

Sussex & Brighton Local Skills Improvement Plan

Annex C – Background & Methodology

Sussex & Brighton LSIP Development Process

- i. LSIP delivery process

LSIP delivery process

Sussex Chamber of Commerce has adopted Skills England process detailed in their Statutory Guidance for the Development of a Local Skills Improvement Plan.

To deliver the process for the develop of the LSIP 2026/29 we established a delivery plan and timeline from the outset, detailed in the high-level delivery timeline in figure 1.

In developing the delivery plan, we built on the activities, recommendations and lessons learnt during the previous iteration of the LSIP to ensure activities and timelines were robust. This included:

- Effective and timely procurement of LSIP external expertise.
- Identification of data to be refreshed, including early conversations with local authority colleges regarding key sector data from their data team for Lightcast data to support the key sector analysis and where further data analysis needed to be procured.
- Develop mechanisms of working with Local Authority partners to ensure alignment with local strategic plans and the emerging Combine Authority arrangements
- Effectively engage with LSIP employers and stakeholders through the process to gain and share intelligence.
- Engagement of providers and other stakeholders in the drafting of priorities and identifying actions to be taken forward over the next three years.
- Governance arrangements through the LSIP Board including timely meetings to provide strategic steer and challenge, as well as support and sign off the deep dives and the LSIP report.

Throughout this Background and Methodology, we will demonstrate how the delivery plan and process undertaken has been robust, followed the proscribed LSIP process and been inclusive of LSIP stakeholders.

LSIP delivery process



Figure 1: Sussex LSIP delivery timeline

LSIP delivery process

Stage 1: Identify and Articulate Skills Needs

In line with Skills England's [Guidance for developing a Local Skills Improvement Plan](#), Stage 1 of the LSIP development process focused on establishing a clear and shared understanding of priority skills needs across Sussex and Brighton. This required integrating national policy direction, local economic priorities and robust labour market intelligence with structured employer and stakeholder engagement.

The process therefore began with a structured review of relevant local authority economic strategies and the UK Industrial Strategy, alongside consideration of the emerging devolution framework. This national and local strategic context review ensured that the LSIP reflected growth-driving sectors, cross-cutting missions and locally defined economic priorities. Alignment with the Get Sussex Working Plan and other place-based strategies was also considered to ensure coherence across the wider employment and skills landscape.

Building on this strategic foundation, the quantitative evidence base was refreshed. Updated **labour market intelligence** and **key sector analysis** were consolidated with **insights from employer and provider surveys** to ensure that emerging skills priorities were supported by robust data. This enabled identification of sector strengths, workforce pressures and potential gaps requiring further exploration.

Recognising that existing intelligence must be validated through engagement, a **structured programme of employer and stakeholder consultation** was embedded within the methodology. A broad range of employers, including small and medium-sized enterprises and those without a strong representative voice, were engaged through surveys and facilitated workshops. Engagement extended beyond Chamber networks through local employer bodies and sector groups to ensure representative coverage.

LSIP delivery process

Wider stakeholders were also engaged to ensure system-level insight was incorporated. This included local authorities, DWP, further and higher education providers, independent training providers, employer support organisations and careers organisations. Their input helped to contextualise employer demand within delivery capacity, labour market activation priorities and progression pathways.

Throughout Stage 1, local authorities were closely involved through LSIP Board representation and a dedicated LSIP–Local Authority Working Group, ensuring strategic alignment and reducing duplication across parallel initiatives.

This structured and layered approach ensured that national and local strategy, labour market evidence, employer intelligence and system insight were brought together to produce a robust and validated articulation of priority skills needs for Sussex and Brighton. This evidence base formed the foundation for Stage 2 of the LSIP process.

LSIP delivery process

Stage 2: Identify Changes, Priorities and Actions

Stage 2 of the LSIP development process focused on translating the validated skills needs identified in Stage 1 into a clear set of priority changes and high-level actions for the 2026–2029 period.

This stage was undertaken through continued joint working with upper-tier local authorities via the LSIP–Local Authority Working Group, alongside engagement with the emerging Sussex and Brighton Strategic Authority. Initial discussions have taken place and regular update arrangements are being established to ensure that LSIP priorities align with the evolving Strategic Authority framework.

Drawing on the refreshed labour market analysis, employer and provider intelligence, and cross-sector engagement undertaken in Stage 1, the LSIP team articulated a clear set of LSIP priorities. These priorities were shaped through consultation with further and higher education providers, employers and wider stakeholders to ensure system-wide relevance and deliverability.

A dedicated LSIP Action Planning Group Workshop was then convened with stakeholders to review and validate the draft priorities and begin formulating high-level actions for inclusion within the LSIP Action Plan. Discussions focused on the key changes required within the local skills system, alongside practical activities that could be taken forward collaboratively over the three-year period.

During this stage, we also commenced development of the LSIP Action Plan, including identifying the desired outcomes linked to the agreed priorities and actions, and how progress will be monitored over the lifetime of the plan. Where appropriate, monitoring and impact measures have been aligned with relevant local strategic plans, such as the Get Sussex Working Plan.

As the Employer Representative Body, Sussex Chamber of Commerce will coordinate ongoing monitoring of LSIP delivery with partners and stakeholders, with progress informing LSIP annual progress reports and monitoring updates to Skills England.

LSIP refresh delivery process

Stage 3: Drafting the LSIP

In line with statutory requirements, responsibility for drafting the LSIP sat with Sussex Chamber as the Employer Representative Body (ERB). Throughout this stage, the LSIP team worked in collaboration with upper-tier local authorities and engaged with the emerging Strategic Authority, ensuring regular opportunities for review and contribution during the drafting process.

The report was structured in accordance with the format set out in Annex A of the statutory guidance. This included:

- A strategic and economic context section, setting out the national and local policy landscape, industrial priorities and economic direction of travel;
- A clear articulation of local skills needs, drawing on the evidence gathered and validated during Stage 1;
- An agreed changes and actions section, reflecting the priorities and high-level actions developed collaboratively during Stage 2.

Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) and Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) categorisations were used to describe industries and occupational skills needs that have been identified as part of the LSIP process, see **Annex A – Explanatory Information on Skills Needs**. This approach supports consistency with Skills England data frameworks, enables clearer information flows and assists providers and partners in aligning provision and measuring impact.

The LSIP team prepared the draft report, integrating evidence from labour market analysis, employer and provider engagement, stakeholder workshops and action planning sessions. The draft was then shared with the LSIP–Local Authority Working Group for review and comment, ensuring continued alignment with local economic strategies and emerging Strategic Authority priorities. Following this stage, the report was presented to the LSIP Board for formal sign-off prior to submission to Skills England.

Following submission, it is anticipated that Skills England will undertake a review of the draft. Any feedback received will be incorporated into a revised version of the report. The updated draft will then be shared with upper-tier local authorities and the emerging Strategic Authority for endorsement before the final version is submitted to Skills England for approval in May.

Outline of Evidence Base

- i. National and Local Strategic Context
- ii. Labour Market and Data Insights
- iii. Data Analysis Reports

National and Local Strategic Context

In line with the 2025 LSIP Statutory Guidance, the Sussex and Brighton LSIP has been developed within a clearly defined national and local strategic framework.

