L3	Net Zero / Agritech
Estu	CMI Award Carbon Reporting Manager L4	Net Zero / Agritech

LSIF Impact

As part of the LSIP findings, it identified that there was a direct requirement to upskill the workforce in digital, soft and green skill areas. As well improving the curriculum delivery within the college system. The LSIF Funding helped deliver a number of projects across the region to address the specific needs identified by the LSIP.



Local Skills Improvement Fund

Inspire | Invest | Innovate

The Local Skills Improvement Fund in Norfolk and Suffolk is interventions for employers in the region. The plan emphasises putting employers at the forefront of the skills agenda. Various projects under this initiative cover a range of priority areas, including soft skills training and other skill development opportunities offered by colleges and independent training providers. The fund provides financial support for projects that contribute to skill enhancement within providers and for businesses.

The activities and KPIs that Suffolk New College, the LSIF Lead, and their partners are looking to achieve are laid out in Annex 5.

These projects focus on addressing critical skill gaps identified by the LSIP, providing training opportunities, and supporting workforce development being delivered as part of the fund, including:

- **Soft Skills Training:** Programs aimed at improving soft skills such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and adaptability to enhance overall workplace effectiveness. See Annex 6a
- **Digital Skills Interventions:** Initiatives focused on enhancing digital literacy and promoting digital skills among employees to meet the demands of a technology-driven economy. See Annex 6b
- **Vocational Training Programs:** Offering vocational training in specific industries to equip individuals with practical skills and knowledge required for various job roles.
- **Collaboration with Colleges and Training Providers:** Partnering with educational institutions and training providers to deliver specialized training courses tailored to meet industry needs.

As part of the LSIF in Norfolk and Suffolk, green skills initiatives are being delivered to equip individuals with knowledge and expertise in environmentally sustainable practices. Below are the headline priorities for the LSIF:



Training in Green Technologies: Staff training programs are being implemented to upskill individuals in green technologies, promoting a more sustainable approach to technology and innovation. See Annex 6c

Sustainability Curriculum Integration: Incorporating green skills and sustainability practices into educational curriculum requirements to ensure that learners are equipped with the knowledge needed to address environmental challenges.

Skills Development for Environmental Solutions: The fund aims to empower staff, learners, and communities with tools and resources focused on green skills and digital literacy to prepare individuals for the workforce for the future.

Collaboration for Environmental Education: Partnerships between educational institutions in Norfolk and Suffolk are focusing on developing programs that address the growing demand for green skills and digital competencies in the region.

These green skills initiatives align with the broader goal of the LSIF to enhance workforce capabilities, drive economic growth, and support sustainable practices. By integrating green skills training into educational programs and providing opportunities for skills development in environmentally friendly fields, the fund is contributing to building a more resilient and environmentally conscious workforce in Norfolk and Suffolk, the fund is directly a result of the LSIP, and its findings have shaped the interventions that are made available.

LSIF: Projects (Various)

**Dr Catherine Richards, Principal
of East Norfolk Sixth Form
College, Gorleston-on-Sea,
Norfolk said:**



“East Norfolk Sixth Form College staff and students have significantly benefitted from the collaborative work that has been undertaken for the Local Skills Improvement Plan. The collaboration between business, the Norfolk Chambers and education providers has been particularly strong.

“East Norfolk Sixth Form College offers the highest number of A levels in Norfolk in addition to T-Levels and Applied Courses. Our young people, all aged between 16-19 are developing excellent academic skills with us. However, giving them experiences of work, developing their employability skills and particularly those that relate to communication, confidence, IT and resilience at work are all being enhanced through the Local Skills Improvement Fund with the development of our new employer facility.

“Employers are being brought into college during the day through video, audio and in person to work with our young people in the heart of the college in a new professional and modern environment which emulates the working environment. The new space offers a presentation area, interaction through IT and allows us to promote businesses to students directly. This means we can offer mini conferences, workshops, respond to employer briefs and business breakfasts or networking events for and with young people in a way that has not been possible before.

“Employers wanting to get involved and work with us to recruit, train and upskill our young people can get in touch by emailing futures@eastnorfolk.ac.uk to find out more.” See Annex 3 for more information.

