

York and North Yorkshire Local Skills Improvement Plan June 2026

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.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

STRATEGIC AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT

RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANS

PART 1: LOCAL SKILLS NEEDS

Key current and medium term (three-year) skill needs of the area

The evidence, data and insights to inform these

PART 2: AGREED CHANGES / ACTIONS NEEDED

Employer feedback on local provision

Agreed changes or actions required

Expected outcomes and impacts

Success Factors

PART 3: DELIVERING THE LSIP PRIORITIES

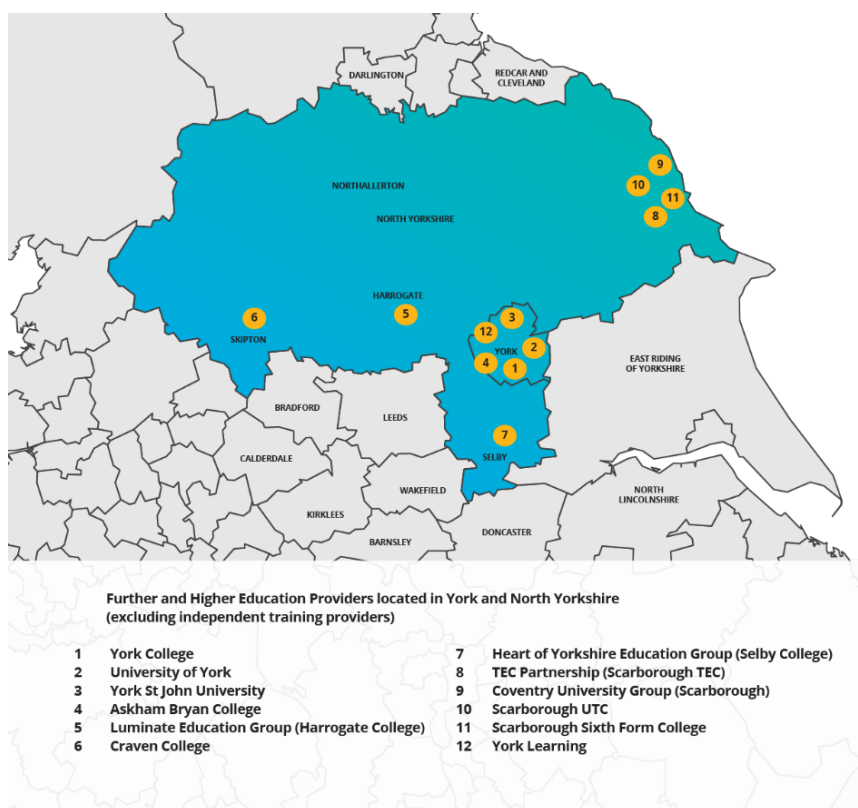
ANNEX A: FURTHER INFORMATION ON SKILLS NEEDS (SIC/SOC)

ANNEX B: ROADMAP OF ACTIVITIES

ANNEX C: BACKGROUND AND METHOD

Post-16 Education Providers across York and North Yorkshire

The map shows the Higher Education and Further Education providers across York and North Yorkshire. (N.B. These are also complemented by Adult Learning North Yorkshire, independent training providers and sixth form colleges within the region).



David Skaith - Mayor of York and North Yorkshire

As Mayor, it is a key priority to help more people get the training they need for the jobs that they want. Not enough people in our county see the opportunities for them to create the life they want here; we're turning the page on that and backing those ambitious people with more education, training and job opportunities. The York and North Yorkshire Local Skills Improvement Plan is central to meeting this goal. It sets out a clear vision for supporting growth in our high-value and fast-growing sectors, while also identifying new and emerging opportunities for the future. Crucially, it strengthens the connection between employers and education providers, ensuring that the skills being taught match the real needs of our local economy. This means our outstanding colleges, universities, and training providers can deliver the talent businesses need to thrive. When we combine this with the fantastic work that we're delivering in adult skills and the funding we're providing to colleges across the county, we are very much seeing devolution in action in York & North Yorkshire. The result of this is more people in skilled jobs that pay well, more money into our local economy, and more York and North Yorkshire residents being able to create that life they want for themselves.

James Mason - Chief Executive of West and North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce

Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) are a government initiative to better align skills provision with employer need, led by Employer Representative Bodies, in this case the Chamber of Commerce. This LSIP sets out the key skills challenges facing York & North Yorkshire and how they will be addressed, developed in partnership with local learning providers and the York & North Yorkshire Combined Authority. It focuses on priority growth sectors: Green Economy, Construction, Creative Industries, Health and Social Care (including Engineering Biology and Life Sciences), Land based skills, Manufacturing and Engineering (including Rail). We thank all contributors. Ensuring employers can access the talent they need, and residents can realise their potential, is critical to the region's future.

INTRODUCTION

What the LSIP is

The Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) is a statutory, employer-led plan which sets out the key skills priorities for York and North Yorkshire and identifies the changes required across the post-16 technical education and training system to better meet the needs of the local economy.

The LSIP reflects the strategic direction set out in the Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper and supports its key priorities, particularly the expansion of higher technical education and the Government's ambition that at least 10% of young people should be going into Level 4 or 5 study, including apprenticeships, by 2040.

Established under the *Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022*, LSIPs provide a mechanism for employers to shape skills provision so that it reflects labour market demand, supports productivity and enables local growth.

In York and North Yorkshire, the LSIP is a central pillar of the region's Local Growth Plan, supporting the ambition to deliver inclusive and sustainable growth that raises productivity, supports business success, reduces inequality and ensures that all residents can benefit from economic opportunity. The LSIP provides a clear, evidence-based framework for aligning skills provision with the priorities of the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority and the needs of employers. The LSIP aims to be realistic in what can be achieved using the existing resources.

The LSIP is developed by the West and North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce, the Secretary of State-designated Employer Representative Body (ERB) for York and North Yorkshire, working in partnership with the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority in its role as Combined Authority. This joint approach reflects statutory guidance, which emphasises collaboration between ERBs and Combined Authorities to ensure that employer insight is translated into coordinated action, investment and delivery across the local skills system. The plan is funded by the UK Government and aligns with wider national skills reform.

Who it is for

The LSIP is intended for a wide range of stakeholders who have a role in delivering a responsive and effective skills system. This includes employers of all sizes, further education colleges, sixth-form colleges, independent training providers and higher education institutions, alongside local authorities, Jobcentre Plus, trade unions and other partners. For education and training providers, the LSIP is particularly relevant as it informs the statutory 'local needs duty' and must be taken into account when planning provision and preparing annual accountability statements, ensuring that public investment in skills responds to evidenced employer demand.

How the LSIP Is Created

Development of the LSIP has been informed by extensive engagement with employers across priority sectors, alongside collaboration with skills providers, local authorities and a wide range of stakeholders. The LSIP is designed to complement and align with existing local, regional and national strategies, providing a clear framework for coordination, investment and delivery across the devolved skills system.

Why the LSIP Is Relevant

The first LSIP (2023–2026) established strong foundations for aligning skills provision with employer need. This refreshed LSIP, covering 2026–2029, sets out the next phase of priorities and actions, supporting the Combined Authority and its partners to use devolved powers and funding more effectively, respond to changing economic conditions, and ensuring that residents and businesses across urban, rural and coastal communities can both contribute to and benefit from good growth.

The LSIP supports the Combined Authority's devolved funding powers while also seeking to influence wider activity and other funding streams, including 16–19 provision and higher education. It aligns with key strategies such as the Local Growth Plan, Adult Skills Plan and the Get York and North Yorkshire Working Plan, embeds Carbon Negative and sustainability ambitions across priority sectors, and contributes to national Opportunity and Growth Missions under Skills England's vision of Better Skills for Better Jobs.

The LSIP supports the Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper, which sets a target for two-thirds of young people to participate in higher level learning by age 25. This target aims to ensure that the UK's workforce is equipped with the necessary skills to meet the demands of the economy. The White Paper emphasizes the importance of a skills system that supports young people, employers, workers, and job searchers to navigate change with confidence and adapt to the digital age.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) is intended for employers, training providers, local authorities and delivery partners who shape and deliver post-16 technical education and skills provision across the area. It sets out employer-led skills priorities and the specific changes needed to ensure training aligns with labour market demand, supports productivity and drives inclusive local economic growth.

Building on the foundations established by the first LSIP (2023–2026), this refreshed plan reflects extensive employer engagement, robust labour market intelligence and close collaboration with education providers, local authorities and delivery partners. It responds to changing economic conditions, rapid technological change and the need to support both immediate workforce pressures and longer-term structural transformation.

Across these sectors, employers consistently report shortages in technical and specialist skills, alongside cross-cutting gaps in digital capability, leadership and management, employability and workforce readiness. These challenges are compounded by difficulties accessing flexible training, and barriers faced by SMEs and underrepresented groups.

The York and North Yorkshire Local Skills Improvement Plan

The LSIP is focused on accelerating growth in York and North Yorkshire’s high value and high growth sectors, where the region has existing strengths and future opportunity, as well as areas of significant employment and skills needs:

Vision City Region Rural Powerhouse Inclusive and productive growth	Priority Skills Sectors - Clean Energy, Green Economy and Carbon Negative Technical Skills - Construction - Creative Industries - Health and Social Care (including Engineering Biology and Life Sciences) - Land Based Skills, including Food and Farming Innovation - Manufacturing and Engineering (including Rail Innovation and Securities)	Skills Employer-led priorities including transferrable skills Delivery Employers, Providers, Combined Authority Accountability and outcomes
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The LSIP identifies both **immediate skills priorities (next 12–18 months)** and **medium-term skills shifts (2–3 years)**. In the short term, the emphasis is on addressing hard-to-fill vacancies through expanded technical provision, short courses and job-ready training. Over the medium term, the focus shifts towards building resilient pipelines into higher-level technical and professional roles, supporting adoption of digital, AI and low-carbon technologies, and strengthening leadership and management capability to drive productivity and business growth.

Within the priority skills sectors the LSIP addresses 6 overarching priorities:

No.	Overarching LSIP Priority and Description
1	Stabilise workforce supply and workforce readiness: Improve work readiness, employability and transferable skills to address immediate recruitment, onboarding and retention pressures across priority sectors.
2	Embed digital capability across all sectors: Strengthen baseline digital literacy and progress towards applied digital, data, AI and automation skills aligned to occupational roles.
3	Build progression pathways and higher-level skills (Levels 1–8): Create clear progression routes, including at Level 2-3 in sectors such as construction, engineering, care, manufacturing and the land-based economy, and expand Level 4–7 technical education and apprenticeships to support productivity and career change or progression.
4	Develop leadership, management and commercial capability: Address frontline leadership shortages and build leadership-for-growth and commercial skills, particularly within SME-dominated sectors.
5	Accelerate green, carbon negative and sustainability skills: Scale retrofit, clean energy and low-carbon skills and embed sustainability across roles and sectors. Not treating green skills in isolation. Reflect the skills needs of the wider land-based sector.
6	Ensure a coherent, employer-informed and responsive skills system: Strengthen employer leadership, flexible and modular delivery, and alignment of funding and provision to LSIP priorities. Increase employer engagement with the skills system, especially for SMEs.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Delivery of the Local Skills Improvement Plan will be monitored through a focused set of outcome-led KPIs that reflect the six overarching priorities and provide clear assurance on workforce impact, employer value and system change. Collectively, these measures track whether the LSIP is improving workforce supply, progression, productivity and system responsiveness across all priority sectors.

1. Workforce supply and readiness

- Increase in the number and proportion of learners enrolled on LSIP-aligned programmes.

2. Digital capability

- Increase in the number and proportion of LSIP-aligned programmes that explicitly embed digital or digital-enabled skills.
- Year-on-year increases in learners completing provision with applied digital skills relevant to their occupational pathway.

3. Progression and higher-level skills (Levels 1–8)

- Increased enrolments on provision explicitly aligned to LSIP priorities.
- Evidence of improved collaborative working between FE and HE to drive place based LSIP priority pathways
- Growth in higher-level (L4–L8) provision aligned to LSIP priorities, supporting graduate retention, productivity and innovation, particularly in technical, digital, clean energy and engineering pathways, whilst not overlooking the importance of level 2-3 courses in these areas.

4. Leadership, management and commercial capability

- Increased proportion of LSIP-aligned provision that explicitly incorporates employability, leadership or supervisory skills outcomes. Can be through curricular or pastoral delivery. Provide evidence-based case studies.

5. Green, carbon negative and sustainability skills

- Growth in the number of learners completing green, carbon negative and sustainability-related provision.
- Increase in the number of LSIP aligned sector pathways that embed sustainability or carbon negative competencies within core provision, rather than delivering these solely through standalone courses.

6. A coherent, employer-informed and responsive skills system

- **Employer engagement activity:** Increase in the number and diversity of employers participating in LSIP engagement activity, surveys, sector skills groups and curriculum discussions.
- **Provider responsiveness:** An increased proportion of provider accountability statements and curriculum changes that explicitly reference LSIP priorities.

Overall impact

Taken together, these KPIs provide assurance that LSIP delivery will result in tangible workforce outcomes, improved employer confidence and a more coherent, employer-informed skills system. Progress will be reviewed annually through LSIP governance arrangements, with KPIs refined through sector skills plans and used to inform reprioritisation where outcomes are not improving as expected.

Overall Purpose, Ambition and Scope of the LSIP

The York and North Yorkshire Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) 2026–2029 provides a shared, employer-led direction for skills reform across the region. Building on the strong foundations established through the first LSIP (2023–2026), this refreshed plan sets out the next phase of priorities and actions to align skills provision more closely with economic priorities and employer demand. It plays a central role in supporting delivery of the Government's Opportunity and Growth Missions and Skills England's ambition of *Better Skills for Better Jobs*, and forms a core part of the region's strategic framework alongside the Local Growth Plan and Adult Skills Plan. The LSIP provides a common, employer-informed framework for collaboration across the regional skills system, bringing together employers, further and higher education providers, independent training providers, local authorities and delivery partners. It establishes a shared understanding of priority skills needs and the system-level changes required to address them, enabling more coordinated planning, investment and delivery across post-16 technical education and training. While the LSIP does not seek to address every skills issue in the region, it focuses on those priorities most critical to productivity, inclusion and long-term economic growth. By clearly articulating employer-led priorities, the LSIP supports delivery at pace, helps align devolved and national funding and commissioning decisions, and ensures that residents and businesses across York and North Yorkshire's urban, rural and coastal communities can both contribute to and benefit from good growth.