A single structured review was undertaken through the **Brighton & Sussex LSIP National and Local Policy Review of Sectors**.

The review drew on:

National frameworks

- UK Industrial Strategy 2025 (growth-driving and foundational sectors)
- Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper
- Clean Energy Jobs Plan
- Skills England labour market and occupational intelligence

Local frameworks

- Brighton & Hove Economic Plan (2024–27)
- East Sussex Prosperity Strategy (2050)
- West Sussex Economic Strategy (2025–35)
- Get Sussex Working Plan
- Sussex and Brighton LSIP (2023)

These sources were considered together through the Brighton & Sussex LSIP National & Local Policy Review of Sectors paper and supporting annexes to ensure alignment between local economic priorities and national growth policy and to identify the key sectors and cross cutting skills themes for the LSIP development (see figure 1).

National and Local Strategic Context

Outcome of the Local Strategy Review Process

The combined analysis of local authority strategies, the Get Sussex Working Plan and national Industrial Strategy alignment provided an evidence-based rationale for:

- Retaining core Sussex growth sectors.
- Expanding the LSIP remit to reflect Level 8 and higher-level skills.
- Embedding cross-cutting themes that respond to both productivity and participation challenges.
- Positioning the LSIP as the skills evidence partner within emerging Combined Authority arrangements.

This approach ensured that sector selection and thematic priorities were not determined in isolation, but were the result of structured comparison, alignment testing and policy cross-referencing across local and national frameworks.

Review Focus	What Was Done	Outcome
Cross-Authority Sector Comparison	Mapped sector priorities across Brighton & Hove, East Sussex and West Sussex using Annex A – Comparison of Key Industry Sectors. Identified shared growth sectors, place-based strengths and consistent green priorities.	Confirmed strong alignment around Digital/Creative, Advanced Manufacturing, Visitor Economy and Health. Validated continued relevance of the existing seven LSIP sectors.
Labour Market & Participation Alignment	Reviewed the Get Sussex Working Plan alongside local strategies to test productivity, economic inactivity and participation themes.	Confirmed LSIP must address both growth-driving and high-employment foundational sectors. Introduced Access Routes into Employment and Career Pathways theme.
Local–National Sector Alignment	Mapped proposed LSIP sectors against the 2023 LSIP and UK Industrial Strategy 2025 growth-driving and foundational sectors (Annex B – Comparison of Local LSIP and National Sector Alignment).	Demonstrated direct alignment with national missions. Provided evidence to retain seven sectors and add Professional & Business Services as an eighth priority sector.
Cross-Sector Skills Drivers	Identified recurring priorities across local strategies, national missions, Skills England and DWP direction.	Distilled four cross-sector themes: Digital & AI Readiness; Green & Sustainability Skills; Innovation & Technical Excellence; Access Routes into Employment and Career Pathways.

Figure 2: Overview of National and Local Strategic Review

Labour Market and Data Insights

During the previous LSIP report we undertook extensive data analysis, which has now been refreshed and updated to ensure that all intelligence remains current and robust. We built on the established analytical framework to retain consistency, whilst incorporating new datasets, updated labour market indicators and emerging intelligence. Learning from the earlier LSIP cycle has enabled us to strengthen our approach, ensuring that analysis is presented in a clear, accessible and meaningful way for providers, employers and wider stakeholders.

Our process and methodology for the collection and analysis of evidence which informed the development of the Sussex LSIP report is set out in Figure 2 below, with detailed supporting information provided in the relevant annexes.

The quantitative evidence base includes Office for National Statistics data (employment, sector composition, occupational structure, productivity and GVA), vacancy and job posting data, claimant count and labour market participation data and skills supply and provision data. In addition, two primary surveys – the Employer Survey and the Skills Provider Survey – were undertaken to provide additional depth and context to the quantitative analysis, creating a more rounded and robust evidence base that could be explored and validated through stakeholder engagement.

Where appropriate, Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) and Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes have been used to ensure comparability with national datasets and alignment with statutory guidance. Recognising the known limitations of SIC and SOC classifications in capturing emerging and hybrid occupations, qualitative validation through employer engagement has been used to test, contextualise and refine findings. See **Annex A – Explanatory Information on Skills Needs** and **Annex E Key Sector Analysis** for SOC and SIC code information.

Data has been aggregated at Sussex-wide level to provide a coherent sub-regional view across the three upper-tier authorities, ensuring consistency of interpretation, alignment with devolved skills planning arrangements, and avoidance of duplication.

A full list and description of the data analysis undertaken can be found on pages 12 and 13 of this annex.

Data analysis reports

LSIP refreshed data reports	Overview
Annex D - Overview of the Sussex Labour Market	An update on the annual LSIP analysis into: • Sussex Demographics and employment overview – employment by occupational group, productivity across Sussex, average pay levels, resident age profile, economic inactivity • Business Demographics – business growth rate, activities businesses by area, business size and business by industry • Unemployment and Claimants – unemployment rates by area and over time, claimants by age.
Annex E - Key Sector Analysis	A report on key sector analysis from Lightcast including unique jobs postings over time and by local authority area, top in demand specialised skills, top advertised occupations and job titles and information on the median advertised salaries.
Annex F - Skills Supply Analysis	Report and analysis of the local skills supply including: • 16 – 18 Further Education and Skills – KS4 leaver destinations, 16-18 Study leaver destinations, L2 English & Maths attainment, Full L2 attainment, A-Level and other 1618 results, T-Level learner completions • +19 Further Education and Skills - 19+ Local Authority participation and achievements by level & age, +19 enrolments and achievements by Local Authority and sector subject area, 19+ participation and achievement trends. • Apprenticeships – Starts and participation trends by age and levels and then by sector subject area and age • Higher Education – HE Enrolments by Local Authority and level and then by sector subject area, Higher Apprenticeships by Local Authority and level, graduate activities • Learner Projections -

Data analysis reports

LSIP refreshed data reports	Overview
Annex H - Business Survey Analysis	An analysis of the telephone and online skills survey undertaken with employers during December 2025. Analysis of the 225 responses includes respondent characteristics, recruitment challenges, engaging with training, improving skills supply, future skills, investing in skills and skills priorities.
Annex I - Skills Provider Survey Analysis	An analysis of the online survey undertaken with skills providers from across the Sussex area. Analysis of the 20 provider responses includes respondent characteristics, provision coverages by key sectors, types of courses and qualifications, ways providers engage with local employers, challenges faced in employer engagement, barriers to providing skills offers, provider recruitment challenges, how providers are training and upskilling staff, staff training challenges.

A full list of all data sources used are contained within each individual data report annex

Alignment with LSIP Guidance

- i. Introduction
- ii. Communications
- iii. Employer Survey
- iv. Provider Survey
- v. Stakeholder Workshops – employer, provider and stakeholder and action planning
- vi. Maximising our reach

Stakeholder Engagement – Introduction

Employer and stakeholder engagement is central to the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) process. While quantitative labour market intelligence provides an essential foundation, it is through structured communication and dialogue with employers, providers and strategic partners that this evidence is tested, contextualised and translated into meaningful priorities and actions.

