

SPECIAL JOINT MEETING

ECONOMY, CULTURE AND TOURISM AND THE CHILDREN AND LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY PANEL

DATE	03/03/2025
REPORT OF	Carolina Borgstrom
SUBJECT	Skills Action Plan – Progress Update
STATUS	Open

CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AIMS

The Skills Strategy and Action Plan sets out the key skills gaps in North East Lincolnshire and what actions need to be taken to best meet the needs of our local businesses, both now and in the future. This supports the Council's aim to help our residents to reach their full potential through skills and learning.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarises the progress made in the last six months of delivery of the skills action plan, August 2024 to February 2025. The actions are categorised into five strands:

- National & Regional Actions
- Communication
- Collaboration
- Careers
- Raising Aspirations

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

The panel is asked to:

- Review the progress made so far against the actions set out.
- Support the continued delivery of the Skills Action Plan

1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

1.1 The Skills Strategy and Action Plan was approved by Cabinet in August 2023. There was engagement with the Joint Economy and Children's Scrutiny Panel in July 2023 and a six monthly update in February 2024 and August 2024. The recommendation from the Panel is to continue to update on progress every six months. Therefore, this report demonstrates work that has taken place to deliver against each of the actions in the Action Plan between August 2024 and February 2025. The medium term actions were refreshed in August 2024 and approved by the Skills Board in October 2024.

1.2 National & Regional Actions

1.2.1 The Skills & Employment element of the Greater Lincolnshire Devolution Deal has been led by NELC and is split into three workstreams; Devolution

of Adult Skills Funding (ASF), Careers provision, and Care Leavers.

- ASF – this group are working on preparing to meet the readiness conditions set by the Department for Education (DfE) for the ASF to be devolved to Greater Lincolnshire County Combined Authority (MCCA). This includes preparing a Strategic Skills Plan that sets out the ambition for adult skills delivery across Greater Lincolnshire. The draft version will be ready by the end of March 2025.
- Careers Provision – Led by NELC, the group have undertaken stakeholder mapping and developed an action plan, which will be recommended to the MCCA. Whilst this aspect of the deal does not confer powers or funding, it provides a platform to instigate changes and longer term, make the case for further such powers and /or funding, especially bearing in mind the Devolution White Paper.
- Care Leavers – This workstream also does not have powers, or funding, attached to it. North Lincolnshire Council are leading and the focus is to bring local authorities together to work with Spectra to align, and improve, the offer for care leavers across Greater Lincolnshire, with the aim to improve outcomes for this group.

As the MCCA staff embed in their new roles, there will be a phase of transition where the workstreams handover and then continue to support with delivery.

- 1.2.2 The Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) is now in its final stages. NELC have been actively engaged throughout to ensure that the needs of NEL residents are being met. Local providers, the TEC partnership, led the funded element of the programme, which also included Franklin College, CATCH and HETA. The interim report can be found [here](#) and the final report is due to be published in June 2025.
- 1.2.3 The UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocated £800,000 to People & Skills projects in financial year 2024 -2025. The projects all meet skills needs set out in the Skills Strategy. These include: Work ready programme into Engineering Construction, Career Shift, which supports adults to connect with employers and training providers, and projects supporting both new entrants and upskilling within Health and Social Care, Hospitality and the Seafood Sector. The projects are on target to support 1147 people. The funding has been confirmed as an extension for 2025-2026, although it will be at a lower amount than 25-26. Successful projects will be eligible to apply to continue delivery.
- 1.2.4 Multiply was £330,000 per year of ring-fenced UK Shared Prosperity Funding that has been delivered from April 2022 to March 2025. The project offers innovative access to maths courses and qualifications to those aged over 19 and has been delivered by four education providers in NEL: Creating Positive Opportunity, The Equality Practice, TEC Partnership and Learning 4 Life. This programme has supported 1,125 unique learners across the 3 years of delivery.
- 1.2.5 In January 2025, the Government announced that North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire had been selected as part of a Regional Skills Pilot. This pilot aims to support people into employment in the clean energy sector. The pilot will run 2025-26 and will be led by Midlands Net Zero Hub and is funded by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero.
- 1.2.6 Connect to work is a new supported employment programme aiming to support 2,200 people per year, at its peak delivery, across Greater

Lincolnshire between 2025 and 2030. There are a range of eligibility criteria but, in essence, the focus is support for those people economically inactive with long term health conditions. Details of the programme and its impact will be reported within the skills strategy and action plan governance at the Skills Board quarterly meetings.

