

Progress Report

June 2025

Contents:

	Page No.
• Purpose of the Report	02
• Summary of the LSIP	03
• Strategic & Economic Context Update	04 - 06
• What Has Been Achieved so Far	07 - 11
• What Still Needs to be Achieved	12 – 13
• Annexes:	
Annex A - Priorities & Actions (Roadmap) (Included with this report)	14 – 18
○ Annex B - Supporting Documentation (Click Here to View)	

1. Purpose of the Report

This annual report for the Norfolk and Suffolk Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) aims to review the progress made in delivering greater employer voice and 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 report provides an overview of achievements made within the plan and demonstrates how important catalysts in the skills system, both local and national, will help shape a direction of travel for the coming months and provide further opportunities to get involved for all employers and stakeholders.

Target Audience

This report is directed towards employers, Further/Higher education providers, independent training providers, and stakeholders across 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 LSIP to help enable them to align their strategies and resources as effectively as possible, thus helping to shape the curriculum and workforce training needs across the region.

Interest to the Target Audience

Our target audiences will find this report of interest 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 LSIP's relevance and effectiveness in addressing local skills needs and the shaping of policy.

To review the last year's Norfolk and Suffolk LSIP published in August 2023 and its supporting Annex, along with the Annual Progress Report from 2024, please use the links below.

[LSIP Progress Report - July 2023](#)

[LSIP Annex - July 2023](#)

[LSIP Annual Progress Report - June 2024](#)

2. Summary of the LSIP

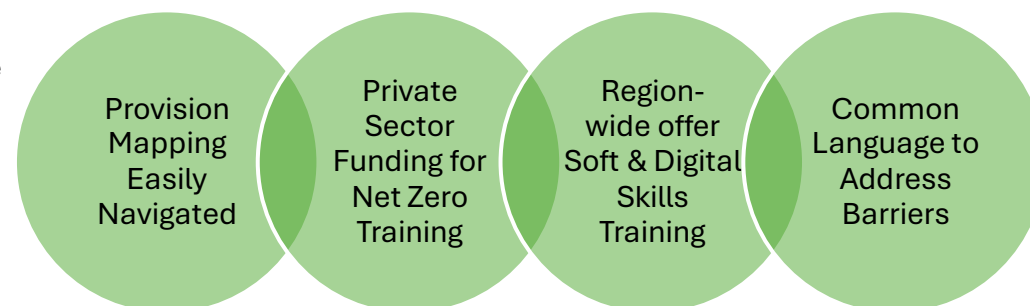
The Norfolk and Suffolk Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) plays a crucial role in the strategic skills landscape of Norfolk and Suffolk by aligning skills development with the region's economic priorities and taking into account employer demand. With a rapidly evolving skills agenda, both locally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

The starting priorities for the Norfolk and Suffolk LSIP were Agri-tech skills, Net-Zero skills, 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 in economic development strategies. The LSIP's emphasis on soft and digital skills, as well as continuous training opportunities, reflects the importance of upskilling and reskilling of the workforce in order for Norfolk and Suffolk to remain competitive.

Leading on the LSIP, Norfolk and Suffolk Chambers of Commerce utilise key stakeholder and employer involvement to underscore the collaborative approach to skills development within the region. Engaging with employers and FE/HE provision in shaping the skills agenda, not only benefits individual employers, but also their employees, thereby contributing to the overall economic resilience and growth of the Norfolk and Suffolk economies.

In summary, the Norfolk and Suffolk LSIP created 4 key (see graphic) priorities which the skills system had the requirement to address, these were based upon extensive research of employer skills gaps and challenges.

The LSIP's legacy will be a system that is able to articulate clearly to the education system and local authorities so that they can respond to 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 and Economic Context

Despite economic shocks and challenges, the Norfolk and Suffolk economies have shown reasonably good resilience, maintaining relatively high employment levels, compared to national figures. Key sectors such as clean energy, agri-tech, advanced manufacturing and construction are central to the region's future growth prospects, with a number of nationally significant infrastructure projects already underway or due to commence. However, the region faces some key challenges. These include wage levels below regional and national averages; significant skills and capability shortages in work readiness/soft and digital skills, ranging from basic digital skills to advanced digital skills; communication and team-working skills; and project management skills. Additionally, both counties continue to have a sizeable proportion of the population, who are economically inactive.