The Sussex and Brighton LSIP has adopted a layered and inclusive approach to engagement, extending beyond the Employer Representative Body membership to include employers of all sizes, further and higher education providers (Levels 4–8), local authorities and wider stakeholders. This has enabled the LSIP to capture real-time sector insight, reflect local nuance across the area's diverse economy, and test emerging findings against employer experience.

Communication has been critical throughout. Regular, transparent engagement has built confidence in the process, strengthened shared ownership of priorities, and ensured that employer intelligence informs both the articulation of skills needs and the identification of deliverable actions.

This section sets out in detail the communication and engagement processes undertaken, the engagement methods and how stakeholder insight has informed the development of the LSIP priorities and action framework.

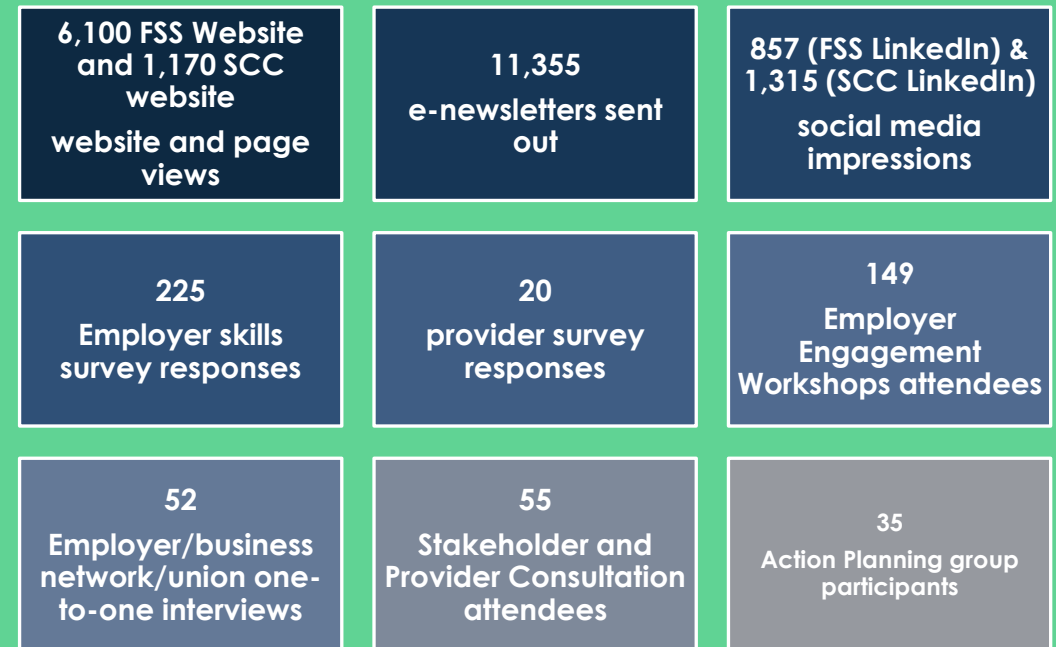


Figure 3 – Stakeholder engagement overview (October 2025 – March 2026)

Stakeholder Engagement – Communications

As part of the development of the 2026–2029 Sussex and Brighton LSIP, a structured and transparent communication approach was embedded throughout the methodology to support robust engagement, evidence validation and collaborative development of priorities.

Communication during this phase was designed to ensure that stakeholders understood the purpose of the next LSIP iteration, the evolving national and local policy context, and how employer and stakeholder input would shape the final report. This was particularly important given significant developments, including the [Industrial Strategy](#), the [Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper](#) and the emerging [Get Sussex Working Plan](#). Clear messaging ensured that the LSIP development process was aligned with these strategies and positioned within the context of devolution.

Regular updates were shared with employers, providers, local authorities and strategic partners to explain the evidence review process, outline proposed sector refinements and cross-cutting themes, and invite feedback at key stages. This approach supported validation of emerging findings and strengthened alignment across the local skills system.

Communication channels included stakeholder briefings, attendance at partner network meetings, regular LSIP newsletters, and targeted direct engagement with all stakeholder groups including employers, further and higher education providers, local authorities and strategic partners. Social media was used to promote engagement opportunities and report on activity, via the Sussex Chamber of Commerce LinkedIn page and a dedicated [Future Skills Sussex LinkedIn page](#) (see Figure 3 – Stakeholder Engagement Overview).

In addition, a dedicated Sussex LSIP website, [Future Skills Sussex](#), provides a central, publicly accessible information hub. The website includes an overview of the LSIP, all published LSIP and progress reports to date, resources for employers and stakeholders, and regular news updates. This has supported transparency, accessibility of evidence, and ongoing stakeholder engagement throughout the development process.

By embedding structured communication throughout the LSIP development process, we ensured that stakeholders were informed, able to contribute at appropriate stages, and confident in how employer intelligence and wider policy developments were being integrated into the LSIP 2026-2029.

Stakeholder Engagement – Communications

Engagement with Employers

Throughout the process, engagement extended beyond the membership of Sussex Chamber of Commerce. Through established networks and targeted activities, non-member organisations were actively included to ensure broad employer voice representation. Local employer representative bodies, including local chambers of commerce and employer networks, were utilised to widen reach and engage harder-to-reach small and medium-sized enterprises across Sussex and Brighton. This ensured that employer input reflected the diversity of the local business base.

Engagement with Employer Networks, Sector Bodies and Trade Unions

Employer networks, sector bodies and trade unions have been engaged during the LSIP development process to ensure the perspectives of the employers and sectors they represent were captured. The LSIP Stakeholder Engagement Leads undertook one-to-one meetings with a number of these organisations. Representatives were also invited to attend Employer Engagement Workshops, as well as the Stakeholder and Provider Consultation Event, providing opportunities for them to contribute insights on sector workforce needs and emerging skills challenges.

Engagement with trade unions was undertaken where possible, including discussions on sector-specific workforce skills needs and challenges; however, their representation is more concentrated within certain sectors, particularly public services and health, rather than consistently across the range of sectors in Sussex, which is characterised by a high proportion of small and micro businesses.

Engagement with Further Education Providers

A productive and established relationship with further education colleges has been maintained throughout the LSIP development process. Regular updates and dialogue have taken place through local membership organisations including the Sussex Council of Training Providers (SCTP) and FE Sussex, as well as through the FE representative on the LSIP Board. This has enabled structured and progressive discussion of emerging priorities and system implications for provision.

Stakeholder Engagement – Communications

Engagement with Higher Education Providers

Communication with higher education providers has increased significantly during the development of the 2026–2029 LSIP. This reflects the extended LSIP remit to Level 8 and the expectation placed on HE providers to engage with the development, review and implementation of LSIPs, and a stronger expectation that they cover technical skill needs at all levels including levels 4 to 8, as set out in the Post-16 Skills White Paper. Regular communication and active involvement in engagement activities has resulted in strong HE participation. The HE representative on the LSIP Board has played a proactive role in facilitating this engagement across the three universities in the area and ensuring higher-level skills perspectives are integrated into the methodology.

Engagement with Local Authorities and Strategic Partners

There has been regular and ongoing engagement with upper-tier local authorities to ensure system alignment and avoid duplication across strategies. In addition to local authority representation on the LSIP Board, a dedicated LSIP–Local Authority Working Group has been established and meets regularly throughout the process. This forum enables structured discussion on sector alignment, evidence review, devolution developments and cross-system priorities, ensuring collaborative development of the next LSIP iteration.

