

## Joint Scrutiny Panel – Economy and Children & Lifelong Learning

<b>DATE</b>	11 <sup>th</sup> September 2025
<b>REPORT OF</b>	Cllr Jackson (Portfolio Holder for Economy, Regeneration and Skills)
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER</b>	Carolina Borgstrom - Director of Economy, Environment and Infrastructure
<b>SUBJECT</b>	Skills Action Plan – Progress Update
<b>STATUS</b>	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 align skills with local business need. This supports the following aim that is set out in the Council Plan; ‘Our ambition is for our people of all ages to be equipped with the skills they need to grasp opportunities both now and in the future.’

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

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

### RECOMMENDATIONS

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 (Action Plan) was approved by Cabinet in August 2023. Since that time, a six-monthly update on progress has been provided to a joint scrutiny panel. Links to the full strategy, action plan and previous progress reports can be found at the end of this report.
- 1.2 The Skills Strategy sets out the context of the economic opportunities within North East Lincolnshire along with some of the challenges to equip both our adults and young people with the knowledge and skills to access those opportunities.
- 1.3 The accompanying action plan sets out 5 strands of action designed to tackle those challenges and narrow the area’s ‘skills gap’. The 5 strands of action are: National & Regional Actions, Communication, Collaboration, Careers, Raising Aspirations and the actions are separated into short term, medium term and long term actions. We are currently in delivery of the medium term actions, which were refreshed in August 2024.
- 1.4 Progress of the Action Plan is monitored by quarterly meetings of the North East

Lincolnshire Skills Board. The board is chaired by an industry representative and has members from secondary schools, the Greater Lincolnshire Careers Hub, Further Education and Sixth Form Colleges, Head teachers, Children's Services, DWP and the VCSE sector. An update from the Skills Board is shared at the Development and Growth Board to update the area's economic sector representatives.

## **1.5 National & Regional Actions: Key updates**

- 1.5.1 In March 2025, the Greater Lincolnshire Mayoral Combined County Authority (GLMCCA) was officially formed. There was a transition period before the three skills workstreams (Adult Skills Funding, Careers and Care Leavers) were formally handed over to the GLMCCA. NELC's Skills Officers will now continue to work with the GLMCCA and colleagues from across the area to support delivery of the Devolution deal.
- 1.5.2 Due to the Collaborative work throughout the Devolution process, the Department for Education (DfE) allocated Greater Lincolnshire an additional amount of Adult Skills Funding (ASF) for academic year 2025-26. This was an additional £354,000 of funding for qualifications in North East Lincolnshire. The recipients of the additional funding are: Creating Positive Opportunity, Learning 4 Life, Think Employment and construction training provision from Orangebox.
- 1.5.3 The final report of the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) was published in June 2025. This, and the interim reports, can be viewed here: [Greater Lincolnshire & Rutland LSIP | FSB Local Skills Initiative](#). The next iteration of the LSIP will align with the Greater Lincolnshire geography, therefore removing Rutland. It will be led jointly by the GLMCCA and the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB).
- 1.5.4 The UK Shared Prosperity Fund has been extended for 2025-26 and in March 2025 we were able to confirm that 11 of the skills projects from 24-25 were able to continue delivery. Projects were assessed against meeting the priorities in the Skills Action Plan.
- 1.5.5 Multiply funding ended in March 2025, however, interventions were able to be continued through UK Shared Prosperity Funding. Due to the success of the scheme, supporting 1,125 people over the last three years, we allocated just over £100,000 to support maths interventions from four providers.
- 1.5.6 Connect to Work is a funded supported employment programme. Over the last six months, NELC officers from skills and Public Health have supported the development of the delivery plan. The programme is managed by Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) for delivery across Greater Lincolnshire and aims to support approximately 1,000 people into employment in North East Lincolnshire between 2025 and 2030.
- 1.5.7 The Get Britain Working White Paper set out that each region must create a plan to increase the area's employment rate. The 'Get Lincolnshire Working Plan' is being led by the Greater Lincolnshire MCCA but is developed in collaboration with Local Authority Officers, ICB representatives and DWP regional leads. NELC officers are part of the development group and are supporting connections across the area to ensure the plan reflects the needs of North East Lincolnshire. The plan is due to be

submitted to Government on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2025.

