

Cumbria Local Skills Improvement Plan

Progress Report June 2024



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This progress report has been prepared in accordance with Local Skills Improvement Plans: Stage 2 Guidance (dated November 2023) and is intended to review progress against the Local Skills Improvement Plan published in August 2023. This report was produced in June 2024 but publication was delayed due to the pre-election period.

1.0 Who Is This Publication For?

While we continue to engage and inform on LSIP progress on an ongoing basis, this report is aimed at providing an update to any interested parties on the progress since publication of Cumbria's LSIP in August 2023, and current future plans. It highlights progress, impact/benefits to date, future plans and any changes since the 2023 report was published, including any new/more granular intelligence.

The report gives you an update on key developments, so that you can see the difference the LSIP is making for Cumbria. This is only a flavour and is by no means exhaustive. We hope it will also encourage you, if relevant, to stay or get involved, and be part of making that difference.

It is focussed on the priorities put forward in the 2023 LSIP, which is available at [Local Skills Improvement Plan - Cumbria Chamber of Commerce](#).

This report is aimed at all interested parties but the focus is in particular on:

- Employers, whether engaged already in the LSIP process or not, to demonstrate progress and encourage further participation.
- Providers, to update on progress, support decision making and encourage further involvement.
- Other stakeholders in the skills, training, careers and employment agenda.

If you are not already actively engaged in the LSIP and would like to be, please contact irene@cumbriachamber.co.uk and start getting involved today.

2.0 Summary Of The LSIP

Building on the 2022 LSIP Trailblazer, Cumbria's 2023 LSIP is a genuine partnership initiative. More than a document, it is a real commitment to working together on an ongoing basis to address Cumbria's key skills challenges and support growth and productivity. The report covers the whole of Cumbria, i.e. both the Cumberland and the Westmorland & Furness Council areas.

LSIPs are intended to be employer led, as ours is. But we believe it is also fundamental that the range of relevant stakeholders are actively engaged in a genuine partnership approach, bringing their issues/challenges, opportunities, knowledge, expertise and resources, so that it is genuinely a shared endeavor for Cumbria. This approach is serving us well.

Led by Cumbria Chamber of Commerce, other Employer Representative Body partners include Cumbria Tourism, CITB, ECITB, BECBC, NFU, The Farmer Network, CBI, FSB, each bringing their experience, knowledge and connections. Together they form the LSIP ERB Group.

Sitting alongside this is a Steering Group, comprised of the Cumbria Chamber LSIP Project Manager, Cumberland Council, Cumbria Careers Hub, Cumbria Economic Observatory, Cumbria LEP, ERB Group representative (Cumbria Tourism), LSIF lead (Lakes College), Westmorland & Furness Council, Work Based Learning Provider Forum (WBLPF) Chair and SAP & People Employment & Skills Group (PESSG) Co-Chair/Employer Representative.

The strategic context and underpinning rationale of the Cumbria LSIP is based on a set of sectors important to the Cumbrian economy (in terms of business population, employee numbers and GVA) and highly representative of businesses in Cumbria, encompassing a range of industries, geographies, size, demographics, and business activity. Each is critical to the economic well-being of the county,

highly dependent on the skills of its workforce and requires both sector specific skills and a range of cross-cutting skills. Between them they represent around 50% of businesses in Cumbria and of its GVA.

These sectors are: Construction; Energy; Land-Based; Manufacturing/Engineering; Social Care; Visitor Economy. Given the future Energy Transition to 2030 and beyond and Cumbria's historic profile in energy generation, energy is a potential growth sector. In light of the requirement to focus, it does not cover all of the sectors important to Cumbria, or all of the county's skills needs. However the research undertaken enables us to draw out cross-cutting themes and there is information on other sectors that can be drawn from our research over time.

Key priorities include:

- Recruitment (and retention)
- Basic and functional skills
- Employee behaviours and emotional intelligence (now relabeled as essential skills, based on the Skills Builder Framework)
- Apprenticeships
- Engaging with providers and finding the right training
- Curriculum development and fitness for purpose
- ICT, digital and data
- Leadership, management and business
- Low carbon, net zero and energy transition
- Energy - a growth sector
- Future skills/what the future looks like

With as underpinning actions:

- Trainers and educators
- Work based learning provider forum
- Holistic model – bringing the education and skills agenda together

Our LSIP focus over the 3 year period from 2023 and key changes we are looking to achieve are:

- Supporting the drive to resolve recruitment issues and workforce growth to achieve a workforce large enough for our current and growing needs.
- Supporting the drive to improve productivity and economic growth, in an inclusive way to deliver productivity and economic growth.
- Enabling businesses to take advantage of opportunities, such as those emerging in clean energy and the move to low carbon and address the challenges facing them (both general and sector specific) ensuring they have the skilled staff available to support this.
- Addressing immediate skills challenges, not least in land based, the visitor economy and care.
- Providing the basis on which we can build further for the future, enabling providers to invest in and develop to serve emerging needs (with sufficient lead time) and developing the pipeline of interest and engagement in our future workforce in these opportunities.

3.0 Strategic And Economic Context Update

On the 1st April 2024 **Cumbria LEP functions** transitioned to the two new Local Authorities, in accordance with the Government decision to integrate LEP functions into local democratic institutions. From April Government is providing funding to local authorities to enable them to deliver the core functions previously delivered by LEPs, namely business representation, strategic economic planning, and the delivery of government programmes where directed. Both developments impact on

and present opportunities for skills strategy and the skills ecosystem in the county, e.g. through what arrangements should replace existing LEP groups.

In Cumbria, Cumberland Council are acting as the lead authority, with a Joint Executive Committee providing the basis of joint working and collaboration on strategic economic growth across the Cumbria geography. The Cumbria LEP team have transferred to Cumberland Council and continue to deliver and manage a wide range of Government funded programmes and functions, including Skills Bootcamps, Careers and Enterprise activity as well as DBT funded growth hub activity.

A new Cumbria Economic Growth Board will be established, with a wide range of business types, sizes, and locations relating to local economic strengths and priorities for Cumbria. During a 6 month transition phase the CLEP will continue to operate its partnership bodies including the CLEP Board, Sector Panels, Strategy Groups and the Futures Forum until September 2024 when the new Cumbria Economic Growth Board will be fully established. Furthermore, Government expects areas to publish a new or updated economic strategy within six months, to support local decision making, furthering the work previously undertaken by LEPs. Both Councils are committed to continuing the work of the LEP to ensure that the county has a vibrant skills system that is responsive to both current and future economic needs and offers excellent learning environments and opportunities, and both were already active as part of the LSIP Steering Group. It is anticipated that the new Economic Growth Board will play an active role in skills, employment and education, in particular by helping to align skills provision with the needs of employers, young people, the current workforce and those not currently in employment.