Engagement with Employment, Careers and Support Organisations

Engagement has also taken place with organisations supporting employment, careers and workforce participation, including the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Careers Hub and other careers services and employer support organisations. These organisations were invited to participate in the Stakeholder and Provider Event and the Action Planning Workshops to ensure their insights informed the development of LSIP priorities and actions. Regular updates and communications were shared with these partners throughout the process, and LSIP updates were also provided through a range of local skills and employment groups where these organisations are represented.

Stakeholder Engagement – Employer survey

As part of Stage 1 of the LSIP development process to 'identify and articulate skills needs', we undertook an Employer Survey to gather up-to-date intelligence from businesses across Sussex and Brighton.

The survey was delivered through a commissioned telemarketing company, supported by a SurveyMonkey link which was promoted via LSIP newsletters and social media channels. This provided employers with the option of participating in a structured telephone interview or completing the survey independently online. In total, 225 businesses were reached across the priority sectors.

Survey questions were revisited from the previous LSIP cycle to ensure continued relevance, clarity of language and alignment with the evolving policy context. Amendments were made where necessary, and multiple-choice response options were included to support ease of completion, while also allowing space for additional qualitative input.

The survey was designed to gather local intelligence on recruitment and workforce development patterns, training provision and investment, skills shortages and operational challenges, future skills needs and business priorities and skills requirements linked to Net Zero and sustainability. For the full analysis of the Employer Survey, see **Annex H – Business Survey Analysis**.

The findings have provided a robust and current evidence base for the LSIP. Survey outputs were used to inform employer engagement workshops, enabling discussion of emerging themes, validation of findings and deeper exploration of sector-specific challenges. The analysis also underpins the articulation of skills needs within the 2026–2029 LSIP.

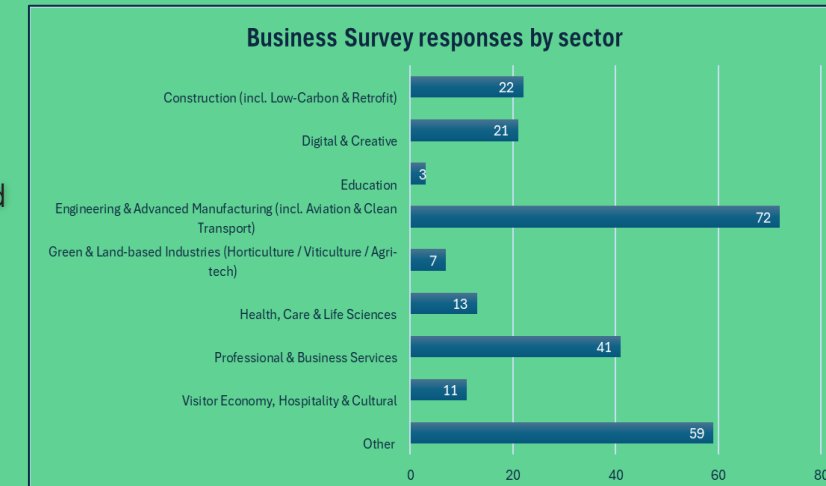


Figure 4: Employer Survey - Please note: there were 225 survey respondents however, the total count exceeds total number of respondents due to businesses covering multiple sectors, local authorities and where a value for "Other" was added

Stakeholder Engagement – Provider survey

Alongside the Employer Survey, a Provider Survey was undertaken to capture system-level intelligence from further education colleges, higher education institutions and independent training providers across Sussex and Brighton. A total of 20 providers responded.

The survey gathered structured insight on:

- Provision by sector subject area and geography
- Types of provision offered (e.g. 16–18 study programmes, Adult Education, Community Learning, vendor qualifications, T Levels and Apprenticeships)
- Qualification levels delivered
- Approaches to employer engagement (see figure 5)
- Barriers to delivering provision aligned to employer need
- Recruitment and workforce challenges within provider organisations
- Staff training and professional development

The findings provided critical insight into the supply side of the local skills system. This enabled comparison between employer demand and current provision patterns, identification of delivery constraints, and exploration of areas where system responsiveness could be strengthened.

Survey outcomes informed further structured discussions with providers and supported validation of the cross-cutting skills themes. The analysis has therefore contributed directly to the evidence base underpinning the 2026–2029 LSIP and strengthened confidence that the proposed priorities are grounded in both employer need and provider capability.

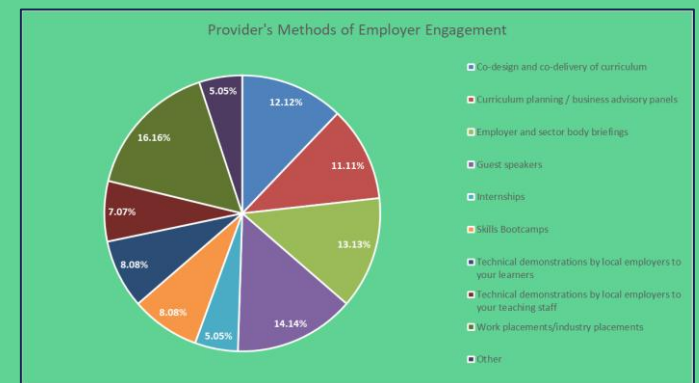
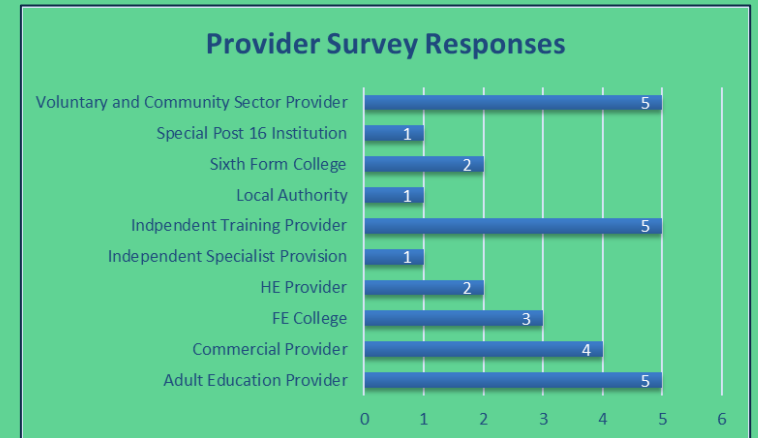


Figure 5: Skills Provider Survey

Stakeholder Engagement – Stakeholder workshops

As part of the development of the 2026–2029 LSIP, it was essential to ensure that employers were able to engage meaningfully with emerging evidence, test sector findings and contribute directly to shaping priorities. A structured programme of employer engagement workshops was therefore embedded within the methodology as a key validation and co-development stage.

The workshop programme was clearly designed and evidence-led, with defined objectives aligned to the Employer Survey findings, labour market analysis and key sector data. Sessions were carefully facilitated to maximise participation, enable structured discussion and ensure that employer insight was captured systematically.

The following pages provide further detail on the format and structure of these workshop activities and how they were integrated into the overall LSIP development process.