In response, there have been and continue to be a variety of government and local initiatives focusing targeted investments to enhance skills development, improve skills infrastructure and increase employment opportunities. Initiatives such as Boost, Norfolk & Suffolk Skills Bootcamps, Working Well in Norfolk; and the Thrive project, targeted towards supporting those who are considered Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) in Suffolk. The Norfolk & Suffolk LSIP is uniquely placed to represent the employers' voice at a strategic level, providing data and insight to help shape current and future programmes and funding opportunities for our region.

Economic Profile of Norfolk and Suffolk

With no reliance on any single sector or industry, stability for the region comes from the diversity of Norfolk and Suffolk's range of sectors. With a focus on key national priorities, both counties are favourably positioned for attracting investment and making significant contributions to the broader UK economy. Collectively Norfolk and Suffolk contribute approximately £41 billion to UK plc. The two counties have a goal to boost productivity in the region, which has the capability to add an additional £4 billion to our region's economic output each year. For a more detailed economic profile for Norfolk and Suffolk, the labour market activity and inactivity overviews and the latest growth plans on Pages 02 - 04 in the Annex B.

Skills Landscape and Challenges

Norfolk and Suffolk face skills-related challenges that impact on their overall economic potential: lower than average wages, compared to the East of England and national levels; lower proportions of the population attaining degree-level qualifications; and a higher number of young people classified as NEET. Specific skills shortages have been identified in STEM fields and the construction industry faces difficulties in recruiting skilled workers. These challenges affect those entering the workforce and those seeking higher-skilled employment, thus having an overall impact economic growth and productivity. Recent years has seen increased demand for roles in Health and Social Care, sales-related occupations and teaching professions. Skills gaps exist for digital literacy, soft and green skills across multiple sectors, linking our skills challenge to our economic structure - with a high concentration of low-skilled jobs and an urgent need to upskill and reskill to meet higher-value industry demand.

The LSIP is driven by the needs of local employers and aims to identify and address skills gaps within the region. Data on lower qualification levels in Norfolk and Suffolk provides strong evidence for the LSIP to prioritise initiatives that boost higher-level skills and educational attainment locally, which better aligns to the actual roles available. By understanding these specific gaps, the LSIP can focus on developing targeted training programmes and fostering stronger links between education providers and businesses. Skills Bootcamps have been developed using this evidence. A more detailed assessment of the skills landscape and challenges can be found on Pages 03 - 04 of the Annex B.

Government and Local Economic Initiatives

Norfolk and Suffolk benefit from a range of government and local initiatives designed to foster economic growth and address specific challenges. This region has been allocated government funding to deliver the “Connect to Work” programme, a key component of the national “Get Britain Working” strategy, aimed at reducing ‘hidden unemployment’ by linking health and employment services. The Business Growth Fund and Made Smarter Adoption Programme help stimulate rural areas in Norfolk. In Suffolk Freeport East and Space to Innovate Enterprise Zones benefit local businesses. £4 million of Skills Bootcamp funding boosted local skills support. For a more detailed summary of local support, see Page 04 of the Annex B.

Economic Conclusion

The economies of Norfolk and Suffolk show both promise and opportunity, as well as challenge. They both have diverse economies with growing opportunities in sectors like clean energy and advanced air mobility and both have healthy job markets. However, they do face headwinds such as lower wages, education levels and experience lower economic outputs per person and need to improve workforce skills attainment levels. Both counties need to address skills gaps, particularly in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and digital fields to attract high growth industries and increase productivity. They need to continue to invest in their infrastructure, including digital and transportation networks, to support business growth and improve residents' quality of life.