As a result of the recent changes, Cumbria is now at Level 1 on the Government's **Devolution Framework**. Level 1 on the Framework is where local authorities agree to work together across a Functional Economic Area or whole county through a joint committee. The LEP integration will provide the foundations for further dialogue on devolution and how the two Councils work with partners to support sustainable and inclusive growth. Building on this the Councils have the option to progress discussions with Government on how to unlock new powers, opportunities and funding for the benefit of residents, businesses and visitors. This would open up positive opportunities in relation to skills.

Team Barrow has been established as a trilateral initiative between central government, Westmorland & Furness Council and BAE Systems, supported by a range of stakeholders. The aim is to enable Barrow to become a new "powerhouse for the north." The partnership focuses on expanding BAE Systems' defence capability, supporting energy security and revitalising Barrow and Furness as a place where people choose to live, work and thrive. It aims also to ensure local people benefit from the opportunities in the area and ensuring a diverse and vibrant economy.

The **economic context** is little changed from when we wrote the LSIP in 2023. Migration figures show that there was some increase in people coming into the county in 2021 and 2022. As a result the working age population grew slightly (by +1,567), but this is likely to have been a one-off post pandemic response and the population remains below the 2017 level. We expect a continued overall trend of decline in labour supply.

The latest GVA figures show that the economy shrank more than nationally during the pandemic and has been recovering more slowly since and as a result our GVA in 2022 was still lower than in 2017 (using constant prices). Cumbria declined over 5 years by -1.3% compared to UK growth of 4.1%. Over 10 years Cumbria grew by 5.4% which is only a third of the UK growth of 17.6%. It is probable that our labour supply issues have been a contributing factor in our slow recovery since the pandemic.

4.0 Priorities And Actions (Roadmap)

The following is not an exhaustive list and does not include all actions and activities detailed in the Cumbria LSIP Report ([Local Skills Improvement Plan - Cumbria Chamber of Commerce](#)).

*Monitoring is a mix of annual survey and at least quarterly feedback for all actions.

Priority	Action / Activity	Partners involved (detail the role and responsibilities of the ERB and relevant partners)	Timescales (start and likely end dates - original and any revisions)	Method of implementation and outcomes expected	Monitoring arrangements - (how is progress monitored and at what intervals)*	Progress Status
Recruitment						
Encourage more young people into apprenticeships, other appropriate pathways, gaps and opportunities	Continue to do more to encourage employers to work with the Careers hub and other stakeholders (Inspira, Centre for Leadership Performance, etc) on careers and employability skills, coordinated through the Careers Hub	ERBs - promote and encourage employers + direct activity Careers Hub – coordination and delivery Other stakeholders - delivery and promotion	In place and ongoing	Employer engagement by ERBs through own channels (newsletters, meetings, other communications, etc) plus direct activity in schools & colleges with learners on employability; Careers Hub and other stakeholder activities variously funded; E.g. Cumbria Careers Day, Tourism Talent Hub, promotion of Go Construct online resource & STEM Ambassadors, LANSS, Furness College T Level event for parents, improved IAG through LSIF, series of T level promotion by providers/Chamber (starting with Furness College), CITB Travel to Train/Into Work/other grants Outcome is more young people taking up apprenticeships/other appropriate pathways and opportunities	ERB communications Careers Hub feedback Employer feedback Provider feedback Referrals	Ongoing and on track
Encourage use of wider employment pools	Encourage and support more employers to recruit more people with disabilities/long term health conditions; initiatives such as Inclusion@Work; sign up to Armed Forces Covenant (AFC)/employing service leavers/using Careers Transition Partnership recruitment;	Chamber (as a Disability Confident Leader & AFC Silver) & other Disability Confident and AFC organisations & JCP - encourage and support, and promote sign ups and recruitment	In place and ongoing	E.g. Employer engagement by Chamber & others through own channels as above; employer events/prison visits organised by Chamber/Cumbria Tourism and Armed Forces Covenant events; Cumbria Tourism working with New Futures & Lancashire & Cumbria prisons; CITB Creating Careers in Cumbria work placement opportunities for unemployed;	ERB communications & events Disability Confident sign ups AFC sign ups Employer feedback Initiatives implemented	Ongoing and on track Also now working on activities to support more people to move from initiatives

	employing prisoners on ROTL/ex-offenders; engagement with JCP			Cumbria Careers Hub working with Local Councils to develop inclusive employment opportunities and increase the number of supported internships available to students with SEN; sector development initiatives by Cumberland Council Outcome is more people in the workforce		to mainstream employment
	Continuing and additional Bootcamp activity and promote and encourage take-up	All stakeholders – promote LSIP - feed in to support topics & design Providers - continue to expand/extend	In place and ongoing	Promotion and engagement as above; research by LSIP; development & delivery by providers; ECITB Work Ready pilot; Furness College welding Bootcamp pilot with BAE commenced February; Wave 5 local proposals submitted and awaiting decisions Outcome is appropriate Bootcamps, take up and more people in workforce/roles	Additional Bootcamp activity ERB communications Employer feedback	Ongoing and on track
Other	Build pool of job opportunities (sitting under Tourism Talent Hub & UCAS), Trainee Manager or similar, with businesses offering Degree Apprenticeship	Cumbria Tourism and UoC – build & deliver	Launched August	Tourism Talent Hub including job matching services Outcome is more people in roles	Talent Hub launched Employer feedback CT/provider feedback	Ongoing and on track
	Support initiatives such as the Employment Working Group and employer led group in Furness	All relevant stakeholders to participate/support	In place and ongoing	Working groups involving businesses & other stakeholders Outcome is more people in workforce/roles	Employer/group feedback	Ongoing and on track
	Continue break down barriers and offer visitor economy training (2 day training courses with guaranteed interviews)	Inspira, Building Better Opportunities and Barrow Adult Learning to implement working with Cumbria Tourism	In place and ongoing	2 day training courses with guaranteed interviews Outcome is more people in roles	Employer feedback Feedback from CT & others	Ongoing and on track
Specific need for more chefs at every level	Train more chefs countywide and introduce chef apprenticeship at Carlisle College at L3	Carlisle College & other providers curriculum leads to implement	Underway, LSIF to complete by March 25	E.g. Kendal College/CT creating shared chef academy; Lakes College increasing employer engagement to increase Chef programme numbers; Carlisle College chef academy & onsite restaurant Outcome is more chefs	Employer feedback Initiatives/curriculum implemented	Ongoing and on track
Specific need for front of house/customer service staff in the visitor economy	Consider specific initiatives though SPF & Bootcamps, see also Curriculum Development & Apprenticeships	Cumbria Tourism & provider curriculum leads	Underway, LSIF to complete by March 25	E.g. Carlisle College introduced Travel & Tourism L2 & building new restaurant through LSIF; virtual restaurant (LSIF) Outcome is more people in roles	Employer feedback Initiatives/curriculum implemented	Ongoing and on track

