

Growing the Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 1 February 2017

Additional Information

Agenda Item 5 – Update on Progress on Pledge 18 – Apprenticeships, Pledge 19 – Higher Education and the Post 16 Review

- Pages 3 – 30 Appendix 1
- Pages 31 - 40 Appendix 2
- Pages 41 – 53 Appendix 3

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Skills and Employment Board Strategy 2017-2020

(A refresh of the 2013 – 2016 Strategy)

Final Draft V1



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FOREWARD

This Skills and Employment Board Strategy 2017-2020 sets out Swindon's ambitions for learning and skills development amongst the adult workforce.

It refreshes and builds on the Skills and Employment Board Strategy 2013-16 which has been successful in achieving:

- The successful implementation of the Raising Participation Age Strategy
- The introduction of the Swindon and Wiltshire Employability Charter and Pledge
- The launch of the Careers and Enterprise Company Enterprise Adviser Network
- The launch of the first Jobfest for young people aged 16 – 24 years, now in its 2nd year
- The implementation of the Apprenticeship Growth Strategy in partnership with employers
- The implementation of the Community Learning Trust, a partnership between Community Learning Providers
- Effective partnership working to shape the ESIF spending specifications
- The submission of a Local Growth Fund bid for Higher Education

The development of the refreshed Strategy is founded on the outcomes of a workshop in June 2016 when partners identified the priorities and actions necessary to take forward the work of the Board. The workshop was attended by a wide range of stakeholders and employers, and partnership work has been key to the success of our work to date. We look forward to further strengthening those relationships across Swindon and Wiltshire in the years ahead.

The significant changes to the learning landscape ushered in by the Apprenticeship Vision for 2020; the Post 16 Skills Plan; the new flexible Adult Education Budget; a White Paper setting out the government's plans to reform the higher education and research system; and the Post 16 Area Review, provide us with new and exciting opportunities to shape an efficient and effective skills system to meet Swindon's needs. Forecasts indicate that thousands of new jobs will be created in Swindon in the coming years with many demanding new skills and higher qualifications. Delivering strong economic growth, improved productivity and full employment in Swindon will, in part, be dependent on how we respond to this skills challenge. We want to see opportunity for all and to make sure that everyone can benefit from Swindon's success.

In recent research more than 1 in 3 local employers reported that skills gaps are a barrier to business growth, with employers citing a lack of technical, practical and job-specific skills as key to growth. In developing the Strategy our aim is to work closely with employers to ensure that they play a central role in the design and delivery of skills solutions to support economic growth. We have set out a number of ways in which to involve businesses more effectively in shaping the curriculum and providing opportunities for young people.



Mike Godfrey
Chair of the Swindon Skills and Employment Board

INTRODUCTION: RESPONDING TO NEW CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

VISION

“By 2030, Swindon will have all of the positive characteristics of a British city with one of the UK’s most successful economies; a low-carbon environment with compelling cultural, retail and leisure opportunities and excellent infrastructure. It will be a model of well managed housing growth which supports and improves new and existing communities.

Swindon will be physically transformed with existing heritage and landmarks complemented by new ones that people who live, work and visit here will recognise and admire. It will remain, at heart, a place of fairness and opportunity where people can aspire to and achieve prosperity, supported by strong civic and community leadership.”

In 2015 the Council launched its vision for Swindon and one of the Council’s Priorities to support this vision is to: **“Offer education opportunities that lead to the right skills and right jobs in the right places.”** This Pledge provides the framework for our Strategy which aims to identify and develop the ambitions and actions necessary to fulfil this Pledge in relation to Swindon’s adult workforce.

The Swindon Economic Strategy sets out five priorities as a context for action in the refresh of our Skills and Employment Strategy for 2017-2020. They are:

- Create an employment and skills system which is more responsive to the needs of business and which supports enterprise and employment growth.
- Work closely with employers to better understand their skills needs and focus available skills development investment more effectively.
- Equip young people with the skills & qualifications to successfully enter the labour market.
- Raise the higher level skills base of the workforce.
- Reduce worklessness and disadvantage.

ALIGNMENT WITH THE SWINDON AND WILTSHIRE STRATEGIC ECONOMIC PLAN

Our Strategy is also written to align with Swindon and Wiltshire LEP’s Strategic Economic Plan and Skills and Talent Strategy which both prioritise skills, acknowledging that the LEP area needs an appropriately skilled and competitive workforce to achieve its growth ambitions through business sustainability and growth.

An extract of the Strategic Economic Plan January 2016, page 13, is over page and details the SWLEP Strategic Objective 1 – Skills and Talent. Priority Actions under the priority ‘Skills System’ are all fully integrated into Swindon Skills and Employment Strategy under the Skills for Growth and the Skills for Inclusion Objectives.

Strategic Objective 1: Skills and talent - we need an appropriately skilled and competitive workforce to achieve our growth ambitions.



The SWLEP has identified four themes in its Skills Plan under which action will be progressed to achieve this objective. These are:

- **Improve the skills system.** Making the education and skills system more effective and responsive to the needs of employers and learners;
- **Skills for growth.** Helping businesses develop skilled workforces that will support long term sustained growth and improved productivity within the local economy;
- **Skills for inclusion.** Supporting the development of an inclusive economy, helping people to overcome barriers to employment, to enter and stay in the workforce; and
- **Maximise the impact of skills.** Delivering the wider priorities within the Strategic Economic Plan i.e. as an enabler to achieve other SEP priorities.

Priority actions

Skills system:

- Ensure there is a robust and responsive post 16 education and skills sector operating to meet the needs of learners and employers which is financially efficient, sustainable and operates from campuses which are fit for purpose;
- Improve progression routes to employment in the post 16 education sector, with strong employer involvement in the curriculum to ensure improved employability;
- Deliver options to enhance higher education participation across Swindon and Wiltshire meeting the demand for higher level and degree-level qualified employees locally; and
- Ensure that the learning and skills offer reflects the needs of the area, including the priority sectors, providing effective Science Technology Engineering and Maths (STEM) skills.

Skills for growth:

- Develop a skilled and competitive workforce meeting the needs of employers;
- Develop higher level skills provision through smarter engagement between the higher and further education sectors and business;
- Achieve a higher proportion of individuals employed in higher skilled and higher value-added roles (Level 4 and above) in priority sectors; and
- Embed apprenticeships as an established route to employment and maximise the opportunities to grow higher and degree apprenticeships.

Skills for inclusion:

- Improve educational attainment, exceeding the national average, at age 16 (including English and Maths) and at age 19;
- Realise the potential of residents with barriers to employment, including young people and older workers and develop innovative approaches to providing support; and
- Ensure impartial and independent professional careers advice and guidance is operating across schools and colleges.

Enabler of other priorities:

- Ensure military service leavers and existing employees have clear pathways to new skills and flexible learning.

MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY OF THE SWINDON STRATEGY

The Strategy will be managed by the Employment and Skills Board. The Board is an employer-led group which includes: local business representatives, members of the Local Enterprise Partnership, employer organisations, Voluntary Sector and Public Sector commissioners. The chair of the LEP Skills and Talent Sub-group is a member of this Board and clear linkages with the LEP are therefore in place.

The Board Sub Groups are responsible for the delivery of activities to achieve the priorities. Each Sub Group will develop an Action Plan with outcomes to be reported to the Board on a regular basis. The Sub Groups have been streamlined since the original strategy to provide a more efficient structure as follows:

Skills for Growth	
Responsibility: Skills for Growth has responsibility for skills for the future and present workforce, including growth of apprenticeships and the development of employability skills for young people in schools and colleges through Careers and Enterprise initiatives.	
This Group is aligned to:	
Swindon Economic Strategy 2013-2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A place of opportunity for young people ▪ A higher skilled, higher earning population ▪ Right skills for right jobs
SBC Priority 2: Offer education opportunities that lead to the right skills and right jobs in the right places.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pledge 18: Increase the number of businesses employing young people as an apprentice from 15% to 20%.
Swindon and Wiltshire LEP Strategic Economic Plan, January 2016: Strategic Objective One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Skills and Talent – we need an appropriately skilled and competitive workforce to achieve our growth ambitions (The Skills System and Skills for Growth)

Higher Education	
Responsibility: Higher Education has responsibility for developing the Higher Education offer to meet business higher skills needs.	
This Group is aligned to	
Swindon Economic Strategy 2013-2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Innovative HE provision
SBC Priority 2: Offer education opportunities that lead to the right skills and right jobs in the right places.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pledge 19: Secure a range of options to access higher education in Swindon
Swindon and Wiltshire LEP Strategic Economic Plan, January 2016: Strategic Objective One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Skills and Talent – we need an appropriately skilled and competitive workforce to achieve our growth ambitions (The Skills System)

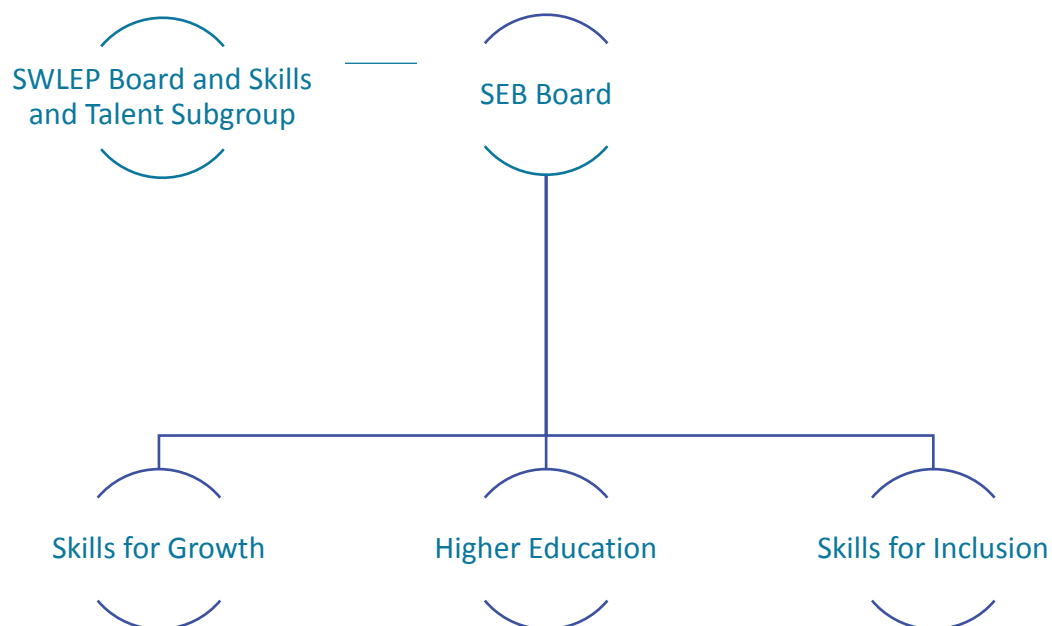
Skills for Inclusion

Responsibility: Skills for Inclusion has responsibility for reducing, worklessness and future exclusion by improving the participation of young people and adults in learning, and securing progression to sustainable employment.