Supporting innovation and new businesses, especially in key sectors like clean energy, agriculture technology, and digital technologies, is essential for future economic growth. Norfolk and Suffolk could significantly boost their regional economy by working collaboratively on initiatives, skills programmes, and infrastructure projects. Jointly, the counties already work closely when setting skills strategy and developing skills policies. So further consolidated, a 'regional' approach could make the region even more notable and attractive to national investment and international trade and help them tackle shared challenges more effectively. The work towards devolution has the potential to provide a platform to take the best of both counties and create a region which is attracting investment and providing opportunity for residents.

Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation

Norfolk and Suffolk are on the fast track for Devolution and will be subject to Local Government Reform. A critical aspect of the Mayoral County Combined Authority (MCCA) agenda includes a closer relationship between the work of the LSIP and the MCCA. By aligning devolved powers with the priorities of the LSIP we can ensure that skills development initiatives are tailored to the specific needs articulated by businesses - ultimately boosting productivity, attracting businesses, and improving the overall economic well-being of Norfolk and Suffolk. (See page 04 in the Annex B for more information on Devolution and Local Government Reform for Norfolk and Suffolk).

Impact on the Provider Landscape

As a result of the changes in the political landscape, such as Devolution and Local Government Reform and the need to navigate changes in skills funding, the provider landscape in Norfolk and Suffolk is under significant pressure to adjust. The LSIP's role is to ensure that the education and training provision is as responsive as possible to employers' needs. To achieve this, we will continue to foster greater collaboration between providers, including:

1. Further Education (FE) colleges
2. Higher Education (HE) institutions
3. Independent Training Providers (ITP)
4. Other stakeholders

Norfolk and Suffolk benefits from a vast array of independent training providers who can deliver a wide range of funded and non-funded training across the region. They have a level of flexibility and agility that may help to deliver at pace, alongside the HE/FE providers, in order to meet the changing requirements of business and employers. With five FE colleges in the region, there is a wide breadth of provision available and all work closely with the LSIP. In the last LSIP delivery period, four of the colleges have been supported by the LSIP with their Ofsted inspections. Three received a 'Good' Ofsted rating and one, West Suffolk College, part of the Eastern Education Group, was awarded an 'Outstanding' Ofsted rating.

Laraine Moody – Group Principal University & Professional Development from Eastern Education Group said: “Through sustained engagement with over 2,000 businesses and the delivery of over 750 new apprenticeships and 3,000 student work placements last year alone, the College serves as a regional anchor institution, driving workforce development and economic resilience. This symbiotic partnership between the College and the LSIP exemplifies how place-based, employer-led strategies can strengthen local provision, boost productivity, and provide learners with meaningful progression into employment and higher education.” (See Page 05 of the Annex B for the full quote).

Key aspects of this changing landscape across Norfolk and Suffolk include increased Employer Engagement; a focus on Priority Skills; collaboration and specialisation; and investment in facilities and resources. The LSIP is always striving to foster significant changes in the provider landscape, encouraging a more responsive, collaborative, and employer-led approach to skills development in Norfolk and Suffolk. Skills England aims to simplify the skills landscape and ensure the workforce has the necessary skills to drive economic growth. Their priorities include: Identifying skills gaps at the national level and creating strategies to address them; unifying the skills landscape across England, in collaboration with local government, businesses, training providers, and unions; shaping technical education to meet skills needs; advising on the highly trained workforce needed for the future economy.

Skills England will prioritise 10 key sectors:

Advanced Manufacturing	Clean Energy Industries	Creative Industries	Defence	Construction
Digital and Technologies	Professional & Business Services	Financial Services	Life Sciences	Health & Social Care

The priorities of Skills England are already being reflected in multiple ways in the work of the Norfolk & Suffolk LSIP:

- **Identifying and Addressing Skills Gaps:** The Norfolk & Suffolk LSIP directly addresses this priority by identifying the specific skills gaps within the region and working to ensure provision is in place to meet those needs.
- **Unifying the Skills Landscape:** The LSIP promotes collaboration between various education and training providers (FE, HE, private providers) and employers, which aligns with Skills England's goal of unifying the skills landscape.
- **Shaping Technical Education:** By emphasising employer engagement and tailoring training to meet industry demands, the LSIP is working to shape technical education to be more responsive to skills needs, a key priority for Skills England.
- **Focus on Priority Skills:** The LSIP's focus on priority skills such as digital, and soft skills aligns with Skills England's emphasis on its 10 priority sectors. The LSIP in Norfolk and Suffolk is working to ensure that the region has a skilled workforce to support these sectors as well as locally nuanced priorities such as agri-food/tech.