Severe shortage of care staff	Consider specific initiatives though SPF & Bootcamps, see also Curriculum Development & Apprenticeships	Provider curriculum leads to develop & implement	Ongoing	See Apprenticeships & Curriculum below; also e.g. Cumberland Council specific initiatives to support care recruitment & see Basic & Functional Skills below Outcome is more people in roles	Employer feedback Initiatives implemented	Ongoing and on track
Employers flag particular requirements for welders, engineering, project managers, electrical and skilled fitters	Train more people in these roles countywide through existing provision & further work to check levels and specialisms in welding	Provider curriculum leads to check, develop & implement	Ongoing	See Apprenticeships & Curriculum below and Recruitment above; also e.g. Bootcamps, Think research and subsequent actions. Outcome is more people in roles	Employer/provider feedback Initiatives implemented Numbers trained/training	Ongoing and on track
Recruitment issue for land based operatives	Develop Bootcamp style intensive reskilling/upskilling programmes for land based operatives L2-3	Providers with LANSS to develop & promote	By March 25 & ongoing	Training to be developed and implemented; promotion of careers opportunities through LANSS Outcome is more people in roles	Employer feedback Initiatives implemented	On track
Basic And Functional Skills						
Issues with basic and functional skills which affect recruitment, training and progression	Ensure availability of appropriate L1/L2 provision	Providers to ensure provision	Completed	E.g. Furness College now E3-L2 + GCSEs & Ascentis ESOL 1-3 Outcome is improved skills	Provision in place Employer feedback	Completed
	Build work situations and basic/functional skills into curriculum more effectively	ERBs to engage employers to work with Careers Hub, schools and colleges	In place and ongoing	E.g. see Careers Hub activity in Section 5 Outcome is improved skills	Employer feedback Initiatives implemented	Ongoing and on track
	Inform and support implementation of Multiply & AEB, consider Multiply type provision for literacy and ICT, looking at funding options such as SPF and Bootcamps	LSIP to inform and support & ERBs engage employers Providers to consider opportunities & funding	In place and ongoing	E.g. Carlisle College have developed comprehensive ESOL offer for adults and U19 focussing on skills needed to secure employment in key sectors such as hospitality and care Outcome is improved skills	Employer feedback Initiatives implemented	Ongoing and on track
Employee Behaviours And Emotional Intelligence (Employability Skills) – now relabelled as Essential Skills						
Significant issues across the range of skills, exacerbated by Covid, with particular challenges in young people, including resilience. Actions are in addition to & building on Careers Hub/employer engagement activities highlighted above	Work together to help build these skills into the curriculum more effectively	Employers with Careers Hub, schools and colleges to implement initiatives	In place and ongoing	E.g. LSIF partners working on essential skills framework with Careers Hub/NCS, Gen2 employability response through social values initiative, Careers Hub activity (see Section 5.0 below), specific activity to support unemployed through Cumberland Council Outcome is improved skills	Employer feedback Provider feedback Initiatives implemented	Ongoing and on track

Apprenticeships

Need for more skilled staff and retention of young people in the county across the range of topics and sectors Opportunities for increased use of apprenticeships with easier access to information for employers (and potential apprentices), easier recruitment and more use of levy sharing	Careers Hub activities (see Recruitment above)	See Recruitment	See Recruitment	See Recruitment	See Recruitment	See Recruitment
	Further develop and promote Apprenticeship Hub (and apprenticeship information) ideally to include vacancy and candidate sharing & work with larger employers on candidate sharing	LSIF consortium to further develop Hub & promote & engage employers ERBs to promote & engage employers	In place and ongoing	E.g. Apprenticeship Hub enhancement, BAE events/activity to engage unsuccessful candidate with other employers Outcome is more people in apprenticeships	Employer feedback Provider feedback Hub enhancement Initiatives implemented	Ongoing and on track
	Roll out of CITB's New Entrant Support Team	CITB to implement	Completed	CITB New Entrant Support Team and various grants including Travel to Train, apprenticeship completion, etc Outcome is more people in apprenticeships & completing	Team in place	Completed
	Use of Careers Hub LMI to promote technical & vocational qualifications to young people and parents	Careers Hub to implement	In place and ongoing	LMI use START Platform launched Outcome is more people in apprenticeships/other vocational	LMI START Platform use increased	Ongoing and on track
Range of recruitment and skills challenges in the visitor economy including chefs, housekeeping, front of house/customer service and management/profitability	Continue to develop apprenticeship provision in hospitality profitability and middle/senior management provision at various levels	Cumbria Tourism and provider curriculum leads to develop and implement	Ongoing, LSIF completion by March 25	E.g. Bespoke and modular hospitality L&M provision developed through LSIF plus virtual restaurant countywide, development of new L3-5 curriculum Outcome is more people in apprenticeships & roles	Curriculum implemented Facilities in place Employer feedback	Ongoing and on track
	Introduce chef apprenticeship at L3 (if demand confirmed)	Carlisle College to develop and implement	Ongoing, LSIF completion by March 25	Carlisle College with CT/employers - LSIF VE project including onsite restaurant, Chefs' Academy and expansion of tourism programmes Outcome is more people in apprenticeships & roles	Curriculum implemented Facilities in place Employer feedback	Ongoing and on track
	Conclude review and agree Welcome Host customer service now suitable or develop bespoke provision	Cumbria Tourism and providers	Underway	Review & research by CT working with businesses - cost prohibitive and businesses looking for local provision so CT looking at how to take forward including potentially obtaining licence (which had previously) and establishing local provision Outcome is local provision established and take-up of provision	Review & research completed Curriculum implemented	Ongoing and on track