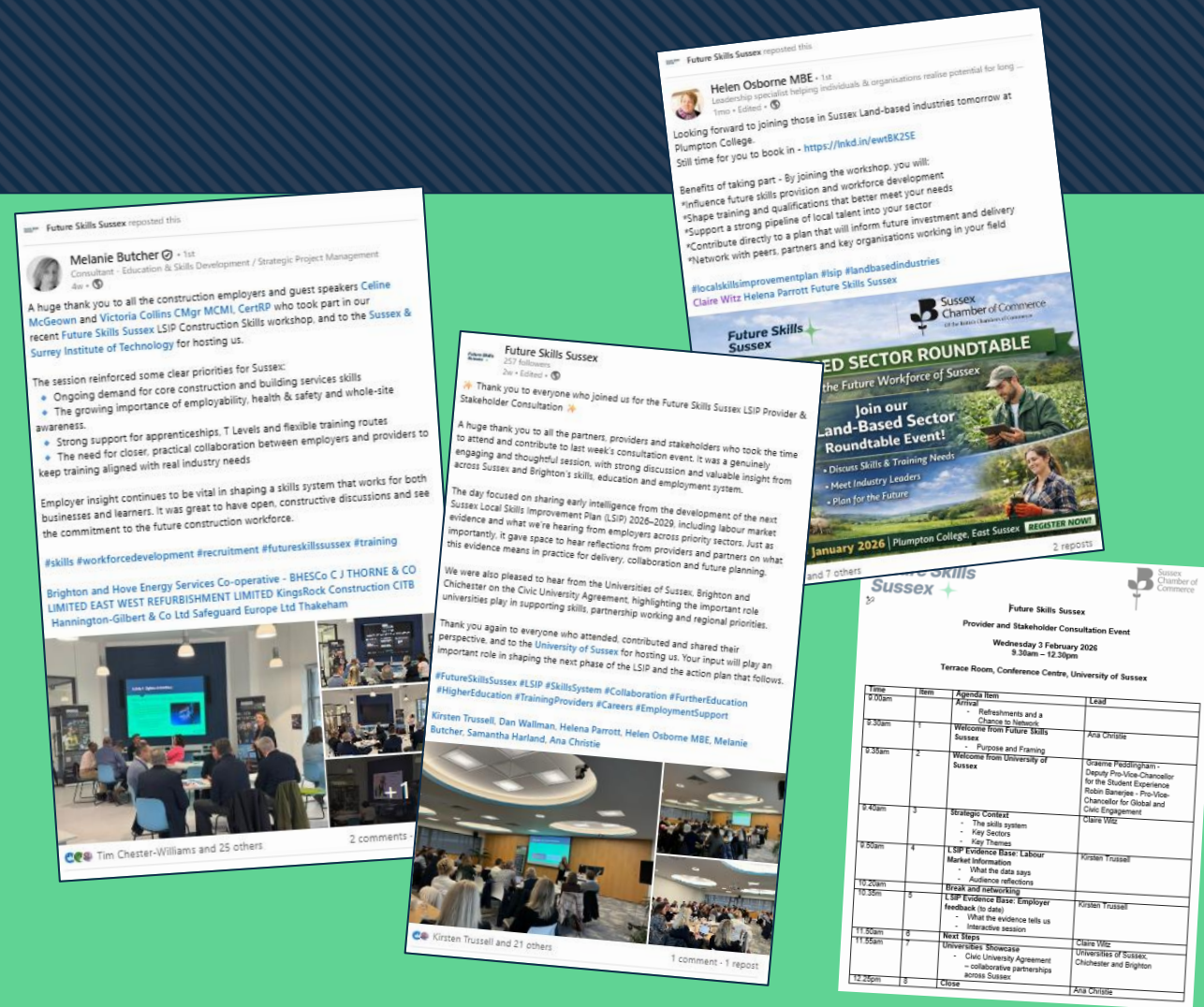


Figure 6: Social media posts and event agenda

Stakeholder Engagement – Stakeholder workshops

Employer Engagement Workshops

As a core component of the LSIP evidence-gathering methodology, a structured programme of Employer Engagement Workshops was delivered to validate findings, deepen sector insight and ensure employer-led shaping of the 2026–2029 LSIP.

Eight in-person sector-specific workshops were held across the LSIP key sectors, alongside one virtual cross-sector workshop to explore shared and system-wide themes. In total, 135 employers and sector representatives participated.

The workshops were designed to:

- Test and validate emerging findings from the Employer Survey
- Test and validate labour market intelligence and key sector analysis data
- Explore workforce recruitment, retention and skills challenges within each sector
- Identify system barriers affecting workforce development and training responsiveness
- Examine cross-cutting skills themes, including Digital and AI readiness, Green and sustainability skills, Innovation and technical excellence and Access routes into employment and career pathways

The sessions were highly interactive, incorporating facilitated group discussions and structured activities aligned to the themes above. Employers were asked to challenge the data, prioritise issues, and expand upon quantitative findings with sector-specific insight and real-time business experience. Feedback from participants indicated that the workshops were valuable and worthwhile, not only in shaping the LSIP but also in supporting employers' own strategic thinking around workforce planning and skills development.

Insights gathered through the workshops informed both the articulation of priority skills needs (Stage 1) and the identification of system-level changes required (Stage 2). The workshops therefore served as a critical mechanism for ensuring that the 2026–2029 LSIP reflects a robust, employer-validated evidence base.

Stakeholder Engagement – Stakeholder workshops

Provider and Stakeholder Consultation Workshop

A dedicated Provider and Stakeholder Workshop was held on 3 February 2026 as part of the LSIP development methodology. The session brought together further education colleges, higher education institutions, independent training providers, local authorities, careers organisations, employment support organisations and DWP representatives to review and interrogate the emerging evidence base.

The workshop provided an opportunity to examine the refreshed labour market intelligence, key sector analysis and the findings from the Employer Survey and employer engagement workshops. A total of 57 stakeholders attended.

The day incorporated structured and interactive activities designed not only to test and validate the emerging findings, but also to support early thinking around the priorities to be included in the 2026–2029 LSIP. Participants were invited to challenge the evidence, reflect on system implications and contribute their perspectives across the cross-sector skills themes of Digital and AI readiness, Green and sustainability skills, Innovation and technical excellence and Access routes into employment and career pathways.

This session ensured that employer intelligence was reviewed alongside intelligence on the employer needs our stakeholder partners are hearing, provider capability and wider system considerations. It formed a critical validation stage within the methodology and provided a strong basis for progressing to the formulation of draft LSIP priorities.

Stakeholder Engagement – Action Planning

Action Planning Group Workshop

An LSIP Action Planning Group Workshop was held on 25 February as the next stage in the development of the 2026–2029 LSIP. The session brought together a range of stakeholders, including education and training providers, the LSIP Board members, local authorities, DWP, careers and employment support organisations and wider strategic partners.

The purpose of the workshop was to move from validation of priorities to collaborative action planning. Participants worked alongside the LSIP team to review the emerging draft priorities and begin formulating high-level actions to be included within the 2026–2029 LSIP Action Plan.

The session was structured to enable partners to consider how the identified priorities could realistically be taken forward over the next three years, what shared responsibilities would be required, and how collaborative working arrangements would support delivery. Discussion focused on practical implementation, alignment across organisations, and the collective role of stakeholders in driving change within the local skills system.