STRATEGIC AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT FOR YORK AND NORTH YORKSHIRE

National Policy Context

The York and North Yorkshire Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) sits within a coherent national policy framework, supporting delivery of Government priorities for growth, productivity and inclusion while maximising the impact of devolved funding and local delivery. Developed in line with the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022, the LSIP is a statutory, employer-led plan that ensures employers have a decisive voice in shaping post-16 technical education and training.

At a national level, the LSIP supports delivery of the Government's Opportunity and Growth Missions and Skills England's ambition of Better Skills for Better Jobs, ensuring that skills provision responds directly to employer demand and labour market need. It aligns with the UK Industrial Strategy (2025) and associated sector plans, the Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper, and national commitments on clean energy, carbon negative and higher-level technical education. Through this role, the LSIP provides a clear mechanism for translating national priorities into place-based, employer-led skills actions.

Industrial Strategy and National Priority Sectors

The Industrial Strategy identifies eight priority sectors considered critical to long-term economic growth, productivity and resilience to 2035, with bespoke government and industry plans being developed for each:

UK Government Priority Sectors (Industrial Strategy)

1. **Advanced Manufacturing** – High-value and technology-driven manufacturing.
2. **Clean Energy Industries** – Carbon negative and decarbonisation-related energy sectors.
3. **Creative Industries** – Cultural, digital and creative production and services.
4. **Defence** – Defence manufacturing and technologies with economic spillovers.
5. **Digital and Technologies** – Including AI, cyber-security, quantum, semiconductors and digital services.
6. **Financial Services** – Banking, insurance, capital markets and related services.
7. **Life Sciences** – Pharmaceuticals, biotech, medical research and health innovation.
8. **Professional and Business Services** – Consultancy, legal, accounting, engineering and related services.

In addition, **Construction** and **Adult Social Care** are recognised as sectors underpinning national economic growth.

The LSIP supports these priorities by focusing on the sectors and occupational pathways most relevant to York and North Yorkshire's economic strengths and workforce needs. In particular, it prioritises Life Sciences (including engineering biology), Clean Energy, Advanced Manufacturing and Rail Innovation, Creative Industries, Digital and Professional Services, alongside Construction and Adult Social Care, translating national ambitions into locally relevant skills priorities and delivery actions.

Clean Energy and Carbon Negative

The Clean Energy Jobs Plan and wider carbon negative commitments highlight the need to significantly expand the clean energy, retrofit and low-carbon workforce. The LSIP contributes by identifying current and future green skills demand, supporting the development of clear skills pathways, and embedding sustainability and carbon negative competencies across priority sectors and occupations.

Regional Economic, Labour Market and Strategic Context

York and North Yorkshire have a distinctive economic profile, combining strong urban centres with extensive rural and coastal areas. The region benefits from strong labour market fundamentals, including a high employment rate (79%, above the England average of 75.7%) and a relatively well-qualified population, with around 48% of residents holding Level 4 and above qualifications. This is slightly above the national average of 47%, although there are significant variations across the geography.

Business density is also high, with 47.7 enterprises per 1,000 residents compared to 39.7 nationally, reflecting a predominantly micro-business economy (89% of firms) and a strong rural profile, including a significantly higher

concentration of agriculture and food-related businesses than the national average. Alongside this, the region has nationally significant strengths in sectors such as life sciences and engineering biology, rail innovation, food and farming, clean energy and creative industries.

Despite these strengths, labour market evidence highlights persistent structural challenges. Productivity, measured by GVA per hour worked, remains below the England average (£38.20 compared to £42.40), and business growth has lagged national rates. Employers consistently report skills shortages and mismatches, particularly in technical, digital and analytical roles, alongside underutilisation of skills within parts of the workforce. These challenges are compounded by an ageing workforce, difficulties attracting and retaining talent in some areas, and uneven skills participation and attainment across the region, particularly in rural, coastal and more peripheral communities.

Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS) Labour Force Survey and Annual Population Survey; ONS Business Demography and Business Population Estimates; ONS Subregional Productivity data; supplemented by Local Growth Plan and employer engagement evidence.

The region's SME-dominated business base further shapes skills demand. Many employers face constraints around workforce development capacity, leadership and management capability, and engagement with training provision. Taken together, these conditions reinforce the need for a more responsive, flexible and employer-informed skills system—one that strengthens early technical pathways (including T Levels and apprenticeships), supports SME engagement, and aligns skills supply more closely with local job opportunities, growth sectors and clear progression pathways into higher-value roles.

This also highlights the critical role of careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) in improving awareness of local opportunities, supporting informed career choices, and enabling access to clear, locally relevant career pathways.

Strategic Alignment and Growth Ambitions

The LSIP is fully aligned with the York and North Yorkshire Local Growth Plan, which sets out the ambition to become a City Region Rural Powerhouse, delivering higher productivity, better quality jobs and inclusive growth across all places. Priority growth and competitive advantage sectors identified in the Local Growth Plan are directly reflected in the LSIP's sector focus and skills priorities.

The LSIP also aligns closely with the York and North Yorkshire Skills Strategy, the Adult Skills Fund Strategic Skills Plan and the Get York and North Yorkshire Working Plan, creating a clear line of sight between economic strategy, employer demand, devolved funding and delivery through the post-16 skills system.

The LSIP further aligns with emerging regional policies, including the Retrofit Strategy, the Strategy for a Sustainable Future and the forthcoming Local Transport Plan, providing the employer-led skills framework through which the post-16 system can respond coherently as these policies are implemented.

Alignment with the Get York and North Yorkshire Working Plan

The LSIP is closely aligned with the Get York and North Yorkshire Working Plan, strengthening the connection between skills provision, employer demand and access to sustained employment. Through its focus on workforce readiness, employability, digital capability and progression routes, the LSIP supports efforts to reduce economic inactivity and improve participation, particularly for priority groups and places.

Together with the Local Growth Plan, Economic Framework, Skills Strategy and Adult Skills Fund Strategic Skills Plan, the LSIP ensures coherence between economic strategy, devolved funding and skills delivery. It provides the employer-led articulation of skills demand, translating strategy and evidence into clear priorities and actions, and ensuring that skills provision remains responsive, coordinated and aligned to economic need.

Priority Sectors for York and North Yorkshire

The Local Growth Plan for York and North Yorkshire includes the following Competitive Advantage Sectors, where York and North Yorkshire is best positioned to accelerate economic growth and productivity at a local and national level.

- Food & Farming Innovation
- Engineering Biology and Life Sciences
- Clean Energy
- Rail Innovation & Secure Technologies
- Creative Industries

These are included in the Local Skills Improvement Plan together with Green Economy and Carbon Negative, Construction, Health and Social Care, Land Based Skills and Manufacturing and Engineering.

York and North Yorkshire Priority Sectors – Evidence-Led Rationale

The priority sectors identified within the York and North Yorkshire LSIP are based on employer evidence, labour market intelligence and alignment with national and regional economic strategy. This targeted, evidence-led approach focuses skills investment on the sectors and occupations most critical to productivity, inclusion and long-term economic resilience across the region's urban, rural and coastal communities.

Clean Energy, Green Economy and Carbon Negative Technical Skills

Clean energy and carbon negative skills are a core LSIP priority because they are essential to delivering national decarbonisation commitments and local growth ambitions. The UK Industrial Strategy and Clean Energy Jobs Plan identify clean energy as a long-term growth sector, with rapid workforce expansion required to deliver retrofit, renewables and low-carbon infrastructure. Locally, the York and North Yorkshire Local Growth Plan identifies clean energy as a competitive advantage sector, while the Adult Skills Fund Strategic Skills Plan prioritises modular reskilling to expand delivery capacity and embed sustainability skills across construction, engineering and related roles.

Construction

Construction skills are prioritised in the LSIP due to persistent workforce shortages, an ageing labour force and the scale of planned housing, infrastructure and retrofit activity. National policy recognises construction as critical to enabling delivery of growth, carbon negative and building safety objectives. The York and North Yorkshire Local Growth Plan relies on sufficient construction capacity to deliver regeneration and decarbonisation, while the Adult Skills Fund Strategic Skills Plan supports entry-level trades, reskilling and progression into supervisory roles. Strengthening construction skills is therefore essential to both short-term delivery and long-term productivity.

Creative Industries

Creative Industries are prioritised because they contribute to employment, placemaking and economic diversification, while supporting innovation across other sectors. The Industrial Strategy identifies Creative Industries as a national priority growth sector, supported by dedicated sector plans. Locally, the York and North Yorkshire Local Growth Plan recognises creative activity as a competitive advantage, particularly in York, while the Adult Skills Fund Strategic Skills Plan supports flexible and modular provision suited to freelancers and SMEs. Focusing on digital, commercial and freelance sustainability skills supports both inclusive employment and higher-value growth.

Health and Social Care (including Engineering Biology and Life Sciences)

Health and Social Care skills are a priority due to rising demand from an ageing population and persistent recruitment and retention pressures. Adult social care and life sciences are recognised nationally as priority and supporting sectors within the Industrial Strategy because of their economic and social importance. Locally, the Local Growth Plan highlights Health and Social Care as a key employment sector and Engineering Biology and Life Sciences as a high-value growth opportunity. The Adult Skills Fund Strategic Skills Plan prioritises stabilising workforce supply, improving progression and expanding higher-level technical skills to support service sustainability and innovation-led growth.

Land-Based Skills, including Food and Farming Innovation

Land-based skills, including Food and Farming Innovation, are a priority due to their central role in York and North Yorkshire's rural economy, workforce resilience and environmental sustainability. National policy and the Industrial Strategy emphasise the need to improve productivity, innovation and resilience across agrifood systems. The York and North Yorkshire Local Growth Plan identifies food and farming innovation as a competitive advantage sector, reflecting the region's high concentration of agricultural, land-based and agrifood businesses and their importance to regional economic performance.

Land-based skills are particularly significant in York and North Yorkshire given that over 70% of the region's land area is agricultural or managed countryside, the area includes two National Parks and multiple National Landscapes, and natural assets underpin tourism, food production, climate resilience and rural employment. The Adult Skills Fund Strategic Skills Plan reinforces this by prioritising practical land-based skills, improved rural access to training, and progression into digital, sustainable and leadership roles, supporting both immediate workforce stability and longer-term transformation across land-based and rural industries.

● **Manufacturing and Engineering (including Rail Innovation and Securities)**

Manufacturing and Engineering are prioritised because they underpin productivity, high-value employment and replacement demand across the region. The Industrial Strategy identifies advanced manufacturing as a core national growth sector, alongside strategic priorities in transport and secure technologies. The York and North Yorkshire Local Growth Plan highlights manufacturing, engineering and rail innovation as competitive advantage sectors with significant growth potential. The Adult Skills Fund Strategic Skills Plan supports replacement demand, upskilling and progression into higher-level technical roles, enabling both workforce resilience and long-term industrial transformation.

The sector skills analysis above informs the identification of the key current and medium-term skills needs for York and North Yorkshire, which are set out in the following section.

PART 1: LOCAL SKILLS NEEDS

This section sets out the key current and medium-term (three-year) skills needs for York and North Yorkshire. It explains how the evidence, data and insights gathered through the LSIP process have informed the identification of priority skills and sectors.

The priority sectors reflect where York and North Yorkshire has existing economic strengths, clear employer-reported skills shortages, and the greatest potential for productivity-led growth. Focusing on these areas ensures that skills investment is aligned with employer demand, delivery of the Local Growth Plan, and national priorities, including carbon negative and higher-level technical skills.

Evidence, Data and Insights

The York and North Yorkshire Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) is underpinned by a robust evidence base that brings together employer insight, labour market intelligence and alignment with local, regional and national strategies. This approach ensures that priorities are firmly rooted in business need while addressing both immediate workforce challenges and longer-term skills requirements linked to productivity, inclusion and economic growth.

The Chamber has engaged extensively with businesses of all sizes across York and North Yorkshire, including both members and non-members, to ensure that the LSIP reflects the full breadth of employer demand. Engagement activity has deliberately reached micro and small businesses as well as larger employers, recognising the region's SME-dominated economy, and has used a mix of surveys, events, sector-based discussions and direct outreach. This inclusive approach has ensured that the LSIP is informed by a diverse range of employer perspectives across sectors, geographies and business types.

Sector insights

Sector insights have been delivered through:

- **Labour market intelligence** including the latest York and North Yorkshire Labour Market Intelligence Report and the Local Growth Plan
- **Employer interviews** with 106 interviews carried out evenly spread across all priority sectors for York and North Yorkshire
- **Skills Round Tables** have taken place with over 180 businesses. In York and North Yorkshire discussions centred around AI and Digital, Construction, Rail, Health and Social Care, Manufacturing and getting ex-offenders back into the workforce. We have also attended the North Yorkshire Local Authority hosted Trailblazer Skills Round Tables, which engaged with North Yorkshire employers across priority skills sectors. Input to sector discussions was also provided by Yorkshire Universities, Yorks St John University, The Institute of Technology representing all FE colleges, Local Authorities, Counsellors, York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority, York College, CITB, Independent Training Providers, Skills for Care and the York Tourism and Hospitality Forum.

Employer Evidence

Employer evidence consistently highlights persistent and cross-cutting skills challenges, including shortages in technical and trade skills, digital and data capability, leadership and management, and employability and work readiness. Employers also report difficulties navigating the skills system, limited flexibility of provision and weak progression into higher-level technical roles. These issues are structural rather than short-term, reinforcing the need for a more responsive, employer-led skills system.

Employer feedback has directly shaped LSIP priorities and the changes proposed, including better alignment to priority sectors, stronger progression pathways from level 1 to level 8, expanded work-based learning, more flexible delivery models and clearer skills navigation.

A detailed report of the employer interviews carried out is found [here](#). Write ups of the Employer Round tables are also available via the LSIP website.

Employer Feedback on local provision

Summary of Skills Data for York and North Yorkshire (Employer Survey Evidence)

This summary draws on findings from the [West and North Yorkshire Chamber skills survey](#) (106 respondents), a piece of work commissioned by West and North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce as part of the evidence base underpinning the York and North Yorkshire Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP).

Employers were surveyed across priority sectors:

Sector	Number of employer interviews	Proportion of total
Clean energy	8	7.5%
Construction	14	13.2%
Creative industries	27	25.5%
Engineering Biology & life sciences	13	12.3%
Food & farming innovation	16	15.1%
Manufacturing	25	23.6%
Rail innovation & security	3	2.8%
Total	106	100%

The survey provides employer-led insight into current skills capacity, recruitment challenges and future workforce needs across the regional business base.