## 1.6 Communication

- 1.6.1 The NELC Skills Communication Plan was approved by the Skills Board in April 2025. The monthly review of this allows officers from Economy, People & Culture, Children's Services, Communications and the Careers Hub to share upcoming events and plan promotion.
- 1.6.2 In June 2025 we opened our Skills Survey for 6 weeks and worked with partners to share this. We got 1259 responses and have analysed the results. Of those 1259 respondents:
- 55% were not in work.
  - 279 people (23%) had no qualifications.
  - 45.8% did not have level 2 or grade 4/C GCSE in English or Maths
  - Their preferred way of learning was online, at work, or part-time.
  - Their preferred place to study was at home, at college, or in the community.
  - 53.5% felt they did not know where to go for advice.
  - The biggest barriers to both learning and employment were health reasons (health, disability, or mental health), followed by confidence and lack of awareness.
- 1.6.3 Working with the Communications Officer, the statistics of the website and social media campaigns are analysed and resulted in the following:
- **Website activity** - The website received a total of 1,376 page views. Of these, 480 were new users. Layout and structure were refreshed during this period, based on user data and insights, to improve accessibility and navigation.
  - **Social media activity** - Over 80 posts were published on each of the primary social media platforms, covering campaigns, events, and partnerships. Key engagement highlights included:
    - Adult learning day at Freshney Place, with 12k+ views
    - Women into engineering day, drawing in 15k+ views
    - Learning4Life-GY celebration, also reaching 15k+ views
  - **Press releases** - 18 press releases were sent between February and July. Topics covered included local events, community initiatives, case studies, and positive news. Each release was distributed to at least 350 media contacts, including regional news.
  - **Video Case Studies** – A series of promotional videos have been produced to share information about adult learning. These showcase a range of providers and will be used alongside other promotion throughout the year. The series can be viewed here: [Learning Lincs - Franklin Adult Learning](#)
- 1.6.4 Working with the InvestNEL team, the quarterly Skills Newsletter to businesses has had two further editions. April had a 46% read rate and July had a 50% read rate. This is in line with comparative statistics for the general business newsletter.

## 1.7 Collaboration

- 1.7.1 The NEL Skills Board reviews progress of the Skills Action Plan. The board works collaboratively to support the delivery of the plan and has representatives from industry, school, Further education, Careers Hub and NELC officers. One workstream has developed a NEETs prevention pilot programme which is seeking

funding. The next focus of the Skills Board is to develop a toolkit to support schools with accessing careers information.

1.7.2 NELC officers have continued to work collaboratively with the Careers Hub to support businesses to engage with young people through schools and colleges. In addition to the delivery of events, we have delivered Teacher Encounters: in the last six months one by NELC and one by Made Great in Grimsby. These days bring teaching staff away from school to gain insight into a sector and the career opportunities within it.

1.7.3 The NELC Economy team have continued to welcome groups to the Town Centre to link in with their Geography curriculum and learn about the regeneration projects. In the last six months this includes A-level Geography students from Franklin College and Year 8 Students visiting from Horncastle.

## **1.8 Careers**

1.8.1 Over the past six months the following Careers events for young people have been delivered in collaboration with a range of partners, reaching almost 3000 young people:

- 19<sup>th</sup> March 2025 - Parents Careers Evening
- 27<sup>th</sup> March 2025 - Women into Manufacturing & Engineering Event
- 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> June 2025 – Construction & Heritage Skills Fair
- 9<sup>th</sup> July 2025 - Annual Skills Fair

1.8.2 In collaboration with DWP and training providers, over the last six months we have delivered the following careers events for adults:

- Regular monthly drop in day at Grimsby Job Centre
- Jobs Fair at YMCA Humber
- Promotional Day in Freshney Place to launch the Skills Survey

1.8.3 The Adult Careers Team deliver Careers Advice to those 19+ through a contract with the National Careers Service. Their delivery is currently at 107% of the contract value due to increased access to the service. The team recently had their Matrix accreditation renewed alongside the Children's Services Young People's Support Service (YPSS). This is the DfE endorsed quality mark of careers provision and the combined teams received outstanding feedback for their quality of delivery, impact and support from leadership.