This workshop marked a key methodological step in translating employer-informed priorities into an action-oriented framework, grounded in partnership and shared ownership across Sussex and Brighton.

Stakeholder Engagement – Maximising our reach

Skills Groups and Networks

The project team attended various existing skills group network meetings to provide updates regarding the LSIP process, the key sector Deep Dive and to gather intelligence. The list below is indicative and is not exhaustive. Engagement meetings included:

- Skills East Sussex and associated Task Group meetings
- Sussex Learning Network Board meetings
- Sussex Council of Training Providers
- Local Chamber members meetings
- Careers Hub meetings
- Various sector body and local business network meetings

Collaboration with other LSIP areas

Conversations with other Chambers of Commerce acting as the employer representative bodies (ERBs) in other LSIP areas have been an important part of the LSIP process. We have engaged with these ERBs through the regular Skills England roundtables, as well as through an LSIP WhatsApp group, regular LSIP Managers Group and sectorial group virtual meetings set up to discuss the LSIP process, good practice and where there is a similar focus on sectors, cross cutting themes.

In addition, there has been a south-east LSIP group meeting to discuss the emerging employer skills needs, LSIP priorities and how we can work together over the next three years. We intend to continue having regular meetings as we move forward.

Sussex Chamber will continue to work with other LSIP that have identified similar challenges, recommendations and actions to see where collaboration and shared working might be possible to ensure joined up approaches and sharing of good practice and resources.

Environmental and Net Zero Goals

- i. Approach with the LSIP Methodology
- ii. Employer Survey
- iii. Key Sector Deep Dives 2025
- iv. Employer and Stakeholder Engagement

Environmental & Net Zero Goals – Approach within the LSIP Methodology

In developing the 2026–2029 LSIP, Sussex Chamber ensured that Net Zero, climate adaptation and wider environmental goals were actively considered within the design of the evidence-gathering and engagement methodology, in line with LSIP statutory guidance.

- Rather than treating environmental sustainability as a standalone topic, we embedded it throughout the LSIP development process by:
- Reviewing national policy ([UK Industrial Strategy 2025](#), [Clean Energy Jobs Plan](#)) alongside local economic and climate strategies to frame employer discussions
- Incorporating specific Net Zero and sustainability questions within the LSIP Employer Survey (see figure 7 below)
- Inclusion of findings relating to green skills from the [Key Sector Deep Dives 2025](#).
- Testing sustainability-related workforce needs directly through employer workshops and stakeholder consultation

This approach was particularly important given Sussex and Brighton's business base, which is dominated by small and medium-sized enterprises. Evidence from the survey and engagement activity indicates that, while larger employers are beginning to embed carbon reduction and ESG practices, many SMEs require practical support to understand:

- What Net Zero and sustainability means in operational terms
- What skills are needed within their workforce and existing job roles
- How to access relevant training and provision

The LSIP therefore recognises that, across Sussex and Brighton, the immediate skills challenge is often not specialist green occupations alone but building environmental sustainability capability within existing roles and supporting SMEs to engage confidently with the Net Zero agenda.

Environmental & Net Zero Goals – Employer Survey

Employer Survey – Understanding Net Zero and Sustainability Skills Requirements

To ensure that employer skills needs relating to Net Zero and environmental sustainability were captured within the LSIP evidence base, Sussex Chamber incorporated specific questions within the Employer Survey conducted during Stage 1 of the methodology ('Identify and articulate employer skills needs').

The survey sought to understand:

- Employers' awareness of sustainability and carbon reduction skills
- The workforce capabilities required to support environmental transition
- Whether businesses were investing, or planning to invest, in sustainability-related training

The findings provided a Sussex-wide evidence base and highlighted that awareness of skills needs and preparedness vary significantly, with SMEs more likely to identify uncertainty about skills requirements.

See **Annex H - Business Survey Analysis** report for full details



Figure 7: Employer survey analysis

Environmental & Net Zero Goals – Key Sector Deep Dives 2025

Inclusion of Findings from the Key Sector Deep Dives 2025

The findings from the [2025 Key Sector Deep Dives](#) were used as an important component of the evidence base informing the development of the Sussex and Brighton LSIP 2026–2029.

The deep dive reports captured detailed insights from employer engagement undertaken during the 2025 research process, including interviews, sector discussions and analysis of labour market intelligence. This provided an existing body of evidence on sector workforce challenges, skills needs and emerging industry trends.

Insights gathered through the deep dive research were reviewed alongside other LSIP evidence sources and they helped to:

- provide employer-led insight into how environmental sustainability and Net Zero ambitions are affecting workforce skills needs across different sectors
- highlight areas where businesses require support to understand and implement sustainable practices
- identify emerging sustainability-related skills requirements linked to technological change, climate adaptation and evolving industry standards
- inform the design of employer workshops and stakeholder discussions undertaken as part of the LSIP development process

The deep dive findings therefore provided an important qualitative evidence base drawn directly from employers, helping to ensure that environmental sustainability considerations were reflected within the wider LSIP evidence gathering and priority-setting process.

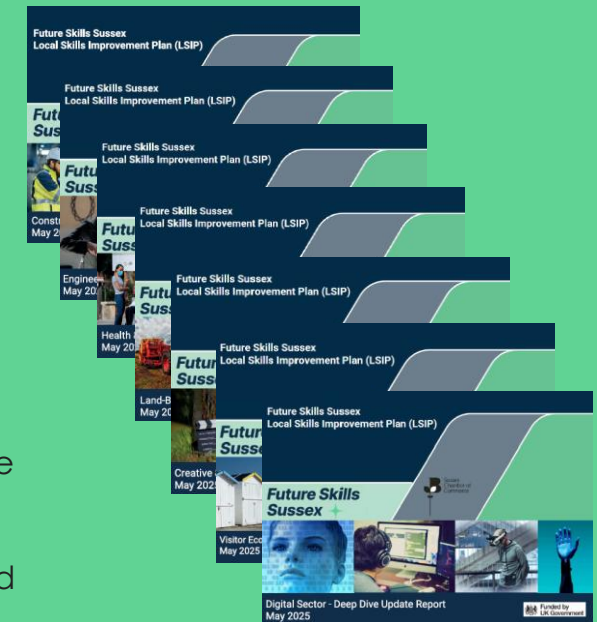


Figure 8: LSIP Key Sector Deep Dive 2025 Reports

Environmental & Net Zero Goals – Employer & Stakeholder Engagement

To further strengthen the evidence base for the LSIP, Sussex Chamber undertook a range of employer and stakeholder engagement activities as part of the development process.

This engagement included:

- Sector-specific **employer workshops**
- **One-to-one meetings and discussions with employers**
- Engagement with **sector bodies and industry representatives**
- Discussions with **business networks and employer representative organisations**

Across these engagements, employers and sector representatives were invited to discuss workforce challenges, including the implications of Net Zero, green skills and environmental sustainability for their sectors and businesses.

These conversations were used to test and validate the emerging evidence base, including the findings from the Employer Survey, insights gathered through the Key Sector Deep Dive 2025 research and wider labour market intelligence and policy context

This process enabled Sussex Chamber to gather additional qualitative insight from employers and ensure that the LSIP reflects a robust and employer-informed understanding of sustainability-related workforce needs.