Findings from employer surveys are included by sector in part 1, and a general overview of findings are given below:

Employer Feedback on Local Provision – Aligned to LSIP Overarching Priorities

Employer feedback is drawn from the LSIP Research Campaign – North Yorkshire Summary Report, based on interviews with 106 employers across all priority sectors, supplemented by wider research. This evidence provides a clear and robust basis for distinguishing between immediate workforce pressures and medium-term skills priorities, and directly informs the six overarching LSIP priorities.

1. Stabilise workforce supply and workforce readiness

- Address immediate recruitment pressures by strengthening work readiness, employability and foundational skills across priority sectors.
- Respond to shortages caused by lack of applicants, wage competition and difficulties attracting people to the area through improved access to local training.
- Improve onboarding, retention and day-to-day productivity through better prepared job-ready entrants.

2. Embed digital capability across all sectors

- Address immediate gaps in foundational digital literacy and confidence across learners, employers and occupations. A lack of digital confidence remains a barrier for many adults.
- Begin integrating technical digital skills into existing provision to meet current employer demand.
- Shift over the medium term towards advanced digital, data and hybrid skill profiles embedded within sector pathways rather than standalone digital provision.

3. Build progression pathways and higher-level skills (Levels 1–8)

- Ensure improved access to the labour market
- Develop clearer progression routes from entry-level roles into higher-level technical, supervisory and professional occupations.

- Strengthen FE–HE alignment and expand Level 4–8 provision in priority growth sectors.
- Address structural recruitment challenges by growing local talent pipelines and enabling progression into higher-value roles.

4. Develop leadership, management and commercial capability

- Address immediate gaps in frontline leadership and management capability that constrain productivity and retention.
- Strengthen sales, marketing and commercial awareness, particularly in Creative Industries, Food and Farming Innovation and Manufacturing.
- Develop leadership for growth and strategic commercial skills over the medium term to support scale-up, innovation and export potential in SME-dominated sectors.

5. Accelerate green, carbon negative and sustainability skills

- Respond to immediate employer need for green and sustainability skills, particularly in Clean Energy, Construction and Manufacturing-related roles.
- Embed sustainability and carbon negative competencies across occupational pathways rather than treating green skills as a standalone offer.
- Support the transition to hybrid skill profiles that combine technical, digital and sustainability capability over the medium term.

6. Create a coherent, employer-informed and responsive skills system

- Expand flexible and blended delivery models, including on-the-job training, online provision and local trainers, to improve employer and learner take-up.
- Improve skills brokerage and navigation, particularly for employers with low confidence in accessing support, building on the Work and Skills Interchange.
- Address system-wide constraints highlighted by employers, including limited apprenticeship capacity in construction, by strengthening employer engagement, modular delivery and progression pathways.

Skills Provider Evidence

Further education, higher education and independent training providers were actively involved in developing the LSIP through surveys, interviews, conferences and joint skills roundtables. Providers consistently identify digital skills as the dominant cross-cutting gap, alongside ongoing challenges in employability and leadership skills that constrain progression and productivity even where technical training exists.

There is strong consensus among providers on what works: employer-informed, vacancy-linked provision; flexible and modular delivery; and greater emphasis on work-based learning, including apprenticeships, placements and curriculum co-design. Providers also stress the importance of upskilling the existing workforce through CPD and modular routes and call for clearer alignment between LSIP priorities, funding decisions and impact measurement.

Labour Market Evidence

Employer and provider insight is reinforced by labour market analysis for York and North Yorkshire, which highlights persistent skills mismatches, underutilisation of higher-level skills, recruitment difficulties in priority occupations and ongoing inequalities between places and communities.

Despite strong labour market fundamentals, including high employment and a relatively well-qualified population, the region continues to face below-average productivity, uneven access to higher-value roles and shortages in professional, technical and skilled trade occupations critical to growth. These challenges are compounded by a predominantly micro and SME-based economy, rural and coastal geography, and constraints on employer capacity to invest in workforce development.

Taken together, this evidence demonstrates the need for a more coordinated, employer informed approach to skills, focused on strengthening technical pathways, improving system responsiveness and supporting progression into good-quality jobs. It also reinforces the importance of aligning local delivery with the Local Growth Plan, Adult Skills Fund Strategic Skills Plan and the Get York and North Yorkshire Working Plan, within a coherent national policy framework.

In response, the LSIP sets out a series of overarching priorities that address these cross-cutting challenges across all priority sectors.

Overarching priorities (apply across all LSIP priority sectors)

These are the area wide skills needs that providers should embed across curriculum, CPD, and progression routes from Levels 1–8, and that underpin the LSIP’s “line of sight” from priorities to delivery.

Current:

- **Work readiness / transferable skills** (communication, teamwork, reliability, problem-solving) to improve progression into work and reduce pressure on providers.
- **Baseline digital capability** (core digital literacy + applying digital tools in the workplace), reflecting persistent employer-reported gaps and operational constraints.
- **Leadership & first-line management** (especially for SMEs and frontline supervisors), consistently identified as a high demand need.

Medium-term:

- **Higher-level technical skills and progression pathways** (clear routes from Levels 1–8; FE/HE alignment; modular routes) to support productivity and work progression into key sectors.
- **Carbon negative / sustainability embedded across roles**, not treated as a standalone topic only for “green” jobs.
- **Digital and emerging technology** moving from baseline skills to applied data/automation/sector tech capability.

Evidence gathering has led to the following:

Sector Skills Needs and desired changes

(Short to Medium Term, including SIC and SOC Codes)

Skills development is recognised as critical to enabling innovation, productivity and competitiveness. Following pages show both short- and medium-term local skills needs for key sectors as well as the changes agreed to address these.

SIC and SOC codes are used in the plan to provide a consistent, nationally recognised evidence framework.

- SIC (Standard Industrial Classification) codes classify industries and sectors
- SOC (Standard Occupational Classification) codes classify jobs and occupations

Part 1: A summary of skills needs is given below.

Part 2: Agreed changes and actions needed are clearly outlined as well as how they will be measured

The suggested changes support skills commissioning and provider accountability statements. Details of activities required to deliver the 6 overarching priorities that will address sector needs are given in Annex B.

Part 1: Clean Energy, Green Economy, and Carbon Negative Technical skills needs

Strategic Importance and Growth Context

Clean Energy, Green Economy and Carbon Negative skills are central to York and North Yorkshire’s transition to a low-carbon economy, supporting energy security, resilience and productivity. The Local Growth Plan identifies clean energy as a priority growth area, with increasing demand across retrofit, renewables, low-carbon construction, renewable energy generation, electrical and mechanical installation. However, delivery is constrained by immediate workforce shortages, an ageing workforce, limited specialist provision and the challenges of a large, predominantly rural geography. Strengthening local skills capacity is therefore critical to enabling decarbonisation programmes, public asset retrofit and private investment.

Alignment with the Clean Energy Jobs Plan and LSIP priorities supports accelerated workforce growth, improved productivity and reduced delivery bottlenecks, while enabling transition into future-focused roles. Over the longer term, expanded higher-level technical capability—alongside embedding sustainability across all sectors—will be essential to supporting inward investment, productivity and high-quality employment.

Alignment with the Clean Energy Jobs Plan and the LSIP supports accelerated workforce growth, improved productivity and reduced delivery bottlenecks, while helping local workers transition into future-focused roles.

Looking ahead, these skills are also essential to the region's longer-term economic transformation. Delivering clean energy ambitions will require expanded higher-level technical capability in areas such as smart energy systems, digital monitoring and diagnostics, project management and systems integration, alongside reskilling pathways for the existing workforce. Embedding sustainability and carbon negative competencies across sectors—not only within “green jobs”—is critical to supporting productivity, inward investment and the creation of high-quality employment. Strengthening Clean Energy and Green Economy skills will therefore enable both near-term delivery and long-term growth, ensuring the region can contribute to national carbon negative commitments while creating resilient, future-focused jobs across urban, rural and coastal communities.

Sector Scope and Demand

- Clean energy and carbon negative activity spans construction, engineering, utilities, retrofit and renewables, rather than a standalone sector. Demand is expected to grow significantly as decarbonisation and retrofit programmes scale up locally, reflecting wider national pressures to expand the clean energy workforce.
- The LSIP evidence identifies clean energy as a priority growth area, with workforce demand expected to increase significantly as decarbonisation, retrofit and clean energy programmes scale up locally.
- Most English regions will need to at least double their clean energy workforce to meet 2030 ambitions.

Key Skills Gaps and Workforce Pressures

- Shortages in retrofit, low-carbon installation, and electrical and mechanical skills
- Gaps in energy efficiency, diagnostics and quality assurance
- Shortages in higher-level and digital skills (e.g. smart energy systems, EV infrastructure, monitoring and controls)
- Ageing workforce and competition for skilled labour across sectors
- Additional demand from woodland creation and land management requirements

Current Provision and System Capacity

- Strong foundation in construction and engineering pathways
- Adult Skills Fund supports modular, short-course and reskilling provision
- Apprenticeships provide entry routes, but specialist provision remains uneven
- LSIP activity is improving employer-provider alignment

Barriers to Skills Development

- Limited SME capacity to release workers for training
- Fragmented provision and low awareness of training routes
- Rural access and transport constraints
- Limited progression pathways into higher-level technical and project roles

Existing Strengths and Market Opportunity

- Clean energy identified as a priority sector within the Local Growth Plan.
- Growing activity in retrofit, low carbon construction, renewables, electrical and mechanical installation, driven by public investment and emerging private sector demand.
- Established engineering and construction base supports workforce transition.
- Improved local skills supply supports productivity gains, inward investment and job creation across urban and rural areas.

Future Skills Needs and System Priorities

- Growth in retrofit, renewables, heat networks, smart systems and digital energy management.
- Clear progression pathways from trade to higher-level technical roles.
- Embedding carbon negative skills across all occupations.
- Flexible, modular delivery suited to SMEs and rural contexts.
- Large-scale workforce reskilling and development of a coherent green skills framework.

Part 2: Clean Energy, Green Economy, and Carbon Negative Technical agreed changes

Relevant SIC codes

35 Electricity, gas and renewables

43 Building services (retrofit, heat pumps, low-carbon installations)

Key SOC occupations

2122 Mechanical engineers

5241 Electricians

2436 Project managers

Skills Needs (Current → Medium-term)

Current (immediate priorities):

- Capacity in retrofit, energy efficiency and low-carbon installation
- Core electrical and mechanical competence
- Baseline digital skills to support diagnostics, monitoring and compliance

Medium-term (system priorities):

- Development of renewable and low-carbon engineering pipelines
- Scaled reskilling routes into green roles
- Progression into higher-level technical and project delivery roles
- Capability in smart energy systems and digital/grid technologies

Provision and System Position

- Provision currently fragmented across construction and engineering pathways
- Growing retrofit and green short-course activity
- Limited coherence in progression routes and employer understanding

Agreed Changes (LSIP Delivery Alignment)

Short-term (Years 1–2):

- Address immediate shortages in retrofit, electrical, mechanical and energy efficiency skills
- Expand job-ready and short-course provision

Medium-term (Years 2–3):

- Build pipelines in renewables, smart energy systems and higher-level technical roles
- Scale workforce reskilling to support transition to low-carbon activity

System / provision change required:

- Establish a clear regional green skills framework
- Embed net zero skills across occupations (not siloed provision)
- Deliver flexible, SME-accessible training models

Outcomes and Success Measures (Year 3)

- Clearly defined and understood green skills pipeline
- Increased workforce capacity in priority low-carbon roles
- Successful reskilling of existing workers

Trigger for intervention: Continued employer confusion and/or fragmented provision across the skills system

Part 1: Construction skills needs

Strategic Importance and Growth Context

Construction skills are critical to York and North Yorkshire due to persistent workforce shortages, an ageing workforce and the scale of planned housing, infrastructure and regeneration activity. Shortfalls in Level 2–3 trade, supervisory and site management capacity risk constraining delivery and maintenance of assets, with direct implications for growth, place-making and community resilience. Construction is also central to carbon negative ambitions, retrofit delivery and building safety, with increasing demand for low-carbon, compliance and digital construction skills to modernise the sector and support progression into higher-value roles.

Sector Scope and Demand

Construction spans building trades, civil engineering, building services and specialist construction activity, delivered largely through SMEs and microbusinesses. Demand is shaped by replacement needs (driven by workforce age) alongside growth in retrofit, low-carbon delivery and regulated building safety requirements across urban, rural and coastal communities.

Key Skills Gaps and Workforce Pressures

- Acute shortages in core trades (e.g. bricklaying, carpentry/joinery, electrical, plumbing).
- Insufficient supply of site supervisors and construction managers, limiting delivery capacity.
- Growing gaps in retrofit, low-carbon and building safety skills linked to carbon negative and regulatory requirements.
- Limited digital construction capability, including adoption of BIM and digital site systems.

Current Provision and System Capacity

- Established Level 2–3 construction and trade provision, including apprenticeships, delivered through FE colleges and training providers.
- Adult Skills Fund-supported delivery provides entry-level trade routes and adult upskilling/reskilling (including modular and short-course activity where applicable).
- CITB-supported standards, apprenticeship frameworks and employer engagement activity underpin much of the training offer.
- LSIP activity focuses on strengthening employer–provider alignment to Local Growth Plan priorities.

Barriers to Skills Development

- Limited employer capacity (especially SMEs) to release staff for training and support placements.
- Fragmented provision and inconsistent awareness of routes and funding.
- Rural geography and transport constraints affecting access to training centres and assessment.
- Funding constraints and limited flexibility for higher-level/specialist training.
- Ongoing challenges attracting new entrants, particularly younger people, into construction careers.

Existing Strengths and Market Opportunity

- Construction is a major employment sector with established trade and apprenticeship routes at Levels 2–3.
- A strong base of SMEs and microbusinesses provides breadth of employment opportunities and local supply-chain resilience.
- The shift to retrofit, low-carbon construction and building safety creates a clear opportunity to modernise skills pathways, improve productivity and support progression.

Future Skills Needs and System Priorities

- Scale entry-level trade routes to address replacement demand and reduce hard-to-fill vacancies.
- Embed retrofit, low-carbon and building safety as “core” competence across pathways (not add-on provision).
- Strengthen digital construction capability (including BIM) and progression from trade → supervisor → manager.
- Improve employer engagement in co-design, placements and work-based learning to strengthen pipeline quality and retention.
- Expand flexible and modular delivery models to fit SME capacity and rural access constraints.

