

# Essex Skills Plan

## 2022 – 2023

An employer-led partnership approach  
to local skills delivery



**This Skills Plan was produced through an Essex Skills Roundtable which was chaired by Councillor Tony Ball with the specific remit to develop an externally facing document.**

Members included local employers, skills providers, further and higher education representatives, local authorities and sector bodies. Engagement has also taken place with key partners such as the Essex Anchor Network, sector bodies, National Careers Service and Job Centre Plus.

This plan is deliberately light touch due to emerging skills policy nationally including a potential forthcoming Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) for Essex, Southend and Thurrock with the Department for Education (DfE) which will provide further detail on local economy requirements for skills.

This Essex Skills Plan has been produced in the interim to articulate Essex priorities in the immediate term and will therefore feed into the LSIP.

A full evidence base (with district and sector sections) is in development and will also be added soon and updated regularly, utilising and contributing to Essex Open Data.

As an “early win” and area of action, an Essex Careers Magazine will soon be published. It is intended for all ages and will showcase local opportunities, sectors and support.

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## Foreword from Councillor Tony Ball

It's a significant time for the skills agenda. With national policy cementing the key role of skills in the economy and growth coupled with local sector shortages, it is vital that we collectively support employers and individuals in Essex to gain the skills they need.

In light of this, and notably, this plan represents a consensus across the public and private sector as to what is required to help ensure everyone gains the skills they need. We have brought together a partnership of employers, further and higher education, training providers, third sector, industry bodies and local authorities. As one of the biggest counties in England, we hope to illustrate to local and national partners, and Government, our shared commitment and aspiration to deliver real results — which also builds upon the Essex County Council Everyone's Essex Plan.

Essex is home to nearly 77,000 enterprises, 99.7% of which are small and medium sized, as well as some household names, such as Ford, Wilkin and Sons and Stansted airport. Indeed, some of the largest national infrastructure projects will be located here, as well as two new

Freeports. Our 1.5 million population is as large as countries such as Estonia — we are a county famous for its entrepreneurial spirit. But Essex is a diverse geography with coastal, rural, urban, wealthy and deprived areas, and so has key areas of focus for our Levelling Up work. Proximity to London brings opportunities and challenges, with high levels of out-commuting. Skills levels, although improving, remain below the national average. Importantly, data and employer feedback confirm that many sectors are struggling to recruit.

We are also living through a period of immense change. Factors such as the digital revolution, changing work patterns, net zero, cost of living and population growth are having a significant local impact. This said, we have an excellent foundation on which to build, and with much work underway already, it is without doubt that Essex is an ambitious area with committed partners who will ensure that we rise to the challenges set out in this plan. This is only the first step, to share a headline consensus on what is needed. We intend to build upon and update this regularly as very much a 'live' document and we will check our progress regularly.



**Councillor Tony Ball**, Chair of Essex Skills Roundtable group and Essex County Council Cabinet Member for Education Excellence, Lifelong Learning and Employability

## Business driven — employer-led

“Essex Chambers of Commerce is pleased to support and endorse this Skills Plan. As home to a wide range of businesses from sole traders and small businesses through to national and international companies, Essex is very well placed to take a truly employer-led approach to skills.

It has been really positive to collaborate on this plan, which will provide an excellent foundation for the forthcoming Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) this year. We are thrilled to have been confirmed by the Government as a designated Employer Representative Body (ERB) and therefore leading on this important area of work. This also enables us to build upon our existing work to ensure that elected politicians and policy makers are aware of the needs of our members, and Essex businesses generally, on a range of issues that affect them. This is achieved through

meetings locally and at Westminster and through groups such as our Essex Business Transport and Infrastructure Forum.


We know from our membership and engagement across Essex, as well as our national work through the British Chamber of Commerce, how important it is to capture and respond to employer needs. Events, networking meetings, export and international trade are core parts of our work and we know first hand the challenges and opportunities experienced by local businesses. This will enable us to engage with employers at speed and to put forward to Government solutions to any skills barriers they are experiencing. A skilled workforce is of course critical for any business, and we are pleased to be helping to ensure the skills system is responsive to employer needs.

This plan enables us to start collaborating on areas of action straight away — a great illustration of the Essex entrepreneurial spirit. We look forward to helping to deliver against this plan and to ensuring that work continues to be business driven and employer-led. Our thanks to everyone involved so far.”



**Denise Rossiter**, Chief Executive, Essex Chambers of Commerce





“We are pleased to endorse the Essex Skills Plan and the collaborative, employer-led approach it sets out. With so many skills shortages faced by local businesses, and with significant growth happening here, it is vital that we equip people of all ages to respond to these by having the skills needed now and in the future. We look forward to working with Essex partners to help deliver against the actions for people and businesses in Essex.”



**David Rayner**, Birkett Long LLP,  
Chair, Success Essex Board

“We are pleased to support the Essex Skills Plan and particularly welcome the opportunity to highlight the challenges and opportunities experienced by employers in south Essex as well as the significant amount of growth happening here. The large majority of our businesses are small and micro and so it’s vital that we support them to navigate and get the most from the skills system. This plan will help us to do just that.”



**Perry Glading**, Chair, Opportunity  
South Essex



# Skills vision statement and priorities

## Vision:

To help deliver a flourishing and inclusive economy across Essex by equipping employers, adults and young people with the skills, conditions and aptitudes required for significant and clean growth today and tomorrow.

