



Funded by  
UK Government



Local Skills  
Improvement Plan

Leicester • Leicestershire • Rutland



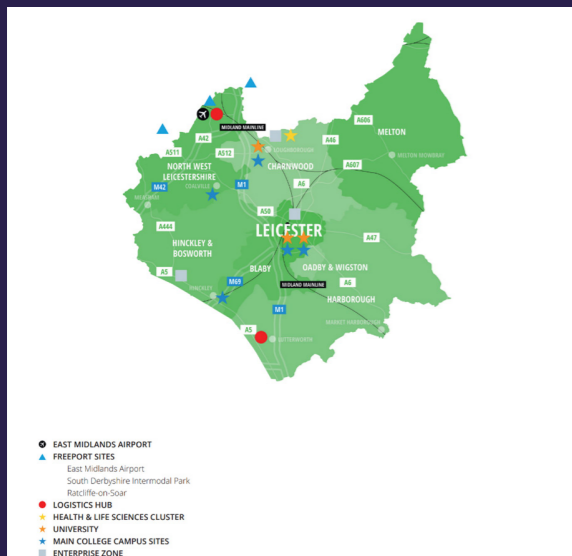
2026–2029

# Local Skills Improvement Plan

Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland

# Contents

1. Executive Summary
2. Local Skills Priorities
3. Annex A – Detailed Skills Needs
4. Annex B – Delivery Framework
5. Annex C – Background and Methodology



Above: Leicester and Leicestershire Local Skills Improvement Plan Geography

## Executive Summary

The Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) sets out a clear, employer-led assessment of current and future skills needs, alongside the changes required to the local skills system to better align provision with labour market demand.

LLR has a diverse and growing economy, with strengths across manufacturing, logistics, construction, health and social care, and creative industries. Forecast growth, combined with replacement demand, is expected to drive significant employment need over the coming years. However, employers continue to report persistent challenges in accessing the skills they need to grow and remain competitive.

These challenges include: skills shortages across key technical and occupational areas

- gaps in higher-level and specialist skills
- barriers to workforce participation
- limited clarity in progression pathways between education levels
- the pace of technological and environmental change

Developed by the East Midlands Chamber as the designated Employer Representative Body (ERB), the LSIP is grounded in extensive engagement with employers, providers and stakeholders. It aligns with national and local strategies, including the Industrial Strategy, Clean Energy priorities, and local Get Britain Working Plans.

Delivery will be aligned with the emerging Jobs and Careers Service, with Jobcentre Plus and careers services acting as key partners. Employer intelligence gathered through

the LSIP will support job matching and provision planning, while insight from Jobcentre Plus on jobseekers, barriers to employment and progression routes will inform continuous improvement.

The LSIP also places strong emphasis on improving participation in the labour market, including targeted action to support individuals who are not in education, employment or training (NEET), through clearer entry routes, targeted outreach and stronger links between skills provision and employment opportunities.

The Plan supports the expansion of higher technical education, in line with the Government's ambition that at least 10% of young people progress to Level 4–5 study by 2040. Higher Education providers play a central role as strategic partners, supporting the identification of higher-level skills needs and the development of progression pathways across Levels 4–7.

Drawing on this evidence, the LSIP identifies five focused priorities that translate employer insight into targeted, deliverable actions:

- Enabling flexible and inclusive skills pathways
- Increasing participation in skills provision
- Improving employability and workplace readiness
- Strengthening digital and AI capability
- Developing green skills for Net Zero

Each priority is underpinned by a defined programme of delivery, with clear actions, lead responsibilities and measurable outcomes set out in Annex B. This ensures a strong and transparent line of sight from employer evidence through to delivery and impact.

This Local Skills Improvement Plan has been approved by the Secretary of State in accordance with the requirements of section 1 of the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022, and the relevant published statutory guidance' LOCAL SKILLS IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2026–2029

# Local Skills Priorities



## Priority 1 – Enable Flexible and Inclusive Skills Pathways

Employers and providers report that the current skills system is difficult to navigate and does not consistently enable progression between levels or into employment. Learners often lack clarity on progression routes, while employers find it challenging to identify provision aligned to occupational needs.