	Promote new Tourism Degree Apprenticeship through Tourism Talent Hub and UCAS	Cumbria Tourism and UoC	In place and ongoing	Promote new Tourism Degree Apprenticeship through Talent Hub Outcome is take-up of provision	Degree Apprenticeship promoted	Ongoing and on track
Remain significant gaps in land based provision	See Curriculum development below	See Curriculum Development	See Curriculum Development	See Curriculum Development	See Curriculum Development	See Curriculum Development
Significant staffing & skills issues in care and particular issues with time off-the-job given staffing shortages	Continue to develop appropriate provision (started under SDF), including L2 apprenticeship	See Curriculum Development	See Curriculum Development	See Curriculum Development	See Curriculum Development	See Curriculum Development
	Develop case studies of good practice in care on use of apprenticeships to support recruitment and pathways	Chamber and providers	June 24 completion + ongoing	E.g. LSIF engagement manager working with care provider to produce 1 by June Outcome is more people in training/roles	Case studies	Ongoing and on track
Engaging With Providers And Finding The Right Training						
Although the situation has improved significantly, employers continue to struggle with engaging with providers and finding the right training. Is a need to facilitate easier access to information for employers and enhance engagement between employers and providers & encourage take-up	Continue to develop and enhance Skills & Apprenticeship Hubs including widening to further providers & linking with CITB, Skills for Care & Tourism Talent Hub; look to develop Apprenticeship Hub to include vacancy & candidate sharing; promote & encourage engagement	SDF/LSIF consortium led by Lakes College ERBs to promote and encourage engagement	March 25 LSIF completion LANSS in place	E.g. Further development of Skills & Apprenticeship Hubs by LSIF; introduction of LANSS; communications and engagement events Outcome is more people in training	LANSS in place Skills/Apprenticeship Hub enhancement Employer feedback ERB communications	Ongoing and on track
	Continue implementation of LANSS & link with Skills Hub	LANSS partners & team	September 24	LANSS team in place & website in production Outcome is more people in training	LANSS in place & operating	Ongoing and on track
	Engage more care providers with Skills for Care and complete dataset	Chamber to engage	Completed	Employers contacted & completing Outcome is more employers completing & accessing funding	Employers completed	Completed
	Targeting and ongoing campaigns aimed at employers on opportunities & how to access	ERBs working with providers and other stakeholders	In place and ongoing	ERB communications through their various channels (newsletters, events, email, social media, etc) Outcome is more employers engaging	ERB communications	Ongoing and on track
	Continue LSIP Insight quarterly e-newsletter and further widen distribution	Chamber to produce & share	In place and ongoing	LSIP Insight e-newsletter Outcome is more employer awareness	Newsletter & circulation	Ongoing and on track
	Work with CITB Employer Network pilot on empowering construction employers to determine local needs	CITB to implement	Launch May 24 and ongoing	Employer networks roll out (joint employer forum by Chamber & CITB 1.5.24 to formally launch) Outcome is more awareness & training	Employer Network launched and operating	Ongoing and on track

Curriculum Development And Fitness For Purpose						
In construction, remain issues with inclusion of required content not relevant to significant numbers of employers (e.g. staircases in joinery)	Continue to review construction provision and build on what has already been achieved through SDF, including consideration of modular/flexible options	CITB, Housebuilders Federation and providers to continue to review construction provision and develop	In place and ongoing	E.g. CITB Employer Networks and use of CSN data , Carlisle College opened Construction Skills Academy May 2024 (enabling greater numbers in bricklaying, plus T levels and higher level programmes) Outcome is more appropriate training	Employer feedback Curriculum changes implemented	Ongoing and on track
In manufacturing there is a need for modular & flexible offers, including provision enabling transfer between mechanical and electronic engineering. There is also some demand for six sigma/lean/productivity, which would support productivity improvement	Continuing development and implementation of modular offers and courses which mix/enable transfer between mechanical and electronic engineering, and will consider other translation/mixed courses as needed. Check current provision of Six Sigma, Lean & productivity and look at opportunities for provision if/where there are gaps	Employers and providers to identify how/which modules could be used for short & modular provision and what needs to be developed & providers to develop	Ongoing LSIF completion by March 25	E.g. Advanced Manufacturing Pathway development, other LSIF supported curriculum development, LSIF curriculum mapping with further development/ deduplication/cooperation planned, Furness College have joined Lancs & Cumbria Institute of Technology, Carlisle College to deliver apprenticeship in metal fabrication following employer consultation; delivery of Maintenance & Operations Engineering Technician L3 Outcome is more appropriate training	Employer feedback Curriculum implemented	Ongoing and on track
Range of gaps in care provision from entry level to management	Building on what achieved through SDF, consider further L2 & L3 plus CPD beyond L5, and expand Lakes College's Routeway to Social Care; consider opportunities for Bootcamp approach including manual handling, first aid etc and T level in social care	Providers to design and implement, with engagement with Skills for Care and employers	In place and ongoing	E.g. following employer engagement Furness College HNC in Healthcare Practice this academic year, only moderate take-up so re-engaging with employers Outcome is more appropriate training	Employer feedback Curriculum implemented	Ongoing and on track
In the visitor economy need for Hospitality Management & Profitability (various levels), a wider range of chefs skills (e.g. gastropub, street food) and a need for front of house/customer service and housekeeping provision	See Apprenticeships above; widen range of chef skills provision; consider e.g. blended learning, moving trainers to students, using employer facilities, larger employers sharing access to their programmes; introduce housekeeping 2 day course with guaranteed interview; increase modularity; determine whether need new FOH/customer service or Welcome Host now appropriate; training on commercial/events and technical people in venues	Cumbria Tourism to work with providers and employers to design Providers to implement agreed	In place and ongoing	E.g. See Apprenticeships above, LSIF modular and bespoke development, virtual restaurant Outcome is more appropriate training	Employer feedback Curriculum implemented Facilities in place	Ongoing and on track

In land based need for generic business & management skills and to tackle range of climate change issues, improve productivity & efficiency in farming, support delivery of England Tree Action Plan, address Natural Capital agenda, Lawton Review and nature recovery, address range of sub-sectoral skills gaps and enhance experience and opportunities for SEND EHCP students	LSIP identifies a detailed list of provision needed to address these issues – both existing which could be implemented and needing development - including includes qualifications and modular/short courses	LANSS and providers (curriculum leads) to work with employers to confirm and develop/implement	Ongoing & LSIF completion by March 25	E.g. Introduction of LANSS, LANSS to further review progress and work with providers to implement, Kendal & NR Training curriculum and resource development and engagement through LSIF, LSIF to establish Environmental Land Management Centre providing green skills training, Myerscough delivery with Furness College & UCC plus other engagement & delivery Outcome is more appropriate training	Employer feedback Curriculum development Facilities in place	Ongoing and on track
Marketing and digital marketing	Stakeholders to increase awareness of available provision at all levels e.g. through NESMA, Bootcamps, short courses. Providers/LSIP to review for any gaps/emerging gaps	ERBs to support awareness Providers/LSIP to review gaps	In place and ongoing	E.g. modular digital marketing options being introduced through LSIF, ERB communications Outcome is more appropriate training & take-up	Employer feedback ERB communications Curriculum development	Ongoing and on track
IT/Digital/Data						
General gaps in business IT skills e.g. Sage, Excel, Word, online marketing and social media, graphic design	Stakeholders to increase awareness of available provision; see also digital marketing above	ERBs and providers to promote	Ongoing plus LSIF complete by March 25 and Digital Accelerator Hub opened July 2023	E.g. Digital Accelerator Hub; LSIF digital innovation and “maker” space; LSIF upgrading facilities; LSIF further development of modular digital programmes including marketing & management; LSIF L3-5 training & pathways in coding, data & analysis, cyber security & networking; LSIF developing content to explore & demo use of digital twins using mixed media in manufacturing; enhanced IAG; further development of advanced manufacturing pathway to include foundation degree at L4/5; CITB/Chamber promoting and supporting access to digitalisation for construction employers; Carlisle College	Employer feedback Curriculum implemented Facilities implemented ERB/provider communications	Ongoing and on track
	Consider how care sector can best be supported around use of AI, VR & other digital opportunities	Providers to review and implement				
	Digital Accelerator Hub including L4/5 skills in AI, robotics, coding, etc	Lakes College and Cumberland Council using Town Deal Funding to implement Digital Accelerator Hub				