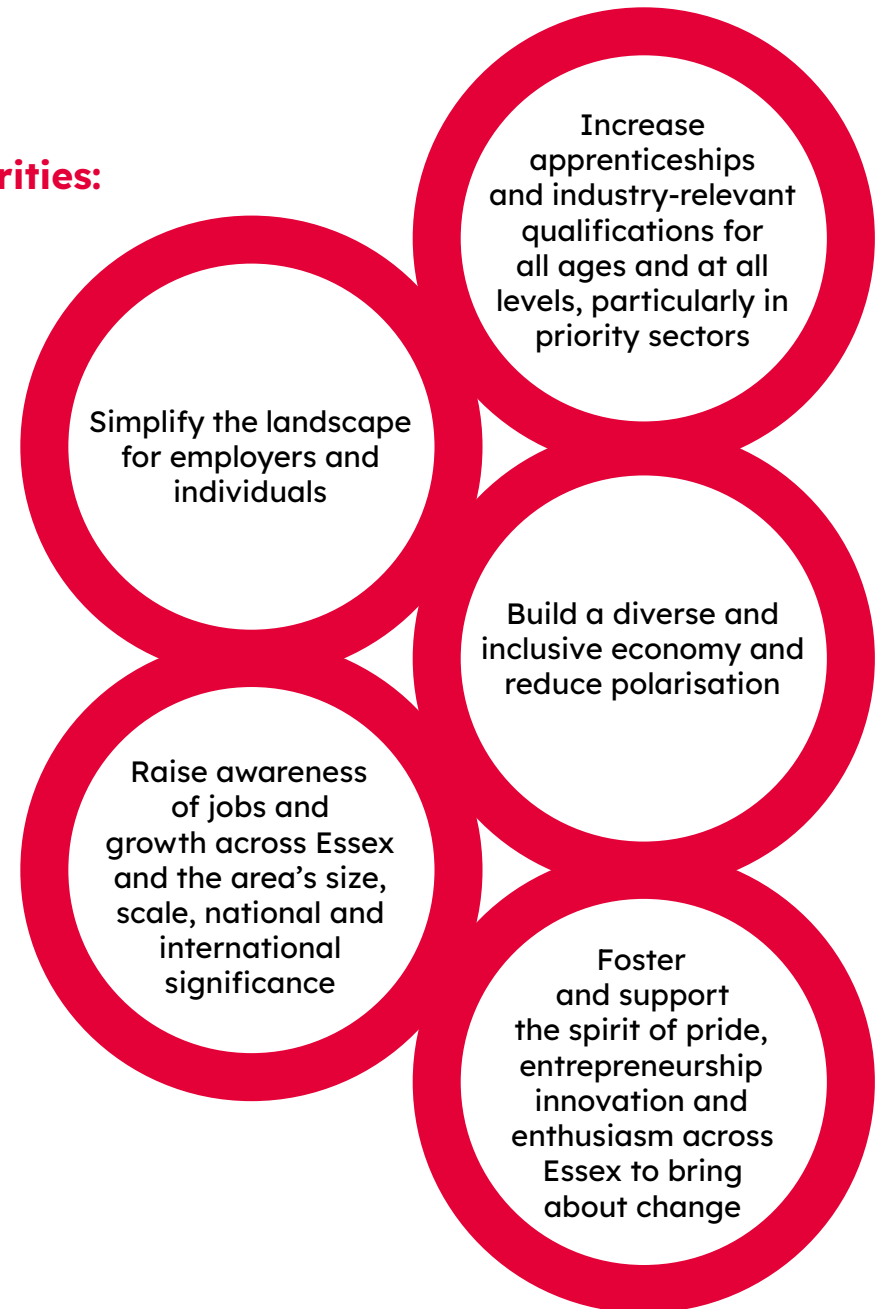
## General principles

In developing the Essex Skills Plan, partners have agreed to work to five general principles which apply to all aspects of the Skills Plan and its delivery:

1. Inclusive growth creating opportunities for all
2. Developing and maintaining a partnership approach, with education partners, local authorities, employers, business representative organisations and sector bodies
3. An employer-led approach to be at the forefront of the Skills Plan in conjunction with other work such as the Strategic Development Fund
4. A commitment to working together to address the findings of the Skills Plan
5. A joined-up voice to share the Essex perspective with Government, national bodies, funders and key stakeholders

Further information on the general principles is provided in the appendix section.

## Priorities:



## Background and rationale – the national context

As reflected in the foreword, it is a period of significant change. As well as new areas of Government policy which are explored below, the impacts of Covid-19 are still being felt.

There are also significant labour market shortages across all sectors impacting on recruitment, and working patterns have changed. Added to this, the digital revolution is providing opportunities, such as virtual work and training, as well as challenges, such as digital poverty and automation placing entry level jobs at risk. As well as major projects, housing and population growth will increase the skills need. External factors such as global economic patterns, climate change and food security are having very real local impacts.

The Department for Education (DfE) has also trailblazed new Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) in eight areas of the country, including in Kent and Sussex. These counties, along with Essex, are located within the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) geography. Developed by Employer Representative Bodies, LSIPs are part of a suite of reforms launched in the Government's Skills and Post-16 Education Act that aim to put

employers more firmly at the heart of the skills system. Expressions of interest were submitted in June 2022 for the first tranche of national LSIPs. The Government's Levelling Up White Paper contained 12 'levelling up' missions, including a Skills Mission. Headlines from this paper are below and in the appendix section.

Thurrock and Southend Skills Plans are also in development alongside SELEP's Skills Report, which is produced for the DfE. The vision and priorities above are consistent with the LEP's. This plan is also aligned to the Essex Sector Development Strategy and Green Infrastructure Plan.

In the context of national and local developments, partners agreed that an Essex Skills Plan was required. The plan aligns with the aforementioned strategies and details plans to respond to changes and optimise benefits from emerging Government policy on skills, as set out on the following pages.

## Impact of the Government's new and existing national skills policy for Essex (further information in appendix section)

**Skills Mission:** By 2030, the number of people successfully completing high-quality skills training will have significantly increased in every area of the UK. In England, this will lead to 200,000 more people successfully completing high-quality training each year, driven by 80,000 more people completing courses in the lowest skilled areas.

### New national policy

<b>Future Skills Unit</b>	A new Unit for Future Skills will be formed.
<b>New Higher Education (HE) Provision</b>	Increased access to HE, particularly in towns, cities and rural locations without access to this provision.
<b>Institutes of Technology (IoTs) and IoT Royal Charter</b>	Further nine Institutes of Technology (IoTs) announced and proposal that IoTs may apply for Royal Charter status.
<b>Department for Education (DfE), Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) pathfinder projects</b>	Three Pathfinder areas aim to bring greater alignment to DWP and DfE interventions working with local Government to match local employment sectoral demand via upskilling (Blackpool, Walsall and Barking and Dagenham).
<b>UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)/Multiply</b>	Firm ringfence of Multiply (support for adults with maths skills) within the UKSPF as a DfE programme. For the Non-Multiply portion of UKSPF, funding will be delivered through lower tiers or MCAs.
<b>Skills Devolution and Adult Education Budget (AEB)</b>	New devolution framework for England with accountability. Devolution to local leaders through devolution deals with clear accountability. Devolution of AEB.



## Existing national policy

<b>Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs)</b>	2021/2022 Skills Accelerator piloting new employer-led Local Skills Improvement Plans and supporting providers with Strategic Development Funding to help shape technical skills provision to better meet local labour market needs.
<b>Funding and Accountability</b>	Reforms to embed local employers at the heart of the system enabling providers to respond to local skills needs.
<b>Skills Bootcamps</b>	Announced at Spending Review 2021 to ensure acute national and local skills shortages can be addressed at speed (e.g. skills shortages) through specialist training.
<b>T Levels, apprenticeships and Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs)</b>	Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) to be rolled out from September 2022, enhanced apprenticeship recruitment service for SMEs and T Levels with employer input.
<b>16-19 free schools</b>	We will open new 16-19 free schools for talented children from disadvantaged backgrounds to have access to a college, school sixth form or 16-19 academy. Has a track record of progress onto leading universities. This opportunity is targeted at areas where it is most needed.
<b>Lifelong Loan Entitlement</b>	In 2025, this will transform student finance system to deliver parity between FE and HE.
<b>Further Education (FE) Capital Transformation Programme (FECT)</b>	£1.5bn FECT programme to invest and transform college estate in England.
<b>Further Education (FE) Role, new provision, access and participation</b>	New Model Institute for Technology and Engineering (NMITE), Higher Education and Research Act (HERA), Office for Students (OfS) and refocussed Access and Participation Plans focussed on social mobility.
<b>Lifetime Skills Guarantee (LSG)</b>	LSG announced in September 2020 to enable individuals to access flexible support to train, retrain and upskill throughout their lives. Free approved L3 qualification infer Free Courses for Jobs programme and expanded trial for high value L3 qualification for free.

## Essex Headlines

- Essex engagement underway with **Unit for Future Skills** and dashboard
- **Institute for Technology** for South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) area led by South East College and local employers
- **Multiply Programme** is rolling out (led by Essex County Council and Southend and Thurrock Councils)
- **Devolution discussions** underway
- This plan to help inform LSIP (**Local Skills Improvement Plan**) and Strategic Development Funding
- Engagement with **Skills Bootcamps** underway
- Supporting employers and providers with **apprenticeships and T Levels**, including through the Essex Apprenticeship Levy transfer service.