Part 2: Construction agreed changes

Relevant SIC codes

41–43 Construction of buildings and specialised construction activities (including heritage)

Key SOC occupations

5312 Bricklayers

5315 Carpenters and joiners

2436 Construction project managers

Skills Needs (Current → Medium-term)

Current (immediate priorities):

- Core trades, site competence, supervision and practical compliance capability
- Early adoption of digital construction tools (e.g. planning, surveying and site systems)

Medium-term (system priorities):

- Scaled retrofit and low-carbon construction capability across the supply chain
- Digital construction (including BIM) capability

- Clear progression routes from trade → supervisor → management

Provision and System Position

- Established Level 2–3 trade provision and apprenticeships
- Some supervisory provision in place
- Limited retrofit and digital construction skills coverage

Agreed Changes (LSIP Delivery Alignment)

Short-term (Years 1–2):

- Increase supply of core trades
- Address shortages in supervision and site management

Medium-term (Years 2–3):

- Scale retrofit, low-carbon and building safety skills
- Expand digital construction capability (including BIM)

System / provision change required:

- Simplified and clearer skills pathways
- Stronger progression routes
- Improved employer engagement and access to placements

Outcomes and Success Measures (Year 3)

- Increased trade workforce supply
- Expanded retrofit and low-carbon capability across the sector

Trigger for intervention: Retrofit demand significantly outstripping available skills supply.

Part 1: Creative Industries skills needs

Strategic Importance and Growth Context

Creative Industries are important to York and North Yorkshire because they support employment, cultural vitality and place-based growth—particularly in York and key towns including Scarborough, Selby, Skipton and Harrogate. The sector also contributes to economic diversification, placemaking, the visitor economy and cross sector innovation, with growth potential where creative capability intersects with digital technology and emerging production methods.

Sector Scope and Demand

The sector spans digital, cultural and heritage activity, design, media and creative services. Employment is characterised by a high proportion of freelancers, microbusinesses and project-based work rather than large anchor employers, shaping both skills demand and how provision needs to be accessed.

Key Skills Gaps and Workforce Pressures

- Gaps in advanced digital and technical creative skills, including effective use of digital tools in creative production.
- Weak business, commercial and freelance sustainability skills (e.g., pricing, bidding, intellectual property, marketing and financial management).
- Limited progression routes from entry level roles into higher value and more stable employment, contributing to income volatility and skills underutilisation.
- Cross cutting gaps in leadership, project management and digital capability, particularly for small firms and self-employed workers.

Current Provision and System Capacity

There is a range of creative and digital provision delivered through further and higher education, adult learning and short course formats. Adult Skills Fund supported provision enables modular and flexible learning that better suits freelancers and project-based workers, while universities and cultural institutions provide a strong talent pipeline—though alignment with commercial job roles is variable. LSIP activity is focused on strengthening employer engagement and improving alignment between provision and business demand.

Barriers to Skills Development

- Fragmented employment patterns can make it harder to access funded training and structured progression routes.
- Limited time and financial capacity among microbusinesses and freelancers to invest in skills development.
- Inconsistent awareness of available provision and funding, particularly among self-employed workers.
- Geographic access challenges in parts of North Yorkshire, alongside digital exclusion in rural areas.

Existing Strengths and Market Opportunity

York and North Yorkshire have an established creative and cultural economy, supported by universities, cultural institutions, SMEs and freelancers. The sector also overlaps with other priority areas—particularly digital and the wider built environment—creating opportunities to grow higher value roles and strengthen innovation and productivity through stronger pathways and better alignment to commercial demand.

Future Skills Needs and System Priorities

- Expand advanced digital creative skills, including immersive and technology enabled production.
- Embed business, commercial and entrepreneurial capability as core alongside technical creativity, supporting scale up and career sustainability.
- Strengthen entry and progression pathways for young people and adults in transition, improving movement into higher value roles.
- Support clearer employer involvement through project-based learning and “live briefs” to improve relevance and progression outcomes.
- Embed sustainability and clean growth principles within creative practice, design and production.

Part 2: Creative Industries agreed changes

Relevant SIC codes

58–60 Publishing, film, TV and music

62 Computer programming and digital content

90 Creative, arts and entertainment

Key SOC occupations

2472 Artists

2136 Software developers

3545 Sales and marketing professionals

Skills Needs (Current → Medium-term)

Current (immediate priorities):

- Digital creative tools and practical production capability
- Business and commercial skills, including freelance sustainability, client delivery and sales/marketing

Medium-term (system priorities):

- Advanced digital capability (including emerging/immersive production where relevant)
- Stronger entry and progression pathways
- Sustained commercial, entrepreneurial and freelance capability for SMEs

Provision and System Position

- FE and HE creative and digital provision in place
- Short-course and modular delivery available
- Limited pathways focused on commercial skills and freelance sustainability

Agreed Changes (LSIP Delivery Alignment)

Short-term (Years 1–2):

- Strengthen entry-level digital and creative production skills
- Improve employability and business/commercial capability

Medium-term (Years 2–3):

- Expand advanced digital, immersive and AI-enabled creative skills
- Support business scale-up and freelance sustainability

System / provision change required:

- More flexible, project-based and short-course delivery
- Clearer entry and progression routes
- Stronger employer co-design and use of live briefs

Outcomes and Success Measures (Year 3)

Improved digital, commercial and freelance capability across the sector

Trigger for intervention:

Low uptake of advanced digital or AI-enabled skills

Strategic Importance and Growth Context

Health and Social Care and Engineering Biology & Life Sciences are strategically critical to York and North Yorkshire, reflecting the LSIP's dual focus on workforce stability in essential services and long-term economic transformation.

Health and Social Care faces increasing demand driven by an ageing population, dispersed rural geography and persistent workforce shortages, particularly at Levels 2–3. Strengthening domestic workforce supply, improving progression into senior and leadership roles, and embedding digital capability are essential to maintaining service sustainability, supporting inclusive employment and reducing reliance on agency and international recruitment.

Engineering Biology & Life Sciences are high-value, innovation-led sectors aligned to the region's strong research and academic base. However, challenges around higher-level skills supply, graduate retention and commercialisation limit the ability to translate research excellence into local scale-up, productivity and high-value employment.

Sector Scope and Demand

Health and Social Care is one of the largest employing sectors in the region, covering health services, residential and domiciliary care, and social work across urban, rural and coastal communities. Demand is characterised by high replacement needs and sustained workforce pressures.

Engineering Biology & Life Sciences form a smaller but strategically significant sub-sector, centred on universities, research organisations and specialist employers, with demand focused on higher-level technical and interdisciplinary skills.

Key Skills Gaps and Workforce Pressures

- Shortages in Level 2–3 frontline care roles, particularly in rural and coastal areas
- Gaps in safeguarding, communication, EDI and digital capability in care settings
- Limited progression into supervisory, management and leadership roles
- Shortages in higher-level technical skills (Levels 6–7) in life sciences
- Gaps in laboratory automation, bioinformatics, data, regulatory/quality and commercialisation skills
- Ongoing challenges with recruitment, retention and graduate pipeline development

Current Provision and System Capacity

- Established Level 2–3 qualifications, apprenticeships and adult learning provision supporting care workforce entry and upskilling
- Use of modular delivery, skills bootcamps and CPD to support workforce development
- Higher-level provision for Engineering Biology & Life Sciences largely concentrated within universities and specialist training
- Limited availability of employer-aligned higher technical pathways, including higher and degree apprenticeships
- LSIP-led activity focused on improving employer engagement and workforce stabilisation

Barriers to Skills Development

- Workforce pressures limiting employer capacity to release staff for training
- Rural geography and transport constraints restricting access to provision
- Funding constraints affecting progression and leadership development
- Fragmented provision and variable alignment with commercial job roles, particularly in life sciences
- Challenges attracting and retaining staff and young people locally

Existing Strengths and Market Opportunity

- A large and established Health and Social Care sector providing essential services and employment across the region
- Strong academic and research base supporting Engineering Biology & Life Sciences
- Established Level 2–3 training routes supporting workforce entry
- Clear opportunity to improve productivity, service quality and job progression through better aligned skills pathways
- Potential to convert research strength into local innovation, scale-up and higher-value employment

Future Skills Needs and System Priorities

- Clear progression pathways from entry-level care roles into senior, specialist and leadership positions

- Expansion of Level 6–7 provision, including higher and degree apprenticeships in Engineering Biology & Life Sciences
- Greater integration of digital, data and automation skills across both sectors
- Strengthened employer engagement to align provision with live job roles and career pathways
- Continued emphasis on flexible, modular delivery to reflect workforce pressures and rural access challenges

Part 2: Health & Social Care (including Engineering Biology & Life Sciences) agreed changes

Relevant SIC codes

- 86 Human health activities
- 87 Residential care activities
- 88 Social work without accommodation
- 72.11 Biotechnology R&D; 72.19 Natural sciences/engineering R&D; 21 Pharmaceuticals (where applicable)

Key SOC occupations

- Care workforce: 6135/6136 Care workers & senior care workers; 6131 Nursing auxiliaries; 1232 Care managers; 1171 Health/public health managers
- Life sciences: 2113 Biochemists/biomedical scientists; 3111 Laboratory technicians; 2424 Project professionals

Skills Needs (Current → Medium-term)

Current (immediate priorities):

- Frontline care competence, safeguarding, communication/EDI
- Level 2–3 qualifications and core digital capability for care systems
- Operational laboratory/technical capability and regulatory/quality awareness in life sciences

Medium-term (system priorities):

- Clear progression ladders (entry → senior → supervisor/manager) and leadership pathways in care
- Expansion of higher-level (Level 6–7) life sciences capability
- Skills in bioinformatics, data, automation/digital lab systems and project delivery/commercialisation

Provision and System Position

- Established Level 2–3 care provision and apprenticeships
- Some progression routes, though uneven across geographies
- Life sciences provision concentrated in higher education with limited employer-aligned pathways
- Overall limited and inconsistent Level 6–7 technical provision

Agreed Changes (LSIP Delivery Alignment)

Short-term (Years 1–2):

- Stabilise Level 2–3 care workforce supply
- Improve work readiness, retention and digital confidence
- Reduce reliance on international recruitment

Medium-term (Years 2–3):

- Expand Level 6–7 technical and interdisciplinary provision
- Strengthen leadership and progression pathways across both sectors

System / provision change required:

- Clear progression ladders from Level 1–8
- Stronger FE–HE–employer collaboration
- Better alignment to live job roles and increased participation (including under-25s)

Outcomes and Success Measures (Year 3)

- Health & Social Care: increased Level 2–3 supply, improved retention and progression, reduced vacancies and agency reliance
- Engineering Biology & Life Sciences: expanded Level 6–7 provision, improved graduate retention, stronger employer engagement and embedded digital/data/commercial skills

Trigger for intervention: No improvement in vacancy/retention indicators (care) or low employer uptake/engagement (life sciences)

Part 1: Land-based skills, including Food and Farming Innovation

Strategic Importance and Growth Context

Land-based skills, including Food and Farming Innovation, are critical to York and North Yorkshire because they underpin a core part of the regional economy and rural employment, and support productivity and place-based resilience. The region has a higher-than-average concentration of agricultural, land-based, food production and agritech activity, and the YNY LSIP Substantive Draft June Submission V6 highlights the dependence of rural enterprises on a skilled local workforce. Land-based skills also align directly with the region's environmental and carbon negative ambitions and are positioned as a competitive advantage within the Local Growth Plan, with the Adult Skills Fund Strategic Skills Plan reinforcing priorities around practical skills, rural access and progression into digital, sustainable and leadership roles.

Sector Scope and Demand

Food, farming and associated agrifood activity represents a significant source of employment, particularly in rural areas, spanning farming, food processing, manufacturing, supply chains and food safety/quality roles. Land-based skills are particularly significant given the scale and geography of the region, including that over 70% of land is agricultural or managed countryside and natural assets underpin tourism, food production, climate resilience and rural employment.

Key Skills Gaps and Workforce Pressures

- Ageing workforce and replacement demand across farming, food production and processing roles.
- Shortages in practical Level 2–3 skills (food safety, quality, traceability and operational competence).
- Limited uptake of digital and precision agriculture skills, constraining productivity and innovation.
- Weak progression pathways into higher-level technical and agribusiness leadership roles.
- Skills mismatch driven by rurality, transport constraints and limited access to training.

Current Provision and System Capacity

Established specialist land-based and food-related provision supports entry-level workforce supply, complemented by Adult Skills Fund-supported delivery focused on practical farming, food processing and quality training. Apprenticeships and modular courses are highlighted as important routes, particularly where tailored to rural SMEs and seasonal working patterns, alongside growing collaboration between providers, employers and sector bodies.

Barriers to Skills Development

- Rural geography and transport barriers limiting access to training and assessor availability.
- Limited capacity of small and microbusinesses to release staff for training.
- Fragmented provision and inconsistent employer awareness of available routes.
- Financial pressures and uncertainty affecting employer investment in workforce development.

Existing Strengths and Market Opportunity

The sector is a core part of the rural economy, with a high concentration of agrifood and agritech activity aligned to the Local Growth Plan's focus on food and farming innovation. Established specialist provision provides a base for entry-level supply, and targeted adult skills investment creates an opportunity to strengthen productivity, resilience and sustainability across the food system.

Future Skills Needs and System Priorities

- Scale digital and precision agriculture skills (digital tools, automation and data use) to support productivity and innovation.
- Strengthen sustainable and regenerative land-use skills to support environmental and carbon negative goals.
- Build clearer progression into higher-level technical and agribusiness leadership roles (including commercial capability).
- Maintain a focus on flexible, place-based delivery models (including rural/mobile approaches) to overcome access barriers and fit SME operating realities.

Part 2: Land-based skills, including Food and Farming Innovation agreed changes

Land-based Skills (incl. Food & Farming Innovation) – Skills and Delivery

Relevant SIC / occupational scope

- 01 Agriculture, food, farming and horticulture
- 5111 Forestry, land management and environment

- 10 Manufacture of food products
- 28.30 Agricultural machinery (agri-tech support)

Key SOC occupations

- 5112 Agricultural and fishing trades
- 3111 Laboratory technicians (food testing)
- 1121 Production managers (food manufacturing)

Skills Needs (Current → Medium-term)

Current (immediate priorities):

- Food safety, quality, traceability and operational capability in farming and food processing
- Baseline digital and precision skills (e.g. farm management software, basic monitoring tools)

Medium-term (system priorities):

- Precision agriculture at scale (data-enabled farming, sensors, analytics)
- Embedding sustainable and regenerative land-use practices
- Agribusiness leadership, commercial capability and innovation skills for rural SMEs
- Workforce capability in land use, forestry and reforestation

Provision and System Position

- Established specialist land-based and agri-food provision at Level 2–3
- Apprenticeships, short courses and modular delivery tailored to rural/seasonal working
- Limited uptake of higher-level and digital/precision agriculture skills

Agreed Changes (LSIP Delivery Alignment)

Short-term (Years 1–2):

- Address replacement demand and workforce gaps
- Strengthen practical skills in food safety, processing and on-farm operations

Medium-term (Years 2–3):

- Scale digital, precision agriculture and sustainable/regenerative skills
- Build agribusiness leadership and commercial capability

System / provision change required:

- Flexible, rural and mobile delivery models
- Improved access for micro and SME employers
- Clearer progression pathways across land-based careers

Outcomes and Success Measures (Year 3)

Increased uptake of digital and sustainable practices

Improved rural access to training and participation

Trigger for intervention: Persistently low participation or engagement in rural areas

Part 1: Manufacturing and Engineering (including Rail Innovation & Secure Technologies) skills needs

Strategic Importance and Growth Context

Manufacturing and Engineering are critical to York and North Yorkshire as key drivers of productivity, high-value employment and supply chain resilience across both urban and rural areas. The sector has established strengths in advanced manufacturing, engineering services and rail-related activity, but faces an ageing workforce, persistent recruitment challenges and ongoing replacement demand in technical and operational roles. Strengthening Level 2–3 skills is therefore essential to sustaining existing businesses and maintaining workforce supply.