This Group is aligned to

Swindon Economic Strategy 2013-2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A place of opportunity for young people ▪ Right skills for right jobs
SBC Priority 4: Help people to help themselves whilst always protecting the most vulnerable children and adults.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to the SBC Transition Programme that aims to improve outcomes for young people and adults with an Education, Health and Care Plan.
Swindon and Wiltshire LEP Strategic Economic Plan, January 2016: Strategic Objective One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills and Talent – we need an appropriately skilled and competitive workforce to achieve our growth ambitions (The Skills System and Skills for Inclusion)

THE SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT BOARD STRUCTURE



The successful implementation of the Strategy will require the active collaboration of all partners. Reflecting this, the principles of collaboration, partnerships and employer engagement have been at the heart of the Plan development process.

The Skills and Employment Board will have overall responsibility to set a strategy and monitor delivery. Individual sub-groups are expected to develop their own action plans with outcomes and performance measures which will be reported to the board on a regular basis.

European Social Fund (ESF) projects, part of the European Structural and Investment Funding (ESIF), scoped and informed by the Swindon and Wiltshire LEP are all commissioned by three main ESF co-financing organisations:

- Department for Work and Pensions
- Skills Funding Agency
- Big Lottery

These projects will be coordinated and integrated into the work of the Skills and Employment Board. Our role will to review performance reports, understand issues and challenges and where possible facilitate and enable. The skills related programmes are as follows:

ESIF and Higher Futures – Skills and employment projects continuum – October 2016

Building Bridges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Big Lottery funding of Community First-led partnership • £4m project (£2m ESF) • Commenced summer 2016 – for 24 months • 1800 + participants • People most disadvantaged in workplace, who have most difficulty sustaining employment • Tailored and integrated interventions, into-employment support, sponsored employment, volunteering, access to skills courses, work experience and CEIAG 	Employability support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DWP tender • Commences late 2016 • £3m ESF • 36 months • 1842 participants • Tackle worklessness - moving the max. no. of unemployed & inactive people into sustained employment • Linked to Work Programme but community-based 	Skills coaching for younger people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SFA contract to Learn Direct began May 2016 • £1m ESF • 18 months duration • 500 learner starts • Providing skills to tackle the effects of disengagement and under-achievement • To address local skills shortages. 	Older workers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SFA contract award offer imminent • £0.95m ESF • 18 months duration • Enable older workers to identify and unlock potential and increase vocational skills • Reduce unemployment amongst older people 	Raising aspirations STEM careers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SFA contract award offer imminent • £1.24m ESF • To increase participation rates in Higher Education and in Apprenticeships. • CEIAG for NEET / at risk of NEET • Focus on studying and entry into STEM careers • Inspire and inform young people to progress in their education and employment goals 	Workforce skills brokerage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SFA contract award offer imminent • £4m ESF • 18 months duration • Businesses to obtain demand-led skills packages from the open market of training providers using the skills broker service. • Key sector SMEs workforces • Giving lower waged workers opportunity to upskill • L&M skills 	Higher Futures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not ESIF Funded - £1.4m "City Deal" • Delivers L4 and HND / Degree • Brokers skills delivery with university and college providers • Focus on military leavers • Flexible, modular approach • Accreditation of prior learning (APL) • Partnership delivery – local authorities, Army, HE and business
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-accredited • Employability support • Multi-agency • Basic Skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic skills • Up to QCFL2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic skills / • Up to QCFL2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic skills • Up to QCFL2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QCFL 2+ • Apprenticeships • Traineeships • CEIAG, experience & placements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intermediate and higher skills • QCF Levels 2 and 3+ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 4+ • HND/ Degree, ACL

SKILLS FOR GROWTH

Skills for Growth include Swindon's ambitions to:

- Grow our **apprenticeship start volumes and the number of employers** who are using apprentices as a route to improving the higher level skills of their workforce; and
- Exploit **Careers and Enterprise** initiatives used by all Swindon's secondary schools to inform their ambitious and measurable careers education plan that raise young people's aspirations, provides opportunities to engage with employers and the world of work and have measurable outputs.

Our 'Skills for Growth' goals and outputs are designed to address **SWLEP** skills challenges. The following is an extract from the SWLEP Strategic Economic Plan January 2016, Objective One, Skills for Growth:

Skills for growth:

- Develop a skilled and competitive workforce meeting the needs of employers;
- Develop higher level skills provision through smarter engagement between the higher and further education sectors and business;
- Achieve a higher proportion of individuals employed in higher skilled and higher value-added roles (Level 4 and above) in priority sectors; and
- Embed apprenticeships as an established route to employment and maximise the opportunities to grow higher and degree apprenticeships.

In particular our work will impact positively on SWLEP priorities:

Education attainment 16-19 (increase to 85.4% 19 year olds with a Level 2, from 83.3%); and the percentage of our residents aged 16 to 64 years who are able to respond to employer demand for Level 4 qualifications (increase to at least national 37.1% from 28.8%).

In addition we will contribute to the Skills for Inclusion challenge of careers advice in schools, and the Skills System by improving employer engagement in schools.

APPRENTICESHIPS

THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR APPRENTICESHIP GROWTH

Apprenticeships are changing, and in its Apprenticeship Vision for 2020¹ and the national Post 16 Skills Plan², the government sets out its ambitious plans for three million more apprenticeships by 2020 and the creation of a simplified Post 16 education and technical training offer. But the challenge is not just to secure an increase in the volume of apprenticeships but to improve their *quality* as well so that they are seen as a prestigious path to successful careers, in all sectors of the economy and at all levels.

To bring about change the government has introduced a number of reforms. In April 2017 funding will be changed and the introduction of the apprenticeship levy will require some of the largest employers to invest in apprentices; this is likely to significantly increase the demand from employers wanting to engage with the apprenticeship programme.

At the same time, reforms mean that apprenticeships are becoming truly employer-led, with the new apprenticeship standards being designed by employers to meet the needs of employers in that sector. Once an apprentice completes an apprenticeship based on a new standard, the objective is that they will be a fully competent and productive employee in that job role.

To deliver the higher skills that the economy needs, from September 2016, Higher and Degree apprenticeships will be advertised on UCAS along with university applications to widen access to the professions. These apprenticeships are designed by employers, universities and professional bodies and already exist for such diverse occupations as Solicitor, Software Developer, Accountant, Dental Technician and Space Engineer.

Against this backdrop, there are huge opportunities to grow provision in Swindon and meet the skills needs of our economy. Our aim is to be equally ambitious with a total of **10,250** starts by 2020 to contribute to the national target of 3million.

This will require an increase in starts year on year, but at present both young people and employers lack an awareness of the potential of apprenticeships to offer a valuable work-based professional and technical alternative to academic routes and higher education. Swindon has double the national average of large employers (with 200+ employees) and with the introduction of the levy it is crucial that providers are ready to respond to this new demand and are able and prepared to develop and deliver the 'off-the-job' training needed for the new employer-designed standards.

Alternative solutions are available for some employers who express an interest in filling vacancies with apprentices but are unsure how it will work for them. For these businesses one option is to use our local Apprenticeship Training Agencies, Longwater and Swindon Apprenticeship Solutions as a first step.

¹ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/482754/BIS-15-604-english-apprenticeships-our-2020-vision.pdf

² https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/536043/Post-16_Skills_Plan.pdf

Skills and qualification needs are rising, and there are significant opportunities to meet these needs through the increased provision of Higher, Advanced and Degree Apprenticeships in our growth sectors. Working with employers we aim to deliver new apprenticeship routes to develop the higher level skills to secure Swindon's continued growth and to complement our ambitions to secure more higher education provision in the town. We are fortunate to have Higher Futures, a SWLEP City Deal project that is working locally with businesses to broker and facilitate opportunities to develop and deliver Higher and Degree apprenticeships. This aspect of Apprenticeship growth will also be addressed by our Higher Education Strategy.

We see the need to grow both the *demand* for apprenticeships and the *supply* of potential candidates; therefore our priorities are to work with the three target groups: people, businesses and providers to simultaneously work to stimulate the supply of and demand for apprenticeships.

WHERE ARE WE NOW WITH APPRENTICESHIP GROWTH?

- Statistics from the National Apprenticeship Service show that there were 1560 starts in 2013-14, 1790 in 2014-15 and 1,920 in 2015/16. This represents 1 apprentice per 58 employees in the workforce in Swindon.
- Trend data shows that Swindon has performed better than nationally in relation to growth in the number of apprenticeship starts since 2005/06, with a reversal of the decline seen in recent years. Since 2013/14 starts have increased by 14% in 2014-15 and by 7% in 2015-16. In 2015-16 Swindon performed better than nationally with a 7% rise compared to 1%; we had the third largest increase in the Southwest and had the largest increase from 2015 to 2016 out of all local authorities nationally.
- Fewer young people in Swindon (4%) start an apprenticeship as a Key Stage 4 destination than in the South West (6%) and in England (5%).
- Higher apprenticeships starts have been lower than the national average since 2012/13. In 2014/15 Swindon had 3% higher apprentice starts compared to 4% in England.
- The percentage of SEN Young People who started an apprenticeship as a Key Stage 4 destination in 2013/14 is low (3%) when compared to the South West (7%) and England (5%)
- Apprenticeships are concentrated in Business, Administration and Law, Retail and Commercial Enterprise and Health, Public Services and Care. Most apprenticeships (59%) are Intermediate level apprenticeships, with 38% at Advanced level and 3% at Higher Level.
- Traineeship numbers in Swindon in 2015/16 remain low with 56 enrolments (double the number from the previous year).
- Swindon and Wiltshire Councils are agreeing a shared Apprenticeship Growth Strategy to minimise costs and maximise impact and opportunities.

OUR PRIORITIES FOR APPRENTICESHIP GROWTH

With Wiltshire Council the following priorities have been agreed. Areas for collaboration are identified and we will work together to maximize impact of all activities.

i) Increase the number of young people taking up apprenticeships and traineeships with 10,250 apprenticeship starts between 2015 and 2020.