				developing use of VR technologies to deliver skills in care and construction; Furness College care facilities Outcome is more appropriate training and take-up		
Leadership, Management And Business						
Need for provision and take up of appropriate L&M & business training including flexibility and ability to manage/lead change	Further review what is available and address gaps, including working together to ensure courses at all levels and across sectors include sufficient focus on flexibility and ability to manage/lead change; work with business support delivery on support through SPF; promote Lancaster/UoC Senior Leadership Apprenticeship and cohort options	Employers, ERBs and providers to review and providers to develop/implement provision based on this ERBs to support engagement and promotion of Senior Leadership Apprenticeship	In place and ongoing	E.g. LSIF bespoke & modular provision, Gen2 L&M Outcome is more appropriate training and take-up	Employer feedback Initiatives implemented Curriculum implemented ERB communications	Ongoing and on track
	Work with business support delivery including on development of SPF delivery including considering opportunities for peer /networking groups to support development	Chamber, LEP etc to design and implement	In place and ongoing	E.g. W&F and Cumberland SPF through Chamber and LEP etc Outcome is more appropriate delivery and take-up	Employer feedback Initiatives implemented	Ongoing and on track
Hospitality management/profitability	See Curriculum above including complete development of visitor economy middle/senior management programme covering hospitality profitability at various levels	See curriculum above	See curriculum above.	See Curriculum above	See curriculum above	See curriculum above
Land based.	CPD through networking/groups e.g. Farmer Network; look to adopt, where feasible, appropriate programmes for land based already developed and accredited elsewhere e.g. LANTRA L5 Leadership & Management & consider in all provision the need for specific leadership, management & business skills relevant to land based not least in changing and challenging environment	Farmer Network and providers to design and deliver, LANSS to review and address further with providers and employers	In place and ongoing	E.g. Farmer Network SPF current and planned workshops, see curriculum development, LANSS to review and address further with providers and employers Outcome is more appropriate training and take-up	Employer feedback Initiatives implemented Curriculum implemented	Ongoing and on track

Care	Look at appropriate L&M including opportunities for CPD beyond L5 and develop appropriate options e.g. specific cohorts of Lancaster/UoC Senior Leaders Apprenticeship	Providers, employers & Skills for Care to review, develop and implement	Ongoing, completion by March 25	E.g. additional CPD opportunities above L5, specific cohorts of Senior Leaders Apprenticeship Outcome is more appropriate training and take-up	Employer feedback Initiatives implemented Curriculum implemented	Ongoing and on track
Cost Of Training						
Issue for some with affordability/perceived affordability of training	Explore and implement ways to reduce costs to employers and work with employers/improve promotion to enhance understanding of VFM	Providers & ERBs to explore and implement	In place and ongoing	E.g. Range of CITB grants including Short Course, Short & Long Period Qualification and Skills & Training Fund Outcome is more take-up	Employer feedback Initiatives/changes implemented Promotional activities	Ongoing and on track
	Further and ongoing promotion of apprenticeship levy sharing	Providers & ERBs to promote/encourage	In place and ongoing	E.g. Apprenticeship Hub, Carlisle College delivering masterclasses and supporting larger employers in levy sharing Outcome is more levy sharing	Employer feedback Initiatives/changes implemented	Ongoing and on track
	BAE have opened up their external training portal to supply chain; work with them to encourage more local businesses and explore/encourage scope for similar by other employers	ERBs to promote and encourage	In place and ongoing	E.g. BAE training opened up, other employers opening opportunities to join in-house sessions Outcome is more take-up	Employer feedback Initiatives/changes implemented	Ongoing and on track
	Encourage and facilitate Skills for Care dataset completions to enable access to funding	Chamber to contact and encourage	Completed	Contacting businesses to encourage to sign up to Skills for Care Dataset to enable funding for training and backfill Outcome is more sign-ups and take-up	Businesses signed up	Completed
Low Carbon, Net Zero And Energy Transition						
Issues in skills and understanding in businesses around opportunities, issues and solutions.	Encourage and facilitate businesses to engage with relevant business support initiatives (such as Eco-I, CAFS and Future Fixers) to help them start developing skills and understanding.	ERBs to encourage and facilitate	In place and ongoing	E.g. CAFS SPF in W&F and planned activity in Cumberland SPF Y3; LSIF - ELM, Regional Hub & Accredited Centre for training & certification of electric vehicle charging point installers/maintainers; low carbon & green energy training hubs & centres across Cumbria delivering accredited training and apprenticeships L3-5; Carlisle college EV training rig now in place and being used for upskilling; Carlisle College working in partnership with Worcestershire Bosch to install domestic green energy technology in college to upskill existing students and local workforce, installing air source heat pump as part of LSIF green energy project	Employer feedback Provider feedback Initiatives implemented	Ongoing and on track