# An overview of Essex

Essex is one of the largest counties in England, working with Southend and Thurrock across what is known as the 'Greater Essex' geography. It is a diverse area, with one of the longest coastlines, rural and urban areas and some of the wealthiest and most deprived parts of the country.

Proximity to London is significant, with high levels of commuting to the capital or home-based working for London-based employers. Similarly, proximity to areas such as Cambridge, Hertfordshire and Suffolk are factors for people commuting in and out of Essex.

Skills levels have improved but are still generally below the national average, although there are variations at district level, which the evidence base will explore more fully. Collaboration between the public and private sector is already strong, with a flourishing SME sector and some world-renowned employers already working to support skills in a variety of ways. Essex partners are clear on the importance of skills to economic growth and to individuals' prospects.



There are also three geographically focussed economic corridors in Essex. Whilst this plan has an Essex-wide remit, it is informed by the needs of each corridor. We will work with each corridor in the future to develop their own objectives and action plans where required.

## South Essex

Work is being led by the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA), representing Basildon, Brentwood, Castle Point, Rochford, Thurrock and Southend.

## The UK Innovation Corridor

Stretching from London to Cambridge by the M11 motorway and including Harlow, Uttlesford and Epping Forest.

## North Essex

Work is being led by the North Essex Economic Board, including Colchester, Chelmsford, Braintree, Tendring, Maldon and Uttlesford.

## At a glance — key facts and figures

The forthcoming evidence base will expand on and regularly update these statistics

	Essex	Southend	Thurrock	Region	UK
Population (2020)	1,497,800	182,800	175,500	6,269,200	65,185
Working age population (16-64) (2020)	903,800	111,200	110,200	60.6%	62.4%
Workless households (and as % of all households) (2021)	51,000 (11.1%)	4,900 (9%)	4,300 (8.6%)	218,100 (11.2%)	2,866,800 (14%)
In employment (16-64) (Jul 2021-Jun 2022)	79%	76.8%	79.3%	77.9%	75.5%
Self-employed (16-64) (Jul 2021-Jun 2022)	8.8%	10.2%	11.8%	9.4%	9.2%
% Working age with <b>qualification level 1</b> and above (Jan-Dec 2021)	88.6%	88.4%	82.8%	88.5%	87.5%
% Working age with <b>qualification level 2</b> and above	74.5%	76%	68.6%	76.7%	78.1%
% Working age with <b>qualification level 3</b> and above	53.6%	56%	45.2%	58.2%	61.5%
% Working age with <b>qualification level 4</b> and above	35.2%	37.9%	27%	39.6%	43.6%
% Working age with no qualification	4.9%	5.6%	7.1%	5.8%	6.6%
Weekly earnings (residence based) (2022)	£689.90	£697.70	£702.0	£667.60	£642.20
Weekly earnings (work based) (2022)	£622.20	£600.80	£632.20	£667.60	£642.20
Out-of-work benefit claimants (2022)	3.5% (31,925)	4.7% (5,205)	4.0% (4,405)	3.6%	4.4%
Job density (2020)	0.77	0.72	0.74	0.85	0.84



## Business and sector make up in Essex

Although there are a number of high-profile large employers in Essex, the overview to the right illustrates the large presence of small and micro-businesses, with whom it is essential to engage. Essex has a slightly larger proportion of micro-businesses than the regional average, with 90.2% of all businesses employing fewer than nine people and 99.7% of all businesses being in the SME category. Small businesses often require additional support to engage with the skills system and to provide opportunities such as apprenticeships. In general, the number of businesses in Essex has steadily increased, from 51,600 in 2011 to 66,800 in 2020.

### UK business counts (2022)

	Essex	Southend	Thurrock	Region
<b>Micro (0-9)</b>	60,110 (90%)	6,460 (91%)	6,455 (92.2%)	245,350 (90%)
<b>Small (10-49)</b>	5,590 (8.4%)	535 (7.6%)	445 (6.4%)	22,415 (8.2%)
<b>Medium (50-249)</b>	920 (1.4%)	80 (1.1%)	90 (1.3%)	3,975 (1.5%)
<b>Large (250+)</b>	180 (0.3%)	20 (0.4%)	15 (0.2%)	955 (0.4%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>66,800</b>	<b>7,015</b>	<b>7,005</b>	<b>272,695</b>

Source: Official Labour Market Statistics (Nomis)

## Employee jobs (2021)

Essex has a total of 592,000 jobs, of which 65.2% are full-time, slightly below the national average of 68.1%. The table below captures the higher-than-average construction, health and care and retail sector jobs. All sectors are experiencing high vacancy rates and difficulties recruiting. With the population growth, figures show shortages in sectors like health and care are likely to continue, so supporting people into these is vital. Along with population growth, jobs are expected to grow in sectors such as construction, health and care.

	<b>Essex</b>	<b>Southend</b>	<b>Thurrock</b>	<b>Region</b>	<b>UK</b>
<b>Employee jobs</b>	592,000	64,000	73,000		
<b>Full-time</b>	386,000 (65.2%)	39,000	48,000 (65.8%)	66.9%	68.1%
<b>Part-time</b>	206,000 (34.8%)	25,000	25,000 (34.2%)	33.1%	31.9%
<b>Jobs by industry</b>					
<b>Manufacturing</b>	39,000 (6.6%)	4,000 (6.2%)	3,000 (4.1%)	7.3%	7.6%
<b>Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply</b>	500 (0.1%)	50 (0.1%)	200 (0.3%)	0.2%	0.4%
<b>Water supply, sewerage, waste management</b>	5,000 (0.8%)	75 (0.1%)	800 (1.1%)	0.7%	0.7%
<b>Construction</b>	46,000 (7.8%)	3,000 (4.6%)	6,000 (8.1%)	5.9%	4.9%
<b>Wholesale and retail trade, repair of vehicles</b>	93,000 (15.7%)	9,000 (13.8%)	16,000 (21.6%)	15.2%	14.4%
<b>Transportation and storage</b>	32,000 (5.4%)	1,750 (2.7%)	16,000 (21.6%)	5.5%	5.1%
<b>Accommodation and food service activities</b>	43,000 (7.3%)	6,000 (9.2%)	4,000 (5.4%)	6.9%	7.5%
<b>Information and communication</b>	22,000 (3.7%)	1,500 (2.3%)	1,000 (1.4%)	4.1%	4.5%
<b>Finance and insurance</b>	15,000 (2.5%)	1,500 (2.3%)	600 (0.8%)	2.1%	3.6%
<b>Real estate activities</b>	10,000 (1.7%)	1,250 (1.9%)	800 (1.1%)	1.7%	1.8%
<b>Professional, scientific and technical activities</b>	50,000 (8.4%)	5,000 (7.7%)	2,250 (3.0%)	9.2%	8.9%
<b>Admin and service support activities</b>	55,000 (9.3%)	6,000 (9.2%)	6,000 (8.1%)	11.8%	8.9%
<b>Public admin and defence</b>	17,000 (2.9%)	3,000 (4.6%)	6,000 (8.1%)	3.4%	4.6%
<b>Education</b>	57,000 (9.6%)	7,000 (10.8%)	6,000 (8.1%)	9.5%	8.8%
<b>Health and social work</b>	81,000 (13.7%)	11,000 (16.9%)	3,500 (4.7%)	12.2%	13.7%
<b>Arts, entertainment and recreation</b>	13,000 (2.2%)	2,250 (3.5%)	900 (1.2%)	2.2%	2.3%
<b>Other service activities</b>	11,000 (1.9%)	1,000 (1.5%)	900 (1.2%)	1.8%	1.9%

Source: Official Labour Market Statistics (Nomis)

# Vacancies and growth

Vacancies in Essex continue to reflect the key sectors and general labour market shortages. Of over 195,000 vacancies posted across Greater Essex from May 2021 to May 2022, most frequently posted vacancies included care workers, nurses, sales-related occupations and customer service roles.