This priority focuses on improving the clarity, accessibility and alignment of skills pathways across LLR. This will include mapping provision across FE, HE, Independent Training Providers and employer-led delivery to identify strengths, gaps and duplication, and **support a more coordinated regional offer**.

HE providers will act as strategic partners, working with FE to strengthen progression

across Levels 4–7. This supports the expansion of higher technical education, in line with the Government ambition for 10% of young people to progress to Level 4–5 study by 2040, with particular emphasis on Level 3–5 technical pathways.

Delivery will include the development of a single employer-facing skills hub, providing a **clear entry point to training provision and improving visibility** of flexible and modular learning aligned to sector and occupational demand.

Skills pathways will be clearly mapped across all qualification levels, supporting progression into employment, including for individuals who are not in education, employment or training (NEET).

## Priority 2 – Widen Participation and Access to Skills Provision

Evidence highlights persistent inequalities in access to skills provision, with barriers affecting individuals from diverse and underrepresented communities. These include low awareness, digital exclusion, childcare constraints and limited familiarity with the skills system. Employers also report challenges in accessing these talent pools.

This priority focuses on widening participation through targeted, inclusive approaches. This will include **strengthening engagement with community, voluntary**

**and faith-based organisations**, expanding ESOL-integrated provision, and ensuring information is accessible and relevant.

Delivery will align with local employment support, including Jobcentre Plus and careers services, to better connect individuals to opportunities and **support progression into work**.

Simplified engagement routes for employers, particularly SMEs, will **reduce barriers to participation and improve access** to local talent.



**Impact:** A more transparent and coordinated skills system, with **improved progression, increased employer engagement, and stronger alignment** between provision and labour market

**Impact:** Increased participation in skills provision, **a more diverse and inclusive workforce**, and improved access for employers to a broader talent pool.

# Local Skills Priorities



## Priority 3 – Strengthen Employability and Workplace

Employers consistently report gaps in employability skills, including communication, reliability, teamwork and adaptability. This highlights a disconnect between education and workplace expectations, particularly at the point of transition into employment.

This priority focuses on strengthening the transition between education and work through a **shared responsibility model** across providers, employers and partners.

Delivery will include clearer expectations around workplace behaviours, improved preparation for placements and employment, and stronger employer feedback loops to inform curriculum design and support.

Approaches will be **flexible and scalable**, reflecting the predominance of SMEs across LLR, including sector-based engagement, shared placement models and coordinated employer input.


## Priority 4 – Develop Digital, Data and AI Skills Across All Sectors

Employers across all sectors report increasing demand for digital, data and AI skills, with gaps ranging from basic digital confidence to advanced technical capabilities.

This priority focuses on **embedding digital skills** across all provision, ensuring that learning reflects sector-specific requirements and emerging technologies.

Delivery will involve continued engagement with employers and sector groups to define digital skill requirements and working with providers to integrate these into existing pathways.

The LSIP will **support coordination between employers, providers and partners** to ensure provision remains responsive to technological change and aligned to workforce demand.



**Impact:** Improved work readiness, **stronger transitions into employment**, and higher retention in early-stage careers. demand.

**Impact:** Improved digital capability across the workforce, **increased adoption of technology**, and a **stronger pipeline of skills** to support productivity and innovation

# Local Skills Priorities



## Priority 5 – Develop Job-Linked Green Skills for Clean Growth, Retrofit and Electrification

Employers report demand for specific, job-linked green skills, particularly in areas such as retrofit, electrification and low-carbon technologies. There is a need to ensure training provision is aligned to real employment opportunities rather than generalised awareness.

This priority focuses on aligning skills provision with employer demand, including live vacancies, project pipelines and sector needs. Delivery will remain responsive to evolving regulatory frameworks and standards.