				Outcome is more appropriate training and take-up		
Retrofit skills in construction especially heating engineers and plumbers	Increase take-up of available training e.g. through Lakes College Retrofit Academy; consider further development requirements/opportunities	CITB, CAFS and providers to continue to review and develop provision	In place and ongoing	E.g. CITB Net Zero & Construction – Perspective & Pathways report; CITB Supply Chain Sustainability School; CITB grants for net zero training & qualifications including retrofit coordinator, assessor, insulation installation etc; Carlisle College has worked with WBLPF to develop partnership with Redcar & Cleveland College to share best practice around green skills; Lakes College Retrofit Academy Outcome is more appropriate training and take-up	Employer feedback Curriculum implemented Initiatives implemented	Ongoing and on track
Significant range of skills gaps across whole land based sector (highlighted elsewhere and detailed in Land based Report)	Work together to fill gaps by adopting training programmes already developed/accredited elsewhere and, where no current provision, develop bespoke training programmes	Providers and LANSS to review and address gaps, with delivery by providers and others as applicable	Start June 24, complete by March 25	See Curriculum and Apprenticeships above	Employer feedback Curriculum implemented	Ongoing and on track
Energy – A Growth Sector						
Need to ensure availability of staff and skills required for construction and installation phase of new developments	For construction phases, focus on occupations such as civil engineers (L6) and technicians (L3), construction site supervisors (L4) and managers (L6), quantity surveyors (L6), engineering constructions riggers and erectors (L3), electrical trades and installation (L3) and scaffolders (L2)	Providers to deliver, in consultation with employers/ERBs	In place and ongoing	E.g. LSIP to develop in develop an infrastructure whereby information on employer needs can be fed into providers as it emerges through a clean energy group including employers and providers, with supporting research; Think research (see Section 6 below); see also Apprenticeships and Curriculum above Outcome is more appropriate training, take-up and people in roles	Employer feedback Curriculum implemented Initiatives implemented Think research and analysis completed	Ongoing and on track
Need to ensure availability of staff and skills required for operational phase of new developments	Focus on ensuring core energy skills required by energy employers, which can be adapted to each clean energy technology as required (usually via shot course provision); priority occupations re electrical engineering (L2), pipe & plate welders (L3), engineering fitters (L30, engineering	Providers to deliver, in consultation with employers/ERBs	In place and ongoing		Ongoing and on track	

	design & draughtspersons (L3), project controls technician (L3/professional (L6); will be a need to prepare for modular courses to support upskilling/transfer when requirements are clear					
Scope to set out more ambitious vision for technical education/training with nationwide appeal. Cumbria appears well served within key engineering occupations likely to be central to future clean energy employer needs	Explore and develop activities e.g. more engaged model of employer engagement – co-designing programmes, sharing innovations, participating in applied research, spinouts, etc.; collective response to clean energy from providers potentially as Cumbria Clean Energy Academy pulling together curriculum and qualifications into branded offer	Relevant ERBs, provider and other stakeholders to discuss and progress	Start October 24 and complete by March 25	E.g. Cumbria Clean Energy Academy explored and potentially established Outcome is more appropriate training and wider opportunities for providers	Cumbria Clean Energy Academy progressed/established Other initiatives implemented	To start
Future Skills And What The Future Looks Like						
Need to develop a range of future skills but employers (and providers) struggle with understanding what the future could look like and therefore future skills	Arrange initial event(s) and communications to highlight and start exploring future developments/opportunities, supported by those employers with a clearer view of the future and covering the range of sectors	ERBs and providers to implement	Ongoing for completion by December 2024	E.g. Cumbria Tourism event November 2023, various Chamber led events to be held during 2023; LSIF activity by providers, engaging with employers and implementing digital innovation and “maker” space including experiential learning, upgrading facilities, developing and implementing demo content including demo of use of digital twins using mixed media in manufacturing; Gen2 HTQ modules in robotics Outcome is improved awareness and understanding and engagement in development	Events held Employer feedback Initiatives implemented	Ongoing and on track
	Improve engagement between Catapults and businesses and link more businesses with universities, KTPs, etc	ERBs to drive	To start by October 24	E.g. communications and events to engage more businesses with these Outcome is more engagement and take-up	Events and communications Employer feedback University etc feedback	To start
	Stakeholders to work with InnovateUK to establish innovation centres and potentially a Catapult	Relevant stakeholders to engage	To start by October 24	E.g. discussions between stakeholders and InnovateUK Outcome is facilities established and used	Facilities established	To start
Underpinning Actions – Trainers And Educators						

Shortage of trainers and educators with current skills highlighted, by employers & providers, impacting on delivery across a range of topics. Need to encourage and enable more skilled & experienced people in these roles	E.g. engage employers in releasing part-time or seconding staff; encouraging recent (particularly early) retirees to become trainers; exploring/exploiting sharing between providers; implementing flexible options including part time and targeted input; opportunities such as service leavers; promoting opportunities to become a trainer; greater focus on train the trainer; explore opportunities for shared provision, including enhanced use of digital delivery to address volume issues and specialised requirements	Providers to implement supported by other stakeholders as appropriate	In place and ongoing	E.g. providers engaging with AFC, staff CPD for new curriculum (LSIF – 30 staff trained in low carbon and/or retrofit in preparation for opening of green energy skills centres/hubs), LSIF developing cooperative working and de-duplication etc, CITB developing clear pathway for construction workers to transition into teacher/assessor and Industry Impact Fund which enables employers to access up to £500k to implement solutions including trainers & assessors, engaging with employers around staff release, Advanced Manufacturing Pathway development, etc Outcome is more trainers	Feedback from providers on staffing	Ongoing and on track
Underpinning Actions – Work Based Learner Provider Forum						
Strong network of providers to support employers, implement LSIP actions more effectively and supports collaborative working	Continue to enhance and develop WBLPF as effective vehicle for collaborative working	WBLPF Executive and members to enhance	In place and ongoing	E.g. Myerscough have joined Forum Outcome is enhanced WBLPF	WBLPF activities Resource appointed Number of members	Ongoing and on track
	Support LSIP implementation e.g. “focus on” sessions, coordinated/collaborative provision, enhancing employer promotion/engagement	WBLPF Executive and members to enhance	In place and ongoing	E.g. “focus ons” held/planned Outcome is enhanced engagement and activity	WBLPF activities	Ongoing and on track
Underpinning Actions – Holistic Model – Bringing The Education And Skills Agenda Together						
Opportunity to bring wider skills and education agenda together more effectively	Develop a holistic and place-based Education & Skills Model for Cumbria building on initial discussions between stakeholders	Relevant stakeholders to discuss and progress	To start by October 2024	Develop and implement model Outcome is more effective overall ecosystem	Initial proposal Development and implementation of model	To start

5.0 What Has Been Achieved So Far?

The following is not an exhaustive list of activities undertaken to date and underway, rather a selection of examples, which seeks to cover the range of issues and sectors and highlight the variety of activities being undertaken. Underpinning this is an ongoing programme of engagement and research between employers, providers and other stakeholders including employer/provider groups, surveys, 1-2-1 discussions, events, etc. Fundamental to delivering Cumbria's LSIP is strong engagement and partnership working between the range of stakeholders – something we are proud of as Cumbria and which continues to build further.