We will:

- Improve awareness of apprenticeships as a route to higher level in schools and colleges. Target young people, parents and staff. Coordinate this with the Careers and Enterprise project and the national Apprenticeship campaigns to gain maximum benefit and impact.
- Coordinate for the benefit of schools and colleges local, regional and national initiatives, such as the ESF funded, Apprenticeship Ambassador Network, and the Careers Education Company funded work.

ii) Pledge 18, of SBC vision Priorities and Pledges, to increase the number of businesses employing young people in the borough as an apprentice to 20% (280 more employers)

The City and Guilds LEP report July 2016 identified the top 5 concerns/ questions employer's asked about apprenticeships; funding updates (including the levy), how to get started, recruitment, how to find training providers/ co-deliver and the work readiness of young people. We can help them to take on apprentices by doing the following:

We will:

- Use innovative approaches and work with partners, stakeholders and key intermediaries to promote to employers the benefits of using apprenticeships as an integrated part of their plans for a sustainable and higher skilled workforce.
- Exploit the use of social media and the national Skills Funding Agency Apprenticeship Campaign Get in Go Far.

iii) To support employers and providers work effectively together to develop and grow by 20% higher and degree apprenticeships to meet local skills needs in our priority sectors.

We will:

- Develop and implement a LEP wide Higher and Degree Apprenticeship growth plan that targets our key sectors (Higher Futures).
- Maximise the impact of Higher Futures to benefit employers. Higher Futures is an ambitious project which will work with local employers to develop a highly skilled workforce for Wiltshire and Swindon, maximising the economic potential of the area and addressing the growing skills gap through the provision of part-time, flexible, university level skills provision to military leavers and local employees.
- Where appropriate, we will support independent and new types of providers to play their part in developing new programmes, particularly in our nearest universities.

CAREERS AND ENTERPRISE

THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR CAREERS AND ENTERPRISE

The Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) was set up because the nature of employment is changing. Jobs continue to be created but young people are struggling to get them, in part because those young people are not getting the inspiration and information they need. Research by the Gatsby Foundation has set out what is required to inspire and prepare young people for the world of work.

The evidence suggests that there is too little good information for young people and too little understanding of what works in careers and enterprise education. Employers and schools work in different worlds and it takes time for collaboration between the two to develop new worthwhile and sustainable programmes. Consequently, examples of excellent practice are patchy and remain local, spreading to other areas only slowly if at all, and the transition from education to employment is not always smooth.

In addition it is recognized that the current post 16 landscape is complex and too difficult to navigate. The national Skills Plan³, BIS July 16, proposes simplified education and technical training offer that will commence implementation in 2018.

The Careers and Enterprise Company and other government initiatives aims to address this challenge by:

- Recruiting senior and strategic business people from the public, private or third sector to become Enterprise Advisers, and using the local Enterprise Advisers and the national Network, to develop strategic and measurable careers, enterprise and employer engagement plans for schools and colleges.
- Encouraging employers to scale up their existing school engagement activities.
- Working with employers and providers to implement the new Technical Routes described in the national Skills Plan (BIS, July 2016), and in particular in the STEM sectors.
- Increasing opportunities for students to have exposure to the world of work. The more contact points there are between business and young people, the better their future employability options.

Raising Participation Age projects in Swindon have left the area well-placed to exploit the opportunities provided by the launch of the Careers and Enterprise Company. The free review of Careers Education offered to all schools and colleges by Swindon Borough Council, and commissioned through Adviza on behalf of the National Careers Service, helped both the cement good working relationships with schools and colleges and ensured those providers were well-aware of their strengths and priorities for development in terms of careers education and employer engagement.

³ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/536043/Post-16_Skills_Plan.pdf

WHERE ARE WE NOW WITH CAREERS AND ENTERPRISE?

- All Swindon Secondary Schools and Colleges were invited to benefit from being engaged in the network. Seventeen schools and colleges are currently matched with their Enterprise Adviser and working to develop Employer Engagement Strategies (November 2016). The Swindon and Wiltshire Enterprise Adviser Network is the most developed in the Southwest.
- Project funding has been agreed until at least end of August 2017, co-funded by Swindon Borough Council and the Careers & Enterprise Company.
- Education Business Partnership, funded through the Careers & Enterprise Company, has begun its project to help grow apprenticeships in the Swindon area, and support schools and employers in developing work experience opportunities. The forthcoming Careers & Enterprise Company mentoring scheme will similarly complement the work of the Adviser Network.
- New Careers and Enterprise projects coming on board during 2017 that will require coordination to build a cohesive and accessible offer to schools.
- The national Skills Plan (BIS, July 2016) has laid out its ambitions to create improved and simplified technical routes towards higher level skills. By 2018 this will commence implementation.

OUR PRIORITIES FOR CAREERS AND ENTERPRISE

i) To recruit and train a sustainable Enterprise Adviser network of 20 Enterprise Advisers.

We will:

- Engage with employers, employer groups and business engagement organisations to secure a sustainable Enterprise Adviser Network of 20 employers, and to raise awareness of opportunities for employers to work with schools and colleges.
- Provide leadership and training to support the effective delivery of the project through the Enterprise Advisers.
- Celebrate the good practice through Enterprise Adviser forums and ensure Enterprise Advisers are linked into the right staff and Governors in schools and colleges, and into local and national networks.

ii) To engage and support 20 schools and colleges to become active members of the Enterprise Adviser Network.

We will:

- Engage with senior leaders and delivery staff in 20 schools and colleges by building on existing relationships with schools, Governors, Head teachers, and the Careers Network.
- Work with the Swindon Careers Network to manage concerns, share best practice and develop the project.
- Promote and celebrate the project to Heads, staff and Governors in all schools and colleges.

- iii) **All 20 schools and colleges in the Enterprise Adviser Network will develop and implement an Employer Engagement Plan to deliver better employability skills, careers awareness and improve aspirations through contacts with employers and the world of work.**

We will:

- Support the needs assessment and development of Engagement Plans which will be realistic and have associated measureable impact.
- Facilitate monthly meetings between Enterprise Advisers and their matched school or college.
- Work in partnership with businesses, schools, colleges, relevant local and national projects and providers to create and promote career pathways in the priority sectors such as science, engineering, maths and technology and the high volume service industries such as construction, hospitality, retail and care.
 - Coordinate, maintain and develop resources and stakeholder opportunities to support schools, colleges and EAs: ‘what works’; Careers and Enterprise Company tools and resources; local opportunities / events / services; and resources and opportunities for specific young people, eg. SEND
- Work in partnership with Wiltshire Council to share best practice and progress.

Skills for Growth Performance Measures

Contributing to SBC Pledge 18 and 19, SWLEP SEP Objective One,

Objective	Outputs
Achieve SBC Pledge 18 by 2019/20	280 more employers with an apprentice start by 2019/20
Grow the number of apprentice starts	Achieve 10,250 apprenticeship starts between 2015 – 2020 (lifetime of current government)
To support employers and providers to work effectively together to develop and grow by 20% higher and degree apprenticeships to meet local skills needs in our priority sectors.	Higher and degree apprenticeship starts grow by 20% annually – 124 starts by 2019/20 (50 starts in 2014-15), contributing to an increase of Swindon’s residents with a L4 qualification (SWLEP SEP). (Reference Higher Futures)
A sustainable Enterprise Adviser network is recruited and supported to deliver the aims of the CEC project.	A network of 20 Enterprise Advisers is maintained and matched with schools and colleges.
All 20 schools and colleges in the Enterprise Adviser Network will develop and implement an measurable Employer Engagement Plan / Careers	All 20 schools have an Employer Engagement Plan that underpins their Careers Education Plan, with measurable outcomes against

Education Plan	educational achievements (qualifications at L2) by age 19 years and addresses CEC identified Cold Spots. Contributes to the SWLEP SEP Skills for Growth and Skills for Inclusion.
Fully integrate local and national initiatives to join up the dots and avoid duplication	Fully integrate ESF and other Skills for Growth projects and provision, eg. Higher Futures, ESF Raising Aspirations, ESF Skills Coaching, Skills for the Workforce

HIGHER EDUCATION

Swindon's Higher Education strategy has ambitions to:

Secure a range of options to access Higher Education in Swindon that is responsive to employer need, contributes to narrowing the participation gap, makes sustained improvements in participation rates for young people and offers an opportunity for upskilling whilst in employment.

Our 'Higher Education' goals and outputs are designed to address **SWLEP** skills challenges. The following is an extract from the SWLEP Strategic Economic Plan January 2016, Objective One, Skills System:

- Deliver options to enhance higher education participation across Swindon and Wiltshire meeting the demand for higher level and degree-level qualified employees locally; and
- Ensure that the learning and skills offer reflects the needs of the area, including the priority sectors, providing effective Science Technology Engineering and Maths (STEM) skills.

THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

In recent years, Higher Education has moved up the political agenda with recent government strategies making clear the linkages between higher education and improved productivity. The HM Treasury Productivity Plan 2015⁴ highlights the role of HE as local anchor institutions, in terms of raising aspirations and broadening the talent pool through both young and older learning, increasing the capacity to support local productivity and to make areas more competitive, improving and sharing prosperity.

Stemming from the Productivity Plan, the Minister for Universities and Science has set an ambition to **"Double the proportion of people in HE from disadvantaged backgrounds by 2020"**. HEFCE analysis suggests that this will mean an increase in participation of 2-3% per annum compared with the current trend of 1%.

In 2014 BIS published its strategy on access to HE⁵ and its unifying ideal is that everyone with the potential to benefit from higher education should have equal opportunity to do so. In order to make progress, the strategy aims to:

- Make significant and sustained improvements in the participation rates for the most disadvantaged groups and in the diversity of the student population.
- Narrow the gap in the participation rates in and across higher education between advantaged and disadvantaged groups.

⁴

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/443898/Productivity_Plan_web.pdf

⁵ The national strategy for access and student success in higher education, 2014

The cap on student numbers has been lifted and this will enable higher education to expand further.

This supportive strategic context will enable Swindon and the LEP to further develop its activity to secure Higher Education opportunities for local residents.

For many years, the Council has pursued a strong and consistent strategic drive towards Higher Education in Swindon, prioritising higher education development through all its relevant policies and strategies. Foremost amongst these is the Vision for Swindon 2015 which has a pledge to, “secure a range of options to access Higher Education in Swindon.”

Wider support for this drive towards Higher Education (HE) also comes from the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership. Its Strategic Economic Plan has a strong thread running through it on the need for action to address the absence of a university presence in Swindon and Wiltshire.

With Swindon identified as a HEFCE⁶ ‘cold spot’, where fewer young people enter HE than would be expected given their prior attainment, Swindon Borough Council and its partners want to play their part in narrowing the participation gap and to make sustained improvements in participation rates for young people.

As well as the need to improve participation amongst young people there is a clear need to up-skill the current workforce and to raise the aspirations and achievement of the future workforce so that local people can benefit from the jobs being created. In order to meet these needs and deliver economic growth, we need to work with employers to drive forward a more responsive skills system including the provision of higher education.

There is significant latent potential to achieve higher level skills within our workforce and among those completing further education. The alignment of local strategy with central government ambitions, combined with the lifting of the cap on student numbers therefore offers real possibilities to realise Swindon’s ambitions.