Targeted pathways will be developed in key areas including retrofit, electric vehicles and energy efficiency, alongside broader support for businesses in developing environmental sustainability capabilities.

This approach reflects the need to upskill the existing workforce, recognising that many green jobs will be created within current industries.

**Impact:** Increased availability of job-linked green skills, improved alignment between training and employment, and a more sustainable and future-ready workforce.



# Annex A – Detailed Skills Needs



## Overview

To support consistency with national datasets and comparison across Local Skills Improvement Plans, skills needs in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) have been mapped to Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) and Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes.

This ensures employer-identified skills gaps align with recognised industrial and occupational groupings and can be aggregated locally and nationally.

## SIC Codes Used for Sector Definition

The LSIP priority sectors are defined using Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes. These provide a **consistent framework** for identifying sectors and

aligning national sources, including the Industrial Strategy and Office for National Statistics (ONS).

### Priority Sectors and SIC Code Mapping

Priority sector	SIC code(s)	Source / classification basis
Advanced Manufacturing	20, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30	Industrial Strategy
Logistics	H (Transportation and Storage)	ONS
Construction	41, 42, 43	Industrial Strategy
Life Sciences	21, 266, 325, 7211	Industrial Strategy
Health and Social Care	86, 87, 88	ONS
Sports and Leisure	8551, 9311, 9312, 9313, 9319	CIMSPA

These SIC codes underpin identification of relevant employers, economic activity and workforce demand across LLR.

## SOC Code Mapping Methodology

For each sector, associated Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes have been identified using Lightcast labour market intelligence.

The number of SOC codes varies by sector because occupational breadth and complexity differ. For example:

- Advanced Manufacturing includes a broad occupational base, typically comprising over 50 SOC codes

- Logistics includes a more defined occupational structure, typically comprising around 30–40 SOC codes

This approach captures the full range of occupations **shaping each sector, from entry-level roles to higher technical and professional jobs.**

## Cross-Sectoral Nature of Occupations

Occupations are not exclusive to one sector and may appear across multiple industries. As a result:

- SOC codes are treated as cross-sectoral
- Employment counts are aggregated across sectors where occupations appear in multiple industries
- Skills are recognised as transferable between sectors, particularly in roles such as:
  - Warehouse operatives

- Managers and supervisors
- Digital and technical specialists

For example, where warehouse operatives work in both manufacturing and logistics:

- 50 individuals in manufacturing and 25 in logistics are reported as 75 total within the regional workforce

This reflects **real labour market dynamics** and avoids artificially separating transferable skills.



# Annex A – Detailed Skills Needs



## Representative SOC Code Coverage by Sector

The indicative SOC groupings below illustrate the occupational breadth of each sector. Full SOC listings are held in the analytical dataset underpinning the LSIP.

Priority Sectors and SIC Code Mapping		
Priority sector	Representative occupations	Key skills themes
Advanced Manufacturing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Production managers and directors (SOC 1121)</li> <li>Engineering professionals (SOC 212x series)</li> <li>Skilled metal, electrical and electronic trades (SOC 52xx series)</li> <li>Process operatives and assemblers (SOC 81xx series)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Automation and robotics</li> <li>Advanced engineering</li> <li>Digital manufacturing systems</li> </ul>
Logistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transport and distribution managers (SOC 1161)</li> <li>Large goods vehicle drivers (SOC 8211)</li> <li>Warehouse operatives (SOC 8131)</li> <li>Supply chain and logistics coordinators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supply chain management</li> <li>Fleet electrification</li> <li>Digital logistics systems</li> </ul>
Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Construction project managers (SOC 2436)</li> <li>Skilled trades (SOC 531x series)</li> <li>Building operatives and technicians</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retrofit and energy efficiency</li> <li>Heat pump installation</li> <li>Modern methods of construction</li> </ul>
Life Sciences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Biological scientists (SOC 2112)</li> <li>Laboratory technicians (SOC 3111)</li> <li>Research and development roles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Laboratory techniques</li> <li>Innovation and R&amp;D capability</li> <li>Advanced technical skills</li> </ul>