1.3 Communication

- 1.3.1 Progress has continued with the collaboration of a group of adult learning providers, NELC's adult careers team and partners working with those 19+ in the community. This is supported by resource from the communications team. The collaborative group have worked to collectively promote adult learning by through events, social media promotion and sharing information.
- 1.3.2 The group also plan and deliver a series of promotional events in the community. A bid for UKSPF funding to support the events was successful and three events have been delivered in the last six months at two leisure centres and Freshney Place Shopping Centre. One further event is planned at Grimsby Job Centre on 5th March as part of National Careers Week. The three delivered in the last six months have engaged with 136 adults.
- 1.3.3 A survey for residents has also been produced. This aims to inform us of the best routes for communication on skills offers and opportunities. The results will be collated and shared with the Skills Board and used to influence communication plans.
- 1.3.4 Our communication graduate, assigned to adult learning, has been working with providers to produce a range of promotional videos. All filming is completed, the videos are being edited and sent for approval, and these will be shared during National Careers Week (3rd- 8th March 2025).
- 1.3.5 The impact of the social media promotion and the updated webpage are being monitored and reported each quarter to the Skills Board. In the last six months the webpage statistics show: [Adult education and learning | NELC \(nelincs.gov.uk\)](https://www.nelincs.gov.uk)
- 1.1K views (up 200% from 2023 period), 712 users (314 never previously accessed).
 - Organic social media posts (ie not paid for) on adult learning have had an average reach of 3,950 residents per post.
 - Social Media boosted posts for events (at a cost of £30) have resulted in a reach of 41,207 residents.
- 1.3.6 A communication strategy for skills is now drafted and will be submitted to the Skills Board for approval at the Q4 update. The strategy includes a working communications plan and a monthly review of the plan that brings together:
- Business communications (NELC officer in Economy)
 - Careers Hub representative for NELC (LCC)
 - Workforce Learning and Development (NELC officer in P&C)
 - Recruitment Communications (NELC officer in P&C)
 - School & College Communications (Skills lead in Children's Services)
 - NELC Communication team representative
- 1.3.5 In January 2025 the Invest NEL team have collaborated to add skills pages to the Invest website. This is for both prospective and existing businesses to access skills information relevant to them. In addition to a regular newsletter to the mailing list, a new skills edition, once per quarter, has

been added. The webpage and newsletter can be viewed here:

[InvestNEL | Developing your Workforce - InvestNEL](#)
[Invest North East Lincolnshire Newsletter - January 2025](#)

The first edition of the Skills newsletter was sent to 621 people and 349 have opened it (56%). Unique click throughs to further information from this first edition was 11. This resulted in three business enquiries to the Careers Hub to engage with schools and colleges.

Engagement will continue to be monitored and reported to the Skills Board each quarter.

1.4 Collaboration

1.4.1 As part of the Skills Action Plan Governance structure, the NEL Skills Board has been established to support the delivery of the actions. The board meets each quarter and receives an update against the Skills Action Plan. The board members are outlined in Appendix 1 and a reporting mechanism is now in place for the area each person represents.

1.4.2 Working in partnership with the Greater Lincolnshire Careers Hub, the Regeneration Team have welcomed a group of Franklin A-level Geography students for a morning to tour the town centre as part of their curriculum learning. This will be repeated again in April 2025. We also presented to all staff at Healing Academy on the predicted growth for the area and how this related to young people's opportunities. The feedback showed that all respondents learnt something new and the average score was 4.18 out of 5 on the relevance of the information to their role. When asked how they would use the information, the responses were:

- 19% - Include in a lesson
- 34% - Talk to family & friends
- 38% - Discuss with students
- 7% - make changes to the curriculum

This session will be offered to all secondary schools via the Careers hub through 2025.

1.5 Careers

1.5.1 NELC's Adult Careers Team have increased their presence by:

- Planning and attending community events and developing and promoting a regular timetable for training delivery in Family Hubs.
- A continued monthly drop-in at Grimsby Job Centre, with support from a range of adult learning providers. This is supported by promotion from our dedicated communications graduate.
- Delivery of their UKSPF funded 'Careershift' project, supporting individuals into employment in key sectors. This project aims to support 180 individuals to overcome barriers to training and work from April 24 to March 25.
- Collaboration with providers to signpost to projects. This includes a Youthwork pathway working with the Youth Alliance and its members, TEC Partnership and Franklin College. The CATCH and ECITB Work ready programme have also been supported by the adult careers team, increasing referrals.
- The Adult Careers team delivers a contract for the National Careers

Service. The outputs on this contract have been met and exceeded this year (24/25) with a 23.2% increase on customers seen compared to 23/24 data.