WHERE ARE WE NOW WITH HIGHER EDUCATION?

- Swindon has had decades of very low participation in Higher Education (HE) with the 10th lowest participation rate in the country amongst young people.
- More than half of all wards in Swindon have some of the lowest participation rates in the country and this situation has persisted for years. Latest data shows that the wards with the lowest percentage of young HE participants were the same wards as a decade earlier. The proportions of young people going into Higher Education from Parks and Penhill wards (7.6% respectively) had the 5th and 6th lowest rate of participation in England. Only 9% of pupils on Free School Meals attend university; this is the second lowest rate in the country and well below the average of 23%.
- Yet projections suggest that to 2022, 64% of all jobs (including replacement demand) will require a Level 4 qualification or above, including related skills at a higher level.

⁶ HEFCE: The Higher Education Funding Council for England

- Higher Futures is a new skills development programme aimed at ensuring the workforce in Swindon and Wiltshire is able to gain higher level skills and qualifications (NVQ level 4, HND, Degree and above). It offers employers specialist impartial support and advice to identify their skills needs and gaps, and develop tailored training solution with Universities and Colleges.
- By 2025, Swindon is projected to have a population of over a quarter of a million and without any change, none of these residents have local or ready access to higher education which meets the needs of local employers.

PRIORITIES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

The current priorities are to

- Increase the range of options for accessing HE in Swindon
- Improve HE participation in Swindon to national average or better
- Increase the percentage of young people (<25) moving from level 3 into HE.

Higher Education Performance Measures	
Objective	Outputs
Create greater learner demand by raising aspiration & achievement amongst Swindon residents (young & old)	<p>Increase the number of Swindon residents with a level 4 and above (university level) qualification from 24% to be in line with national average (31%).</p> <p>Increase the number of 18/19 year olds progressing to University from 27% to be in line with national average (37%).</p>
Increase the access to HE in Swindon	<p>Increase the HE offer in Swindon to exceed the current position of: Approx. 900 HE learners in Swindon (Swindon College 390; New College 515). + Oxford Brookes deliver BSc/MSc in Adult Nursing and FD in Operating Department Practice. October 2016 numbers are approx. 520 students.</p>
Engage with Swindon Employers to develop an attractive & sustainable curriculum that maximises the uptake of the improved HE offer in Swindon.	<p>Extend the current offer of subjects:</p> <p>Engineering/Construction, Education, Business /Management, Art/Design, Health and Social Care</p>
To support employers and providers work effectively together to develop and grow by 20% higher and degree apprenticeships to meet local skills needs in our priority sectors.	<p>Higher and degree apprenticeship starts grow by 20% annually – 124 starts by 2019/20 (50 starts in 2014-15). (Note: this objective and output is linked to the Higher Futures Plan)</p>

SKILLS FOR INCLUSION

Skills for Inclusion will work to improve the participation of:

- All young people who are NEET* or at risk of becoming NEET, aged 16-18 (academic years 12 and 13), and up to 25 years for Looked After Children/Care Leavers and those with an Education Health and Care Plan; and
- Adults who are looking to re-engage after a break in employment for whatever reason.

This group aims to enable access to effective progression routes that lead to employment and therefore reduce the chances of future exclusion for these groups.

*NEET: Not in education, employment or training.

Our 'Higher Education' goals and outputs are designed to address **SWLEP** skills challenges. The following is an extract from the SWLEP Strategic Economic Plan January 2016, Objective One, Skills for Inclusion:

Skills for inclusion:

- Improve educational attainment, exceeding the national average, at age 16 (including English and Maths) and at age 19;
- Realise the potential of residents with barriers to employment, including young people and older workers and develop innovative approaches to providing support; and
- Ensure impartial and independent professional careers advice and guidance is operating across schools and colleges.

Note: the third bullet above is addressed within the Skills for Growth objectives and outputs. It is relevant to the Swindon Skills for Inclusion because good careers advice and guidance underpins our ambitious adult education progression and destination targets.

YOUNG PEOPLE

THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

The Post 16 Skills Plan⁷ published in July 2016 provides for the transformation of post 16 learning and the government's ambition is that every young person, after an excellent grounding in the core academic subjects and a broad and balanced curriculum to age 16, is presented with two choices: the academic or the technical option. The academic option is already well regarded, but the

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/post-16-skills-plan-and-independent-report-on-technical-education>

technical option must also be world-class. There should be appropriate bridging courses to make movement between the two options easily accessible.

To achieve this, the Skills Plan ushers in a radical overhaul of the post-16 vocational qualification system to replace 20,000 courses with “15 high-quality routes”. The first ‘pathfinder’ routes will be taught from September 2019 and will be two-year college based programmes suitable from the age of 16, as well as those aged 19+, with close alignment to the new apprenticeship standards.

All 15 routes will be rolled-out for teaching by September 2022 and four of the 15 routes will be “primarily delivered through apprenticeships.” A new, employer-led Institute for Apprenticeships will regulate quality across apprenticeships and its remit will be expanded to cover all technical education.

Quality work placements within each programme will be critical, and every 16–18 year-old student following a two-year, college-based technical education programme will be entitled to one.

In addition, the reform of school and college accountability measures will provide new data on how young people progress at school or college, and is intended to encourage providers to focus on achieving the best outcomes for all their students, irrespective of their starting points and will help all providers place an equal focus on destinations.

With Swindon having one of the highest proportions of young people in the country choosing technical options at 16, the reforms being introduced provide a real opportunity to support Swindon’s young people and adults in new ways to enable them to secure sustained skilled employment and meet the needs of our growing and rapidly changing economy.

WHERE ARE WE NOW WITH YOUNG PEOPLE?

- From 2013 to 2016 the September Guarantee rate for year 11 students in Swindon grew to be among the highest in the country. Numbers remaining in learning in March of the following year were strong and better than the national average over the same period but fell below national for the first time in 2016. Numbers remaining in learning into year 13 broadly matched the national picture from 2013 to 2015 but fell well below national in 2016. In March 2016 Swindon was ranked in the bottom quartile of authorities on this measure, largely as a consequence of larger numbers of students moving into employment without training in year 13, rather than continuing in learning.
- Falling trends in the proportion of 16 and 17 year olds who are recorded as NEET in Swindon match those found nationally. Slightly fewer 16 year olds are NEET compared to nationally, in Swindon, but slightly more 17 year olds.
- Until 2016, the proportion of both 16 and 17 year olds in Swindon, in unknown destinations, was consistently below the national average. In 2016 figures for both years were above the national average, with Business Support Team colleagues increasingly stretched to deliver a wide range of services within localities and not consistently prioritizing their “tracking” role.
- The majority of young people who are tracked but are not found to be in learning or NEET are in employment without training. In March 2016, in Swindon, the rates were 1.6% at 16,

compared to a national figure of 0.9%, and 5.8% at 17, with a national figure of 3.2%. This equates to approximately 40 16 year olds and more than 150 17 year olds in Swindon.

- Education Employment and Training (EET) rates for key vulnerable groups of 16 to 18 year olds are below those of their peers and of similar cohorts nationally. For Looked After Children/Care leavers and Young Mothers/Pregnant Teenagers (typical cohorts 110 in both cases) the gap from the national group is small and not likely to be statistically significant. For LDD learners (cohort typically close to 400) the official EET rate is 76% compared to the equivalent national figure of 81%.
- While the proportions of vulnerable groups in positive destinations are only a little below national averages, the attainment of some of these young people is a cause for concern.
- Attainment gaps at KS4 and KS5 for vulnerable groups are wider than the national average. At 19 the gap in attainment by Free School Meal status is the widest for three years and only very small proportions of these groups enter Higher Education.
- With neither of Swindon's FE Colleges having a positive 'value added' score for Level 3 vocational/technical courses, the on-going post-16 area review is a crucial opportunity to ensure that opportunities for vulnerable groups are prioritised.
- Recent research (Dec. 2015) in Swindon showed that employers across all sectors of the economy have entry level occupations. However, significant minorities struggle to recruit to those positions because of difficulties in finding personnel with the right attitude, motivation and work ethic. Skills most in demand for these recruits are less about specific qualifications but focus on attitudes and behaviours, team-working, customer care and oral communication skills.

PRIORITIES FOR DISADVANTAGED YOUNG PEOPLE

- i) Ensure all young people NEET or at risk of NEET have opportunities to progress to a positive and appropriate destination after the age of 16 and achieve at least level 2 by 19 years.**

We will:

- Put in place robust tracking arrangements to identify young people who are not engaged in education or training or who have left provision, reducing the numbers of 16 and 17 year olds in unknown destinations.
- Work with SBC teams in Children, Families and Community Health, and Adult Social Care to promote options and choices to secure effective referral and participation in relevant and fit for purpose education and training.
- Work in partnership with the voluntary sector, ESIF funded projects and other relevant provision that can support disadvantaged young people to re-engage and stay engaged.

- ii) Reduce the performance and employment gap between disadvantaged young people and their peers**

We will:

- Work with providers and employers to provide sector routes that lead to employment or further learning.
- Work with Providers and other stakeholders such as DWP to support the development of Traineeships, Supported Internships and Supported Employment opportunities.
- Work with the SBC Transitions Team to review, plan activities / actions that when implemented will contribute towards the improvement of participation and employment rates of these groups.

i) Develop a high quality and diverse curriculum offer which provides high quality destinations to meet the needs of vulnerable young people.

We will:

- Facilitate a joined up approach of education (A levels), training (technical) and employment services that can provide a joined up end to end service that meets the needs of young people who needs cannot be met by the core system alone.
- Work with providers to pilot innovative ways of delivering learning that meets the needs of all young people.
- Support partners to implement the Governments Post 16 Skills Plan (July 2016)

COMMUNITY AND ADULT LEARNING

THE CHALLENGES AND THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADULT LEARNING

Learning is an important vehicle for social mobility, and is beneficial both for individuals and for society as a whole. It is particularly important in the current context of rapid technological change, longer working lives and an ageing population. Numerous studies have demonstrated that learning as an adult (including non-accredited learning) brings many benefits including better health and wellbeing, greater social engagement, increased employability and greater capacity for parents to help their children to learn.

The Marmot Strategic Review of Health Inequalities in England concluded that reducing health inequalities requires action on six policy objectives, one of which makes explicit the links between employment and well-being:

- Give every child the best start in life
- Enable all children young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives
- Create fair employment and good work for all
- Ensure a healthy standard of living for all
- Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities
- Strengthen the role and impact of ill-health prevention

Employment projections show that skills needs are rising and those without the skills for employment will find it increasingly difficult to find work so there is a need to build on the work

already being undertaken, to continue with activities proposed in this plan and to help more people that are out of work to access employment opportunities.