## Priority Sectors and SIC Code Mapping

Priority sector	Representative occupations	Key skills themes
Health and Social Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health professionals (SOC 22xx series)</li> <li>Care workers and home carers (SOC 6145)</li> <li>Allied health roles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workforce capacity and retention</li> <li>Clinical and care skills</li> <li>Digital health technologies</li> </ul>
Sports and Leisure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sports coaches and instructors (SOC 3442)</li> <li>Leisure and fitness managers</li> <li>Community engagement roles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coaching and physical activity delivery</li> <li>Health and wellbeing</li> <li>Community engagement</li> </ul>

## Application to LSIP Priorities

This SOC/SIC mapping supports the LSIP by:

- Providing a robust evidence base linking employer feedback to occupational demand
- Enabling alignment with Skills England datasets and national analysis
- Supporting the design of targeted skills

pathways across qualification levels (Level 2–7)

- Informing sector-specific and cross-sector skills interventions, particularly in:
  - Digital and AI capability
  - Retrofit and Net Zero
  - Employability and behavioural skills

## Limitations and Considerations

- SOC/SIC mapping reflects current data availability and may evolve over time
- Occupational overlap means that sector-

specific analysis must account for transferable skills and workforce mobility

Some emerging roles (e.g. AI, green technologies) may not yet be fully represented in SOC classification.



# Annex B – Delivery Framework 2026–2029



## Delivery and Accountability Framework

Each action has a single accountable lead organisation responsible for coordinating delivery, monitoring progress and reporting to the LSIP Advisory Board.

Supporting organisations contribute to delivery but accountability for performance sits with the named lead organisation.

Progress will be reviewed quarterly through the LSIP Advisory Board and reported annually through an LSIP Delivery Report using a Red-Amber-Green (RAG) methodology.

### Priority 1 – Enable flexible and inclusive skills pathways

Action	Accountable Lead	Supporting Partners	2027 Milestone	2028 Milestone	2029 Target Outcome	KPI
Map full provision landscape across Levels 2–7	East Midlands Chamber	FE Providers, HE Providers, ITPs, Local Authorities, Jobcentre Plus	Comprehensive skills map completed	Annual update completed and gaps identified	Provision map embedded within planning processes	Skills map published; annual review completed; identified gaps addressed
Develop Employer Skills Hub Strengthen community engagement	East Midlands Chamber	FE, HE, ITPs, Careers Service, Jobcentre Plus	Platform established and operational	500 employers actively using platform	750 employers actively using platform	Employer registrations; referrals into provision; user satisfaction above 80%
Strengthen Level 4–5 technical pathways and identify progression routes and gaps from level 3–5	East Midlands Chamber	FE Colleges, University Partnerships, IoT, Sixth Forms	Audit of Level 3–5 provision completed	New pathways developed in priority sectors	10% increase in participation in Level 4–5 provision	Level 4–5 enrolments; progression rates; employer participation

### Priority 2 – Widen Participation and Access to Skills Provision

Action	Accountable Lead	Supporting Partners	2027 Milestone	2028 Milestone	2029 Target Outcome	KPI
Expand integrated ESOL and skills provision	East Midlands Chamber	FE Providers, HE Providers, ITPs, Local Authorities, Jobcentre Plus	Baseline participation established	Additional integrated programmes launched	15% increase in participation from ESOL learners	Enrolments; completions; progression into further learning or work
Strengthen community-based outreach	Leicester City Council on behalf of LLR Local Authorities	VCSE Sector, FE, HE, DWP	Outreach programme operating across all districts	Annual engagement plan implemented	Increased participation from identified	Number of outreach events; participant numbers; learner conversions
Increase SME engagement in skills provision	East Midlands Chamber	Employer Groups, FSB, Providers	Employer engagement model implemented	SME participation increased	25% increase in SME engagement compared with baseline	Number of SMEs engaged; placements; apprenticeships supported