LSIF: Projects (Various)

LSIF Lead

Emma Taylor, Director of Business Development & Major Projects at Suffolk New College said:

“The LSIF partnership in Norfolk and Suffolk is led by Suffolk New College, with six other partners – East Coast College, West Suffolk College, City College Norwich, College of West Anglia, the University of Suffolk and East Norfolk Sixth Form. The £4.7m Norfolk and Suffolk Local Skills Improvement Fund programme runs from November 2023 to March 2025, with investments responding to LSIF digital, soft skills and net zero priorities.



The LSIF Digital Futures Conference on 13 March 2024 was a particular highlight, bringing together staff from all the partner organisations to talk about responding to the skills opportunities and challenges presented by new and emerging digital technologies – graphic recorder Rebecca Osborne captured key points from the day. See Annex 4 for the completed conference graphic.

The partnership will also be delivering a Green Futures Careers Hub at both the Suffolk County Show and the Royal Norfolk Show, providing careers inspiration across all key sectors. A key LSIF priority is a single programme of short courses in LSIF priority themes and this has been developed by the LSIF partnership, including a Norfolk and Suffolk Digital Passport basic skills digital training package which is available to all local training providers.

The LSIF partners have taken part in LSIF events and strategic groups to ensure that activity is aligned to the LSIF, and have liaised extensively with employers in the development of the new curriculum, facilities and programmes that have been funded. 2024-25 will see the launch of a number of LSIF-funded facilities and ongoing improvements to local training provision informed by the LSIF.

LSIF: Project 1st

Dan Cocksedge, Founder of Switch Direction, Ipswich, Suffolk said:

“Sara, the Skills & Training Officer at Suffolk Chamber advised us of an opportunity in relation to the LSIF, with a focus on Digital Literacy, delivered by Suffolk New College through the LSIF. As an ITP, this is an area I specialise in and was keen to quote for. “I was delighted when Switch Direction was awarded the tender and we started Phase 1 of the LSIF Digital Literacy.



“It was great to work with local educational providers offering training and development to individuals with the DWP, students and local businesses. As a result, I have been building the content and online accessibility to offer learning to all teaching staff, students, and employers to enhance digital agility, digital application, and implementation within the workplace. I believe this is a strong demonstration where collaboration with ITPs and larger educational providers can work in harmony. To test the model and delivery of the digital literacy elements so far it was given to some DWP customers and was very well received.

“Since the project, I have been invited to be an Industry Partner with the Suffolk New College and I am soon to start working with other local colleges in Suffolk.”



East of England All-Party Parliamentary Group (EAPPG)

As part of the work of this group, a skills paper was produced by the LSIPs, Local Authorities, FE Sector Representatives as well as employers to address the government's levelling up agenda. The Norfolk and Suffolk LSIP team, together with the Essex LSIP team led on the key LSIP themes for the region, which were included in the Executive Summary and presented to senior MPs and Peers. See Annex 7 for a summary of the paper.

The East of England All-Party Parliamentary Group aims to bring together the region's Members of Parliament (MPs) and Peers with elected local leaders, as well as representatives from the private and third sectors.

This collaborative effort aims to address issues and promote the interests of the East of England region within the parliamentary setting. The group provides a platform for discussion, cooperation, and advocacy on matters relevant to the East of England of which the LSIP is a key component for these discussions.

6. What still needs to be achieved?

At the heart of the LSIP is the constant requirement to engage with businesses and articulate skills requirements for the region. The LSIP is addressing this by keeping the 3 key objectives, as outlined below, at the core of all its activity. Thus, ensuring that all interventions create a sustainable impact on the skills of the workforce and that employers have a voice with regards to curriculum and workforce development programmes.

The LSIP understands the need to communicate back to the engaged employers to demonstrate the steps being taken by provision in the region, creating relationships with industry to deliver a more confident employer base.

The huge amount of the work undertaken so far is only the beginning of the process. The steps below highlight how much more can be done collaboratively to address the priorities outlined within the LSIP.

Major steps have already been taken over the past year to work more closely with stakeholders and the Norfolk and Suffolk skills teams to ensure that collectively, as a region, we have an LSIP which has absolute currency in the local skills system.

