

Annex B

Summary of the Marches LSIP Methodology, Priorities and Stage 2 Plans



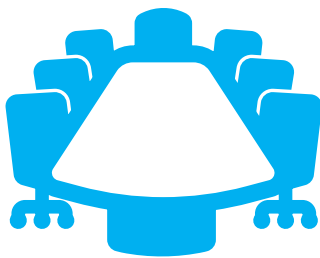
Annex B



Growing the future of
the Marches

The Marches LSIP Methodology

The main Marches Stage 1 Report and all annexes Nos 1-23 contain the evidence of the work undertaken to understand, articulate and demonstrate the skills requirements, provision, and barriers for the Marches area. Always putting employers at the heart of the LSIP is key and how going forward, through collective working, the LSIP can ensure the Employers Voice remains key to all decision making with regards to skills and training.



Governance

A Marches LSIP Stage 1 Board of 15 was created in September 2022, this contained all local authorities, business boards, Marches LEP, representation from all major providers, HE, FE and Private Providers, other ERB's such as the NFU, CITB and the FSB and chaired by a private sector large employer CEO.

Also appointed was the Project Director and Project Manager. Due to the vast area, Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce were contracted to assist with Herefordshire to ensure good coverage. They are also an ERB covering the Worcestershire LSIP, providing additional knowledge share for the LSIP project.

For the Marches, four sectors were decided upon as the focus for the project. These were selected after discussion with many stakeholders, especially the Marches LEP Skills Advisory Panel members.

- Engineering/Manufacturing including food and drink manufacture
- Construction including environmental technology
- Health & Social Care
- Professional Services

Selected as relevant to the three sub-regions, all large employing sectors, and sectors that have longevity and showing growth, not decline.

Formal Board meetings were held 6 weekly, normally virtually, due to the vast geographic area the Marches covers, and to make best use of time, maximise attendance and reduce environmentally unfriendly travel. These meetings provided a full update on progress, discussed the issues and ways forward, allowing flex within the methodology as different understandings and evidence came to the fore.

Also held were Board roundtables and a wide array of specialist meetings such as with the key FE providers to share findings and understand forward thinking. This also allowed us to understand the intelligence gained by the stakeholders through their own business engagements.



Research and Reasoning

Employer and industry research plus scoping was carried out in all the four sectors to understand the sector makeup, the range of skill sets required, the sub-regional peculiarities and how that tied to local provision.

Before the major employer interview stage commenced, the ERB engaged a selection of employers to help hone the question set, to ensure the data obtained would give the level of detail required to understand the sectors individual needs. To ensure the questions were in a language that would resonate with employers and leave no room for

ambiguity. Questions that would also have the ability to probe into the issues that are causing skills shortages and barriers to productivity, but not related to standard training needs.

Working with other ERB's and specialist bodies, such as the CITB, broadened understanding greatly. This deeper understanding, coupled with the scoping, enabled the interviewers to engage very meaningfully with the various sectors to understand the employers language and culture. The Employers Voice extensive interview stage engaged with a large variety of businesses of all sizes and distributed across the Marches. Both businesses that providers currently engage with, and those who are not engaged. It was ensured throughout that the businesses were aware that LSIP is a longer-term project and encouraged them to continue to engage. This was very positively received. It was also ensured, through the methods used, that the employers could speak freely and openly to ensure their honest and full opinions were voiced.



As the interviewing progressed, various interim findings were supplied to the main providers to support them in the completion of their Accountability Agreements and help support longer term curriculum planning. The Board also received details to allow them to understand the emerging priorities.

The interviews concluding in a 69-page Employers Voice report (Annex 6) based on 463 direct interviews and other information collected. A report not only to support providers, but other stakeholders in their work to improve skills, economic and social development. The report highlighted skills shortages but also barriers to training, recruitment, and retention. This large volume of work gives clear evidence of where these needs lie and how barriers or poor understanding are hindering progress and productivity. The research clearly showed that soft and work ready skills are as important to progression as are standard occupational skills. The employers warmly welcomed the opportunity to express their needs and views openly.

It was clear quite early on that many of the skills shortages are not unique to the Marches, but national or regionally recognised skills shortages, however those shortages still need to be addressed.

Marketing

Robust marketing was used to reach the widest audience, with clear messaging explaining that the Government was putting businesses at the heart of the skills agenda and would continue to do so, as explained in the 2021 Skills for Jobs white paper. This stance was taken to build rapport with employers and to encourage a willingness for them to engage at various stages of the project.

Interviews

The business opinions were gained through various methods, 1:1 interviews, self-completion interviews, focus groups, events, Board round table events and via sector support membership organisations such as Shropshire Partners in Care. As well as employers, many additional stakeholders, smaller private training providers and sector specialists were engaged with to aid understanding and fact check feedback. Work was also carried out to understand the range of providers across the Marches and the diversity of the educational offer. During this processes current innovative training solutions were discovered and these were noted as examples of good practice to support the work in Stage 2. Also noted was where employers found unusual sources of staff, from unlikely training providers, again offering strong ideas for Stage 2 and the promotion of opportunities to employers.