### Priority 3 – Strengthen Employability and Workplace Readiness

Action	Accountable Lead	Supporting Partners	2027 Milestone	2028 Milestone	2029 Target Outcome	KPI
Embed employability framework across providers	LLR FE Colleges Group	Universities, Employers, Chamber	Common framework developed	All major providers implementing framework	Consistent employability approach across LLR	Number of providers adopting framework; learner employability assessment scores
Improve workplace and placement readiness	Business and Education Partnership Network	Employers, FE, HE	Employer placement standards developed	Placement preparation programme developed	Improved transition into employment	Placement completion rates; employer satisfaction; learner satisfaction
Establish employer feedback loops	East Midlands Chamber	Sector Panels, Providers	Sector feedback process established	Employer feedback incorporated into curriculum reviews	Employer-led continuous improvement embedded	Number of employer feedback sessions; curriculum changes



# Annex B – Delivery Framework 2026–2029

## Priority 4 – Develop Digital, Data and AI Skills

Action	Accountable Lead	Supporting Partners	2027 Milestone	2028 Milestone	2029 Target Outcome	KPI
Define sector-specific digital and AI skills requirements	East Midlands Chamber	Digital Employers Group, Providers	Annual Digital Skills Assessment produced	Skills requirements refreshed	Annual employer-led digital needs assessment embedded	Employer participation; assessment completed annually
Embed digital and AI capability in learning programmes	LLR FE Colleges Group	Universities, ITPs, Employers	Audit of curriculum completed	Digital and AI content integrated into priority pathways	Digital and AI skills embedded across priority sectors	Number of programmes updated; learners completing digital modules
Increase access to digital and AI training provision	LLR Provider Partnership	FE, HE, ITPs	Baseline provision established	Pathway to programmes introduced	20% increase in digital and AI learner participation	Enrolments; completions; progression into digital occupations

## Priority 5 – Develop Job-Linked Green Skills for Clean Growth, Retrofit and Electrification

Action	Accountable Lead	Supporting Partners	2027 Milestone	2028 Milestone	2029 Target Outcome	KPI
Identify green skills demand and future workforce requirements	East Midlands Chamber	Employers, Local Authorities	Green Skills Assessment completed	Annual update published	Green skills intelligence informs provision planning	Assessment completed; employer participation
Develop retrofit, EV and low-carbon skills pathways	LLR FE Colleges Group	FE Providers, Employers, Universities	New pathways developed	Delivery expanded across LLR	Increase in learners completing priority green skills	Programme enrolments; completions; employer satisfaction
Align provision with infrastructure, retrofit and Net Zero projects	Leicester City Council	Chamber, Employers, Providers, Local Authorities	Priority projects mapped	Sector skills plans developed for major projects	Provision aligned with identified workforce requirements	Number of projects supported; learners progressing into related jobs

## Cross-Cutting Actions

Action	Accountable Lead	Supporting Partners	2027 Milestone	2028 Milestone	2029 Target Outcome	KPI
Align LSIP delivery with Jobcentre Plus and Careers Services	East Midlands Chamber	DWP / Jobcentre Plus District Management Team	Formal delivery alignment established	Shared referral pathways operating	Improved progression into employment	Employment outcomes; referrals; job outcomes
Reduce NEET participation through clearer progression pathways	Leicester City Council on behalf of LLR Local Authorities	FE Providers, DWP, Careers Services	Baseline established	Targeted interventions implemented	Reduction in NEET participation across LLR	NEET statistics; participation rates; progression outcomes
Develop and share annual Labour Market Intelligence	East Midlands Chamber	Skills England, Local Authorities, Providers	Annual LMI report produced	Intelligence integrated into planning	Annual evidence-led planning process established	Reports published; stakeholder engagement
Maintain LSIP delivery governance and performance monitoring	East Midlands Chamber	LSIP Advisory Board, Delivery Partners	Quarterly reporting framework established	Annual LSIP review completed	Transparent performance management embedded	Quarterly reports; annual delivery report; RAG status of actions

## Performance Monitoring

All actions will be monitored quarterly against:

- Delivery milestone achievement
- KPI performance
- Employer engagement levels
- Learner participation outcomes
- Employment outcomes
- Equality and inclusion measures
- Risks and mitigating actions

Progress will be reported to the LSIP Advisory Board using a Red-Amber-Green (RAG) framework and published annually through an LSIP Delivery Report.