4. What has been achieved so far?

Employer Engagement

The Norfolk and Suffolk Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) is fundamentally driven by the needs of employers. Therefore, employer engagement is of paramount importance in guiding skills development and provision across the region. By placing businesses at the heart of the process, the LSIP can ensure that the developing skills programmes are truly aligned with the demands of the local labour market thus fostering economic growth and boosting productivity.

A crucial element of this employer engagement is the surveying of businesses to identify skills gaps/needs. These surveys provide invaluable data, directly from the source, about the specific skills that employers are currently lacking and/or anticipate needing in the future. The LSIP has various methods in which it collects data to inform curriculum and policy decisions and has delivered the following programme for employers across the region including events and skills surveys:

LSIP Employer Engagement Events

January 2023 – December 2023	January 2024 – December 2024	January 2025 - June 2025
3 x Events in Norfolk 3 x Events in Suffolk 1 x Joint Flagship Event - Newmarket	3 x Events in Norfolk 2 x Events in Suffolk	2 x Events in Suffolk 2 x Events in Norfolk
Total Employers & Stakeholders engaged with LSIP Events: 400		

Further LSIP Employer Engagement

Keystone Employers	Skills Surveys	121 & Informal Employer Engagement
60 (50:50 split across both counties)	500 employer responses	740 engagements
Total Employer engagement with the LSIP: 1,300		

This granular level of insight is essential for shaping a responsive and effective skills ecosystem. It allows training providers and educational institutions to tailor their programmes, thus ensuring that individuals acquire the competencies that are most valued by industry. Ultimately, this targeted approach enhances the employability of the local workforce, supports business growth and strengthens the overall economic resilience of Norfolk and Suffolk.

The LSIP employer surveys explore possible reasons why businesses do not engage with training. Below are a sample of the kind of responses received:

- Teams being too small, with no growth plans
- Apprenticeships not fitting the business, or being at the wrong level
- Bad experiences with having apprentices
- Lack of relevant local or specialist training
- Difficulty in finding information about available training
- Challenges in accessing grants or funding
- Concerns about basic skills and aptitude
- Perceptions that courses are being 'dumbed down'
- Preference for in-house training
- Difficulty in finding tutors

The full survey data can be found within the Annex B on Page 07.

LSIP Keystone Employers

The Norfolk and Suffolk LSIP Keystone Employers Programme is uniquely designed to support local sector skills groups with insights and employer input. The LSIP engages with employers who are active supporters of skills development opportunities within their industry sectors. We can take their best practice and use it to inspire other employers and to share feedback with the appropriate sector groups.

The feedback and best practice can either be articulated on the employer's behalf by the LSIP, or the LSIP can facilitate the employer providing direct feedback in person at the sector group meetings, where appropriate. These 'Skills Champion' employers play a crucial role in the local economy due to their size, number of employees, or influence in specific sectors, and they help demonstrate the employer commitment to skills within the region.

Objectives and Activities of the LSIP Keystone Employers:

- **Employer-led skills improvement:** The programme aims to place employers at the centre of identifying and addressing the skills needs of the Norfolk and Suffolk workforce and informally advising council skills teams through Sector Group meetings.
- **Collaboration and partnership:** Involves fostering stronger relationships between employers, further education colleges, universities, independent training providers, and local authorities to ensure that training and education align with the demands of the job market.
- **Addressing skills shortages:** A key focus is to tackle specific skills gaps identified in key sectors within Norfolk and Suffolk, such as digital technology, clean energy, agri-tech, advanced manufacturing, and engineering.
- **Developing relevant training:** Keystone employers are at the forefront of discussions with training providers to design and deliver industry-led courses and Skills Bootcamps that equip individuals with the skills that businesses need.
- **Workforce development:** Keystone employers encourage businesses to invest in the growth and development of their employees, recognising that a skilled workforce is crucial for innovation and economic success.