Looking ahead, the sector is central to long-term economic growth and innovation, particularly in Rail Innovation and Secure Technologies. Expanding higher-level technical, digital and systems integration skills—alongside capability in automation, AI, data-enabled manufacturing and project delivery—will be critical to improving productivity, supporting innovation and enabling progression into higher-value roles.

Sector Scope and Demand

Manufacturing and Engineering represent a significant employment sector, spanning advanced manufacturing, engineering services, repair and maintenance, and rail-related activity. Employment is characterised by a high proportion of skilled trades, technicians and professional engineering roles, alongside a strong SME base and ageing workforce. Rail Innovation and Secure Technologies form a smaller but strategically important sub-sector aligned with national infrastructure and systems integration priorities.

Key Skills Gaps and Workforce Pressures

- Ageing workforce and high replacement demand across trades, technicians and engineering roles
- Persistent shortages in core technical skills (machining, fabrication, welding, maintenance, quality and inspection)
- Gaps in higher-level technical and digital capability, limiting productivity and innovation adoption
- Weak progression pathways into supervisory, professional and project management roles, particularly for SMEs
- In rail and secure technologies, gaps in systems integration, applied digital capability and project delivery

Current Provision and System Capacity

- Established Level 2–3 technical and trade provision, including apprenticeships delivered through FE and training providers
- Adult Skills Fund-supported provision focused on workforce replacement, upskilling and reskilling
- Some higher-level and specialist provision (engineering and digital), though availability and employer engagement remain uneven
- Ongoing activity to improve alignment between provision and live job roles, including in rail-related pathways

Barriers to Skills Development

- Limited employer capacity, particularly among SMEs, to release staff for training
- Low awareness of available provision and funding routes
- Rural geography and travel distances limiting access to specialist facilities and equipment
- Funding constraints and limited flexibility for higher-level and niche technical training

Existing Strengths and Market Opportunity

- Key productivity and high-value employment sector for the region
- Strong base of manufacturing and engineering SMEs aligned to Local Growth Plan priorities
- Established apprenticeship and technical pathways supporting entry-level and technician roles
- Opportunity to modernise the workforce and increase productivity through digital, green and advanced manufacturing adoption

Future Skills Needs and System Priorities

- Expansion of skills in automation, Industry 4.0, digital manufacturing and data-enabled systems
- Growth in Rail Innovation and Secure Technologies skills, including systems integration, digital capability and project delivery
- Strengthening progression pathways into higher-level technical, supervisory and management roles
- Embedding low-carbon and sustainable manufacturing practices across occupational pathways
- Increasing attraction of younger entrants into engineering and technical careers
- Expansion of higher and degree apprenticeships, particularly in rail-related disciplines
- Development of flexible, modular delivery models to support SMEs and working learners

Part 2: Manufacturing and Engineering (including Rail Innovation & Secure Technologies) agreed changes

Relevant SIC codes

- 25–30 Manufacturing (fabrication, machinery, transport equipment)
- 33 Repair and installation of machinery
- 71 Engineering design, testing and R&D
- 30.20 Rail locomotives and rolling stock (rail sub-sector)

Key SOC occupations

- Engineering technicians (3115)
- Welding trades (5215)
- Design and development engineers (2126)
- Engineering professionals (2129)

- Software developers (2136)
- Project managers (2424)

Skills Needs (Current → Medium-term)

Current (immediate priorities):

- Skilled trades and technician supply
- Quality, inspection, process optimisation and compliance capability
- In rail/secure technologies: systems integration readiness, applied digital capability and basic cyber awareness

Medium-term (system priorities):

- Industry 4.0 capability (automation, controls, data-driven manufacturing)
- Rail-specific skills in AI/data, cybersecurity/resilience and systems integration
- Higher-level technical and project/innovation delivery capability

Provision and System Position

- Strong Level 2–3 trade and technician provision
- Apprenticeship pathways established
- Limited higher-level and digital/advanced technical coverage

Agreed Changes (LSIP Delivery Alignment)

Short-term (Years 1–2):

- Replace ageing workforce and increase trade/technician supply
- Reduce hard-to-fill vacancies in core roles

Medium-term (Years 2–3):

- Expand Industry 4.0, digital and automation skills
- Scale rail-specific systems, digital and higher-level technical training
- Grow higher and degree apprenticeship pathways

System / provision change required:

- Stronger progression from trade → technician → professional roles
- Closer alignment of training with live job roles and employer demand

Outcomes and Success Measures (Year 3)

- Strong apprenticeship pipelines across trades and technical roles
- Reduced hard-to-fill vacancies

Trigger for intervention: Continued recruitment difficulties despite increased provision

Analysis of employers' short and medium-term skills needs, including sector-specific skills has informed the six overarching LSIP priorities, with the following section outlining how these will be addressed. The six priorities are:

No.	Overarching LSIP Priority and Description
1	Stabilise workforce supply and workforce readiness
2	Embed digital capability across all sectors
3	Build progression pathways and higher-level skills (Levels 1–8)
4	Develop leadership, management and commercial capability
5	Accelerate green, carbon negative and sustainability skills
6	Ensure a coherent, employer-informed and responsive skills system

PART 2: The Six York and North Yorkshire Skills Priorities: Expected Outcomes, Impacts and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Evidence in Part 1 shows that skills challenges in York and North Yorkshire are cross-cutting and systemic, requiring coordinated, system-wide action rather than sector-specific responses alone. Employers consistently report shortages in technical and specialist skills, alongside gaps in digital capability—including AI and low-carbon skills—that are increasingly required across roles. Not strong enough progression into higher-level skills (Levels 4–5 and above), combined with gaps in leadership, management, employability and workforce readiness, constrains productivity, recruitment and retention, particularly in SME-dominated sectors. Limited access to flexible, employer-responsive training and barriers for under-represented groups further reinforce the need for the six overarching LSIP priorities as the system-level changes required to stabilise workforce supply, strengthen progression and deliver a responsive, inclusive skills system.

Priority 1: Stabilise workforce supply and workforce readiness

This priority applies across all LSIP priority sectors by focusing on work readiness, employability and transferable skills to address immediate recruitment, onboarding and retention pressures. Employers across construction, care, manufacturing, food and farming, clean energy and creative industries require job-ready entrants who can move quickly into productive roles and sustain employment, particularly in SME-dominated and rural labour markets.

However, in response to this, employers must also be ready to step up and input into skills delivery as well as offering student placements and routes to employment that support work readiness.

Intended outcomes

- Improved work readiness and employability of learners entering priority sectors
- Faster transition from learning into sustained employment
- Increased employer participation in skills delivery and progression routes

Expected impacts

- Reduced recruitment and onboarding pressures for employers, particularly SMEs
- Improved early retention and reduced churn in entry-level roles
- Stronger alignment between provision and immediate labour market need

KPIs, measures and monitoring approach

- Increase in the number and proportion of learners enrolled on LSIP-aligned programmes.

Measure: Provider curriculum mapping used in LSIP monitoring and accountability statements, **6 monthly review.**

Priority 2: Embed digital capability across all sectors

Digital capability is a baseline requirement across all priority sectors. This priority ensures learners develop core digital literacy alongside applied digital skills relevant to occupational roles, supporting productivity, efficiency and adoption of new technologies. Digital skills are embedded within sector pathways rather than delivered as standalone provision.

Intended outcomes

- Improved baseline digital literacy and applied digital skills across priority sectors
- Greater productivity and adoption of digital tools within workplaces

Expected impacts

- Increased workforce adaptability to technological change
- Stronger alignment between training provision and digital job requirements

KPIs, measures and monitoring approach

- Increase in the number and proportion of LSIP-aligned programmes that explicitly embed digital or digital-enabled skills.

Measure: Provider curriculum reviews and LSIP aligned provision mapping, **6 monthly review.**

- Year-on-year increases in learners completing provision with applied digital skills relevant to their occupational pathway.

Measure: Provider performance data and learner completion records, **6 monthly review.**

Priority 3: Build progression pathways and higher-level skills (Levels 1–8), improve inclusion and access

Progression is essential because employer demand in York and North Yorkshire cannot be met through entry-level skills alone, and current provision does not consistently support progression, inclusion or access across the full skills pipeline. The LSIP evidence shows that while activity at Levels 2–3 is critical for workforce supply, employers across priority sectors also face persistent gaps at higher technical and professional levels, with scope to strengthen progression pathways linking education, training and sustained employment.

This requires clearer and more coordinated progression routes from Level 1 onwards, ensuring that individuals—particularly those entering or reentering the labour market can transition from pre-employment support into skills provision and employment. Strengthening alignment with Job Centre Plus, careers services and the Work and Skills Interchange is critical to supporting early engagement, informed decision-making and access to appropriate provision.

In this context, the LSIP is closely aligned with the Get York and North Yorkshire Working Plan, which focuses on improving labour market participation and reducing economic inactivity. Together, these approaches strengthen the connection between skills, employment and careers support, creating a more coherent system that enables individuals to progress from initial engagement and entry-level provision through to higher-level technical roles and sustained employment.

Priority 3a: All priority sectors require clear progression routes from entry-level roles to higher technical, supervisory and professional occupations. This priority strengthens transitions between Levels 2–3 and Levels 4–7, aligns FE and HE provision, and expands higher technical education and apprenticeships to support retention and productivity.

Priority 3b: Support progression through improved Careers advice and guidance, strengthened by further development of the Work and Skills Interchange to highlight opportunities and career pathways in priority sectors

Priority 3c: Develop greater higher-level skills provision aligned to LSIP Priorities, including at L7-L8 to help support graduate retention in the region and drive productivity and innovation.

Priority 3d: Ensure increased and progressive engagement with LSIP aligned skills training, particularly for priority or under-represented groups, for example women into manufacturing.

Intended outcomes

- Clear progression routes from entry-level into higher technical and professional roles
- Improved retention of talent within the region
- Learners and adults have a clearer understanding of local employment opportunities and progression routes within LSIP priority sectors.
- Enhanced regional capacity for productivity, innovation and leadership, underpinning long-term economic growth and competitiveness.

Expected impacts

- Reduced skills leakage and improved workforce productivity
- Stronger pipeline of higher-level technical skills to support growth sectors

KPIs, measures and monitoring approach

Priority 3a: Evidence of improved collaborative working between FE and HE to drive place based LSIP priority pathways

Measure: Validated examples given, **6 monthly review.**

Priority 3b: Evidence of enhanced careers advice and guidance through the Work and Skills Interchange to highlight opportunities and career pathways in priority sectors.

Measure: Validated examples given, **6 monthly review.**

Priority 3C: Evidence of greater higher-level skills provision aligned to LSIP Priorities.

Measure: Increased number of validated examples given, **6 monthly review.**

Priority 3d: Increased enrolments on provision explicitly aligned to LSIP priorities.

Measure: Learner enrolment data across FE, HE and apprenticeship pathways **12 monthly review.**

Priority 4: Develop leadership, management and commercial capability

Leadership, management and commercial capability are consistent cross-sector constraints. This priority addresses gaps in frontline supervision, people management, project delivery and commercial skills, particularly in SME-dominated sectors, supporting improved retention, growth and innovation adoption.

Intended outcomes

- Improved frontline leadership and people management capability
- Increased confidence of SMEs to invest, grow and innovate

Expected impacts

- Better workforce retention, productivity and staff engagement
- Stronger resilience and succession planning in SME-dominated sectors

KPIs, measures and monitoring approach

- Increased proportion of LSIP-aligned provision that explicitly incorporates employability, leadership or supervisory skills outcomes. Can be through curricular or pastoral delivery.

Measure: Provide evidence-based case studies. **6 monthly review.**

Priority 5: Accelerate green, carbon negative and sustainability skills

Green and sustainability skills apply across all sectors, not only clean energy roles. This priority accelerates delivery of specialist green skills while embedding sustainability and carbon negative competencies across wider occupational pathways, supporting decarbonisation, compliance and long-term resilience.

Intended outcomes

- Increased availability of specialist green skills and wider sustainability competence
- Workforce readiness to support carbon negative and regulatory change

Expected impacts

- Stronger delivery of clean growth and decarbonisation objectives
- Improved long-term resilience of businesses across sectors

KPIs, measures and monitoring approach

- Increased number of learners completing green, carbon negative or sustainability-aligned provision

Measure: Provider course data and qualifications mapped to green skills frameworks. **6 monthly review.**

- Proportion of sector pathways embedding sustainability or carbon negative competencies

Measure: Curriculum audits and LSIP skills pathway reviews. **6 monthly review.**

Priority 6: Ensure a coherent, employer-informed and responsive skills system

This priority underpins delivery of all others by strengthening employer leadership, co-design and flexible delivery. It improves alignment between funding, provision and employer demand, ensuring consistent system response while enabling sector-specific solutions through skills groups and review cycles.

Intended outcomes

- Stronger employer leadership and influence over skills planning
- Improved coordination across providers, funders and delivery partners

Expected impacts

- Faster, more consistent system response to changing labour market needs
- Greater value for money and impact from devolved and national funding

KPIs, measures and monitoring approach

- **Employer engagement activity:** Increase in the number and diversity of employers participating in LSIP engagement activity, cluster groups and curriculum discussions.

Measure: LSIP governance records, sector group participation and engagement logs. **Quarterly Review.**

- **Provider responsiveness:** An increased proportion of provider accountability statements and curriculum changes that explicitly reference LSIP priorities.