Top skills sought included communications, management, customer service, sales, planning, leadership, teaching, operations and problem solving. Chelmsford, Colchester, Basildon, Harlow, Southend and Braintree saw the highest number of vacancies.

As the graph on the right illustrates, levels of vacancies are also significantly above those at the same period last year. Further information on vacancies will be included in the evidence base to support this plan.

**Job vacancies in Greater Essex in Oct and Nov 2021 and Oct and Nov 2022**





A number of additional factors and projects will impact upon future jobs, which could be used to engage local communities. This includes nationally significant infrastructure projects (NSIPs) such as the Lower Thames Crossing.

A recent report undertaken for the SELEP by Mace Group includes some preliminary figures about potential additional jobs resulting from these projects. This estimates that a workforce of over 76,000 is needed by 2024, with a peak demand of 117,000 in the period between 2025 and 2028. The report also states that there are significant challenges in meeting these skills in the context of existing shortages. The report also breaks figures down into South Essex, Southend and Thurrock, with estimated demand as shown on the right. Due to the nature of projects and changing timescales, it will be important to continue to monitor this. The Mace report also makes a series of recommendations, which are reflected in the action plan section below.

### **South Essex, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock — three Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects**

- Approximately 2,700 jobs between now and 2024
- Approximately 23,600 jobs between 2025 and 2028
- Approximately 11,300 jobs between 2029 and 2038
- Approximately 600 jobs from 2039 onwards.

### **North Essex — three projects**

- Approximately 21,800 jobs between now and 2024
- Approximately 25,700 jobs between 2025 and 2028
- Approximately 5,500 jobs between 2029 and 2038
- Approximately 20 jobs from 2039 onwards.

The case studies on the following pages are just a few examples of projects and developments that will impact on skills and employment needs.

## The proposed Lower Thames Crossing

The Lower Thames Crossing would be part of the biggest investment in the country's road network for a generation. It will almost double road capacity over the Thames east of London, bringing communities together and giving millions of people more flexibility and choice for where they live, work and learn.

The Lower Thames Crossing wants to ensure local people can take advantage of the opportunities that will be on their doorstep. During construction, they aim to recruit more than 45% of their workforce locally and aspire to raise the skills levels of people and businesses within their communities. There will be a wide range of skills needed to construct the project, and they plan to drive change and futureproof skills across the region and construction sector by ensuring their workforce is trained to do their job more sustainably.

## Thames Freeport

DP World and Forth Ports are bidding for a Thames Freeport, with London Gateway, the Port of Tilbury and Ford's Dagenham engine plant at the centre. This highlights the role of the River Thames. The proposal includes a Thames Freeport Skills Accelerator and the potential for 20,000 new jobs.



## Freeport East

A partnership between Hutchison Ports, Harwich Haven Authority New Anglia LEP, South East LEP and local authorities. This will be centred on the Port of Felixstowe and Harwich International Port.

## Bradwell B

A proposed new nuclear power station dependent on Government plans and

Development Consent Orders (DCOs), which would be built at Bradwell-on-Sea. Proposals are for a twin reactor power station, able to generate 2.2GW of low carbon electricity, enough to power around four million homes. Such a power station could employ as many as 9,000 people at peak construction, if it goes ahead. It is also important to note the development of Sizewell C in Suffolk, which will impact Essex, as there may be some commuting from North Essex to jobs at the station.

## **UK Health Security Agency (previously Public Health England) relocation to Harlow**

A public health science campus at Harlow, Essex. This involves the construction and development of a world-leading national Science Hub, bringing together key public health science and research capabilities.

The UKHSA strategy will continue to develop over the coming months. Harlow's place in that strategy, and how the future site will work with the wider organisation, will be assessed and assured. Under current plans the first staff are scheduled to move in the 2026/2027 financial year. First recruitment will include facilities management, IT and some hyper-scientists. This will help to grow science and technology skills in Harlow.

## **Garden communities**

Plans for garden communities are developing across Essex, including Harlow and Gilston Garden Town, Tendring and Colchester Borders Garden Community. In South Essex, a joint infrastructure and strategic plan will develop a blueprint for new homes, jobs and infrastructure.

## **The Anchor Network**

Various anchor institutions in Essex are significant employers in their own right. They offer a range of opportunities and showcase leadership in areas such as apprenticeships and inclusive growth.

Anchor institutions include local authorities, universities, colleges, hospitals and care homes. Many are part of the Essex Anchors Network, which encompasses Southend and Thurrock, and is starting to develop a collaborative approach to employment. This will include inclusive and accessible employment practices and how we can best showcase the range of opportunities in the public sector.



Further information about the Anchor institutions is available at [available on the Future of Essex website.](#)










## Sector snapshot and future outlook

Sectors set out below are labelled as ‘key’ and also ‘future growth’. ‘Key’ describes a sector which is large, established and significant to Essex. ‘Growth’ describes where a sector will see significant growth over the coming years.




The **Essex Sector Development Strategy** has also identified five sectors for growth: construction and retrofit, clean energy, advanced manufacturing and engineering, Digi-tech and life sciences.

Sector	Essex picture now	Future outlook / pandemic impact
<p><b>Construction</b></p> <p>Key and future growth sector</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 58,000 jobs — above national average</li> <li>• Ageing workforce</li> <li>• Disproportionately male workforce</li> <li>• Competition from London</li> <li>• Vacancies include quantity surveyors, bricklayers, architects and carpenters</li> <li>• Public perception hindering new entrants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued growth — housing growth across Essex</li> <li>• Large infrastructure projects, such as Lower Thames Crossing</li> <li>• Growing need for green and low carbon, retrofit skills and digital practices</li> <li>• Large requirements for ‘off-site’ jobs</li> </ul>
<p><b>Health and care</b></p> <p>Key and future growth sector (Med-Tech and Care Tech)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 98,000 jobs</li> <li>• Disproportionately female workforce (particularly care)</li> <li>• Occupations and vacancies include care workers, nurses, social workers and residential care managers</li> <li>• Negative public perceptions of the sector (particularly care) hindering recruitment but good opportunities to progress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population growth and ageing population will impact on sector</li> <li>• Opportunities to use digital technologies</li> <li>• Increased vacancies through pandemic. Some reduction of EU and overseas care workers.</li> <li>• The pandemic raised the profile of the sectors</li> </ul>