Since the start of our Programme, the LSIP has engaged with more than 60 employers, who have expressed an interest in being a Keystone Employer and providing insight on sectoral based skills challenges. They are happy to add value the sector groups. As the LSIP supports these employers through the process, they will become integral to the future work of the LSIP, particularly as we move towards a devolved skills system, by being able to provide a consistent trusted employer voice, which will be paramount to shaping the local skills landscape. Please see Pages 07 – 08 of the Annex B for some employer case studies.

LSIP as a Key Component of the Skills System

The Norfolk and Suffolk LSIP has worked continuously, together with all our stakeholders, to ensure that it is completely embedded within the local skills system. The mechanisms below ensure that our LSIP remains relevant, vibrant and accessible:

- **Statutory Duty on FE Providers:** A crucial element of embedding the LSIP, is the statutory requirement for Further Education (FE) providers - colleges and independent training providers (ITPs) to pay due reference to the LSIP, when creating accountability agreements and designing future curriculum. They are legally obligated to consider the skills priorities outlined in the LSIP, thus creating a powerful mechanism for aligning training provision with employer needs. Over the last year, the LSIP has supported FE Colleges and ITP's on the skills element of OFSTED inspections, as a key stakeholder we can articulate the positive employer interaction that has taken or is taking place.
- **Local Authority Alignment:** The LSIP actively collaborates with the local authorities across Norfolk and Suffolk. These authorities have a strategic overview of their local economies and labour markets. By working in partnership, the LSIP can leverage the authorities' understanding of local priorities, economic development strategies, and social inclusion agendas, thus ensuring a more direct and collegiate approach to skills planning that meets both the public sector need and that of the employers.
- **Supporting Sector Groups:** The LSIP actively supports all key sector groups across the region, we provide a platform for the sector groups to articulate their collective skills needs, which then informs the broader priorities of the local skills policy. This fosters a more joined-up approach and delivers impactful employer voice for industry within the skills system. The groups are facilitated in the main by local council skills colleagues and are delivered in partnership with the LSIP, again showcasing the alignment and the co-working of all the major skills teams in the region.

Breaking Down Barriers and Fostering Collaboration

The complex skills system often suffers from a siloed approach and a lack of communication between the many different stakeholders. The Norfolk and Suffolk LSIP actively seeks to break down these barriers. The wiring of the skills system is also hard to navigate for businesses and the LSIP is uniquely positioned to address this. Some key outputs of this work in breaking down these barriers is shown below:

- **Employer / FE Collaboration:** One of the core capabilities of the LSIP is its ability to broker collaborative arrangements between industry and provision. Introductions from businesses to ITPs and FE Colleges have been made, as well as the brokering of conversations between ITP's and FE Colleges to address a more partnership approach to delivery.
- **Navigating Complexity:** The LSIP acts as a central point of contact to assist employers to navigate the often-confusing landscape of skills provision. By clearly articulating priority skills and facilitating connections with relevant providers, it reduces the burden on businesses to individually seek out and engage within the skills system. See Annex B, Page 06 for a graphic illustration of local skills system.

- **Strategic Alignment:** By bringing together employers, FE providers, and local authorities, the LSIP facilitated a more strategically aligned approach to skills development. This is fostering a mindset for the region of 'do different' to achieve the aspirational values set by the local authorities, government targets and regional direction for workforce readiness and upskilling.
- **Shared Ownership:** The collaborative nature of the LSIP has engendered a sense of shared ownership of the local skills agenda among key stakeholders. This collective responsibility is crucial for driving sustained improvement and overcoming the inherent complexities of the skills system.

In conclusion, the Norfolk and Suffolk LSIP has become a pivotal element of the skills system by being employer-led; creating links with FE/HE providers; actively involving local authorities; and supporting the sector groups. It's success in fostering collaboration and identifying local priorities has positioned the LSIP as a key reference point in government policy, demonstrating a model for how to break down barriers and shape skills delivery in a complex environment. It's continued evolution will be crucial in ensuring that the local skills system effectively meets the needs of the local economy and its workforce and devolution provides a great opportunity for the LSIP to be the driving force behind many future skills projects.

Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF) for Norfolk and Suffolk

The LSIF provided a significant financial boost across both counties, aimed at transforming skills training across the region. £4.75 million was allocated to a collaborative project, led by Suffolk New College, working with City College Norwich, the College of West Anglia, East Coast College, West Suffolk College, East Norfolk Sixth Form College, and the University of Suffolk. This initiative ran until March 2025 and focused on addressing key skills gaps identified in the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) for Norfolk and Suffolk.

The LSIF has been directed towards several key areas:

- **Net Zero Technologies:** Developing training facilities and resources for skills in retrofit, renewable heating, solar power, and electric vehicle maintenance.
- **Employability Skills Centres:** Creating spaces within partner colleges to support learners in developing crucial employability skills in partnership with local businesses.
- **Digital and Virtual Reality:** Investing in new equipment to enhance teaching methods and meet the growing demand for digital skills.
- **Green Technologies in Agriculture:** Providing resources for training that aligns with sustainable agricultural practices and the transition to Net Zero.
- **Staff Upskilling:** Training college staff in green technologies and the latest digital teaching methods.
- **Community Soft Skills Programmes:** Delivering programmes to improve essential soft skills for individuals and local businesses.
- **Curriculum Development:** Creating new courses in the priority areas identified by the LSIP: soft skills, digital skills, and net zero skills.
- **Digital Resources:** Development of resources like the Norfolk and Suffolk Digital Passport, offering free digital skills training materials.
- **Industry Spaces:** Creating spaces for employers to engage with learners and support their workplace skills development.
- **Transition Support:** Establishing spaces to help anxious learners and those with autistic spectrum conditions transition into vocational programmes.

The LSIF directly aligns with the LSIP's objectives by:

- **Addressing Employer-Identified Needs:** The funding is specifically targeted at the skills gaps highlighted by employers in the LSIP, particularly in digital, soft, and green skills, as well as sector-specific needs like Agri-Tech and Net Zero industries.
- **Implementing Actionable Priorities:** The LSIF projects directly deliver on the actionable priorities set out in the LSIP, such as investing in new training facilities and developing relevant curriculum.
- **Fostering Collaboration:** The LSIF project brings together a wide range of education providers and works closely with the Chambers of Commerce, ensuring a coordinated approach to skills development across Norfolk and Suffolk, as articulated by the LSIP.
- **Enhancing Skills Provision:** The investments in equipment, staff training, and curriculum development aim to make technical education and training more responsive to the needs of employers, a central goal of the LSIP.
- **Boosting Employability:** By focusing on the skills demanded by employers, the LSIF aims to equip learners with the skills needed to secure good jobs and improve their career prospects, aligning with the LSIP's ambition to enhance the region's workforce.

In summation, the LSIF has acted as a key mechanism for implementing the strategic objectives defined within the Norfolk & Suffolk LSIP. It has provided the financial resources for the FE providers which were necessary to enact the changes to start to meet the skills needs of employers and help drive economic growth in the region.

Further examples of the LSIF project can be found in the links in the supporting Annex B on Page 07.

5. What still needs to be achieved?

The Norfolk and Suffolk LSIP has laid out a clear roadmap for addressing our region's critical skills challenges. To accelerate progress and maximise impact, we are focusing on strategically developing our **Keystone Employers** initiative. We believe that by empowering and collaborating closely with leading businesses, i.e. those with significant regional influence and a commitment to skills development, we can create a powerful catalyst for change.