A fundamental change to adult learning is the transfer of control of the Adult Education Budget (AEB) from 2017 to local government areas through devolution agreements. Transferring the AEB will enable local areas and colleges and other training organisations to reshape their local adult education provision. The principal purpose of the AEB is to engage adults and provide the skills and learning they need to equip them for work, an apprenticeship or further learning. It also enables more tailored programmes of learning to be made available, which do not need to include a qualification, to help those furthest from learning or the workplace. Consequently, colleges and other training organisations will have more flexibility to respond to the needs of their local area. This will enable the funding of programmes that really make a difference by including locally designed learning activity alongside qualifications, or instead of them.

In clarifying their skills priorities, local areas can influence the pattern and nature of provision for those learners that need support to engage and progress in learning to reach a full Level 2 or 3 and this will provide Swindon with the opportunity to tailor its adult and community learning to meet local needs.

The introduction of new adult (19+) learner outcome measures for further education from 2017, will put greater emphasis on destinations (into employment, apprenticeship or further learning) and progression within learning and earnings which will further support the authority in this work.

WHERE ARE WE NOW WITH ADULT LEARNING?

- The proportion of adults (18-65 year olds) with learning disabilities in paid employment, at 4.2% in 2014/15, is well below the national rate of 7.0%.
- The national Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2015 show that Swindon is a place of contrasts. Overall it is amongst some of the least deprived parts of England, however pockets of deprivation exist, and 8 of Swindon Local Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are in the most deprived 10% nationally, whilst others are in the most privileged 10%.
- 1% of the Swindon workforce are registered as Job Seekers (1,400 people) compared with 1.5% in England. 24% of claimants are aged between 18 – 24 years and 24% are 50+ years.
- Worklessness, i.e. those on a range of out of work benefits, is below average, but some wards have very high rates of worklessness. These include Penhill where 24% are on out of work benefits; Parks (19%); Walcot (15%) and Gorse Hill and Pinehurst (14%).
- Swindon has a lower proportion of adults who have low skills levels. There are only 68.9% of adults who have achieved a Level 2 or above qualification compared to 77.6% in the southwest and 73.6% in Great Britain.
- The 2011 Census found long term health problems or disability limited the day to day activities of 15.4% (32,302) of people in Swindon.

- In Swindon, there are an estimated 25,000 individuals with depression or common mental health problems.

PRIORITIES FOR ADULT LEARNING

- i) **Swindon Community Learning Partnership collaborates to produce a joined up accessible curriculum that meets the needs of our priority learners, resulting in adults achieving L2 and above to at least national average.**

We will:

- Work in partnership, through the Skills and Employment Board structure, to continue to develop the established Swindon Community Learning Partnership (Trust), working with partners and stakeholders to identify new opportunities to engage and progress our priority learners.
- Create where possible a joined up curriculum that minimizes duplication, maximizes the use of public funding, capitalizes on each partners resources and expertise, and makes available a commercial offer for those that can afford to pay.
- Work in partnership to ensure all learners who have not yet achieved L2 or above are able to access ESOL, English, Maths and IT.

- ii) **Improve Adult Education Budget learners' destination outcomes to at least 60% progressing into learning, work or volunteering.**

We will:

- Identify and target priority learners, including those 'known' to SBC, who would benefit from the community learning offer to widen participation amongst key groups.
- Support and train tutors and trainers with information and resources to improve the provision of information, advice and guidance of partner, stakeholder and ESIF funded project provision.
- Work with others to share volunteering information between ACL providers and agencies that coordinate and develop volunteering.
- Work with partners to increase take-up of opportunities in Higher Education, Traineeships and apprenticeship as routes to higher level skills.

- iii) **Work with providers and employers to develop employer led sector-based routes into learning and work with clear progression pathways relevant to the needs of business and the lives of our learners.**

We will:

- Bring together employers and providers to create employer led sector groups that identify skills needs and contribute to shaping the curriculum.
- Build on existing resources and expertise of providers to create the sector pathways.
- Work with partners to grow access to Traineeships, Supported Internships and apprenticeships.

Skills for Inclusion Performance Measures	
Objective	Outputs
Ensure all young people NEET or at risk of NEET have opportunities to progress to a positive and appropriate destination after the age of 16.	Reduce NEETs and unknowns for each year group to below the national average, to achieve 3% for 16 year olds and 5% for 17 year olds by 2018. 95.4% in learning/ apprenticeship by 2018.
Increase the proportion of young people from vulnerable groups in learning, in particular Looked After Children/Care Leavers and holders of EHCPs	Improve EET destinations for 16 to 18 year old Looked After Children/Care Leavers from 63% to 70%. Increase the figure for LDD learners from 78% to 83%. (July 2018)
Improve Adult Education Budget learners' destination outcomes to at least 60% progressing into learning, work or volunteering.	Work with Skills and ESF project providers to develop an accessible and joined up AEB curriculum enabling 60% of AEB learners who are engaged to progress into a positive destination (44% in SBC in 2015-16), and % of working age population with L2 or above at least as good as national.
Work with providers and employers to develop employer led sector-based routes into learning and work with clear progression pathways relevant to the needs of business and the lives of our learners.	Develop post 16 engaging and relevant sector based routes with providers to increase the percentage of young people that achieve L2 or above by 19 years to at least national 85.5%, from 83.3%

5. PERFORMANCE MEASURES SUMMARY

Skills for Growth Performance Measures	
Objective	Outputs
Apprenticeship Growth SBC Pledge 18 and 19 SWLEP SEP Objective One (L2 by 19 years target and proportion of residents with a L4)	280 more employers with an apprentice start by 2019/20
	Achieve 10,250 apprenticeship starts between 2015–20
	Higher and degree apprenticeship starts grow by 20% annually – 124 starts by 2019/20 (50 starts in 2014-15) *Led by Higher Futures
	All secondary schools / colleges have Employer Engagement Plans that underpin their outcome focused Careers Education Plan (address CEC Cold Spots).
	Fully integrate ESF and other funded work, Eg Higher Futures, ESF Raising Aspirations, ESF Skills Coaching and other
Higher Education Performance Measures	
Objective	Outputs
Higher Education SBC Pledge 18 and 19 SWLEP SEP Objective One (Proportion of residents with a L4 target)	Increase the number of Swindon residents with a level 4 and above (university level) qualification from 24% to be in line with national average (31%). Increase the number of 18/19 year olds progressing to University from 27% to be in line with national average (37%).
	Increase the HE offer in Swindon to exceed the current position of; 900 HE learners in Swindon (Swindon College 390; New College 515). Oxford Brookes deliver BSc/MSc in Adult Nursing and FD in Operating Department Practice. October 2016 numbers are approx. 520 students.
	Extend the current offer of subjects by working with employers and providers: Engineering/Construction, Education, Business/Management, Art/Design, Health and Social Care
Skills for Inclusion Performance Measures	
Objective	Outputs
Inclusive solutions to realising the potential of young people and adults. SWLEP SEP Skills System, Skills for Growth and Skills for Inclusion	Reduce NEETs and unknowns for each year group to below the national average, to achieve 3% for 16 year olds and 5% for 17 year olds by 2018. 95.4% in learning/ apprenticeship by 2018.
	Improve EET destinations for 16 to 18 year old Looked After Children/Care Leavers from 63% to 70%. Increase the figure for LDD learners from 78% to 83%.
	Develop post 16 engaging and relevant sector based routes with providers to increase the percentage of young people that achieve L2 or above by 19 years to at least national 85.5%, from 83.3%
	Work with Skills and ESF project providers to develop an accessible and joined up AEB curriculum enabling 60% of AEB learners who are engaged to progress into a positive destination (44% in SBC in 2015-16).

Post 16 Area Review Briefing

Purpose: To provide information regarding the Wiltshire, Swindon and Gloucestershire Post 16 Area Review, including reference to the roles of the local authority and the LEP and progress made towards the Wave 4 Review beginning mid-September 2016.

Summary

The review will cover Gloucestershire, Swindon and Wiltshire and the process forms part of national reforms to the post-16 education and training sector, focusing mainly on Further Education Colleges. Wiltshire College, New College and Swindon College are all in scope for the SWLEP area as well as three colleges in Gloucestershire.

The overarching aims of the review are to deliver:

- Institutions which are financially viable, sustainable, resilient and efficient, and deliver maximum value for public investment. The review will identify scope to make efficiencies in a range of ways.
- An offer that meets each area's educational and economic needs.
- Providers with strong reputations and greater specialisation. An important outcome of each review will be the establishment of clearly aligned progression routes, from schools through to specialised institutions including new Institutes of Technology, and National Colleges.
- Sufficient access to high quality and relevant education and training for all, including 16-19 year olds, adults and learners with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), both with and without high needs.

The review for our area will run from mid-September 2016 to February 2017. The LEP has commissioned support to develop a robust data analysis and skills plan for the area in preparation for the review. The Skills and Talent group of the LEP has been steering this work for Wiltshire and Swindon, and meetings have also been held with Gloucestershire LEP and County Council.

Papers published to launch the review state that:

"The engagement of the local authorities and LEPs is key to the success of the review as there is a need to ensure delivery of the wider economic objectives for the area, including a focus on higher level professional and technical skills. They will bring views on the economic needs of learners and employers in their area, current and future gaps in provision to be filled to meet the economic need, and will be able to feed in employer views. One of the expected outputs from this review will be local outcome agreements on skills."

1 Background

In a written ministerial statement on 20 July 2015, the Skills Minister, Nick Boles, announced plans for "a restructuring of the post-16 education and training sector, through a series of area based reviews of provision."

Taking place in five waves over an eighteen month period and due for completion by March 2017, the reviews, covering all further education and sixth form colleges, are currently underway with wave 3 of 5 nearing completion. Waves 1, 2 and 3 included colleges where there were serious financial and/or quality concerns with waves 4 and 5 to include those colleges less at risk. It is therefore expected that recommendations from Wave 4 reviews will be lighter touch than previous waves.

Few recommendations coming out of the reviews to date have yet been published.

The Government expects the area reviews to “enable a transition towards fewer, larger, more resilient and efficient providers, and more effective collaboration across institution types.” Each review will be led and overseen by a ‘local steering group’ consisting of college chairs of governors and principals, Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), local authorities, FE and Sixth Form College Commissioners and Regional School Commissioners. They will start by assessing the educational and economic needs of the area before evaluating institutional options to meet that need. The options could include greater specialisation, rationalisation, mergers or closures of institutions.

Institutions will be responsible for deciding whether to accept any recommendations arising from a review. However, the Government has stated that it expects institutions to take action in light of the review’s findings.

There have been some concerns raised about the area review process. In particular, concerns have been raised about the scope of the reviews and that some post-16 institutions, including school sixth forms, 16-19 free schools and University Technical Colleges, will not be included. In response, the Government has stated that such institutions can opt-in to the reviews if they wish and that Regional Schools Commissioners will identify any issues with such provision as part of the review process.