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Essex picture now</b>	<b>Future outlook / pandemic impact</b>
<p><b>IT, digital and creative</b></p> <p><b>Key and future growth sector</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 37,400 jobs</li> <li>• IT disproportionately male</li> <li>• Creative sector has a lot of freelancers – lack capacity to engage in traditional skills models (e.g. apprenticeships)</li> <li>• Vacancies include software developers, coders, IT support, graphic designers and programmers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital roles required across all sectors given the ‘digital revolution’</li> <li>• Games, entertainment and cultural part of sector likely to see growth</li> <li>• IT jobs are resilient and saw growth through the pandemic. Creative sector experienced high levels of furlough (70%+) and lack of income</li> </ul>
<p><b>Finance</b></p> <p><b>Key sector of employment</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18,350 jobs</li> <li>• Strong relationship to London – high commuting to finance jobs</li> <li>• Occupations and vacancies include insurance underwriters, finance analysts, sales-related roles and financial managers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some finance companies are relocating away from London</li> <li>• Growing need for IT (software) skills due to online nature of industry</li> <li>• Potential risk of jobs moving elsewhere in Europe or beyond if companies move out of London</li> <li>• Continued operation through pandemic as move to home working. Longer term, there could be a shift away from London-based jobs</li> </ul>
<p><b>Manufacturing and engineering</b></p> <p><b>Key and future growth sector</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 41,500 jobs – below national average</li> <li>• Disproportionately male workforce</li> <li>• Ageing workforce</li> <li>• Occupations and vacancies include mechanical engineers, production managers, engineering managers and test engineers</li> <li>• Negative public perception hindering recruitment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ageing workforce likely to impact on skills needed – high need for technical skills</li> <li>• Digital and robotics will change the skills required in future</li> <li>• Projected reduction in overall employment in the sector, but the ageing workforce, need for digital skills and competition from other sectors means a skills shortage is still likely</li> </ul>
<p><b>Education</b></p> <p><b>Key sector</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 60,000 jobs</li> <li>• Reported difficulties recruiting and retaining staff</li> <li>• Vacancies include education teaching professionals, teaching assistants, primary and nursery education teaching professionals and FE and HE tutors</li> <li>• Largely public sector so reliant on public funding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A continued need given population growth</li> <li>• General challenges in schools, colleges and universities recruiting to specialisms, especially where there are shortages in the sector</li> <li>• Impact of pandemic in adapting to online learning</li> </ul>

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Essex picture now</b>	<b>Future outlook / pandemic impact</b>
<p><b>Transport and logistics</b></p> <p>Key sector</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 52,500 jobs — above national average</li> <li>• Disproportionate male workforce</li> <li>• Of national significance because of international and national gateways</li> <li>• Vacancies include HGV drivers, forklift truck drivers, warehouse managers, transport managers and depot managers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact of digital and robotics on future skills requirements (e.g. automated warehousing)</li> <li>• Thames Freeport and Freeport East to grow and expand economic activity near local ports</li> <li>• Parts of sector (e.g. HGV driving) saw huge increase in demand throughout pandemic</li> <li>• One of top sectors recruiting during pandemic</li> </ul>
<p><b>Energy and utilities, water and waste</b></p> <p>Key and future growth sector</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9,115 jobs — above national average</li> <li>• Occupations and vacancies include water and sewerage operatives, engineering technicians and business sales executives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Similar shortages to the engineering sector</li> <li>• Possible future skills needs for intelligent energy systems that track energy usage or operating solar, wind and carbon capture technologies</li> </ul>
<p><b>Accommodation, food, hospitality and tourism</b></p> <p>Key sector</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 51,500 jobs</li> <li>• Links to agriculture and land-based jobs</li> <li>• Occupations and vacancies include restaurant managers, bar staff and hotel managers</li> <li>• Staff shortages</li> <li>• Huge impact from pandemic, with high rates of staff furloughed (70+%). Recovering now but experiencing shortages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued adaptation of the market through trends such as Airbnb</li> <li>• Growth of jobs through new restaurants, hotels and bars</li> <li>• High employee turnover rate</li> </ul>



<b>Sector</b>	<b>Essex picture now</b>	<b>Future outlook / pandemic impact</b>
<p><b>Wholesale and retail trade</b></p> <p>Key sector</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 126,000 jobs — above national average</li> <li>• Occupations and vacancies include store managers, sales executives and retail salespeople</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heavy reliance on, and inter-relation with, the transport and logistics sector</li> <li>• Online retail impacting jobs and affecting need for digital skills required for automation and online processes</li> <li>• Significantly impacted by the pandemic, with high proportions of people furloughed (70%+)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Agriculture and land-based jobs</b></p> <p>Key sector</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7,478 people employed in Essex</li> <li>• Occupations include farmers, agriculture managers and animal care services occupations</li> <li>• 74.4% of workforce male (nationally)</li> <li>• Vacancies include landscapers, veterinary nurses and farm estate workers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Links to food security and climate change — potential for more UK production if imports become too costly</li> <li>• Misconceptions of sector and lack of awareness of aspects such as robotics in farming</li> <li>• Innovations in areas such as wine production could lead to further need — increasing presence of local vineyards</li> <li>• Growing need for farm-based Research and Development and response to climate change</li> <li>• Increased demand through pandemic and spotlight on sector</li> <li>• Sector has grown in Essex and is projected to grow further</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sport and physical activity</b></p> <p>Key sector</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18,901 jobs</li> <li>• 59% of workforce is aged under 35</li> <li>• Almost even split of female / male workforce (54% male / 46% female)</li> <li>• Occupations and vacancies include personal trainers, lifeguards, sports coaches, activity coordinators and fitness instructors</li> <li>• High employee turnover rate</li> <li>• Public perception of sector hinders recruitment (student, part-time, not seen as a career)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA) supporting development of traditional skills models to tackle barriers</li> <li>• Huge impact from pandemic, with large numbers furloughed — recovering but still shortages</li> <li>• A clear opportunity to support the health and care sector with population health and wellbeing</li> </ul>

## Showcasing success

**Essex is an ambitious area with a strong track record of galvanizing partners, committing to action and bringing about change. This is clearly an excellent foundation upon which to deliver this Skills Plan and to provide confidence in its success. Various programmes of support and leading-edge facilities with education and employer partnership at the core are already in place. Just some examples are as follows:**

### Pathways to Diagnostic Trailblazer Project — Colchester Institute and ESNEFT

This innovative partnership project (funded by the UK Community Renewal Fund) was designed by East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust (ESNEFT) and Colchester Institute (CI) to provide Tendring residents with the opportunity to acquire requisite skills to access local job opportunities at the new Community Diagnostic Centre (CDC) at Clacton Hospital.

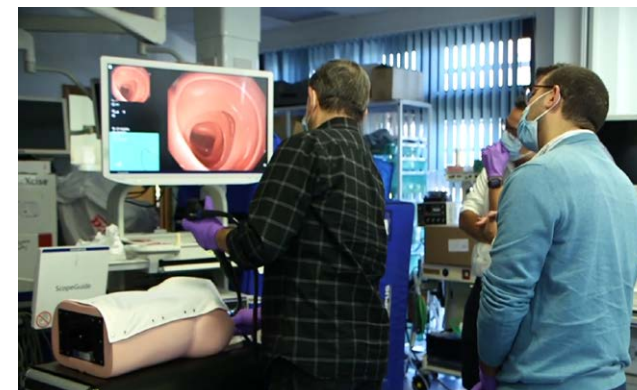
The CDC requires a significant number of skilled recruits to meet its strategic intent over the next five years. A thriving CDC will greatly support the Levelling Up agenda in a deprived community. Not only will Tendring residents have direct local access to diagnostic procedures, but job creation will lead to improved economic wellbeing, leading to improved health outcomes that follow on from gainful employment.