# Annex C – Background and Methodology



## Evidence Base

The LSIP uses:

- A. LSIP Survey outcomes (2026)
- B. Employer focus groups, workshops, sector panels
- C. CISO Intelligence
- D. EMC QES data
- E. Skills England LMI
- F. Local authority economic plans
- G. Community partner insights (EDI focus)

## Alignment with LSIP Guidance

Followed all required stages: evidence gathering, prioritisation, co-development, action planning.

- H. Followed all required stages: evidence gathering, prioritisation, co-development, action planning.
- I. Employer engagement beyond Chamber membership (SMEs, microbusinesses, large anchor firms).
- J. All provider categories engaged including FE, HE, ITPs, community providers and specialist colleges.

## Environmental and Net Zero Goals

Priorities align to Net Zero, clean growth and adaptation.

- K. Priorities align to Net Zero, clean growth and adaptation.
- L. Focus on retrofit, electrification, energy efficiency, resource optimisation, and compliance skills.

## Equality of Opportunity

Priorities address participation gaps, cultural barriers, trust barriers, accessibility, digital poverty, and inclusive recruitment.

- M. Priorities address participation gaps, cultural barriers, trust barriers, accessibility, digital poverty, and inclusive recruitment.
- N. Widening talent pools is central to economic improvement and aligns with employer skills shortages.

## Governance Structure

The LSIP is governed through a structured framework designed to ensure employer leadership and accountability. Strategic oversight is provided by the LSIP Advisory Board (LSAB).

- The LSIP is governed through a structured framework designed to ensure employer leadership and accountability. Strategic oversight is provided by the LSIP Advisory Board (LSAB).

- Strategic oversight is provided by the LSIP Advisory Board (LSAB)
- Sector-specific intelligence is generated through dedicated panels (Manufacturing, Logistics, Digital, Construction, Health & Care, Sport)
- Delivery is supported through working groups including local authorities, providers and community partners
- Progress is monitored through quarterly reporting cycles, with annual review points to assess impact and refine priorities

## Data Sources and Methodology Summary

Employment by Occupation	Shows the top occupations in each sector using SIC mapping and latest Lightcast employment data grouped by area and sector.	Lightcast LMI API
Growth in Employment (%)	Shows sector employment change between 2019 and 2024 using SIC-based comparisons.	Lightcast LMI API
Visa Sponsorship by Occupation	Shows visa grants by occupation and sector using Home Office data matched to relevant SOC codes.	Home Office Representative Groups / Jobcentre Plus
Total Companies	Shows the number of LLR-headquartered companies by filtering active firms by location and SIC code.	Companies House
Large Companies	Shows the number of economically significant local companies using active firms with full accounts and relevant SIC codes.	Companies House
GVA Current Prices	Shows sector GVA at current prices using ONS data filtered to the local area and mapped by SIC code.	ONS
Apprenticeship Achievements	Shows apprenticeship achievement volumes by sector using DfE data matched to sector groupings.	Department for Education
Demographics	Shows the population profile by age, ethnicity, qualifications, and social grade using ONS Census data.	ONS
Business Survey	Shows employer views across priority sectors using East Midlands Chamber survey responses analysed from survey and outreach activity.	East Midlands Chamber LSIP survey



**Funded by  
UK Government**

**east midlands  
chamber**

Derbyshire | Leicestershire | Nottinghamshire



**Local Skills  
Improvement Plan**

Leicester • Leicestershire • Rutland