Measure: Provider self-assessment, LSIP review cycles and funding assurance processes. **Annual Review**

Overall Strategic Impact

Taken together, these six priorities provide a clear, employer-led framework for skills reform in York and North Yorkshire. In the short term, the LSIP will deliver improved alignment between provision and demand, greater employer confidence, and stronger workforce readiness. Over the medium term, it will support a more productive, inclusive and resilient regional economy, underpinned by a future-ready skills system aligned to growth, innovation and net-zero ambitions, and delivering strong value for public investment.

Delivery: Employer Engagement, Communications and System Capacity

Delivery of the LSIP is underpinned by strong employer engagement, coordinated communications and sufficient system capacity to respond to employer demand.

Employer engagement is essential to LSIP deliverability. The LSIP aims to strengthen employer participation, where possible to increase the availability of jobs, apprenticeships, placements and work-based learning opportunities, while expanding employer involvement in curriculum co-design. It will also support businesses—particularly SMEs—to invest time and resources in workforce development. This will improve workforce readiness, support progression into sustained employment and strengthen alignment between provision and labour market demand.

A coordinated communications approach will ensure clear, timely and consistent engagement with employers, providers, local authorities and stakeholders throughout delivery. Led by the Employer Representative Body in partnership with the Combined Authority, this will use targeted briefings, newsletters, digital channels and engagement through existing business and skills networks. Communications will focus on priority skills needs, expected actions and progress against LSIP priorities, aligning with wider regional governance and economic growth communications to ensure transparency, avoid duplication and support shared ownership across the system.

Effective delivery will be dependent on system capacity and coordinated investment. Sustained funding from employers, government and devolved programmes will be required to maintain adult skills provision, expand delivery in shortage areas and support the recruitment and retention of specialist tutors. Delivery will also rely on employers providing sufficient opportunities for employment and work-based learning, enabling learners to achieve work readiness and progress into sustained employment.

These interdependencies will be managed through joint governance and annual review, ensuring that actions remain realistic, funded and deliverable at pace across the 2026–2029 cycle.

PART 3: DELIVERING THE LSIP PRIORITIES

ANNEX A: FURTHER INFORMATION ON SKILLS NEEDS (SIC/SOC)

ANNEX B: ROADMAP OF ACTIVITIES

ANNEX C: BACKGROUND AND METHOD

ANNEX A: FURTHER INFORMATION ON SKILLS NEEDS (SIC/SOC)

SIC–SOC Priority Skills Table (Ordered by Sector)

This table consolidates SIC and SOC priority skills areas, including SIC and SOC codes, and is ordered by agreed priority sectors for LSIP evidence and skills planning.

Clean Energy, Green Economy & Carbon Negative Technical Skills

Information about future skills needs for each priority sector is also given in part one on sector skills.

SIC Codes	SOC Codes	Occupational Group	Example Roles	Current Skills Needs	Future Skills Needs
35, 42	2121–2126	Engineering & Technical	Civil, electrical engineers	Rapid retrofit-driven growth	Workforce doubling required
35, 42	5241–5314	Installation & Retrofit	Electricians, installers	Strong current demand	Sustained carbon negative growth
35, 42	2136–2142	Digital & Environmental	Digital & environmental professionals	High green skills demand	Fastest-growing occupations

Construction

SIC Codes	SOC Codes	Occupational Group	Example Roles	Current Skills Needs	Future Skills Needs
41–43	2436; 2122	Professional & Technical	Project managers, engineers	Professional role shortages	Replacement-driven growth
41–43	5311–5315	Skilled Trades & Operatives	Bricklayers, carpenters	Over 50% skill shortages	Ongoing replacement demand

Creative Industries

SIC Codes	SOC Codes	Occupational Group	Example Roles	Current Skills Needs	Future Skills Needs
58–63	2137; 2431–2432	Professional & Technical	Developers, architects	Creative-tech shortages	Above-average growth

58–63	3411–3422	Associate & Skilled Creative Roles	Designers, producers	Project-based churn	Replacement-led demand
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Health and Social Care (including Engineering Biology and Life Sciences)

SIC Codes	SOC Codes	Occupational Group	Example Roles	Current Skills Needs	Future Skills Needs
86, 88	2211–2216; 2221–2229; 2112–2119	Professional & Technical	Medical practitioners, therapists, scientists	Specialist clinical and scientific shortages	Growth driven by complexity and replacement demand
86, 88	3211–3214; 3111–3113	Associate Professional & Technical	Nurses, paramedics, lab technicians	High vacancy rates	Expansion to support services
86, 88	6141–6144	Skilled Health & Care Roles	Care workers, nursing auxiliaries	Acute recruitment pressure	High replacement demand

Land-based Skills, including Food and Farming Innovation

SIC Codes	SOC Codes	Occupational Group	Example Roles	Current Skills Needs	Future Skills Needs
01, 10	2112–2119; 2150	Professional & Technical	Scientists, R&D managers	Higher-level skills shortages	Productivity and innovation demand
01, 10	3111–3113	Associate Professional & Technical	Lab & engineering technicians	Technical support gaps	Technology adoption growth
01, 10	5111–5113; 8111	Skilled Trades & Processing	Farmers, food operatives	Ageing workforce	Replacement-led demand
11–16;	5112 – 5114, 3550, 2142	Agriculture and Horticulture	Horticulture, conservation and environmental professionals	job-ready horticultural skills, technical conservation and environmental land-management roles	Environmental land use, climate resilience and nature-based solutions; progression into higher-level environmental professional roles

021-024	5113, 5114, 3550, 2142	Forestry and Land Management	Silviculture and forestry activities	Operational delivery	Increasing demand for SOC 3550 and SOC 2142 to support reforestation, biodiversity, sustainable land use and long-term environmental management.
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Manufacturing and Engineering (including Rail Innovation and Secure Technologies)

SIC Codes	SOC Codes	Occupational Group	Example Roles	Current Skills Needs	Future Skills Needs
25, 28, 30	2122-2129; 2150	Professional & Technical	Engineers, R&D managers	STEM recruitment difficulty	Largest net employment growth
25, 28, 30	3111-3132	Associate Professional & Technical	Engineering & IT technicians	Persistent shortages	Advanced manufacturing growth
25, 28, 30	5211-5231	Skilled Trades & Operatives	Machinists, vehicle technicians	Apprenticeship pressure	Replacement and upskilling demand

Further Evidence from Skills Round Tables

Evidence from recent skills round tables highlighted persistent and cross-cutting skills pressures alongside emerging future needs. At the Digital and Technology Skills Roundtable (November 2025) Employers identified growing demand for digital, data, AI and automation skills across sectors, combined with the need to upskill existing workforces, strengthen cyber awareness and build long-term digital talent pipelines. At the Construction Skills Roundtable (October 2025) employers reported acute shortages in core trades, supervisory and management roles, driven by an ageing workforce and rising housing and infrastructure demand, alongside constraints caused by limited training capacity and tutor shortages. Across both roundtables, employers emphasised the importance of flexible, work-based training models, stronger apprenticeship and entry routes, and a more responsive, employer informed skills system aligned to live demand and long-term workforce sustainability.

ANNEX B: ROADMAP OF ACTIVITIES

Abbreviations

CBI – Confederation of British Industry

ERB – Employer Representative Body

FE – Further Education Colleges

FSB – Federation of Small Businesses

HE – Higher Education

ITP – Independent Training Providers

JCP – Job Centre Plus

WNYCC – West and North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce

YNYCA – York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority (Including Local Authorities as appropriate)

IoT – Institute of Technology

YLP – Yorkshire Learning Providers

YU – Yorkshire Universities

York and North Yorkshire LSIP 2026–2029 – Activity Planning Table

We confirm that specific lead organisation(s) will be agreed and assigned for each activity as the LSIP moves into the delivery phase and to this end engagement with the providers has already commenced.

	Recommended change	Activity required	Named delivery lead(s)	Supporting partners	Timescales	Expected outcomes	Monitoring and measurement
1	Priority 1: Workforce supply and readiness. Increase in the number and proportion of learners enrolled on LSIP-aligned programmes.	Rebalance and expand job-ready, occupation-specific provision aligned to LSIP priority sectors using SIC/SOC mapping; strengthen employer co-design and provider accountability. A lead college will be requested for each sector specialism.	WNYCC (ERB) / YNYCA	FE led by IoT; HE Led by YU; ITPs led by YLP; employer networks and sector bodies	Short term (12–18 months); Medium term (2–3 years)	Faster recruitment into hard-to-fill roles; improved workforce readiness; increased productivity	Provider curriculum mapping used in LSIP monitoring and accountability statements (6 monthly review)
2	Priority 2: Embed digital capability across all sectors - Increase in the number and proportion of LSIP-aligned programmes that explicitly embed digital or digital-enabled skills. Year-on-year increases in learners completing provision with applied digital skills relevant to their occupational pathway.	Embed digital, data, AI and low-carbon competencies across provision; expand green, retrofit and emerging digital skills training.	WNYCC (ERB) / YNYCA	FE led by IoT; HE Led by YU; ITPs led by YLP; employers; digital and green economy partnerships	Short term embed; Medium term scale	Improved digital confidence; resilience to automation and net-zero transition	Provider curriculum reviews and LSIP aligned provision mapping. Provider performance data and learner completion records (6 monthly review).
3	Priority 3a: Progression and higher-level skills (Levels 1–8)	Build and clearly articulate progression pathways.	WNYCC (ERB) / YNYCA	FE led by IoT; HE Led by YU; ITPs led by YLP;	Short term design; Medium term delivery	Clearer progression pathways; higher	Evidence of improved collaborative

	All priority sectors require clear progression routes from entry-level roles to higher technical, supervisory and professional occupations.			employers; Skills England		progression to advanced roles; improved earnings	working between FE and HE to drive place based LSIP priority pathways. Validated examples given. (6 monthly review)
	Priority 3b: Support progression through improved Careers advice and guidance, strengthened by further development of the Work and Skills Interchange to highlight opportunities and career pathways in priority sectors	Careers promotion; CEIAG improvement; pathways maps	YNYCA	FE led by IoT; HE Led by YU; ITPs led by YLP; employers;	Short term: further mapping of priority sector careers pathways, Medium term: delivery and refresh as needed	Clearer progression pathways; higher progression to advanced roles; improved earnings	Evidence of enhanced careers advice and guidance through the Work and Skills Interchange to highlight opportunities and career pathways in priority sectors. Validated examples given. (6 monthly review)
	Priority 3c: Develop greater higher-level skills provision aligned to LSIP Priorities, including at L7-L8 to help support graduate retention in the region and drive productivity and innovation.	Enhance delivery of Level 7-8 skills aligned to LSIP Priority sectors. Including Degree Apprenticeships, student projects, Knowledge Transfer Partnerships, Industry-embedded Doctorates, PHDs.	Yorkshire Universities; YNYCA	HE providers led by YU	Short term: Brief Providers Medium Term: Embed and monitor development Longer Term: Provider collaboration	Expanded Level 7–8 provision aligned to priority sectors, improving graduate retention into high-value local roles, strengthening employer access to advanced skills, and supporting innovation,	Provide evidence-based case studies. (6 monthly review)

						leadership capability, productivity growth and employer-led provision design.	
	3d. Ensure increased and progressive engagement with LSIP aligned skills training, particularly for priority or under-represented groups.	Build clear, visible progression pathways, embed flexible learning, reduce access barriers linked to place and circumstance, e.g. rurality, strengthen employer led entry and progression routes, target under-represented groups through trusted partners, such as Job Centre Plus	WNYCC (ERB) / YNYCA	FE led by IoT; HE Led by YU; ITPs led by YLP; Careers Hub; ERB	Short term: Make access routes simple and visible, Target outreach via trusted partners, Use flexible provision to boost take-up; Medium Term: strengthen employer supported engagement	Reduced place-based and structural barriers to skills participation, Improved long-term workforce supply and productivity	Increased enrolments on provision explicitly aligned to LSIP priorities. Measure: Learner enrolment data across FE, HE and apprenticeship pathways (12 monthly review).
4	Priority 4: Leadership, management and commercial capability Increased proportion of LSIP aligned provision that explicitly incorporates employability, leadership or supervisory skills outcomes. Can be through curricular or pastoral delivery.	Embed leadership and employability outcomes into LSIP-aligned delivery. Increase delivery of employability, leadership and commercial skills delivery. Integrate leadership development into pastoral and	WNYCC (ERB) / YNYCA	FE led by IoT; HE Led by YU; ITPs led by YLP; Careers Hub; ERB	Short term develop, medium term embed, sustain	Improved job readiness; stronger leadership; increased productivity and retention	Increased curricular or pastoral delivery. Measure: Provide evidence-based case studies. (6 monthly review).

		learner-support models. Support progression from technical roles into leadership pathways. Monitor and increase uptake of leadership-embedded provision.					
5	Priority 5: Green, carbon negative and sustainability skills -Growth in the number of learners completing green, carbon negative and sustainability-aligned provision. -Increased embedding of sustainability and carbon negative competencies across sector pathways, rather than delivery through standalone “green” courses alone.	Increase provision of green, carbon negative and sustainability-aligned provision. LSIP-aligned provision in priority sectors to explicitly integrate sustainability and carbon negative competencies into existing qualifications.	YNYCA; Providers (delivery); Employers (work-based learning)	FE led by IoT; HE Led by YU; ITPs led by YLP; WNYCC, FSB, York & North Yorkshire Growth Hub	Short term embed; Medium term workforce impact	build the workforce capability required to deliver carbon negative, climate adaptation and wider environmental goals; growth in the number of learners completing green, carbon negative and sustainability training	Provider course data and qualifications mapped to green skills frameworks; Curriculum audits and LSIP skills pathway reviews. (6 monthly review).
6	Priority 6: A coherent, employer-informed and responsive skills system -Increased number and diversity of employers actively engaged in LSIP governance, sector skills groups and curriculum co-design.	Increase the number and diversity of employers actively involved in LSIP governance, sector skills groups and change programmes. Regular convening of sector skills groups to validate	YNYCA FE led by IoT; HE Led by YU; ITPs led by YLP;	Employers; Jobcentre Plus (DWP); York & North Yorkshire Careers Hub; City of York Council and North Yorkshire Council employment support; NHS Humber	Short term set up sector skills groups; Medium term course content reviewed	Increase in the number and diversity of employers actively engaged in LSIP activities and the skills system	LSIP governance records, sector group participation and engagement logs. Quarterly Review. Provider self-assessment, LSIP

