

Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)

Essex, Southend
and Thurrock

Executive Summary

This Executive Summary provides an introduction and high-level overview of the main Essex, Southend and Thurrock LSIP report.



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UK Government

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1. Introduction and Background

Essex Chambers of Commerce is delighted to have been chosen by the Department for Education as lead for the **Essex Local Skills Improvement Plan**. These plans are being rolled out across England to provide an employer voice and perspective of skills needs locally, with Further Education Colleges required to respond to them.

Essex Chambers of Commerce worked with stakeholders to undertake engagement with local employers between September 2022 and March 2023, to collect the information and insight that informed our local plan.

3. Recommendations

The Local Skills Improvement Plan contained a number of recommendations. These were based around three themes with specific areas of focus under each as set out below. The work to implement the Local Skills Improvement Plan recommendations will be taken forward by the Employment and Skills Board as outlined [here](#), supported by sector specific groups. These will build on existing sector arrangements wherever possible.

Skills system priorities

- Skills planning system for Essex
- System access & flexibility
- Information, Careers Advice & Guidance
- Tutor shortages & capacity of providers to respond
- Inclusive employment
- Barriers to engagement.

Skills priorities

- Soft skills and behaviours
- Basic English, Maths and ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages)
- Digital skills and 'Digitech'
- Green skills
- Leadership and Management skills.

Essex sectors and technical skills

- Advanced Manufacturing, Engineering & Aviation
- AgriTech & Food Tech
- Community & Voluntary
- Construction & the Built Environment
- Creative & Cultural
- DigiTech
- Education
- Health, Social Care & Med Tech
- Professional Services
- Transport & Logistics.

2. Introducing Essex

The plan captured skills needs of the labour market and local employers across the whole of Essex, and identified action based solutions required to enable local colleges and skills providers to effectively meet those needs.

The full plan can be read [here](#). All references to Essex in the report include Essex, Southend and Thurrock. As one of the largest Local Skills Improvement Plan areas nationally (a population of 1.9 million) and an entrepreneurial location (home to nearly 81,000 businesses), skills and recruitment is at the forefront of employers' concerns.



4. Impact to Date

The information collected in the production of the Local Skills Improvement Plan was used to support a bid to the Department for Education for new funds to help address the vocational and technical skills needs of businesses in Essex. By contributing to the research, local businesses have helped us to support local Further Education Colleges to secure a total of £5.5 million of additional funding for the area. This will be used to support the following projects:

- Capital funding for Chelmsford College enabling the Learning & Resource Centre to be repurposed into a digital & employability hub aligned to LSIP key sectors.
- Capital funding for Colchester Institute's Net Zero Centre to introduce domestic renewables training courses and commercial training in areas such as heat pumps, solar PV, battery storage and EV Charging installations.
- Colchester Institute will also establish a new Digital Skills Growth Hub through the purchase of new hardware. This will enable the college to expand its work with the creative and digital businesses based at SPACE in Queen's Street Colchester, and those who will work from the nearby £3.7m AIXR Centre for Immersive Technologies opening in 2024.
- Harlow College will repurpose and equip 4 existing teaching spaces to create state of the art digital learning areas, enabling delivery of technical skills for digital, creative, health sciences.
- New City College (Epping Campus) will convert 120m² of existing storage space into a low carbon laboratory space.
- South Essex College will repurpose 618m² of space on the first floor of their Thurrock building to accommodate new music technology provision which will be linked to the Backstage Centre at High House Production Park.
- USP College will repurpose the college theatre at its Seevic Campus creating a multi-purpose and adaptive digital learning and immersive technology space.

Essex County Council is also providing £610,000 of additional funding to support even more opportunities. This extra funding will address employer engagement, tutor shortages and retention, and developing a talent pipeline. Combined with the £5.5 million of Department for Education funding for facilities and equipment, this extra funding will significantly accelerate addressing skills priorities across the county.

5. Get Involved and Make a Difference

As the Employment and Skills Board drives this agenda forward, Essex Chambers will need more employers to get involved and contribute to keeping our information regarding skills priorities and barriers up to date. Further information on how to get involved can be found [here](#).



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