It also reinforced that, across many sectors, employers require support to build practical environmental sustainability capability within their workforce, particularly within small and medium-sized businesses that dominate the Sussex economy. This is then reflected in the LSIP skills priority to:

Embed skills for environmental sustainability and climate resilience across the Sussex and Brighton workforce and future pipeline, supported by leadership capability to enable consistent and effective implementation.

Equality of Opportunity

- i. Labour Market Evidence
- ii. Local Strategies & Plans
- iii. Employer Survey
- iv. Employer and Stakeholder Engagement
- v. How considerations informed LSIP Report

Equality of Opportunity - Labour Market Evidence

Equality of Opportunity Approach - How this was addressed in the LSIP methodology

Equality of opportunity has been considered throughout the development of the Sussex and Brighton Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP). Equality and inclusion considerations were embedded within the LSIP methodology through the analysis of labour market intelligence, employer engagement and stakeholder consultation activities. This approach ensured that the development of the LSIP evidence base considered barriers to participation in employment and training and the need to broaden access to opportunities across Sussex and Brighton.

Labour Market Evidence

Equality considerations were incorporated into the labour market intelligence analysis undertaken to inform the LSIP. This included analysis of:

- **Resident population characteristics**, including age demographics and wider population trends
- **Economic inactivity and unemployment by age group**, alongside wider labour market participation data
- **Projected demographic changes**, including the implications of an ageing workforce and expected changes in the number of young people entering the labour market

Including these indicators within the labour market analysis ensured that the LSIP evidence base considered demographic change and labour market participation patterns when identifying employer skills needs.

Equality of Opportunity – Local Strategies & Plans

Review of Local Strategies and Plans

As part of the LSIP methodology, a structured review of relevant local economic strategies and plans was undertaken. This ensured that equality and participation considerations identified within place-based strategies were reflected within the LSIP development process.

This review included strategies and plans produced by local authorities and strategic partners across Sussex and Brighton, including the [Get Sussex Working Plan](#). The review helped the LSIP team to understand how partners across the area are seeking to:

- **Support individuals who are furthest from the labour market**
- **Increase labour market participation across different communities**
- **Address local barriers to employment and skills development**

Incorporating this review into the LSIP methodology ensured that the development of the LSIP was aligned with wider place-based priorities relating to employment, skills and labour market participation.

Equality of Opportunity – Employer Survey

Employer Survey - Strengthening Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in the workplace

The employer survey undertaken as part of the LSIP research also explored issues relating to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) within the workplace. Including EDI questions within the survey methodology enabled employers to provide insight into the extent to which equality and inclusion considerations are currently addressed within their organisations and where further support may be required.

The survey asked employers whether they required support in relation to EDI practices within their workforce and explored specific areas where assistance may be beneficial. These included:

- **Creating inclusive workplace cultures**
- **Developing awareness and confidence among managers around equality and inclusion**
- **Supporting workforce wellbeing and social diversity**
- **Embedding inclusive practices within recruitment and workforce development**

The results of these questions are presented in the chart below and form part of the wider evidence base used to understand employer perspectives on equality and inclusion within the workplace.

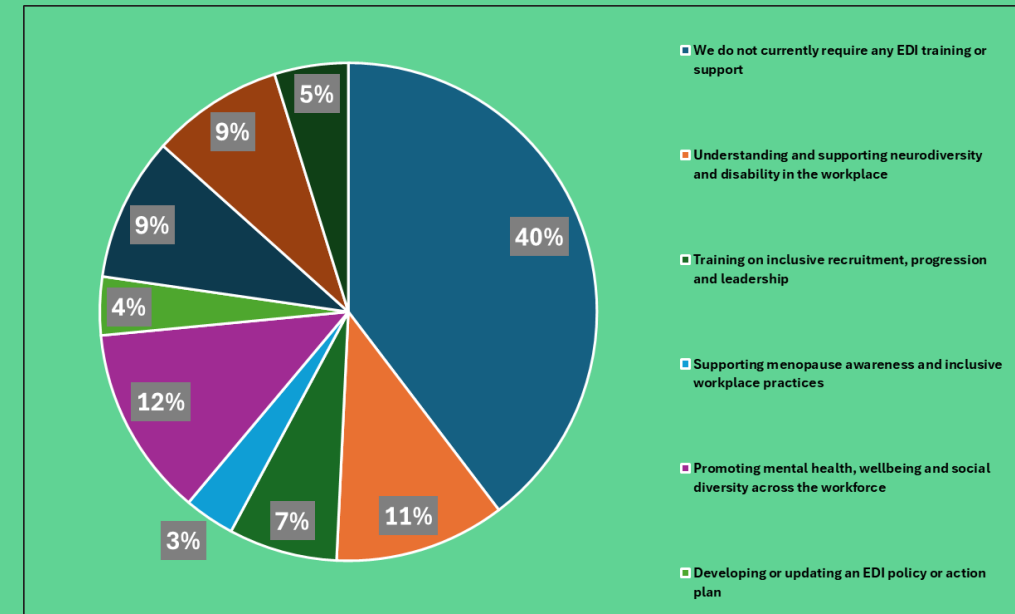


Figure 9: Employer survey analysis

Equality of Opportunity – Employer and Stakeholder Engagement

Equality considerations were also explored through engagement with employers, providers and organisations involved in careers, employment and skills support. Through workshops, one-to-one discussions and wider stakeholder engagement activities, participants were invited to reflect on barriers that may affect access to training and employment opportunities.

Discussions included consideration of:

- **Geographic and socio-economic deprivation** and how this can affect participation in education and employment
- **Access to education and training provision**, including the availability of local learning opportunities
- **Digital barriers**, including access to technology and online learning
- **Access to employment opportunities**, including entry routes into sectors experiencing skills shortages

These discussions helped ensure that the LSIP engagement process explored how widening participation could support workforce development across priority sectors.

Equality of Opportunity – How considerations informed LSIP Report

Insights gathered through the labour market analysis, review of local strategies, employer survey and the employer and stakeholder engagement activities informed the development of the LSIP priorities, and the development of the Action Plan for 2026–2029.

Throughout this process, equality of opportunity considerations were carried forward from the initial evidence gathering stages through to prioritisation and action planning.

In particular, the cross-sector skills theme of **Access Routes into Employment and Career Pathways** reflects the importance of improving how individuals access and progress within the labour market. This is then reflected in the LSIP skills priority to:

Strengthen access, entry and progression routes into employment to reflect technological change and Sussex and Brighton's demographic realities, so that pathways remain inclusive, clear and aligned with employer expectations.

Actions developed within the LSIP Action Plan will support the delivery of this priority over the 2026–2029 period. By embedding equality considerations throughout the LSIP development process the LSIP aims to support more inclusive access to employment and career progression opportunities across the Sussex and Brighton economy.

Governance Structure

- i. LSIP Team
- ii. Governance Structure

LSIP team

To ensure effective overall project management, delivery of the LSIP process and robust planning for widespread stakeholder engagement it was necessary to build a strong project delivery team.