Outlined below are the 3 key points which were central to the successful contract extension into Phase 2 of the project in August 2023:

1. **Galvanise collaborative action with employers, providers and local stakeholders to support the delivery of the actionable priorities and the roadmap set out in the LSIP.**

In simpler terms, it means working together with companies, organizations, and community members to actively support and put into action the key priorities and plans identified in the LSIP. This collaboration and joint effort are essential for effectively executing the strategies laid out in the plan to enhance local skills development and improve the overall skill level of the workforce.

- **Engagement:** Engage with employers and key stakeholders to communicate the goals and objectives of the LSIP.
- **Partnership Building:** Establish partnerships and collaborations with employers, educational institutions, training providers, and community organizations to align efforts and resources.
- **Resource Sharing:** Share resources, expertise, and best practices among stakeholders to leverage collective knowledge and capabilities.
- **Coordinated Efforts:** Coordinate actions and initiatives among all parties involved to ensure alignment with the priorities and roadmap of the LSIP.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Establish mechanisms for monitoring progress, evaluating outcomes, and adjusting strategies as needed to achieve the goals set out in the LSIP.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Create feedback loops to gather input, insights, and suggestions from stakeholders to continuously improve and adapt the implementation process.



2. Ongoing Employer Engagement and Embedding the LSIP process in the local skills system.

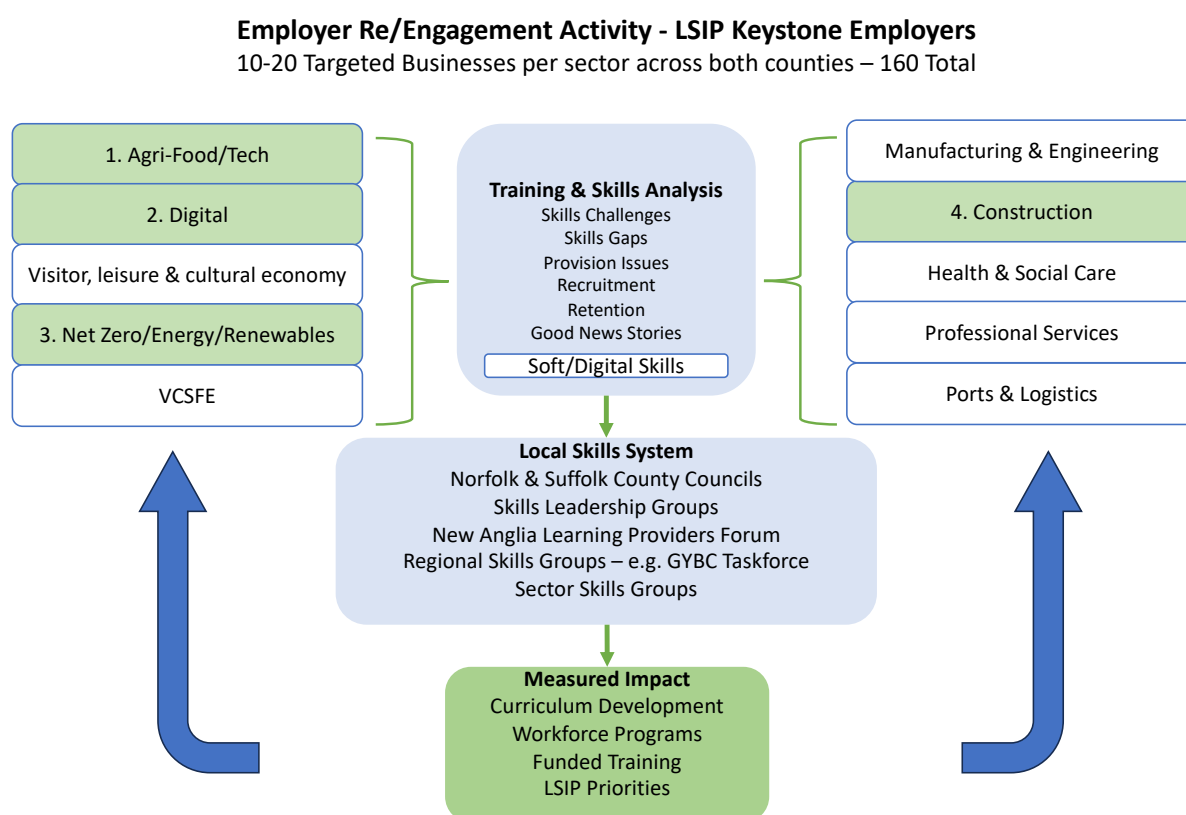
The LSIP team is collaborating with businesses in the region to identify **LSIP Keystone Employers**. Their role is to offer continuous insights on skills challenges in their sector and area. These insights will be crucial for shaping the local skills system and influencing future curriculum and training programmes. Our aim being to have at least 5 to 10 Keystone Employers in each of the sectors as outlined in the graphic on page 19.