Cumbria Careers Hub set up the **Employability Skills Programme** Working Group to address the issue of employee behaviours and emotional intelligence. It has agreed that the terminology used to describe employability skills, employee behaviours and emotional intelligence are most probably confusing to young people. "Employability skills" are currently delivered to young people in Primary, Secondary and Post 16 education through various programmes including external provision, yet the problem is worsening. Actions agreed to date are to:

- Agree a common language to describe employability skills that would be consistent throughout education, inclusive and relevant to the age group it was being delivered to.
- Utilise the existing [Skills Builder Framework](#) and replace previous descriptors with "Essential Skills".
- Review programmes of delivery in schools and change the language to make use of the Skills Builder Language (providers i.e. Inspira, CfLP, FESP, CYA).
- Work with Social Value Employers who deliver employability programmes in schools to encourage them to utilise the Skills Builder Framework. Morgan Sindall and Sellafield have already adopted the framework.
- Work with employers who support careers education in schools to utilise the Skills Builder Language and when recruiting people into their organisation especially young people leaving education.
- Provide support to Careers Leaders in schools and colleges to help them ensure their careers education programme utilises the Skills Builder framework and essential skills are embedded in the curriculum.
- Work with partners such as DWP to encourage use of the same language with their customers.
- Meet with employers to focus on understanding how employers can adopt the Skills Builder Framework when engaging in careers activity and during their recruitment process.

This project is about systemic change – it will involve changing how employers, partners, providers and educationalists explain essential skills in their everyday language and delivery. It is a long-term project with incremental changes over the next few years.

The Inaugural **Cumbria Careers Day** was held in March 2024, engaging over 100 employers, providers and other stakeholders in promoting the range of careers opportunities, through a mix of on and offline activities such as video content and work place visits. Cumbria Careers Day will be an annual event and will take place on 5th March 2025.

In this phase of the LSIP 46 employers have been referred to the Careers Hub through survey activity alone.

Following a recommendation in the Trailblazer report a range of Cumbrian partners working together have established a **Land & Nature Skills Service for Cumbria** (LANSS). This is hosted by the University of Cumbria, with the Chamber acting as accountable body and employer. The LANSS team has been appointed and is now operational, branding agreed and website production is underway. The service will launch formally in September 2024 The LANSS will promote, engage and facilitate access to training and careers in the land and nature sectors and identify and highlight training needs and gaps, through provision of online information and resources and engaging directly with employers, learners,

potential learners and providers. By bringing everything together in one place and providing hands-on support it will make it easier to find the right training and encourage more entrants to the sector. On an ongoing basis the service will also work to identify and address gaps and issues in provision.

Alongside this **Myerscough College**, based in Lancashire, has been increasing and continues to increase its footprint and activity within the county, helping to address gaps left by the loss of Newton Rigg and new opportunities (alongside work by local providers). The College has also joined the Cumbria Work Based Learning Provider Forum as part of becoming a more integral part of the county's skills ecosystem.

An employer-led initiative, led by Mark Brook of James Walker and supported by the University of Cumbria, providers and a number of other stakeholders, including the Chamber's LSIP team, is piloting an **advanced manufacturing apprenticeship pathway**, from Level 2 through to Degree Apprenticeship, filling an identified gap and need. This is based on and draws together existing frameworks. The intention is for specialised delivery to support specific sub-sector requirements. The model involves delivery of generic content (approximately 80%) by all providers involved, with the remaining 20% sub-sector specific content delivered as a specialism by one provider. Delivery will include activity within the facilities of key employers, making these available to learners from other employers.

Drawing on their involvement in the Cumbria and other LSIPs, **CITB have implemented range of activities** nationally and locally including, for example:

- Establishing the New Entrant Support team to help support employers with hiring and supporting apprentices to help improve retention and achievement. Support from the team includes sourcing applicants, advertising vacancies, raising awareness of levy transfer, accessing funding and grants, finding a suitable training provider and offering ongoing support to the employer throughout the duration of the apprentices training.
- Implementing grants such the CITB Into Work Grant which supports employers to provide work experience of post 16 courses including T levels, Level 2 & 3 construction diplomas and construction traineeships [Into Work grant - CITB](#).
- Launching Employer Networks on 31st May which bring together groups of construction employers in a region to identify any particular skills challenges and make decisions on how CITB funds are spent. The training can be anything which supports construction employers including trade skills they may need right now or something they may need in future such as retrofit training. Employer networks have been piloted in various regions across the England, Scotland and Wales over the last 12 months and have been very well received by employers.
- Introducing the Industry Impact Fund (launched last year) which allows construction employers to access funds of up to £500k to implement solutions to recognised industry challenges including trainers and assessors [Industry Impact Fund - CITB](#).

Building on the two successful SDF programmes, a £2.5m **LSIF programme** is being implemented, led by Lakes College, in partnership with Carlisle, Furness, Gen 2, Kendal, NR Training, SP Training and the University of Cumbria. The focus is on low carbon and green skills in energy, construction, logistics and land based; catering and hospitality; and digital skills. Deliverables are as follows:

- Low Carbon
 - Environmental Land Management Centre which will provide green skills training
 - Regional Hub and Accredited Centre for the training and certification of Electric Vehicle Charging Point Installers/Maintainers
 - Low carbon and green energy training hubs and centres across Cumbria offering modular, accredited training and apprenticeships Levels 3-5

- Design and develop a level 3 standard for Driving Instructors
- Co-ordinate and collaborate an approach to promote the opportunity of low carbon and green skills as a high technical career to encourage young people to pursue careers
- Hospitality and Catering
 - Refurbish hospitality facilities and suites to provide skills training for the catering and hospitality sectors across Cumbria
 - Create a virtual restaurant providing training and education across Cumbria
 - Cumbria wide new curriculum development in hospitality and catering Levels 3-5
 - Continue to engage with Cumbria Tourism, supporting and promoting the Talent Hub
 - Co-ordinate a collaborative approach to promote the opportunity of catering and hospitality as a high technical career to encourage young people to pursue careers
- Digital Skills
 - Digital innovation and 'maker' space and enhanced business hubs to include experiential training on the use of new technologies
 - Upgrade existing IT facilities and study spaces, enabling delivery of courses together with progression pathways to higher and degree apprenticeships in Cumbria
 - Build on previous digital programmes, by further development of new modular programmes and extending reach to new content including marketing and management
 - Provide training and education at Levels 3-5 and include pathways in coding, data and analysis, cyber security and networking
 - Develop content to explore and demonstrate the use of digital twins using Mixed Reality in manufacturing
 - Further develop the Cumbrian Framework for Advanced Manufacturing Apprenticeships by developing a foundation degree Level 4 and 5
 - Provide robust information, advice and guidance for young people in regard to emerging digital business needs
- Cross Cutting Themes
 - Employability (Essential) Skills – a framework and training programme for education and training providers developed and designed by employers and providers to ensure young people have work ready behaviours and skills
 - Leadership and Management – bespoke and modular training for the hospitality industry
 - Information, Advice and Guidance – robust information and guidance for employers and learners across all workstreams

LSIF actions are all complete or underway and will be completed by March 2025. Over 47 employers have been directly involved in design and development of curriculum plus others in directly through ERBs/LSIP. 30 staff have been trained in low carbon and/or retrofit in preparation for opening of the green energy skills centres/hubs.