Wave 4 Area Reviews are scheduled to commence in September 2016 and will include a review of our designated area which covers, Wiltshire, Swindon and Gloucestershire and will review Wiltshire College, Swindon College, New College Swindon, Cirencester College (if Cirencester becomes an academy it will not be included in the area review), Hartpury College and Gloucestershire College. Data for South Gloucestershire College will be included within this review, although they participated in wave 3 as part of the West of England review. The current FE commissioner will be starting off the wave 4 reviews and handing over to a new commissioner during the course of the review (name yet to be announced). I

2 What are the Reviews aiming to achieve?

- **Institutions which are financially viable, sustainable, resilient and efficient and deliver maximum value for public investment.** This may mean rationalised curriculum; multi campus colleges sharing back office functions.
- **Delivering an offer that meets each area’s economic and educational needs.** This means that the skills vision of the LEP has been clearly articulated, and that consideration is given about how existing structures can be adapted to deliver provision more effectively and efficiently.
- **Providers with strong reputations and greater specialisation.** An important outcome will be clear progression routes to higher level skills, with providers focussing on what they can deliver effectively to a high standard.
- **Sufficient access to high quality and relevant education and training for all.** The curriculum on offer is inclusive to enable participation by all those with SEND.
- **Colleges well equipped to respond to the reform and expansion of the apprenticeship programme. The government intends that apprenticeships are the biggest part of the vocational market.** Innovative preparation by colleges in responding to the new employer led environment must be considered in the review.

3 Area Reviews –Approach

- The National Area Review Steering Group, reporting to the Minister for Skills, is responsible for the national approach to phasing and scoping reviews. They are also responsible for evaluating the impact of the review process. The work of the National Steering Group is informed by the Stakeholder Advisory Group.
- Reviews are conducted within a national framework with space for local flexibility, including looking at needs for national provision e.g. land based.
- The focus is on General FE and Sixth Form Colleges.
- An outcome is to create a network of prestigious Institutes of Technology; detail is lacking but they will happen in the medium term (see section 6.2). BIS recently published a consultation on maintenance loans for level 4 and above students and only those studying at IoTs or National Colleges will be eligible.
- All involved are expected to embrace the following general principles; strategic and visionary, open-minded, seeking best value, embracing digital technology both for learning and management, commitment to collaboration, financial sustainability, 'once and for all' long-term vision, evidence based, focus on quality improvement, shared services, blended learning possibilities, delivers the skills vision.

4 Area Reviews - Process:

- Local steering group meetings commence (mid-September 2016 in our case)
- Analysis phase – looking at the local area's current and future skills and economic needs, current education and training provision, college estate, college and sixth form financial and performance data, thorough research into economic data, demographics, deprivation, attainment gaps, travel to learn analysis.
- Site visits to colleges after 1st steering group meeting.
- Development of structural options phase.
- Option analysis and evaluation phase.
- Recommendations are made and presented to the colleges' governing bodies.
- Area Review summary of analysis recommendations to be published on gov.uk.
- Implementation of the review recommendations.

5 Further detail on the roles of LEPs and Local Authorities before, during and after the review

Papers published to launch the review state that:

"The engagement of the local authorities and LEPs is key to the success of the review as there is a need to ensure delivery of the wider economic objectives for the area, including a focus on higher level professional and technical skills. They will bring views on the economic needs of learners and employers in their area, current and future gaps in provision to be filled to meet the economic need, and will be able to feed in employer views. One of the expected outputs from this review will be local outcome agreements on skills."

- **Support and challenge.** LEPs and local authorities (LAs) are essential partners in an Area Review process and have an important place at the Steering Group table; in both supporting and challenging and to ensure delivery of the right outcomes for learners and employers.
- **Informing decisions based on in depth understanding of employers.** With the impending introduction of the apprenticeship levy, employers from both the private and public sector will have an increasingly prominent role in directly investing in skills. LEPs have an in depth understanding of the views of the employers, local skills shortages and workforce development needs which is essential to inform decisions

about the curriculum and building the business case for investment of specialist training facilities.

- **Providing detailed information.** During the initial Steering Group meeting, LEPs and LAs are jointly expected to provide detailed information about current skills needs and future priorities in an integrated picture which provides information beyond that which Steering Group members will have read from public documents. See Appendix 2 for a breakdown of the information required. In summary this will be:
 - Population characteristics (economic activity, unemployment, NEETs levels of HE, basic needs and students with SEND).
 - Key local employment sectors, and their direction of travel in terms of replacement demand, jobs growth and skill levels needed
 - Any acute skills shortages and skills gaps reported by employers which are relevant to the review
 - 'One- issue' forecasts which are relevant (for example major construction projects within the region which might impact on demand for skills; business relocations; closures and inward investment).
- **Commenting on provision.** Following the presentation of the overview of the colleges involved in the review by the Joint Area Review Delivery Unit (JARDU), LEPs and LAs will be invited to comment on the pattern of provision and gaps in provision and over-supply.
- **Judgements.** JARDU will propose scores for each area following the financial evaluation LEPs and LAs will be involved in judgements about how the changes made will benefit citizens and employers across the review area.
- **Consideration around Local Growth Fund.** LEPs and LAs will need to consider how Local Growth funds including capital funds and/or the future contracting of the adult education budget will affect proposals.
- **Investment.** There is an expectation that LEPs will make proportionate investments in skills capital projects, including the new investments that will come out of the area reviews.
- **Developing programme proposals.** LEPs will also be able to develop programme proposals that will allow them to more effectively respond to the area reviews.
- **Post review implementations.** Progress against recommendation will be monitored locally and nationally. LEPs and LAs retain their focus on driving improvements in education and skills and assessing how the implementation of recommendations is contributing to improvements in local economic performance.
- **Continued support for colleges beyond the conclusion of the review.** Ongoing support from the LEP and LAs will be required post review completion in respect of a number of important roles including supporting colleges with regular information on the changing economic and educational needs of the area, providing feedback to employers about what the review has achieved, strengthening the role played by senior business leaders in colleges by getting them actively involved as board members and practical help to colleges to speed up the development of new areas of work and/or the development of higher-level skills.
- **Provide feedback.** It is expected that combined authorities, LEPs and local authorities will be invited to feed back on college strategic plans and curriculum proposals in the course of their development.
- **Apprenticeship Training Agencies (ATAs).** LEPs and LAs will have a role in working closely with groups of colleges involved in establishing ATAs which have the potential to improve and increase the apprenticeship offer
- **Encouraging employer sponsorship.** An additional remit includes encouraging larger employers with skills shortages and gaps to sponsor a part of its specialist provision

There are no boundaries or limitations to what might be proposed as an outcome of the review, and options around collaboration and joint investment may have implications for decisions by LEPs about capital funding.

6 Further Government Guidance

6.1 Overview

In March 2016, further guidance was published which contains greater detail on a number of issues in relation to: Structural and Prospects Appraisals, the preparatory requirements of the review and experiences of the areas where the review process has been carried out.

These lessons include:

- The importance of early engagement between colleges on options to rationalise their curriculum and offer shared services
- The need for early communication between the colleges, LEP and LAs within an area
- The importance of a strong evidence based on accurate and timely data
- The importance of effective stakeholder engagement
- The role that the wider sector can play in supporting change
- The importance of having the right level of skills and resources in place to support the reviews in terms of knowledge and expertise across a range of review elements
- The importance of enabling the learner voice to input to the review boards
- The potential to consider innovative delivery models to effectively deliver apprenticeships

Updated guidance also contains more detail regarding the implementation of the outcomes of the review and information on the restructuring facility funding. Additional guidance is expected in the coming weeks.

The updated guidance highlights that, since the original guidance, there have been a number of developments critical to the future of further education. The first is the Spending Review. This protected FE. It also created a huge opportunity in substantially increased investment in apprenticeships through the employer levy. These are seen by BIS as strengthening the need for reform, rather than diminishing it.

As the Further Education Commissioner has identified, colleges that perform well on a range of quality and efficiency criteria – from class sizes to back office costs – can produce surpluses and reinvest in high quality delivery for their learners. However, well in advance of the Spending Review many colleges were treading a tight financial line, and in some cases requiring exceptional support. The area reviews are designed to enable all colleges to be secure for the long term. Critically this will mean adjusting to the potential to expand apprenticeships in an environment where employers have greater control – this is seen as a huge opportunity for colleges agile enough to take advantage.

6.2 Institutes of Technology

The original policy paper refers to Institutes of Technology (IoTs) as a means of achieving the objectives of the productivity paper and the delivery of high quality STEM provision at levels 3, 4 and 5. Updated guidance published in March provided further information on IoTs, stating that the emphasis is on quality and sustainability rather than quantity. The anticipation is that IoTs will require close collaboration between existing and new providers. There is likely to be more than one opportunity for areas to be considered for IoTs. Case studies are currently being set up which will test the viability of several different institutional governance models. The next steps will be announced in autumn 2016. Early indications suggest that 6-10 IoTs will be in place by the end of parliament, that they may or may not be

linked to devolution deals and that it is unrealistic to expect a need for an IoT to be identified as part of the Area Review process. Since the guidance publication there has been more of a shift towards IoTs as a means to bridge the level 4 rather than level 3 gap and to bridge FE to HE provision.

7 Preparation for the Swindon/Wiltshire/Gloucestershire Review

- A shared data pack has been jointly commissioned by all the colleges in the area. Relevant data is being extracted and executive summaries are being prepared by all colleges in the review which will be made generally available to all interested parties.
- Three meetings with all chairs and principals of the colleges in the review have taken place (in February, April and June) to share views and to agree data sharing etc.
- The SWLEP Skills and Talent sub group had a briefing on the Area Review process from the FE Advisor involved in the West of England Wave 3 Review which outlined the role of the local authorities and LEPs and the Area Review process.
- SWLEP, Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council have commissioned Red Box Research to provide some additional capacity to ensure robust preparation for the review. This will include ensuring data analysis and a report outlining key findings and recommendations are in place providing the information that the guidance and the area review team have indicated is required from LEPs and LAs. As part of the commission, work to strengthen the LEP Skills Plan will take place.
- Amanda Burnside, Principal of Wiltshire College and Peter Nathan, Head of Education at Swindon Borough Council have briefed Wiltshire Association of Secondary School Heads (WASSH) and Swindon Association of Secondary School Heads (SASSH).
- Two meetings between Gloucestershire LEP and LA and Wiltshire and Swindon LEP and LAs took place on 23 May and 21 July to initiate preparation for the review. It covered a wide range of items including the profile and provision of the colleges in the area and the content and structure of the presentation required at the start of the review. On 21 July, the Joint Area Review Delivery Unit attended to provide an update.
- Individual meetings took place between the principal of each college, Head of Education and the Strategic Commissioner Routes to Employment to discuss the college data from the commissioned evidence base and the recommendations being put forward from the LEP/LA.
- The Post 16 Review Delivery Unit/Regional Schools Commissioner provided information for schools and invited their input.