This next phase of LSIP development will be about translating our strategic priorities into tangible action. Working hand-in-hand with keystone employers to identify and support employer-led training solutions. In order to successfully achieve the LSIP strategic positioning, we will look to collaborate and enable the following activity:

- **Deepen LSIP Keystone Development and Profiling:**
 - Conduct in-depth consultations with key employers across sectors to further refine understanding of current and future skills gaps
 - Develop detailed skills profiles for critical occupations within these sectors, outlining required competencies and potential training pathways
 - Establish a network of 'Keystone Employers' who will actively champion and contribute to understanding skills challenges and skills gaps
- **Enhance Website Engagement and Information Dissemination:**
 - Launch the updated LSIP website with easily accessible information on priority skills, available training programs, and funding opportunities.
 - Develop interactive tools on the website to allow employers to register their skills needs and connect with relevant training providers
 - Regularly publish case studies and success stories showcasing the impact of the LSIP on individuals and businesses in Norfolk and Suffolk via a quarterly newsletter
- **Strengthen Collaboration with Independent Training Providers (ITPs):**
 - Host follow-up forums with ITPs to collaboratively design and commission new training programs, that directly address the skills gaps identified in the LSIP
 - Foster collaboration and partnership working with ITP's and FE Colleges
 - Develop mechanisms for ITPs to provide feedback on the effectiveness of the LSIP and suggest further improvements
- **Brokerage Activities for Skills Matching:**
 - Implement a proactive brokerage service that actively matches employers with suitable training solutions and potential talent pipelines
 - Develop a database of both employer skills needs and available training provision across Norfolk and Suffolk to facilitate efficient matching
 - Access funding to train dedicated skills brokers who can provide tailored support to businesses, particularly SMEs, in navigating the skills landscape

Overarching Next Steps:

- **Establish a clear plan with measurable targets:** Define key performance indicators (KPIs) to track the progress and impact of the LSIP initiatives.
- **Secure Sustainable Funding and Resources:** Identify and secure the necessary funding to support the delivery of the planned actions and ensure the long-term sustainability of the LSIP

- **Maintain Ongoing Communication and Engagement:** Regularly communicate progress and updates to all stakeholders, including employers, training providers, local authorities, and individuals
- **Foster a Culture of Collaboration and Partnership:** Continue to build strong relationships and partnerships across the skills ecosystem in Norfolk and Suffolk to ensure a coordinated and effective approach to skills development

These next steps aim to build upon the initial activities and forward trajectory of the implementation of the Norfolk and Suffolk LSIP, ultimately leading to a more skilled workforce and a stronger regional economy, and ultimately stronger strategic position within the skills system for the local skills improvement plan in Norfolk and Suffolk.

We encourage all stakeholders, employers, and partners in Norfolk and Suffolk to actively explore how they can contribute to the success of the Keystone Employers initiative. By working together, sharing expertise, and committing to collaborative action, we can build a highly skilled workforce that drives innovation, productivity, and prosperity across our region.

Specific ways for stakeholder, employers and partners to get involved with the LSIP now include:

- **Expressing interest** in becoming a Keystone Employer (for eligible businesses).
- **Contacting the LSIP Team** to discuss potential partnership opportunities.
- **Attending upcoming forums and workshops** related to the Keystone Employers initiative.
- **Sharing information** about the initiative within your networks.

Let's all continue to work together to make the Norfolk & Suffolk Local Skills Improvement Plan an employer-centric, powerful engine for skills development across Norfolk and Suffolk.

Progress Report – Annex A

June 2025

Priorities and Ongoing Actions

- This Roadmap sets out the direction of travel and distance gained against the original priorities as published in Local Skills Improvement Plan in May 2024, as the skills landscape changes amendments and timescales may have changed from the original publication – these are highlighted at ‘UPDATES’ in the below Roadmap. Some actions are ongoing and will continue beyond June 2025, as outlined in the below tables.

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 • University 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. October 2025: Develop a plan of engagement to businesses and provide opportunities for using this resource.	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 <i>Cont..</i>	Suffolk New College will manage the project under the LSIF via a monthly review.	Delivery timescales all on track. In Progress UPDATE: Courses have been developed by partners and are now available at the LSIF webpages as part of the LSIP landing page and offers a suite of courses via partners for business use. Further work is required to understand via partners of LSIF how to best utilise this resource how much <i>Cont..</i>

- LSIP Road Map Cont...