The first of six participant cohorts started in December 2021 and by May 2022, when the fourth cohort commenced, 168 trainees had engaged with the programme. The twelve-week programme consists of initial IAG, clinical masterclasses, rotational work placements, online learning and individual support. For some students, an introductory qualification in the health professions, or qualifications in literacy and/or numeracy are also part of the fully funded package. Distinct programme elements are delivered by staff from both organisations, which



concludes with a guaranteed interview for suitable vacancies within the Trust.

With the option of pursuing either a clinical or non-clinical route into NHS employment, and with some participants having already secured roles in both administrative and support functions, the project is well on the way to achieving the target conversions of 50 local residents into employment by the end of the scheme. Such is the success of the project, the delivery partners are already looking to potentially replicate the scheme for other areas of the Trust's activities.



## XTEND Digital Campus at USP College

Leading with Virtual Reality (VR) and Artificial Reality (AR) technologies.

USP College has paced its digital innovative journey, from the creation and implementation of immersive classrooms, which remove geographical limitations accessing high quality curriculum, through to the opening of its own state-of-the-art digital technology centre, XTEND Digital.

XTEND Digital (funded by Essex County Council and the South East Local Enterprise Partnership) specialises in Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality, Extended Reality and Immersive Education. The college, partnered with industry experts, have achieved a career-focused, workplace style environment that offers real time employer engagement and live briefs. Using the centre's available technologies, the college's E-Sports, Games Development and Creative Media students are able to deliver real products and solutions, offering a direct pipeline into industry, a unique opportunity not otherwise accessible. This is delivered and supported through the onsite College Company.

The centre has welcomed, and continues to collaborate with, a number of high profile employers, including Pearson, NHS, Essex Police, Midlands Police, DLALA Studios, HDS Securities, Lower Thames Crossing and more.



### Emerging technologies

Test and engage in new and emerging technologies video wall, motion simulator, Teslasuits and VR headset experiences.



### Motion capture studio

Studio with a state-of-the-art 20-camera OptiTrack PrimeX22 system. Capacity to track body, facial and fingertip movements of up to four people wearing full body suits.



### Volumetric and photogrammetry

Large green screen Volumetrics (holographic capture) Photogrammetric 3D Scanners offer perfect 3D data and capture of assets.



### Immersive environment

Immersive education, linked immersive learning and seamless and engaging live teaching experience across multiple locations.



## Kickstart in Essex

There were a range of Kickstart programmes across Essex and this is just one example of how this has made a difference to someone in the creative sector.

The Kickstart Scheme was created by the Government during the pandemic to provide young people aged 16 to 24, who were in receipt of universal credit, with a fully funded six-month work placement. Essex County Council set up a Kickstart Gateway to enable SMEs to participate in the scheme and provide a breadth of opportunity for young people in Essex.

Blossom Thwaites started a Kickstart placement with Basildon-based Chic Media Limited in September 2021 with no prior experience in photography other than taking snaps of her daughter on a mobile phone. Fast-forward eight months and Blossom has not only completed her placement but has developed such strong media and photography skills that she has secured a permanent position with the Basildon company.

Blossom found formal education settings challenging and fell into, rather than chose, an apprenticeship in hairdressing when she left school. She says, "School was difficult



and when I left I had to do a one-day placement. The only option available was hairdressing, but I soon decided it just wasn't for me."

Something that Blossom did love doing was taking pictures of her young daughter on her phone. She explains, "I would do mini shoots of my daughter and it was something I really enjoyed, but I had no experience of using a proper camera."

After leaving her hairdressing apprenticeship, Blossom explored various options with her DWP job coach.

"I told my coach that I really liked

photography," Blossom says. "But she said that entry level jobs in creative media didn't come up very often. Then she found this Kickstart position with Chic Media and I was thrilled that such a great opportunity existed."

Blossom applied and interviewed for the job and her application was successful. She believes that the placement has provided her with all the necessary skills she needs to work in the photographic industry.

"I have learnt a lot, such as how to use a camera properly. I now know how to edit footage and photos and I have done a course on how to light shots effectively."

Just as importantly, her time with Chic Media Ltd has enabled Blossom to develop her soft skills. "I've become even better at listening to clients and understanding their needs and wants," she says. "I've also gained experience in a work environment and learnt how to work with and alongside people. My favourite shoots to do are with babies, as I know how to get the best out of them."

Moving forward, this hugely successful Kickstarter participant is focussed on a bright (and very well lit) future. "The role has given me the motivation to want to do better and I now have lots of available paths to progression. I am more confident and have more self-belief. I eventually want to manage my own studio."

**“ I have learnt a lot, such as how to use a camera properly. I now know how to edit footage and photos and I have done a course on how to effectively light shots.”**



## Stansted Airport College

Stansted Airport College is a partnership between London Stansted Airport (MAG) and Harlow College — the first of its kind at any airport in the country and, as such, offers a unique opportunity to get onto the first rung of the career ladder within the aviation industry. Opened in September 2018, the college offers an exciting range of technical and professional courses, in the areas of aircraft engineering, aviation operations, cargo and logistics and event management.

The ground-breaking project was funded by Essex County Council, MAG (London Stansted Airport), Uttlesford District Council and SELEP. Since its launch, the college has developed strong partnerships with a wide range of employers on the airport campus. These include Stansted Airport, Air Traffic Control, Border Force, FedEx, Jet2, Ryanair, Inflight, TUI, GT Engines, Titan Airways, Harrods Aviation, Hampton by Hilton, Novotel and many others.

Designed with the aviation industry at the forefront, the facilities at the college reflect the professional, real-life working environments you would expect at any major airport around the world. Being part of Harlow College, the college is recognised by Ofsted for good quality, support for trainees and having excellent systems in place to make learning exciting, meaningful and innovative.

### Facilities include:

**Training rooms** — designed to encourage collaborative working, the training rooms feature inspiring views across the runway to the airport.

**Computer suites** — equipped with the latest IT facilities and laid out to reflect the professional work spaces of the business world.

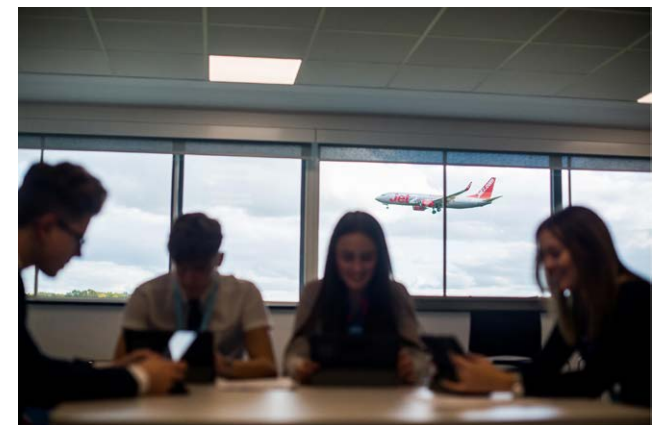
**Cabin crew room** — kitted out with real aeroplane seats, offering trainees the most realistic working environment.

**Engineering workshop** — designed along the lines of an aircraft hangar and home to two jet engines, including a Boeing 737 engine.