8 Update on the review.

- Steering Group meetings have taken place in September, October and November 2016. The Head of Education has attended all meetings. The January 2017 meeting was cancelled due to further work on potential structural changes needing to take place. The final meeting is scheduled for 7th February 2017.

- At the first meeting in September, the LEPs and LAs presented information on how well the current post 16 offer is meeting educational and economic needs.
- At the November Steering Group, all parties were invited to put forward a summary of recommendations. SWLEP, Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council provided a summary of recommendations based on the paper provided for the first meeting.
- The Joint Area Review Delivery Unit (JARDU) co-ordinated input from local employers on how well the colleges are meeting employer needs. SBC officers worked with local employers to ensure questionnaires were completed. A summary report was provided by JARDU for the steering group.
- SBC has provided additional information and input to meetings between Swindon College and New College to discuss potential future arrangements.

Appendix 1: Area Reviews – Participants' and roles and responsibilities

- **LEPs.** Engaging in the review process by setting out their skills vision, with robust data on potential for economic development and job creation. Enabling change with their access to capital funding and ESF funding. Being the business voice to articulate how the system needs to change to better meet employer demand. LEPs will be on the Steering Group.
- **Local authorities.** If there is no devolution deal then the LA responsibility is to contribute through setting out their vision for the education and skills system, with robust data on participation, cohort demographic change and the needs of SEND learners coming through the system. Engaging with school sixth forms in maintained schools and taking account of the analysis produced by the review to inform their future deliberations about schools provision. LAs will be on the Steering Group.
- **Governing bodies.** Ensuring all the relevant options are considered for their institution. Chairs are members of the Steering Group supported by Principal or Chief Executive who will also attend throughout the process.
- **FE and Sixth Form College Commissioners.** Responsible for ensuring consistency, quality and neutrality across all area reviews. Ensuring that review recommendations are clear and deliverable.
- **Deputy FE Commissioners, FE Advisers, SFC Advisers and the Joint Area Review Delivery Unit.** Deputy FE Commissioners provide oversight and direction, supported by the team of FE and SFC Advisers and the Joint Area Review Delivery Unit (cross agency team).
- **Regional Schools Commissioner.** Engaging with post-16 academies, free schools and UTCs at the beginning and end of the process, feeding in local knowledge of issues or opportunities relating to provision. They will work closely with LAs. Member of Steering Group.
- **Education and Skills Funding Agencies.** Facilitating the review through data analysis and presentation, using funding levers to support the process and implementation of recommendations. The Transaction Unit will support restructuring and will be engaged towards the end of the process to ensure that all options are considered. Members of Steering Group.
- **BIS, DFE and wider government to include BIS Local.** Set the national context within which the review takes place. May be members of Steering Group or may be represented through the funding agencies.
- **Ofsted.** Will provide the steering group with summary and analysis of inspection findings for colleges and all other post-16 providers in the area covered by the review.
- **Others.** Support is available from a range of organisations to include the Education and Training Foundation, JISC, the AoC, NUS. HEIs can opt in and are advised to do so from the start of the process if they wish to be involved.

Appendix 2: Local Authority Engagement in Area Reviews

Local authorities will need to make an input at the first steering group meeting on the local area, its needs and the challenges that can be addressed through the review. This should include:

- **Demographics and deprivation:** Do you have information, data and intelligence that would be helpful in showing the local demographic picture for the age 16-19 cohort: declines, rises, and deprivation? For example:
 - What is the picture of decline and recovery?
 - Are there housing or transport developments that will impact?
 - Are there variations in the pattern across the area and when does the primary surge start to move through into post-16?
 - To what degree and what assumptions are there about forecasting?
- **Participation:** Data available for the area review is based on the Statistical First Release data. Do you have data which is more timely or which adds useful detail to the basic picture presented by the SFR.
 - Do you have further data and information that would update this profile, beyond that submitted? (and what assumptions are there about forecasting?)
 - Do you have any information, based on year 11 participation and basic need data, to indicate likely demand on post-16 institutions and are there housing or transport developments that will impact on these projections?
 - Are there specific aspects that you would like to see identified through the review?
- **Local learner outcomes:** Again data used by the area review will be based on published data.
 - Do you have any concerns that you wish to raise about local learner outcomes? This should include any specific concerns about outcomes for young people with characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010.
 - Where LAs have conducted their own recent analysis of learner outcomes, such as A level performance, sharing with area review will be a helpful contribution
- **High needs post-16 provision:** Local authorities have a statutory duty around ensuring that there is sufficient suitable provision for their residents aged 16-19 and a particular duty and commission role in relation to learners with additional needs. It is therefore important that LAs come to the meetings with a view on any gaps in provision for these learners and any issues regarding quality. The data available to the area review team comprises numbers of funded places only at the initial stage and does not reflect actual delivery or the totality of the SEND offer.
 - Are there any available forecasts of SEN levels/specialisms required locally for the future?
 - Are there current gaps in provision that colleges might be able to fill – e.g. by increasing capacity in order to reduce the number of young people attending residential provision?

- Are there any particular issues around either the supply of suitable provision for SEN learners or the outcomes that you wish to mention?
- Is there further specific points about SEND and High Needs you would like to see articulated in the review?
- **Gaps in provision:** Are there any particular gaps in provision for young people in general or in specific geographical areas?
 - What are the gaps (sector or type of provision/geography/numbers)?
 - What action have you taken so far to fill those?
 - This should include any specific concerns about outcomes for young people with characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010.
- **Configuration of provision:** Does the LA have any views on the current configuration of post-16 provision and any recommendations to improve access to learners, specialist accommodation, building condition or travel arrangements?
- **Skills:** The LA in collaboration with the LEP will be invited to present their joint analysis and conclusions on current skills needs and future priorities at the first steering group. This should either be via a slide presentation or a position statement and should address the following questions:
 - What are areas of employment growth for the area and why?
 - Where are the gaps between the current skills available and what will be needed for the future?
 - What are the keys areas of development / change that need to be considered in the review?
 - What part do you expect the colleges to play in this?

Input at the meetings

Challenge role: local authorities have a role in providing challenge on emerging options to ensure that the needs of all learners and employers will be met by any potential changes.

Schools engagement in the area review process: While JARDU will supply the base post-16 schools data, LAs and RSCs will be able to provide input on issues around schools or applications in the pipeline for new post-16 provision. It will be important to agree early who writes to the schools/academies, whether there is potential/need to run any schools engagement sessions with representative leads and how the feedback is collected. A suggested standard letter template will be provided when a review starts and this can be sent from LAs with responses coming into the area reviews mailbox.

Facilitating employer/council engagement: LAs and LEPs will also be able to provide some input on the employer voice and may be able to facilitate engagement of employer groups, district councils etc. where this will be helpful to providing insight into local needs.

Swindon and Wiltshire Needs Analysis for the Post 16 Area Review

Summary Paper

Final



September 2016

1.0 Introduction

1. The purpose of the analysis is for the LEP, Swindon Borough Council and Wiltshire Council to inform the Post 16 Area review steering group of learner outcomes and needs and employer needs in the area. The work will also inform the refresh and further development of the LEP wide Skills Plan.
2. Data for each local authority is set out in the appendices which accompany this report. It should be noted that given the time lag for some published data, analysis of trends does not fully show the more recent changes that have taken place within the FE Sector.

The LEP's Vision

3. Swindon and Wiltshire's LEP's Strategic Economic Plan was published in January 2016 and sets out our ambitious plans to ensure that by 2026 Swindon and Wiltshire will be "world-renowned for its innovation, entrepreneurialism and great quality of life." To achieve this vision, the LEP has set out 5 strategic objectives. Amongst these, its number one priority is in relation to skills and talent: **"We need an appropriately skilled and competitive workforce to achieve our growth ambitions."** Our ambition is for the creation of a demand-led skills system, where employers have the opportunity to inform provision, working with providers to develop a better understanding of new and emerging sector requirements and replacement demands, and to support the creation of an education offer that is responsive and relevant to employer and learner needs.
4. Our actions to deliver those objectives are set out in the SEP¹ and include a number of actions of relevance to the Post 16 Area Review. In particular, action to: *"Ensure there is a robust and responsive post 16 education and skills sector operating to meet the needs of learners and employers which is financially efficient, sustainable and operates from campuses which are fit for purpose"* aligns closely with the overarching aim of the Post 16 Area Review and the opportunities it provides to reshape post 16 provision. A summary of priority action are in Appendix 1.

Swindon and Wiltshire

5. Locally, the councils' strategies align with this objective. This is outlined in the Employment & Skills Strategy and the Council launched its vision for Swindon in 2015 and one of the local authority's priorities to support this vision was to: **"Offer education opportunities that lead to the right skills and right jobs in the right places."**
6. In Wiltshire, the aim of the Employment and Skills Strategy 2014-2020 is, "to put employers at the heart of the employment and skills/education system to drive growth in the Wiltshire economy and provide a structured and coordinated partnership approach to sustained engagement in education, training or work across all age and client groups."

2.0 Demographics

7. Swindon and Wiltshire has a population of just under 700,000 people, making the sub-region one of the smallest LEPs in the country (31st of 39 LEPs in terms of population size). Wiltshire accounts for the largest proportion of the total with a population of 483,100, with Swindon accounting for the remaining 215,800.
8. In the past decade, the LEP area has been one of the fastest growing LEPs in the country with an increase in population of 10.6%, well above the average growth in England of 8.2%. Looking ahead,

¹ (<http://www.swlep.co.uk/resources/document635997701081146000.pdf>)

further strong growth is forecast with an increase of 11.3% between 2014 and 2024 compared with a rise of 7.1% in England.