Priority	Action / Activity / Milestone	Partners involved	Timescales	Method of implementation and outcomes expected	Monitoring arrangements	Progress Status
Project 1 st Cont...				<p>the providers and showcased on the LSIP/LSIF webpages</p> <p>17 categories of course with 50 different courses on offer.</p> <p>Digital Passport has 24 training videos on topics such as MS Team, Office 365, cloud storage, GDPR, PowerPoint, Word, Excel and Browser use.</p>		<p>traffic we can drive to the resource and as a collective it is maintained. A cohesive approach with both Chambers of Commerce and LSIF Partners will ensure best use of this Provision.</p> <p>The Norfolk and Suffolk Digital Passport brand and materials created by Switch Direction for the partners to use to support digital basic skills training.</p> <p>We are all delivering digital basic skills courses – we are currently using these for some free courses being offered by Switch Direction via Suffolk Chamber, and for digital basic skills courses being offered by Suffolk New College to DWP participants through</p> <p>Cont..</p>

• **LSIP Road Map Cont...**

Priority	Action / Activity / Milestone	Partners involved	Timescales	Method of implementation and outcomes expected	Monitoring arrangements	Progress Status
Project 1 st Cont...						<p>Adult Skills Fund.</p> <p>If we can clearly see demand from employers, we can grow that programme.</p> <p>Ongoing mapping to be reviewed with input from FE/HE/ITPs.</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>August 2024: Ongoing quarterly updates to mapping.</p> <p>January 2025: Research and Cont..</p>	<p>Sector Groups and Events will provide insight, as well as New Anglia Learning Provider Forum for Training Provision.</p> <p>Research through webpages.</p> <p>Online portal & Social Media coverage – Links sent to chamber members and 400 businesses who previously engaged with the LSIP.</p>	<p>Monitored through bi-weekly updates with LSIP Operational meetings. Led by Norfolk Chambers of Commerce</p>	<p>Initial Mapping Completed.</p> <p>UPDATE: As provision is changing constantly aligned with funding, a more up to date digital way to keep businesses up to date is required.</p> <p>There is work being undertaken to understand whether there is a skills aggregator – (AI) based function we could utilise for</p> <p>Cont...</p>

• LSIP Road Map Cont...

Priority	Action / Activity / Milestone	Partners involved	Timescales	Method of implementation and outcomes expected	Monitoring arrangements	Progress Status
Priority Provision Mapping Cont...			deliver a plan for the implantation of a digital platform for businesses to access the knowledge and tools as part of the provision locally.			businesses to navigate this far easier than a manual collation of information. A new roadmap for delivery of this will need to be designed using delivery partners, the LSIP however will endeavour to ensure that provision is updated where possible in the interim period.
Common Languages Responses Develop a common guide to the skills landscape.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create complete Glossary of Terms. Articulate skills landscape in an employer digestible format. Online web portal for ease of navigation. Convening Sector Groups and District Skills Groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LSIP Team Local Authorities incl. districts Providers HE/FE DWP / VCSFE Employer Forums in Norfolk & Suffolk 	September 2023: Commence Work August 2024: Update Web portal 6-weekly Sector Groups running since September 2023 and will continue throughout the programme January 2025: As part of the digital work in the previous action, a digital platform will aid this activity.	Convening groups Engaging Business Ensuring all FE Providers are using a common language – articulating through sector groups and provision networks, with local authorities' skills teams Outcomes: Simplified language delivering greater accessibility for all businesses.	Monitored through operational meetings and feedback from sector/working groups. Weekly LSIP operational meetings.	UPDATE: This is being delivered through consistent employer engagement and breaking down of barriers for businesses. Also signposting to LSIP websites for further understanding, this work could complement the above skills mapping as we move to a more digitally based platform and develop a roadmap for delivery.

• **LSIP Road Map Cont...**

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. Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs), such as Sizewell C, Offshore Renewables 	October 2023: Work Commenced Work is ongoing until April 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. UPDATE: Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) within the region are proactively using funds to deliver skills interventions. Notably, RWE and Sizewell C have funding allocated to work with communities to address skills and engagement. We are working with them to understand the impact will be key for the LSIP and the relationship with the stakeholders.