**Bombardier Challenger 600 Jet** — fully refurbished jet plane donated by Inflight, allowing trainees to experience life aboard an executive jet.

In February 2019, the college launched a new initiative, Go On Girl, with a clear message: to highlight the vital role that females play within the engineering industry. To this end, the college has developed a girls-only engineering course: the Pre-Apprenticeship in Engineering Operations.

Alumni from the college are now working and studying at many prestigious destinations, including the Royal Air Force, Boeing, Ryanair, British Airways, Virgin Atlantic, Hampton by Hilton Hotel, Harrods Aviation and Border Force.



## Leonardo

Leonardo is a global high-tech company and a leading player in aerospace, defence and security. The company employs over 800 at its Basildon site, where engineers are responsible for designing and manufacturing sensors that help protect UK armed forces from threats posed by improvised explosive devices (IEDs) or rogue drones. They also design world-leading thermal imagery technology with applications as varied as border security to nature documentaries such as the BBC's 'Frozen Planet'.

The Purpose Coalition — which seeks to improve social mobility in the UK — last year published a report identifying the success of Leonardo in seeking to benefit disadvantaged regions by providing life-changing career opportunities.

One such example, focussed on employees from the Essex region, saw a team of Leonardo Basildon apprentices win last year's Institution of Mechanical Engineering's (IMechE) Apprentice Automation Challenge (AAC). The challenge asks apprentices across the country to develop innovative ways to address a challenge in society and the wider world, that could be used in daily life at home or at work. Leonardo's winning team, SAL — featuring six young engineers from the region — spent eight months developing a sustainable solution to reduce plastic waste. The team designed and built a Hydration

Station that dispenses drinks, removing the need for plastic bottles and consequently reducing plastic waste.

Leonardo's apprentices have also been working with primary and secondary schools in the local community, acting as mentors in the Chelmsford Science and Engineering Society's 'Fresh Air Fresh Thinking' project. The project is designed to encourage curiosity and creativity, develop research skills and teamwork and increase young people's awareness of a major environmental threat, with the data being used as a focus point for last year's Clean Air Day. As part of this scheme, apprentices from Leonardo's Basildon site taught students how to create environmental monitors using Raspberry Pis connected to testing sensors and equipment.



Led by Basildon employees and colleagues from around the UK, the company's Ethnicity Inclusion Network Group is one of six employee-led groups championing inclusion and diversity across the company. Through their work and a proactive partnership with the Association for Black and Minority Ethnic Engineers (AFBE), Leonardo is welcoming more new joiners from ethnic minority communities. At last year's AFBE Live event, Leonardo's Ethnicity Network Group STEM Lead and Basildon Mechanical Engineer, Arvind Mahendran, spoke about the importance of mentorship and representation when challenging the barriers around diversity and social mobility in the context of STEM skills.

It is particularly exciting that one of Leonardo's winning iMechE AAC team, Jainna Bhalla, was shortlisted for the Multicultural Apprenticeship Awards 2022, in recognition of her contribution to the Leonardo Basildon business.

**Six** young engineers from the region spent eight months developing a sustainable solution to reduce plastic waste.



### Diversifying the talent pipeline at Morgan Sindall Construction

Across the East of England, Morgan Sindall Construction is diversifying its talent pipeline through a strategic educational outreach programme. Driven with purpose, they're keen to showcase how the next generation can secure a fulfilling career that leaves an amazing legacy in the communities which the company builds. Through various outreach activities, using their STEM Ambassadors and working with the Careers and Enterprise Company, they partner with local primary and secondary schools, sixth forms and colleges to create a stepping stone pathway into the industry.

School and college partners are guaranteed three engagements in an academic year that are either created by Morgan Sindall Construction or led by the school. They target all year groups, including anything from interactive site visits through to mock interviews, career fairs and more.

By the time students are in year nine, the engagement becomes much more strategic, with a role discovery activity that is designed to increase students' curiosity of the industry. This is also with the intent that, once the students go into year ten, they will apply for Morgan Sindall's virtual work experience (VWEx) programme. This programme is a meaningful week-long placement, where students work in teams and are supported by industry experts to deliver a design brief, which

is presented back to the business on the Friday afternoon. Further information about VWEx can be found on the [Morgan Sindall Construction website](#). Some of the students then move on to in-person placements and mentorships with Morgan Sindall Construction staff.

As a result of these strategic educational partnerships, diversity has improved substantially in the last four years. 33% of those joining the programme are now from ethnic minorities (versus an industry rate of 9%), and, on average, 40% of participants are now female (against an industry average of 14%). Furthermore, 60% of Morgan Sindall Construction's current apprentices had engaged with the company through its educational outreach programme before applying to become an apprentice. This proves that 'getting in early' to make young talent aware of the diverse opportunities available in the industry really turns the tide in perception. The programme is making a difference by creating a diverse talent pipeline, four years in the making, that is supporting an inclusive workforce for the years ahead.



**The programme is making a real difference by creating a diverse talent pipeline, four years in the making, that is supporting an inclusive workforce for the years ahead.**

# The Essex Skills Plan – strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT)

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth and jobs in large number</li> <li>• Strong employer engagement and partnership working already in place</li> <li>• Existing programmes, facilities and resources in place as foundation to deliver</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Labour market shortages, particularly in logistics, care, construction, health and education</li> <li>• Lack of awareness of sectors</li> <li>• Lack of awareness of roles on offer</li> <li>• Complex landscape confuses employers and individuals</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New jobs created by big projects – a useful hook to showcase sectors</li> <li>• Virtual and flexible working could help address shortages</li> <li>• Green and net zero changing job roles in sectors like construction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Numbers commuting to London remain high</li> <li>• Covid-19 continuing to impact on sectors such as hospitality</li> <li>• Future Covid-19 variants could risk other sectors</li> <li>• Digital change and automation, impacting on entry level jobs</li> <li>• Changing demographics, including an ageing population</li> <li>• Global threats, such as food security, climate change and competition from elsewhere</li> <li>• Lack of tutors, particularly in key sectors and emerging areas, such as green and digital</li> </ul>



# Emerging Action Plan and Quick Wins

This action plan will focus on short-term goals as well as ongoing and future priorities. This will help to address current and future shortages within local sectors. Quick wins will be prioritised ahead of the development of a full action plan to support the delivery of this Skills Plan.

Quick wins include:

- ✓ **Work with major projects and build a shared approach to their skills needs to deliver local opportunities**
- ✓ **Support the Local Skills Improvement Plan and share this Skills Plan with the Department of Education to illustrate commitment and readiness to deliver**
- ✓ **Launch this Skills Plan, along with key headlines and data, to raise awareness of local skills needs**
- ✓ **Share Skills Plan and emerging action plan with Government and local MPs**
- ✓ **Raise awareness of employability and soft skills common to all employers**
- ✓ **Secure commitment statements from local employers**
- ✓ **Publish information on programmes and support already available, such as**

## bootcamps

- ✓ **Work with the Strategic Development Network to localise resources for SMEs on the skills system and available programmes**
- ✓ **Raise awareness amongst all ages of local sectors (e.g. through the delivery of a careers magazine and information on the Essex Opportunities Portal)**
- ✓ **Produce regular labour market information and policy updates**
- ✓ **Engage in the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and Multiply programme**

The following action plan is based on emerging priorities, Government policies and the SWOT analysis above. Key performance indicators will be added and fed into the Local Skills Improvement Plan work.