	-A growing proportion of provider curriculum changes and investment decisions explicitly aligned to LSIP priorities, evidenced through accountability statements and monitoring returns.	priorities, test evidence and shape delivery. Use of employer insight to inform new provision, curriculum updates and withdrawal of misaligned courses.		& North Yorkshire Integrated Care Board (ICB); Partnerships such as Rise2Thrive (VCSE network)			review cycles and funding assurance processes. (Annual Review)
	Other Delivery Activities						
7	Establish effective LSIP governance	Establish LSIP governance within the York and North Yorkshire Work, Health and Skills Partnership, supported by and sector skills task and finish groups where needed	WNYCC (ERB); YNYCA	FE led by IoT; HE Led by YU; ITPs led by YLP; Local Authorities, Trade Union; Community, CBI, FSB, JCP. Businesses and sector bodies within task and finish groups	Y1 establish; Y2-3 embed	Steering group established; regular reporting	Quarterly review of activity and annual report
8	Establish Task and Finish Groups and deliver sector priority actions -Sector skills plans -KPI frameworks -Progression mapping -FE/HE/ITP coordination -Employer informed	Better coordination between supply and demand, address overarching priorities within sectors	WNYCC (ERB); YNYCA	Employers, FE appointed lead (including Technical Excellence Colleges), HE appointed lead, ITP appointed lead, Local Authorities, relevant ERB and sector bodies, DWP	Y1 establish; Y2 active; Y3 embedded	Enhanced sector skills, clear progression mapping in place, reduced vacancy rates, outcomes feeding into main LSIP reporting	Sector plans; KPIs reported

9	Improve inclusion and access to skills for under-represented groups	Deliver targeted outreach; address challenges around accessibility due to rural and coastal areas, reduce structural barriers, strengthen progression into higher-value employment.	YNYCA / WNYCC (ERB)	All Local authorities FE led by IoT; HE Led by YU; ITPs led by YLP; JCP; Work and Skills Interchange; Community organisations, employers led by business chair	Short term engagement; Medium term progression	Increased participation and progression; reduced skills-related inequalities	Participation and progression data by group and place
10	Deliver effective LSIP communications plan and activity: ensure clarity, engagement and ownership of the LSIP	Deliver clear, consistent LSIP messaging through targeted briefings, updates and existing stakeholder networks	WNYCC (ERB)	YNYCA, FE led by IoT; HE Led by YU; ITPs led by YLP; Local Authorities, other ERBs, JCP, Trade Unions, Employers	Short term: Establish comms plan and clear communication channels Medium term: ensure consistent messaging and 2-way communications	Effective stakeholder awareness, engagement and alignment with LSIP priorities	Stakeholder feedback, engagement levels, evidence in provider accountability statements and planning
11	Encourage greater employer engagement and investment in skills provision	Regular engagement with employers on the benefits of investment in skills and effective workforce planning, including through sector skills task	WNYCC (ERB) / YNYCA	FE led by IoT; HE Led by YU; ITPs led by YLP;	Short term: Targeted employer outreach, co-design of provision,	Enhanced work readiness and employment opportunities supporting increased	annual review, employer feedback and performance against agreed KPIs

		and finish groups and related activities.		Local Authorities, other ERB and sector organisations, JCP, Community, ERBs, Local Authorities, Technical Excellence Colleges	curriculum input and in-kind investment Medium term: Sustained employer investment, embedded LSIP partnerships, long-term provider collaboration	productivity and economic growth	
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ANNEX C: BACKGROUND, EVIDENCE AND METHODOLOGY

Purpose of this Annex

This Annex sets out the approach, evidence base, governance and methodology used to develop the York and North Yorkshire Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP). It demonstrates how the LSIP has been developed in line with statutory guidance, and how employer insight, labour market evidence and strategic alignment have informed the identification of skills priorities, agreed changes and actions.

Background and Strategic Context

Alignment with Wider Strategies and Evidence

The evidence base underpinning the York and North Yorkshire LSIP has been deliberately selected to ensure clear alignment with the York and North Yorkshire Local Growth Plan, the Get York and North Yorkshire Working Plan, the Adult Skills Fund Strategic Skills Plan, and relevant national policy including the Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper, the Industrial Strategy and carbon negative commitments.

Labour market intelligence, employer interviews and sector research demonstrate that the priority sectors identified through economic strategy are also those experiencing the most acute skills shortages, replacement demand and growth potential. The LSIP translates these growth ambitions into workforce-specific requirements, focusing on job-ready technical skills, progression into higher-level roles and leadership capability needed to improve recruitment and retention, succession planning, productivity, retention and inclusive growth.

Alignment with employment and inclusion strategies highlights persistent barriers to labour market participation, including skills mismatches, underutilisation of higher-level skills, weak progression into Level 4–5 technical pathways, limited access to flexible training for adults in work and unequal outcomes for disadvantaged and under-represented groups. The LSIP responds directly by prioritising workforce readiness, flexible and modular provision, employer-responsive delivery and inclusive access to progression opportunities in growth sectors.

Carbon negative and sustainability ambitions are embedded throughout the LSIP rather than treated as standalone priorities. Evidence shows that delivery of decarbonisation increasingly depends on skills across construction, manufacturing, digital, engineering and professional roles. The LSIP therefore focuses on integrating low-carbon and sustainability competencies across sectors, alongside specialist technical pathways, ensuring the local workforce can support carbon negative transition while creating good-quality, future-facing jobs.

Taken together, the evidence base provides a clear line of sight between economic strategy, labour market need and skills delivery, demonstrating that the LSIP functions as a coordinated, employer-led intervention aligned to York and North Yorkshire's growth, employment, inclusion and carbon negative ambitions.

Evidence

The LSIP draws on a robust and triangulated evidence base, combining quantitative labour market intelligence with extensive qualitative employer and stakeholder insight. Development of the plan has been undertaken in close collaboration with the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority, operating within a shared strategic framework and in line with the emerging joint-ownership model set out in national guidance. This collaboration has included the regular sharing of labour market intelligence, employer insight and wider economic data, ensuring a common evidence base to inform priorities, actions and sector focus. Priority sectors for York and North Yorkshire have been jointly agreed, drawing on employer engagement led by the Chamber alongside the Combined Authority's economic strategy, Local Growth Plan and skills and employment programmes, ensuring alignment between employer-led demand, devolved funding and system delivery.

Secondary Evidence

Secondary evidence sources informing the LSIP include:

- Local and regional labour market intelligence and analysis
- Economic and sectoral assessments produced by the Combined Authority and local authorities
- National datasets and analysis provided through Skills England
- Existing strategies and plans, including the Local Growth Plan, Adult Skills Fund Strategic Skills Plan, and clean energy and carbon negative frameworks

Primary Employer Research

Primary research has been central to LSIP development and includes:

- Employer roundtables and sector-specific discussions (at least one per priority sector)
- 106 in-depth employer interviews across all priority sectors
- Employer surveys and questionnaires, including the British Chamber of Commerce Quarterly Economic Survey, the largest of its kind in the UK
- Ongoing employer forums and engagement activity, including the Chamber Leadership Groups for York and North Yorkshire
- Discussions with sector bodies such as CITB and Skills for Care
- Discussions with education and training providers

Together, this approach ensures that skills priorities reflect both immediate workforce pressures and medium-term structural change over the LSIP cycle.

Employer Engagement

Employer engagement has been central to the development of the York and North Yorkshire LSIP, ensuring that skills priorities and agreed system-level actions are firmly grounded in employer demand. Engagement activity extended beyond Chamber membership to reach employers across all sectors, business sizes and geographies, with particular emphasis on SMEs and rural and coastal economies.

Employer Roundtables, Forums and Sector Engagement

A programme of employer roundtables and structured forums was delivered across York and North Yorkshire, bringing together businesses, sector representatives and partners. This included engagement through the Chamber of Commerce Leadership Group, Property Forum and Transport Forum, alongside targeted sector-based discussions. These forums enabled employers to:

- Test labour market and skills evidence
- Explore sector-specific recruitment challenges and workforce pressures
- Identify cross-cutting skills needs, including digital capability, leadership and management, green skills and employability

This approach supported in-depth qualitative discussion and allowed employers to validate and refine emerging findings from data analysis and wider research.

Employer Surveys and Economic Insight

Large-scale survey activity formed a core component of the LSIP evidence base, including the Quarterly Economic Survey, which captured employer insight on business conditions, recruitment challenges and skills demand. Survey findings were complemented by Local Authority-led trailblazer consultations and the 2025

Labour Market Intelligence Report, ensuring employer perspectives were triangulated with robust labour market and place-based data.

Ongoing Employer Dialogue and Impact on LSIP Development

Employer engagement was an ongoing process rather than a one-off exercise. Continued dialogue through forums, surveys and sector engagement ensured that emerging issues and changing priorities were reflected throughout LSIP development. Employer insight directly informed:

- Identification and prioritisation of current and medium-term skills needs
- Validation of labour market evidence and sector priorities
- Agreement of system-level changes required to improve responsiveness, access and progression

The scale, diversity and continuity of engagement ensure that the York and North Yorkshire LSIP meets statutory requirements for employer leadership and provides a credible, evidence-led framework for aligning post-16 skills provision with local business demand.

Jobcentre Plus

The LSIP works in partnership with Jobcentre Plus to align skills provision with labour market demand and support individuals to progress into sustained employment. Jobcentre Plus provides front-line engagement, job search support and referrals into training, while the LSIP ensures that provision is employer-led and aligned to priority sectors. Through integration with DWP programmes and the Get York and North Yorkshire Working Plan, this creates a coherent system linking entry-level support, skills development and employment outcomes, enabling individuals to progress from unemployment into sustainable and higher-value roles.

There is regular engagement with Jobcentre Plus and they have been involved in development of the plan via regular meetings and Local Authority Skills Boards.

Trade Unions

Trade unions are important partners in the delivery of the LSIP, contributing workforce insight, supporting access to training and working with employers to shape workplace skills provision. Through union learning representatives and wider engagement, unions help increase participation in training, particularly among under-represented groups, and support the delivery of high-quality apprenticeships and progression pathways. Their involvement in local governance structures ensures that the LSIP reflects both employer demand and workforce needs, contributing to a more inclusive, responsive and coherent skills system.

Provider Engagement

Development of the York and North Yorkshire LSIP has involved providers across the full post-16 system, including Further Education colleges, the Institute of Technology, independent training providers, adult learning services and Higher Education partners. This ensures the plan reflects the full range of provision in the region.

Engagement has focused on testing employer-identified skills priorities against existing and planned provision, considering delivery capacity, feasibility and progression across Levels 1–8. This has ensured that LSIP priorities are realistic, deliverable and aligned with provider planning, accountability requirements and devolved funding decisions.

Further Education and Statutory Providers

Further Education colleges play a central role in the regional skills pipeline, delivering:

- 16–18 technical education
- Level 2–3 apprenticeship pathways
- Level 4+ progression and higher technical routes

Colleges and other statutory providers have been actively involved throughout LSIP development. They are key to addressing workforce challenges, particularly through sustained participation at Levels 2 and 3, which underpin future workforce supply.

Engagement has focused on aligning employer demand with provision, identifying capacity constraints and ensuring priorities can be embedded in statutory plans and delivery.

Higher Education

Higher Education providers have contributed to ensure alignment with higher-level skills (Levels 4–8), progression routes and regional innovation priorities. Engagement has included structured dialogue, sector roundtables and collaboration with the Combined Authority and Chamber.

This has strengthened progression into higher technical education and degree apprenticeships, and ensured alignment with employer demand in key sectors such as digital, engineering, life sciences, clean energy and creative industries. Universities are represented in governance through Yorkshire Universities, embedding their role in LSIP delivery.

Independent Training Providers and Wider Partners

Independent Training Providers are key delivery partners, particularly in apprenticeships, adult skills and flexible provision. Engagement has also included commercial, voluntary and community providers, recognising their role in supporting workforce entry, progression and inclusion.

These partners provide valuable insight into hard-to-reach learners, specialist provision and alternative delivery models.

Strategic Role of Providers

Across HE, FE and ITPs, providers are strategic partners in both shaping and delivering the LSIP. They have contributed to:

- Identifying and validating skills needs
- Co-designing delivery actions and system changes
- Informing progression pathways and curriculum alignment

This ensures a shared, deliverable plan aligned to employer demand and system capacity.

Ongoing Engagement

Provider engagement is continuous rather than one-off. Providers remain involved through:

- LSIP governance and partnerships
- Regular workshops and briefings
- Ongoing delivery planning, monitoring and review

This approach ensures the LSIP remains responsive, collaborative and able to adapt to changing labour market needs.

From Planning to Delivery

While FE providers currently publish annual Accountability Statements, there is no formal system-wide agreement setting out how the Combined Authority, FE, HE and independent training providers will collectively deliver priority skills outcomes. The LSIP highlights the need for clearer collaborative arrangements, including:

- shared responsibility for delivery against growth priorities
- resourcing for joint working
- clearly defined progression pathways from Level 1 through to Level 8

The York and North Yorkshire Work and Skills Interchange, developed through the previous LSIP and delivered by the Combined Authority, complements the Local Skills Improvement Plan by providing a joined-up

mechanism that connects skills, employment and health support at both individual and employer level. As part of the Get Britain Working Economic Inactivity Trailblazer, the Interchange focuses on supporting people who are economically inactive or face barriers to work, while helping employers to create inclusive job opportunities. Working alongside the LSIP, it demonstrates how coordinated delivery across the work, health and skills system adds value—bringing services and partners together to create a more accessible, joined-up system that strengthens participation, progression and workforce resilience across York and North Yorkshire.

In response to employer and stakeholder feedback, going forward, delivery will be strengthened through:

- **Sector specific skills groups and job plans** aligned to growth and employment priorities
- **Regular convening of the “quadruple helix”** of employers, providers, public sector, sector bodies and communities
- A greater focus on **higher-level and transferable skills** to support productivity, progression and workforce mobility
- Strengthening **16–18 Technical Workforce Pathways** to secure future workforce supply in priority sectors and supporting inclusive economic growth. A stronger system should be employer informed and requires clear technical pathways that enable young people to progress seamlessly from 16–18 provision into Apprenticeships, higher technical education and sustained employment.
- **Employer engagement** will be strengthened through a central role in shaping pathways. Employers will play a decisive role in informing curriculum content, delivery models and progression routes, ensuring that 16–18 provision reflects live job roles, sector standards and future workforce needs. This will be particularly important in sectors such as engineering, construction, clean energy, rail and digital.
- Finally, while good progress is being made, **stronger careers information, advice and guidance** will be needed to raise awareness of technical routes, their labour-market value and progression opportunities, supporting wider participation and improved retention of young technical talent within the region.

Effective careers guidance will also be required at Key Stages 3 and 4 to inform post-16 choices, with employers playing a key role in supporting this through engagement, insight and real-world exposure. Through this approach, the LSIP, Adult Skills Funding and skills providers offer the bridge between strategy and delivery, ensuring that local skills providers deliver tangible benefits for employers, residents and the wider economy of York and North Yorkshire.