In Phase 1, the project had broad engagement with businesses to understand the local skills landscape and shape the initial plan. Moving forward, the LSIP aims to take a more strategic approach by working with a diverse range of sectors and representative businesses in the locality.

This shift is not about spending time on business surveys that may not yield desired results, but rather about establishing long-lasting, meaningful partnerships with local businesses committed to shaping the local skills landscape. This knowledge can be used to share with local authority and education partners when considering further skills improvements.

The diagram below illustrates how crucial employer engagement work will integrate into the LSIP system.



It will influence the creation of training programs and curriculum development while considering both new and existing funding sources and involving all relevant stakeholders.

The green box assigned to a sector indicates a significant priority for local government. To provide an effective engagement system, it is essential for the LSIP team to feedback to employers the positive impact of their engagement.

Feedback and continuous knowledge exchange with employers will continue to be key to achieving success.

3. Achieve better alignment of the local skills system with employer needs and help to sustain the alignment long-term.

A strategic approach involving several key steps is being implemented:

- **Research and Analysis:** Conducting research to understand the current skills landscape and identify the skills most in demand by local employers. Analyse the gap between the skills available in the local workforce and the skills required by employers.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Engaging with employers, industry associations, educational providers, and government agencies to gather insights on skill requirements and industry trends. Collaborating with these stakeholders to create a shared understanding of skills needs and develop solutions together.
- **Curriculum Development:** Working with educational providers to align their curriculum with the skills needed by local employers. Introducing industry-relevant courses, certifications, and training programs to bridge the skills gap effectively.
- **Workforce Development Programmes:** Implement programs that facilitate upskilling and reskilling of the local workforce to meet current and future industry needs. Providing training opportunities, apprenticeships, and mentorship programs to enhance skills and employability.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Continuously monitoring the effectiveness of the alignment efforts through feedback mechanisms, data analysis, and performance metrics. Evaluating the impact of the interventions on the local skills system and adjust strategies as needed to sustain long-term alignment.
- **Policy Support:** Advocating for policies that support the alignment of the local skills system with employer needs, such as funding incentives for skill development initiatives or regulatory frameworks that promote industry-education partnerships.

By implementing these steps in a coordinated and sustainable manner, the local skills system can achieve better alignment with employer needs and maintain this alignment over the long term, ultimately benefiting both employers, providers, and the local workforce.

7. Annexes

Below are hyperlinks to all the annex documents.

1. View the signed MOU between the Norfolk & Suffolk LSIP and the Norfolk & Suffolk Skills Hub (NCC & SCC). [Click Here.](#)
2. View the proposed LSIP Employer Engagement Events. [Click Here](#)
3. View images of the East Norfolk Sixth Form College's proposed Employers Area. [Click Here.](#)
4. View the LSIF Digital Futures Conference interactive graphic created by Rebecca Osborne. [Click Here.](#)
5. LSIF KPIs. [Click Here](#)
- 6a. LSIF Project 5: Soft Skills Courses. [Click Here.](#)
- 6b. LSIF Project 5: Digital Skills Courses. [Click Here.](#)
- 6c. LSIF Project 5: Green Skills Courses. [Click Here.](#)
7. View the east of England All Party Parliamentary Group's Levelling Up for Skills Summary. [Click Here.](#)
8. Minutes of the LSIP Board Meetings: [LSIP Board Meeting – 23 November 2023](#)
[LSIP Board Meeting – 24 February 2024](#)
[LSIP Board Meeting – 21 May 2024](#)