These are a starting point to which partners will contribute on an ongoing basis.

**Essex Skills Plan priority: Increase apprenticeships and industry-relevant qualifications for all ages and at all levels, particularly in priority sectors**

## ACTIONS

- Set a shared target for apprenticeship numbers
- Optimise the Essex Opportunities Portal to showcase the range of apprenticeships and T Levels available in Essex
- Develop materials showcasing case studies of local apprenticeships
- Develop LMI information for schools and colleges, setting out current and future jobs and roles on offer
- Work with SELEP and other stakeholders on the tutor shortage issue
- Work with the Institute for Technology and South Essex Technical University
- Lobby and make the case for flexible, modular training for employers where required
- Maximise funding opportunities and programmes, such as DfE Bootcamps
- Maximise apprenticeship and training opportunities arising from new building developments

### **Essex Skills Plan priority: Simplify the landscape for employers, stakeholders and individuals**

#### **ACTIONS**

- › Optimise the Essex Opportunities Portal as a location for individuals to access information on skills, regularly updating it with new initiatives and support
- › Develop new materials to promote available support, working in collaboration with the Strategic Development Network to localise
- › Explore funding opportunities (e.g. UKSPF and Future Skills Unit)
- › Hold a Skills Summit to launch this plan and promote employer support on offer

### **Essex Skills Plan priority: Raise awareness of jobs and growth across Essex, as well as the area's size and national/international significance**

#### **ACTION**

- › Enhance information on the Essex Opportunities Portal
- › Work with anchor institutions and major projects to showcase their job roles

- › Utilise existing programmes and resources, such as the Enterprise Adviser Network, STEM Ambassadors, and SELEP career resources
- › Supporting people into key sectors, utilising existing programmes, such as ESF and Restart
- › Skills Summit to set out the needs of the economy and support on offer
- › Address and showcase cross-cutting skills needs, such as leadership, management and communication

### **Essex Skills Plan priority: Build a diverse and inclusive economy and reduce polarisation**

#### **ACTION**

- › Support and set targets for inclusive initiatives, such as Disability Confident
- › Conduct equality impact assessments for work already underway to ensure an inclusive approach
- › Ensure that materials and case studies reflect local communities

### **Essex Skills Plan priority: Foster and support pride, entrepreneurship innovation and enthusiasm across Essex to bring about change**

#### **ACTION**

- › Hold sessions for SMEs and microbusinesses to showcase the support on offer (including for employees) and to encourage them to consider T-Levels, apprenticeships and other offers
- › Utilise a strong partnership approach and current activity to build momentum and engagement. This could involve becoming an Enterprise Adviser or Governor, or working with schools or colleges. A tick list could enable SMEs to engage with local communities
- › Be a single voice when engaging with Government and articulating barriers, such as tutor shortages and our complex landscape
- › Share the collective ambitions set out in this plan with Government. This will involve sharing the plan with MPs and other key stakeholders, as well as formally launching the plan

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Progress against the above actions will determine our success. We will also measure success by monitoring key datasets, such as skills levels, apprenticeships and FE and HE outcomes.

# Supporting information

## Appendix 1: The general principles for the Skills Plan

### **One: Inclusive growth creating opportunities for all**

Partners are committed to ensuring that growth leads to opportunities for everyone and that individuals are given extra support where required. This includes cohorts such as care leavers, homeless people and people with disabilities. This is also a commitment to supporting a diverse workforce, providing opportunities for all regardless of gender, race, age, ethnicity, physical abilities, sexual orientation and religion.

### **Two: Developing and maintaining a partnership approach with education partners, local authorities, employers, business representative organisations and sector bodies**

This plan has been developed in partnership and is not 'owned' by any single organisation in Essex. Maintaining a partnership approach and enabling new organisations to contribute will be vital to success.

### **Three: An employer-led approach to be at the forefront of the Skills Plan in conjunction with other work, such as the Strategic Development Fund**

This plan is focussed on current and future employer needs. This will ensure that individuals are supported into careers and that local educators can develop a clear response to the needs of the economy.

### **Four: A commitment to working together to address the findings of the Skills Plan**

In order to deliver this plan, it is essential that partners commit to working together.

### **Five: A joined-up voice to share the Essex perspective with Government, national bodies, funders and key stakeholders**

The Skills Plan aims to provide a clear consensus from public and private sector partners in terms of Essex's needs. This will place us in a good position for potential funding and enable partners to articulate needs at a national level.

## Appendix 2: Further information on key policy developments

### The Skills and Post-16 Education Act

### The Levelling Up White Paper and supporting documents

- **A Future Skills Unit** to bring together information and data relating to skills and jobs. This will enable a better understanding around skills gaps and will provide data and evidence. The unit will work with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and the Department for Work and Pensions to collate information. This aligns with this Skills Plan’s focus on future growth and should ensure access to local data to inform activity.
- **Further devolution of Adult Education Budget (AEB)** – the Levelling Up White Paper states by 2030, every part of England that wants a devolution deal will have one. Devolution of AEB is already in place in Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) areas and the DfE has committed to this for new devolution deals.
- **UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and ‘Multiply’** – the UKSPF will provide £2.6 billion of new funding, rising to £1.5bn by March 2025, with all areas of the UK receiving an allocation from the fund. This will replace the European Social Fund. Some pilots have already

been underway through the Community Renewal Fund. Focus for UKSPF will include:

- supporting disadvantaged people to access the skills they need to progress in life and into work
- supporting local areas to fund skills needs and supplement adult skills provision
- reducing levels of economic inactivity and moving those furthest from the labour market closer to employment through investment in bespoke employment support tailored to local need

Additional skills reforms will include:

- **Skills Bootcamps** – these are already underway across geographies and sectors. They offer free, flexible training for adults to acquire skills required for careers. Roll-out will include sector focuses, including green, digital and construction as part of up to an additional £550 million to expand. SMEs will provide 10% of training to existing staff (previously 30%). South Essex College is running a Bootcamp, supporting individuals to obtain free qualifications to respond to HGV driver shortages.

- **Apprenticeships** – funding will increase by £2.7 billion by 2024-25. This includes an enhanced recruitment service for SMEs, as well as making it easier for large employers to transfer their Apprenticeship Levy to SMEs to further support apprenticeships in disadvantaged areas.
- **Higher Technical Qualifications** – the DfE is working with the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education to roll out higher technical qualifications (HTQs) from September 2022. These have been approved against employer-led standards and provide learners with the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for a given occupation.
- **Institutes of Technology (IoTs)** – Nine new IoTs are being launched in England, which will take the total to 21. **This includes a new IoT for the SELEP area, led by South Essex College**, working with further and higher education partners across the geography. The SELEP IoT includes employer partners such as DP World (London Gateway), Port of Tilbury, Princess Alexandra Hospital Group, Leonardo, Morgan Sindall and Megger Instruments. Higher technical skills training will be provided, including transport and logistics,

engineering and manufacturing, health science, construction and the built environment.

- Other areas of continued policy will include further roll-out of T-Levels, Lifelong Loan Entitlements and a £1.5 billion FE Capital Transformation programme to transform college estates in England. The Lifetime Skills Guarantee will also continue, enabling access to flexible support to train, retrain and upskill at any age.

As further detail emerges regarding the above, Essex partners will need to engage and ensure maximum take-up of available initiatives.







This information is issued by:  
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Published February 2023