Skills shortages were highlighted and these were discussed with the providers to further understand need versus supply. One factor quickly identified in all sectors was the drain of skills to urban areas and newly qualified graduates not returning. Stage 2 will allow an even deeper

Funded by

Department
for Education

Marches LSIPs
Local Skills Improvement Plan

 Shropshire
Chamber of
Commerce

 Herefordshire
& Worcestershire
Chamber of Commerce



Help us to help YOU

Are you from one of these sectors?

 Engineering /
Manufacturing
including Food &
Drink Production

 Professional
Services

 Construction
including
Environmental
Technologies

 Health &
Social Care

Do you employ staff?
Then we need **YOUR** help

What is the Marches LSIPs?
The **Local Skills Improvement Plan** - a DfE nationwide project. Shropshire Chamber has been selected by the DfE to undertake this work in the Marches, working closely with Herefordshire & Worcestershire Chamber.

What is the purpose of the project?
To understand the skills training requirements in the next 3-5 years within different sectors. To bring together the views of employers and trainers to help look at innovative ways to deliver future training.

How can you help?
We need your views on how you see training evolving in your sector. How have skills shortages changed how you work and does this give us innovative ideas for the future?

Your voice is key to this being a success.
We ask that you fill in a one-off questionnaire, answer a series of text polls or share your thoughts 1:1 with our researchers (in confidence of course).

Help ensure training meets the future head on

Click here to complete the Survey TODAY!

Marches LSIPs Team
E: lsip@shropshire-chamber.co.uk
T: 01952 208227
W: shropshire-chamber.co.uk

Project Directors:
Richard Sheehan & Ruth Ross
Project Manager: **Rosie Beswick**
Project Administration: **Alex Brown**

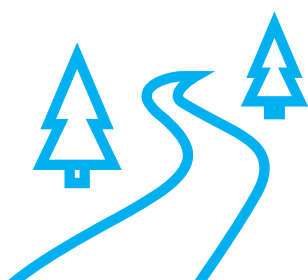
understanding of the drivers and how those can be reversed, where possible, as shown in the Quick Wins section of the main report.

Quick Wins & Future Provision



Quick Wins in the main report covers many of the areas that were found to be the cause of skills and staff shortages. Further work is progressing to understand these mismatches; where skills shortages are showing, but provision is at suitable levels to meet need. Again, the causes are varied and need on-going investigations in Stage 2. Cultural understanding between public and private sector is a barrier to improvement, with this lack of understanding of the different cultures leading to misunderstanding and mistrust. Stage 2 must be used to break down the barriers, build trust for all and ensure these issues are swiftly dealt with. Another key focus in Stage 2 will be to ensure current provision is understood and therefore taken up by employers as it was clear that employers do not always know what is on offer, understand that offer, or have the time, skill, or additional manpower to access what is available. The willingness of employers to be involved is there, but not always the understanding.

Report & Roadmap



The final report and the 23 annexes, in addition to the Annexes A & B, explain in far greater detail the methodology, the employers views and needs, and the ongoing research required in Stage 2. The Employers Voice data provided a wealth of identified quick wins as well as longer term additional provision requirements. The report also highlighted the roadmap for Stage 2 and how to find solutions for the issues raised by the results of Stage 1.

Also explained was the ethos to continue to be adopted by all those involved for the betterment of the Marches economy and how that ethos should be further instilled. A collective effort to enhance cooperation and collaboration by employers, stakeholders, and other parties, will ensure a strong future for the Marches and a clear focus for the LSIP during Stage 2.

As Stage 2 needs to deep dive, learn from the Employers Voice research, and monitor progress, there will be more emphasis on fluid working groups, set with specific tasks, reporting to the main Board, as well as a greater number of open forums to further bring employers and providers together.

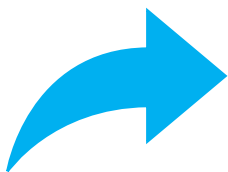
The Employers Voice will continue to be captured both in open and closed forums, to ensure changes in tone are noted, that changes in skills needs are highlighted, and training is being obtained. Working closely with the Local Authority's inward investment and employment teams will allow greater understanding of any emerging sectors, with growing employee numbers and training needs, also helping the LSIP Board to be aware of any large redundancies and how those staff can be redeployed locally. There will be continued sharing of best practice, learning from previous SDF and other initiatives to understand how best to make the greatest change.

Working with the providers to ensure that LSIF projects are making the differences intended and support those projects to help ensure that employers benefit from those initiatives, as well as highlighting to employers the current ongoing initiatives.

Continue to work with JCP to understand the issues around unemployment and how activities such as Bootcamps are supporting the progression to work. Bridge gaps in employer understanding of the work of JCP and Local Authorities.

Work with OFSTED & the DfE to fully understand requirements, especially if changes are made, and relay details of these interactions to the Board, so that the implications or requirements can be discussed and the LSIP flex accordingly.

Feeding Back to Employers



When the LSIP Stage 1 report is published, the employers will be informed, so that they can fully understand the purpose, direction, and emphasis of the LSIP project. Having had a spirit of openness from the start has helped to keep the employers willing to engage with the process, fostering a willingness for long-term interaction. Giving up valuable time is not something busy employers can do easily, so it is imperative that their time, knowledge, and views are made good use of and that they can clearly see progress, giving them the incentive to continue to be vocal and involved.