Partnership with the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority

The York and North Yorkshire Local Skills Improvement Plan has been developed through a close and ongoing partnership with the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority, in line with statutory guidance on joint delivery between Employer Representative Bodies and Combined Authorities.

The West and North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce, as the Employer Representative Body, has worked collaboratively with the Combined Authority to agree sector priorities and share evidence, data and insight, while jointly developing plans for how the LSIP will be implemented in practice.

Joint governance arrangements, including shared representation on the LSIP Board, have enabled regular information exchange, coordinated use of labour market intelligence and employer insight, and alignment of skills priorities with devolved funding, commissioning and wider employment and economic policy.

This partnership approach ensures that LSIP priorities are grounded in both economic strategy and live workforce demand, with clear alignment to the Local Growth Plan, Adult Skills Fund Strategic Skills Plan and the Get York and North Yorkshire Working Plan. As a result, the LSIP operates as the primary employer-led mechanism for aligning skills delivery with the Combined Authority’s growth, inclusion and carbon negative ambitions, while reducing duplication and fragmentation through a shared evidence base, agreed priorities and coordinated delivery framework.

Environmental and Carbon Negative Goals

In line with Section 1(6) of the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022, the LSIP gives full consideration to carbon negative and wider environmental objectives. This includes skills required to deliver clean energy, retrofit, climate adaptation and sustainability across all priority sectors.

The LSIP also includes reference to the UK government's Clean Energy Jobs Plan, which aims to create a new generation of good jobs in the clean energy sector. The plan forecasts that employment across clean-energy sectors will rise from around 440,000 in 2023 to 860,000 by the end of the decade. This growth is supported by £50 billion in private investment since July 2024. The plan recognized initiatives such as the York and North Yorkshire £7 million Carbon Negative Fund and York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority's ambition to become the UK's first carbon negative region by 2040.

In line with statutory requirements, the LSIP considers carbon negative and environmental goals and embeds sustainability across priority sectors.

Careers Advice and Guidance

Careers advice and guidance across York and North Yorkshire have been strengthened through the Work and Skills Interchange, improving coordination between employers, providers and careers services and ensuring that careers messaging better reflects local labour market demand.

This has supported clearer and more consistent signposting of progression routes into priority sectors, including technical, vocational and higher-level pathways, while increasing employer involvement in shaping careers information. Building on this foundation, the LSIP will continue to enhance awareness of local opportunities through strengthened place-based collaboration, up-to-date employer insight, and improved understanding of progression routes across further education, apprenticeships and employment, particularly for young people, adults in transition and under-represented groups.

Equality of Opportunity

Equality of opportunity is a core consideration throughout the development and delivery of the York and North Yorkshire LSIP and reflects the Combined Authority's wider ambitions for inclusive growth and improved labour market participation. The LSIP has been informed by analysis of participation, progression and outcomes by place and group, alongside engagement with organisations supporting disadvantaged and under-represented communities. This evidence highlights that skills challenges and barriers to opportunity vary significantly across York and North Yorkshire's local authority areas and require a place-sensitive, system-wide response.

The LSIP is closely aligned with existing inclusion-focused strategies and programmes, particularly the Get York and North Yorkshire Working Plan, which addresses economic inactivity, health-related barriers to work and access to good employment. By prioritising job-ready skills, clear progression pathways, flexible and modular provision, and employer-responsive delivery, the LSIP provides the skills system component that supports people to enter work, remain in work and progress into higher-value roles. In doing so, it complements wider employment support, health, careers and community-based initiatives rather than duplicating them.

The LSIP also supports inclusive growth by embedding equality considerations across all six overarching priorities, ensuring that skills provision aligned to growth sectors is accessible to a wider range of learners, including adults, career changers, people with health conditions, those facing digital or language barriers, and communities with historically lower participation. This approach helps ensure that the benefits of skills investment, productivity growth and the transition to carbon negative are shared across all places and populations in York and North Yorkshire.

Key Barriers to Work in York and North Yorkshire

Evidence from the Get York and North Yorkshire Working Plan and supporting labour market analysis highlights that, despite relatively high employment rates, many residents face persistent and overlapping barriers to entering, remaining in and progressing in work. A central challenge is economic inactivity linked to health, with long-term physical and mental health conditions identified as a major constraint on participation, particularly among working-age adults who would otherwise be able to contribute to the labour market. Poor health is

compounded by fragmented support across work, health and skills systems, limiting sustained engagement with employment opportunities.

Skills-related barriers are also significant. The evidence points to young people leaving education without essential skills or clear progression routes, alongside adults with low or outdated skills who struggle to access training that fits around work, care or health needs. At the same time, York and North Yorkshire experiences skills mismatch and under-utilisation, where a relatively high-qualified workforce is not always matched by local higher-skilled roles, contributing to low pay, poor progression and out-commuting for better-paid jobs.

Job quality and progression remain key barriers. Many individuals are trapped in insecure, low-paid or seasonal work, particularly in sectors with a strong rural, coastal and visitor-economy footprint. This affects earnings, job stability and long-term attachment to the labour market, and can exacerbate health and wellbeing challenges. Employers, particularly SMEs, also report barriers related to leadership capacity, workforce development and retention, which limit progression opportunities for local workers.

There are also **place-based and structural barriers**, including transport connectivity in rural and coastal areas, limited access to childcare and caring responsibilities—particularly affecting women’s participation and progression—and uneven labour market outcomes between different places and population groups. These challenges contribute to disparities in participation, progression and earnings across the region and reinforce the need for coordinated, place-sensitive solutions.

Together, this evidence underlines the importance of a joined-up approach between the LSIP and the *Get York and North Yorkshire Working Plan*: addressing skills supply alone is not sufficient without parallel action on health, job quality, progression pathways and employer capacity to create inclusive and sustainable employment.

Governance Structure

LSIP Governance: Board and Steering Arrangements

Governance of the York and North Yorkshire Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) is delivered through a multi-partner structure that brings together organisations responsible for skills, economic development and employer representation. This approach ensures the LSIP remains employer-led, evidence-based and aligned to regional priorities, while avoiding duplication with existing strategies and delivery mechanisms.

Membership spans the full skills and economic system, including the West and North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce as the Employer Representative Body (ERB), the York and North Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (YNYCA), national business organisations (CBI and FSB), and representatives from Further Education, Higher Education, independent training providers and adult learning services. Local authorities, including City of York Council and North Yorkshire Council, provide place-based insight on labour markets, inclusion and delivery priorities.

This collective representation supports shared ownership, coordinated decision-making and alignment between employer demand, provider capacity and funding frameworks.

Transition to 2026–2029 Governance

Governance arrangements are being refreshed for the 2026–2029 LSIP period in line with statutory guidance and the transition towards a joint ownership model between Employer Representative Bodies and Strategic Authorities. This transition will:

- Strengthen employer input, including sector-focused engagement
- Align more closely with YNYCA work, health and skills structures
- Reduce duplication by integrating LSIP oversight within existing regional governance

From September 2026, LSIP oversight will sit within the York and North Yorkshire Work, Health and Skills Regional Partnership, supported by the wider Work, Health and Skills Forum.

Governance Framework: Roles and Responsibilities

Employer Representative Body (ERB)

Provides overall leadership of the LSIP on behalf of employers, setting priorities, approving updates and overseeing performance.

Work, Health and Skills Regional Partnership / Business Board

Offers strategic oversight, challenge and assurance, including endorsement of significant changes and resolution of cross-system issues.

York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority (YNYCA)

Acts as joint owner and system enabler, aligning funding and commissioning with LSIP priorities and integrating skills with wider economic and net zero strategies.

Sector Skills Groups and Employer Forums

Lead on identifying and validating sector needs, co-designing provision and highlighting delivery barriers.

Providers (FE, HE and Independent Training Providers)

Deliver provision aligned to LSIP priorities, determining curriculum and delivery models within regulatory and funding frameworks.

LSIP Programme Team

Coordinates delivery, maintains the roadmap and performance monitoring, and escalates risks and issues.

Strategic Alignment and Business Board Relationship

The Work, Health and Skills Regional Partnership reports into the York and North Yorkshire Business Board, ensuring alignment between LSIP priorities and wider economic strategy. This enables:

- Integration of employer insight into regional decision-making
- Alignment with productivity, investment and growth priorities
- Independent challenge and assurance on LSIP delivery

This arrangement reinforces the LSIP's employer-led focus while embedding skills within broader economic governance.

Delivery, Monitoring and Review

Delivery is jointly overseen by the ERB and YNYCA, with performance monitored through the Work, Health and Skills Regional Partnership and reported to the Business Board. The Partnership:

- Meets quarterly to review progress against the LSIP roadmap and KPIs
- Brings together expert representatives from government, providers, employers and the voluntary sector
- May establish task and finish groups to address sector-specific priorities

The wider Work, Health and Skills Forum meets biannually to support engagement, information-sharing and co-design across the system.

Progress is assessed through annual reviews and a defined KPI framework covering participation, progression, employer engagement and system responsiveness. This ensures the LSIP remains adaptable to changing labour market conditions and policy developments.

Democratic Oversight

Formal accountability is provided through YNYCA governance structures, including Combined Authority Board oversight and scrutiny. This ensures:

- Alignment with the Local Growth Plan, Adult Skills Fund priorities and employment strategies
- Oversight of inclusion, participation and the transition to a carbon negative economy
- Transparency in delivery, funding and impact

Balanced Governance Approach

Together, these arrangements ensure that the LSIP:

- Remains employer-led and grounded in business need
- Is fully integrated within regional economic and governance systems
- Operates as the principal mechanism for delivering skills priorities

This model provides a clear balance between business leadership and democratic accountability, supporting effective and coordinated delivery across York and North Yorkshire.

Monitoring, Review and Adaptation of LSIP Delivery

Purpose

Monitoring and review arrangements ensure that delivery of the York and North Yorkshire LSIP remains aligned to employer-led priorities, demonstrates progress against the expected outcomes, impacts and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) set out in Part 2, and adapts in response to labour market change. This approach provides a clear and auditable assurance trail for the Employer Representative Body, the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority and national partners, including Skills England, in line with LSIP statutory guidance.

Approach to Monitoring and Review

Progress against LSIP priorities will be monitored through a structured and proportionate review process, led by the Employer Representative Body (ERB) in partnership with the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority. Formal annual reviews will assess performance against the KPIs associated with the six overarching priorities in Part 2 and the expected outcomes and milestones set out in the Annex B Roadmap of Activities. Where progress is off-track, these reviews will be used to agree corrective action, adjust delivery activity or recalibrate priorities.

Ongoing monitoring activity will include:

1. Reviewing employer skills needs using labour market intelligence, employer surveys, sector engagement and investment intelligence, ensuring continued alignment with the priority outcomes and KPIs in Part 2.
2. Collecting provider-level data on participation, progression and destinations to evidence delivery of actions in Annex B, and to track performance against Part 2 KPIs related to access, progression and workforce readiness.
3. Working with providers and delivery partners to implement and monitor specific actions set out in Annex B, share emerging employer intelligence, and gather feedback on delivery feasibility and system constraints.
4. Seeking structured employer feedback on the impact of LSIP-aligned changes, supporting evidence against Part 2 KPIs relating to employer satisfaction, job-readiness and skills utilisation.
5. Reviewing activity to strengthen employer engagement, including apprenticeships, T Level placements, work-based learning, upskilling and reskilling, curricula co-design and industry placements, as set out in Annex B actions linked to workforce readiness and flexible provision priorities.
6. Maintaining ongoing engagement with stakeholders to ensure LSIP delivery remains aligned with related strategies and services, including employment support, Jobcentre Plus and careers guidance, reinforcing the inclusion-related KPIs in Part 2.

7. Submitting monitoring information and updates to Skills England, and drafting and publishing an annual LSIP progress report that explicitly reports performance against Part 2 KPIs and progress in delivering Annex B actions.
8. Ensuring regular two-way updates with providers, supporting shared ownership, transparency and continuous improvement against agreed priorities.

Monitoring Framework

Monitoring of the LSIP takes place at three connected levels, so we can clearly see whether priorities are being delivered, actions are working, and outcomes are being achieved.

1. Strategic Oversight (LSIP level – “Are we on track overall?”)

This level looks at the big picture. It checks whether the LSIP remains focused on the right priorities and has the intended impact.

At this level we:

- Review progress against the outcomes, impacts and KPIs set out in Part 2
- Produce an annual LSIP progress report, clearly showing how delivery activity in Annex B is contributing to those outcomes
- Review provider accountability statements to confirm alignment with LSIP priorities
- Provide oversight through the Employer Representative Body, working jointly with the Combined Authority

This ensures there is clear strategic assurance and accountability.

2. Delivery and System Performance (“Is the system working as intended?”)

This level focuses on whether the skills system is operating effectively and delivering the changes agreed in Annex B.

At this level we:

- Ask providers to self-assess progress against LSIP priorities and agreed delivery actions
- Review changes to curriculum and progression routes, particularly those supporting progression into Levels 4–5 and above
- Use evidence of employer engagement to support priorities on workforce readiness and flexible training
- Monitor participation and progression data by sector, level and place to understand who is benefiting from LSIP-aligned provision

This helps identify delivery barriers early and supports continuous improvement.

3. Labour Market and Impact Monitoring (“Is this making a real difference?”)

This level looks at whether LSIP-aligned activity is resulting in real change in the labour market.

At this level we use:

- Labour market intelligence to track changes in demand, vacancies and skills shortages
- Learner destination and sustained employment data
- Employer feedback on improvements in recruitment, retention, productivity and skills utilisation

This evidence shows whether LSIP actions are delivering the wider outcomes described in Part 2.

A Structured Cycle

Monitoring and review will operate through a structured cycle of quarterly monitoring, annual review and a mid-cycle review at the end of Year 2, ensuring the LSIP remains responsive to labour market change.

Stage	Frequency	Focus
Quarterly and six-monthly monitoring	Quarterly / 6 monthly	Delivery progress and emerging issues
Annual review	Annually	Outcomes, impacts and success factors
Mid-cycle review	End of Year 2	Recalibration of priorities
LSIP refresh input	End of cycle	Evidence for LSIP update

Why this works

This approach ensures a clear line of sight between:

- What we are trying to achieve (Part 2 priorities and KPIs)
- What we are doing (Annex B delivery actions)
- What difference it is making (labour market and employer outcomes)

It ensures the LSIP remains a live, adaptive framework, fully aligned with statutory guidance and Skills England assurance expectations.

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