1.5.2 In collaboration with multiple partners, the following careers events have secured funding and are in planning for delivery in 2025:

- Parents' Careers Evening – 19th March 2025
- Women into Manufacturing and Engineering – 27th March 2025
- Heritage & Construction skills event – 12/13th June 2025 (TBC)
- Annual Skills Fair – 9th July 2025

1.6 Raising Aspirations

1.6.1 National Citizenship Service Project – This project was a collaborative bid between NELC's Young People's Support Service, a training provider and industry. The project targets groups of young people, often in disadvantaged groups, to be able to attend intro to industry days. This project has so far delivered 517 experiences to 183 young people over 15 cohorts. This includes:

- 58 who had Free School Meals in the last 6 years
- 99 with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP)
- 25 who are care experienced
- 20 who were NEET at the time of them going on the programme
- 16 with English as a second or other language

1.6.2 A Continuing Professional Development (CPD) day was organised for NELC Careers Advisors (for both adults and young people). This involved them attending CATCH for a morning to find out about their offer, the engineering sector and how to support people with applications.

1.6.3 The NELC People & Culture Learning & Development team have completed the Employer Standards Questionnaire. This analyses the school and college engagement that is currently happening and recommends areas for improvement. The information from this will be used to support future engagement.

1.7 Next Steps

1.7.1 Continue to monitor the impact of the Skills Strategy and Action Plan on qualification level data and engagement data.

1.7.2 To approve the Skills Communication Strategy at the Quarter 4 Skills Board and continue to monitor progress of communication methods.

1.7.3 Support NEL business and provider engagement with regional and national priorities and funding routes such as: Connect to Work, Adult Skills Funding, Skills Bootcamps, Regional Skills Pilot, Local Skills Improvement Plan the new Mayoral County Combined Authority.

2. RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The delivery of the Skills Action Plan relies heavily on collaboration with partners. It is vital that positive relationships are maintained. The Skills Action Plan seeks to support and facilitate others in order to widen adult participation in learning and increase awareness of opportunities for both young people and adults. If the Action Plan is not able to be delivered the risk is that access to learning continues to decrease and our residents are not able to benefit from the economic growth of the area.

3. REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

The Skills Action Plan sets out to work with the communication team to promote Adult Learning. There are potential positive reputational implications to continuing this. The social media feedback on posts about adult learning, including case studies and the Careers Service information, have been largely positive from residents and resulted in increasing traffic to the webpage.

4. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The delivery of the Skills Action Plan should aid in providing an upskilled workforce, thus strengthening the local economy. Whilst there is no immediate financial implication arising from the delivery of the plan, funding may be required in the future to implement proposed actions. It is currently anticipated that any such funding will be sought from external sources.

5. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IMPLICATIONS

The Careers and Raising Aspiration Strand of the Action Plan are designed to positively impact children and young people. Raising attainment and participation levels of adults, particularly parents, also supports young people to have positive experiences of education.

6. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Supporting young people and adults into careers in the renewables and decarbonisation sectors will support the area to reach its Net Zero targets and will have a positive impact on the environment.

MONITORING COMMENTS

In the opinion of the author, this report does not contain recommended changes to policy or resources (people, finance or physical assets). As a result, no monitoring comments have been sought from the Council's Monitoring Officer (Chief Legal Officer), Section 151 Officer (Director of Finance) or Strategic Workforce Lead.

7. WARD IMPLICATIONS

The adult learning promotional events and training timetables are specifically targeting wards where adult attainment is lower.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 – Skills Board Membership

9. CONTACT OFFICER(S)

Amy Gresham, Strategic Lead for Skills and Employability
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Carolina Borgstrom

Director of Economy, Environment & Infrastructure

NO RESTRICTIONS

Appendix 1
NEL Skills Board

Membership list and representation

Mark Riley (Chair)- Phillips 66
Amy Gresham – NELC Skills Lead (Economy)
Karen Linton – (*Employability Forum Rep*) NELC Skills Lead (Children’s Services)
Stephen Ryder – (*VCSE Forum Rep*) Director of Creating Positive Opportunity
Stephen Logan – (*Head Teacher’s Forum Rep*) Principal of Healing Academy
Ann Hardy – (*Development & Growth Board Rep*) CEO of TEC Partnership
Wendy Ellis – Principal of Franklin College
Annie Cook – (*SEND Forum Rep*) NELC Lead EHCP co-ordinator
Joanne Woodhouse – DRET Careers Lead
Lee Douglas – Greater Lincolnshire Careers Hub Lead
Vicky Booth – (*Careers Leads Rep*) NE Lincolnshire Careers Hub Co-ordinator
Nick Gregory – DWP Employer & Partnership Manager
Ben Dent – (*Corporate Parenting Rep*) NELC Deputy Service Director for Children in Care and Care Leavers