1.8.4 The Careers, Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG) Strategy is currently undergoing a refresh and the updated version will be published for 25-28.

## **1.9 Raising Aspirations**

1.9.1 In March 2025 the Young People's Support Service National Citizenship project came to an end after 2 years of delivery. The project supported 198 16-18 year olds over 17 cohorts. This was made up of 7 introduction to engineering, 7 introduction to renewables, and 3 introduction to the seafood sector taster sessions.

1.9.2 In addition to the flagship event, the Women into Manufacturing and Engineering Steering Group also run a 'Raising Aspirations' programme to support young girls through school with their engagement with STEM subjects, bringing in female

mentors from industry. This year the programme has worked with John Whitgift, Healing Academy, Cleethorpes Academy, Oasis Academy Immingham and Oasis Academy Wintringham.

- 1.9.3 The Adult Careers Team completed delivery of their UK shared Prosperity Project, Careershift, in March 2025. The project gained excellent feedback from participants and supported 130 people to remove barriers to training and employment. The project was extended for 25-26 and aims to support a further 100 people by March 2026.

## **1.10 Qualification and Employment Data**

- 1.10.1 From 2021 to 2024, the proportion of adults with no qualifications fell, closing the gap with the national average from 5.6 to 3.1 percentage points.
- 1.10.2 Those with Level 2 qualifications increased, narrowing the gap from 10.7 to 5.8 points—reversing a previous trend of widening gaps and demonstrating a positive impact from the interventions.
- 1.10.3 At level 3 there has been an increase between 2021 and 2024, from 46.3% to 49.7%, for North East Lincolnshire. However, the gap with the national data has widened from a 15.2 percentage point difference in 2021 to an 18.2 percentage point gap in 2024.
- 1.10.4 Similarly, the gap at level 4 continues to widen from a 20 percentage point gap in 2021 to a 22.8 percentage point gap in 2024.
- 1.10.5 Latest figures for Economic Activity have been released for Apr 2024 – March 2025. These show that in North East Lincolnshire 76.6% of working age residents are economically active. This is marginally higher than statistical neighbours and 1.9 percentage points lower than the national average.
- 1.10.6 The highest stated reason for Economic Inactivity is ‘long term sick’, which is currently at 43.9%. This is a slight decrease from the previous year’s figure of 45% but is still an outlier for our area with the national average sitting at 28.2%.

## **2. RISKS, OPPORTUNITIES AND EQUALITY ISSUES**

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 and Career opportunities. 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, NATURE RECOVERY AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

Supporting young people and adults into careers that are in the Clean Energy industry has a positive impact on the environment.

#### **7. WARD IMPLICATIONS**

Data shows that wards such as the East Marsh, have significantly more barriers to training and employment, coupled with the lowest qualification rates. This means that targeted interventions will be focussed on areas of need, including delivering training and information sessions within those communities.

#### **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The Skills Strategy & Action Plan: [Skills-Strategy-and-Action-Plan-2023.docx](#)

March 2025 Progress Report [4.-Skills-Action-Plan-Progress-Update.pdf](#)

August 2024 Progress Report [3.2-Nikki-Copy-of-NELC-Skills-Action-Plan-Tracker.xlsx.pdf](#)

February 2024 Progress Report [4.-Skills-Action-Plan-Progress-Update.docxPDF-837KBicon-namepaperclip-prefixfa.pdf](#)

July 2023 Report, Skills Strategy and Action Plan [Item-4.-Scrutiny-report-and-skills-strategy.pdf](#)

#### **10. CONTACT OFFICER(S)**

Amy Rogers, Strategic Lead Skills & Employability  
01472 323038

**Cllr Phillip Jackson**  
**Skills**