ECITB have run a **Trainee Maintenance Operative Framework pilot/Work Ready Programme** in West Cumbria in deprived communities. This is Bootcamp style provision with confirmed jobs in the nuclear with specific employers for successful completers. A further cohort is planned with more under consideration.

Activity towards **wider employee pools** (e.g. events and communications) is bearing fruit. As a direct result of work by the Chamber, for example, 8 additional businesses have signed up to the Armed Forces Covenant so far, with a further 8 referred from the latest survey. Similarly 3 employers have taken up ROTL opportunities as a direct result of events and communications with 45 outcomes, and a further 3 referred from the latest survey. While DWP cannot confirm earlier numbers 102 Cumbrian businesses are now signed up to Disability Confident (82 Committed, 17 Employer and 3 Leader) with 2 referrals from the last survey alone.

Skills for Care report a gradual increase in sign-ups to their Datacube, which enables funding for training and backfill, since work to promote this by the Chamber from 60.3% in September 2023 to 66.7% in April 24 so far.

The **2024 LSIP monitoring survey** highlights the following:

- Usage of Bootcamps increased from 5% to 9%, with awareness unchanged 63% (62% previously).
- Numbers employing apprentices approximately unchanged (28%). The key reasons for not doing so were not needed 54% (up from 44%), cost 11% (10%), time 10% (14%), difficulty recruiting 10% (8%), difficulty finding courses/suitable apprenticeships 10% (12%) and don't know where to start 12% (new question).
- Reasons for using apprenticeships included good way of developing skills 93% (80%), cost effective 67% (33%), helps retention 58% (39%) and cheap labour 5% (4%). Other reasons were primarily around giving people skills and confidence and getting people into the workforce/industry.
- 5% found it very easy to recruit apprentices (4%), 23% easy (28%), 37% neither easy nor difficult (43%), 30% difficult (20%) and 5% very difficult (5%).
- In terms of apprenticeship retention during training 48% rarely or never struggle (67%), 27% sometimes (24%) and 8% usually or always (9%), indicating more employers are struggling some or all of the time.
- 12% always/usually (13%) struggle to retain post training, 47% sometimes (32%) and 41% rarely/never (55%), indicating more employers struggling more often to retain. Experiences in particular areas/sectors vary.
- 23% pay the apprenticeship levy and use their full levy (30%), 14% pay but don't use their full levy (10%).
- 76% reported no issues with basic skills, up from 71% last time, primarily with existing staff.
- The number reporting no issues with essential skills was down slightly at 54% compared with 57%. Anecdotally this is reported as a major issue. Issues were primarily with young people leaving education 38% (up from 29%), but also other new staff 15% (up from 11%).
- 37% feel engaged with providers and able to find the right training, 29% feel engaged but can't find the right training, 20% don't feel engaged but can find the right training and 14% don't feel engaged and can't find the right training.
- When asked about topics needed most of those identified are available.

6.0 What Still Needs To Be Achieved?

As can be seen from sections 4.0 and 5.0 above, work is progressing well, with most activity completed or ongoing. The reason so much is highlighted as ongoing is that these are genuinely ongoing activities, with constant review, development and reinforcement required. All these will continue as we move forward.

In this section we are highlighting a number of specific key activities to be completed or implemented. This will require continuing, and increasing, engagement between providers, employers and other stakeholders.

LANSS will be formally launched in September 2024, including launch of the LANSS website. In the run up to and post launch activity in promotion, engagement and review will get into full swing and continue to run. In addition the LANSS team will begin to work on a model to enable sustainability of the service beyond the period currently funded.

LSIF activity will be completed by March 2025. This includes opening of the green energy skills centres/hubs in September 2024 across Cumbria as well as completion of other capital projects. In addition, following on from the curriculum mapping which has been undertaken across the LSIF partnership, aligned with future jobs trends, LSIP and LEP priorities and skills needs and duplication identified, further work on this is being undertaken through to March 2025.

The work on our behalf by Think is progressing well, working with ECITB, with the research phase nearing completion. The project is focused on **engineering and construction in Cumberland** in light of the difficulties facing these sectors in recruiting and retaining skilled labour in the area. Cumbria Chamber has been working with Britain's Energy Coast Business Cluster (BECBC), ECITB and others to develop a collective response to the workforce recruitment challenges facing the engineering and construction sectors. To assist with this task, this project is further developing the evidence base around skills shortages in Cumberland, clarifying the scale and nature of the challenge and will be working with local partners to set out the roadmap for action that will enable solutions to these challenges to be found. It focusses on Cumberland but will reflect on the important role that BAE Systems in Barrow plays in the demand for, and supply of, technical skills in the area. It includes but also looks beyond the critical nuclear supply chain, to encompass a broad range of relevant construction and manufacturing subsectors in Cumberland, noting that many in the Sellafield supply chain also rely on demand from other markets. As well as primary research, the project draws on existing analyses of construction and manufacturing sector skills demand and supply, such as through the LEP or regional/national reports by sector networks and associations and considers other key data, such as that relating to Cumberland's demography, migration patterns, resident attainment, economic activity (and so on) to build a comprehensive picture of the drivers of current skills shortages, and what needs to be done to address them. It is taking a medium-term view, gathering data and using qualitative insights (from employers of all size and skills providers, in the main) to understand the nature and, scale of likely demand and the capacity of the education and training system to respond in kind. Once the report is available, this will be published in the LSIP area of our website ([Local Skills Improvement Plan - Cumbria Chamber of Commerce](#)) and discussions among stakeholders on how best to implement proposed actions and address issues progressed.

During the coming year, stakeholders will be running a series of events and activities for businesses around **future skills, AI, robotics** etc., with the aim of sharing opportunities and possibilities, supporting businesses to consider ways forward and therefore potential skills needs, and showcasing some of the facilities and curriculum already available to support skills development.

Businesses are encouraged to get involved in activities, coordinated through **Cumbria Careers Hub**, supporting schools, colleges and other providers through promoting career pathways and opportunities and development of essential skills. This includes initiatives such as Cumbria Careers Day 2025 as well as a range of opportunities throughout the year.

Most importantly, stakeholders remain committed to working together to progress these actions and ensure the best skills offer for Cumbria that can be achieved.