Sussex Chamber CEO provides direction and guidance for the delivery and review of the LSIP, as well as providing sound local business knowledge and support for stakeholder engagement. In addition, the CEO works with the LSIP Lead to oversee the governance and contractual arrangement of the LSIP.

LSIP Lead oversees the project management, leads on stakeholder and provider engagement, governance, provides strategic direction and delivery of the LSIP process; ensuring a robust process and that lessons learnt from the previous iterations of the LSIP have been incorporated into the LSIP 22629 development process. The role requires not only a good knowledge of the local economic and businesses landscape but also the local skills system.

LSIP Coordinator provides admin and project coordination support including communications, social media, employer survey and provider survey data analysis, LSIP Board secretariat support, employer and stakeholder engagement and event organisation.

Strategic Expert works alongside the LSIP Lead giving strategic support and expertise for the development and writing of LSIP report, as well as supporting future progress review and monitoring of the LSIP going forward. Leads on the consultation events and workshops with partners and stakeholders. The role requires not only a good knowledge of the local economic and businesses landscape but also the local skills system.

Stakeholder Engagement Leads engage with a range of stakeholders effectively and undertake the employer engagement workshops, one-to-one employer meetings and engagement with employer networks, sector organisations and unions.

Internal Sussex Chamber staff support the LSIP providing support for wider LSIP Team to undertake co-ordination in respect of social media, stakeholder engagement and events organisation. Ensuring the LSIP messages, information and engagement opportunities are disseminated not only to Chamber members but the wider business community.

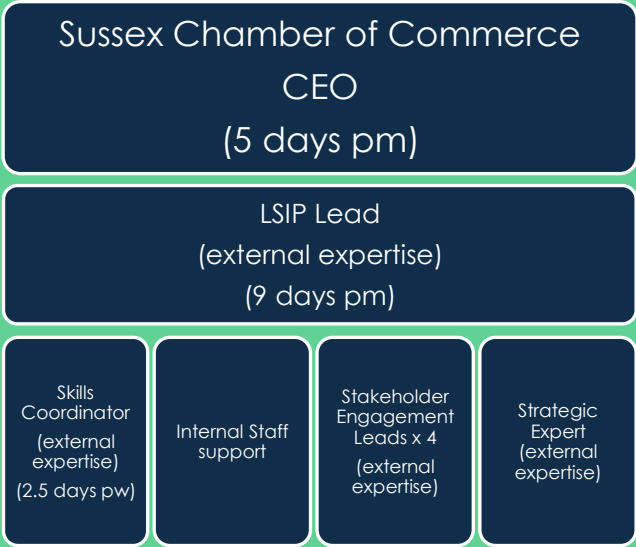


Figure 10 – LSIP Team organogram

Governance Structure

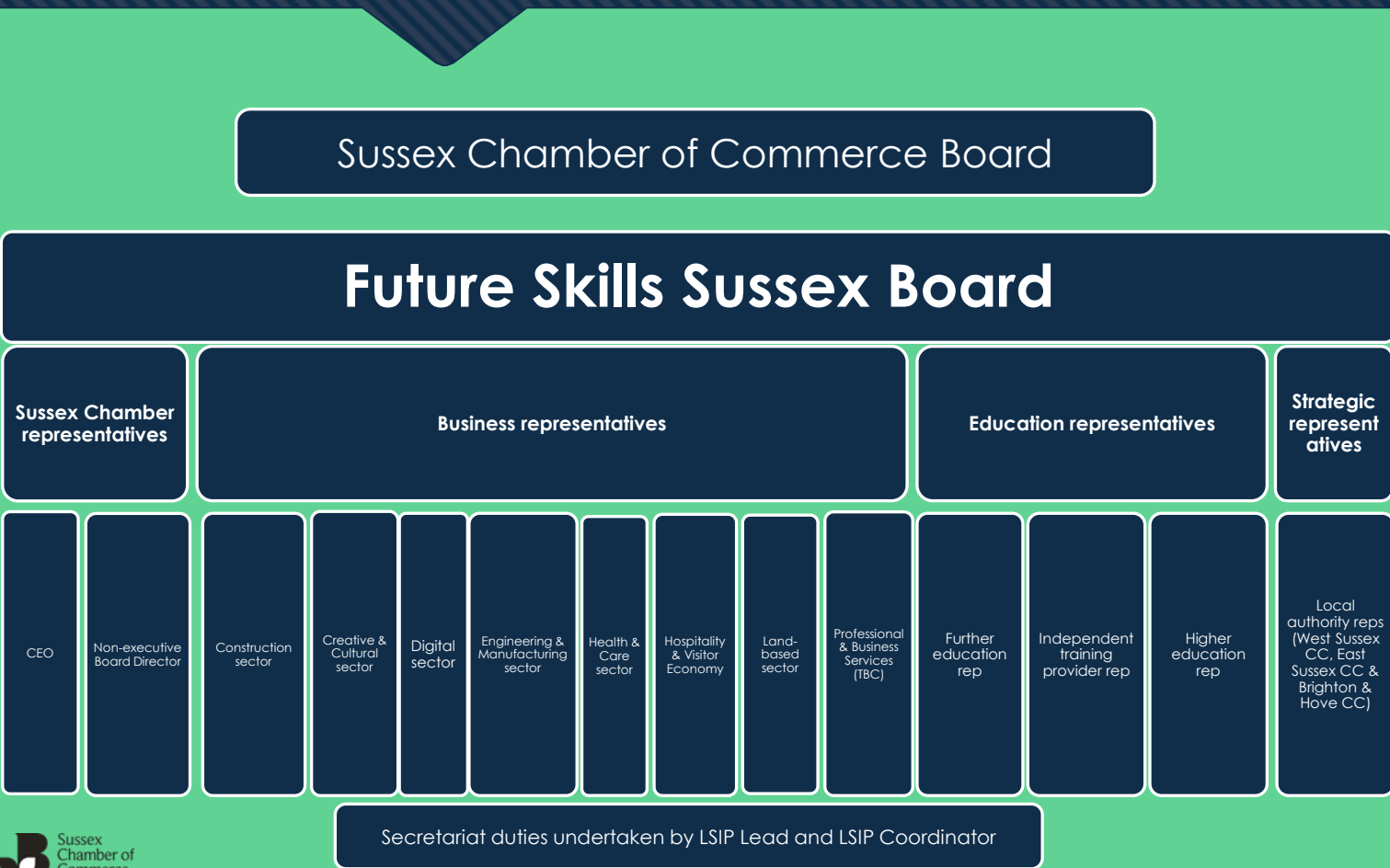


Figure 11 – Sussex LSIP Board structure

Since the LSIP Trailblazer in 2022 an effective governance structure has been in place and the LSIP Board continues to provide strategic direction and challenge.

The Board members, from across our key sectors, local education providers and local authorities are committed to providing oversight and direction for the LSIP development and will continue to do so moving into the next stages of delivery, monitoring and review.

In addition, the Board members are actively involved in the LSIP process and activities. This includes:

- business representatives championed sector specific activities such as the employer engagement workshops and the 2025 deep dives for their respective sectors, providing support, contacts, intelligence and being a critical friend;
- Board members actively participated in events including the Action Planning Groups;
- board members will continue to be engaged in further action planning activities before the publication of the LSIP in June 2026. And support the implementation of the LSIP once published.

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