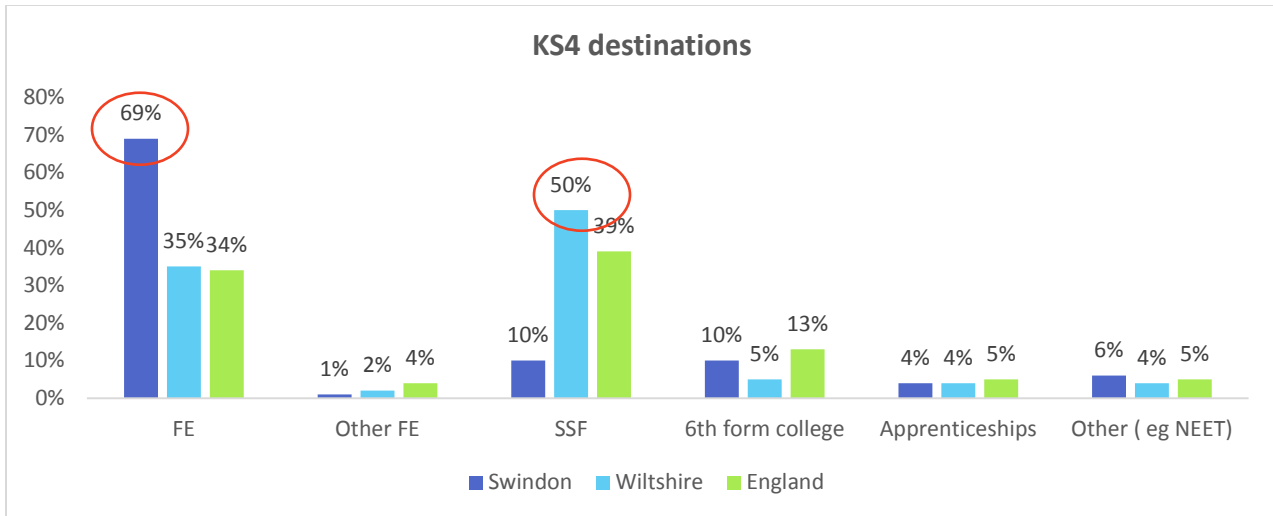
9. Much of the increase is driven by the ageing of the population and a challenge for the post 16 sector in the short term will be the continuing decline of the 16-18 year old population to 2019, after which there will be year on year increases. By 2024, projections suggest that there will be around 27,000 16 -18 year olds – almost 1,400 more than there are currently. Housing growth and the Army Basing programme (which will increase the population on Salisbury Plain) will strengthen the growth of the 16-18 cohort in the longer term.
10. Access and the rural nature of the county are particular issues for learners in Wiltshire where almost 1 in 2 of the population live in rural areas, limiting the options for post 16 learning.
11. Whilst Swindon and Wiltshire is one of the least deprived LEAs in the country, 45,000 people in Swindon and Wiltshire live in areas which are considered to be amongst the most deprived 20% in England. Skills for employability and independence are therefore vital.

School and college infrastructure

12. In Wiltshire, one FE College, Wiltshire College is the main provider of post 16 technical education and has sites in Chippenham, Lackham (specialist land based), Trowbridge and Salisbury. There are 29 secondary schools, 22 of which have a sixth form, 5 special schools, 4 of which have a sixth form and a UTC in Salisbury, specializing in Science and Engineering.
13. In Swindon, 2 FE Colleges, Swindon College, offering a mainly technical education and New College offering academic courses and technical courses. There are 11 secondary schools, 5 of which have a sixth form. 2 of these opened in 2014. 3 special schools, one with a sixth form and provision up to 25 and a further special school sixth form opening in September 2016. There is also a UTC specializing in Engineering.
14. The number of sixth forms across the area is increasing. In Wiltshire, 22 out of 29 schools currently have sixth form provision and others are in the process of acquiring sixth forms. In Swindon, there are now 6 sixth forms in mainstream schools and two in special schools. A new 11-18 free school – the Great Western Academy scheduled to open in September 2018 will be set up by New College, Swindon to meet population growth. The aim is to form a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) so that schools become part of the New College 'family'. There are also further secondary schools in the pipe line, aligned with the major development in New Eastern Villages and Wichelstowe.

3. Participation

15. The FE sector is of particular importance to the local economy, being the main provider of technical learning, but additionally in Swindon, it is also a major supplier of all post 16 academic learning. Through their role in providing learning from 16 year olds through to the delivery of skills for employability to adults the three colleges in Swindon and Wiltshire are vital to our ambitions for growth and innovation.
16. Swindon has fewer young people 'in learning' than average, whereas Wiltshire has above average rates in learning for 16 and 17 year olds, but well below average proportions of 18 year olds participating. The strength of the labour market is seen to be a strong attraction for those leaving learning, and we would like to see more young people take up apprenticeships to enable them to combine work and learning and to progress in the labour market.



Source: SFR05/2016

Chart 1: KS4 destinations of pupils in 2013/14

17. Whilst the numbers taking up apprenticeships is below average, numbers have been rising, and there is a good fit between our employment growth sectors and the subjects of apprenticeship starts. However, apprenticeships are by and large addressing lower level skills needs with 60% of starts at Intermediate level rising to 72% of starts of all under 19s. The Colleges have acknowledged the need to introduce more Advanced Apprenticeships and recognise the potential for more collective work to drive up apprenticeships through the development of Apprenticeship Training Agencies, promotional activities, developing specialisms and sharing staff. This is welcomed, and we would like to build on this work to develop creative responses to the opportunities arising from the apprenticeship levy.

4 Learner outcomes

18. We would like all our young people to receive high quality learning which equips them to progress to a wide range of further study, training and employment in our growing economy; however, we recognise that the context for post 16 learning is given by their prior attainment. In Swindon, whereas attainment is at or above average up to KS2, thereafter, key indicators show that on all key measures Swindon underperforms at KS4 and this then continues through to post 16 learning and subsequent destinations:

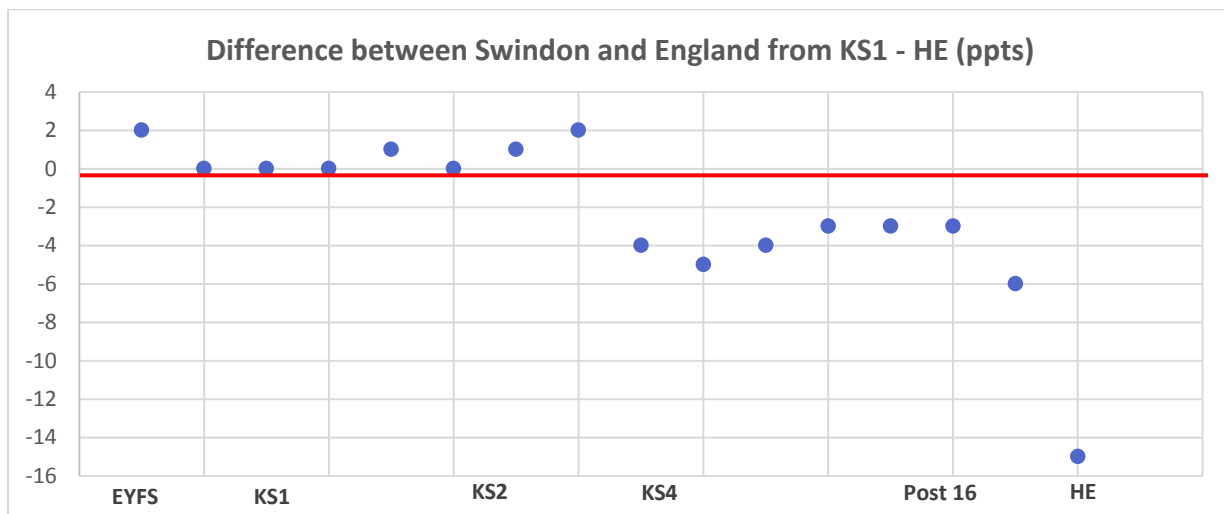


Table 2a.

Each blue dot represents a key stage as itemized in table 3 below.

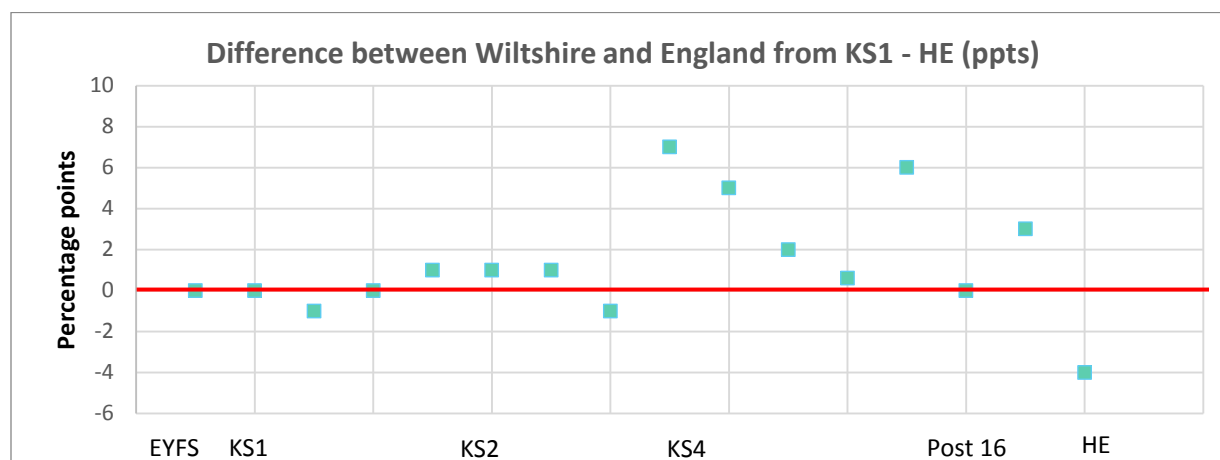


Table 2b.

All attainment phases: Difference between Swindon and England (ppts)					
EYFS	Good level of devt.	2	KS4	5 GCSEs A*-C inc E&M	-4
KS1	Reading L2+	0		5 GCSEs A*-C	-5
	Writing L2+	0		Ebacc	-4
	Maths L2+	0		Expected progress in English	-3
	Science L2+	1		Expected progress in maths	-3
KS2	Reading L4+	0	Post 16	L2 by 19	-3
	Writing L4+	1		L3 by 19	-6
	Maths L4+	2	HE	% KS5 entering HE	-15

Source: LAIT/SFR36/2015 and SFR40/2015

Table 3a: Attainment stages in Swindon 2014/15 – difference from England average (See Appendix for key)

19. In Wiltshire, the pattern of attainment is more in line with the national average, however, here the concern is that the county averages disguise significant variation in attainment across the county (in relation to 5 GCSEs including English and maths, for instance, attainment varies from 40% in Pewsey and 48% in Amesbury to 85% in Salisbury (based on school location)). Subsequent progression to HE is below average.

All attainment phases: Difference between Wiltshire and England (ppts)					
EYFS	Good level of devt.	0	KS4	5 GCSEs A*-C inc E&M	7
KS1	Reading L2+	0		5 GCSEs A*-C	5
	Writing L2+	-1		Ebacc	0
	Maths L2+	0		Expected progress in English	0.3
	Science L2+	1		Expected progress in maths	6

KS2	Reading L4+	1	Post 16	L2 by 19	0
	Writing L4+	1		L3 by 19	3
	Maths L4+	-1	HE	% KS5 entering HE	-4

Source: LAIT/SFR36/2015 and SFR40/2015

Table 3b: Attainment stages in Wiltshire 2014/15 – difference from England average (state funded schools)

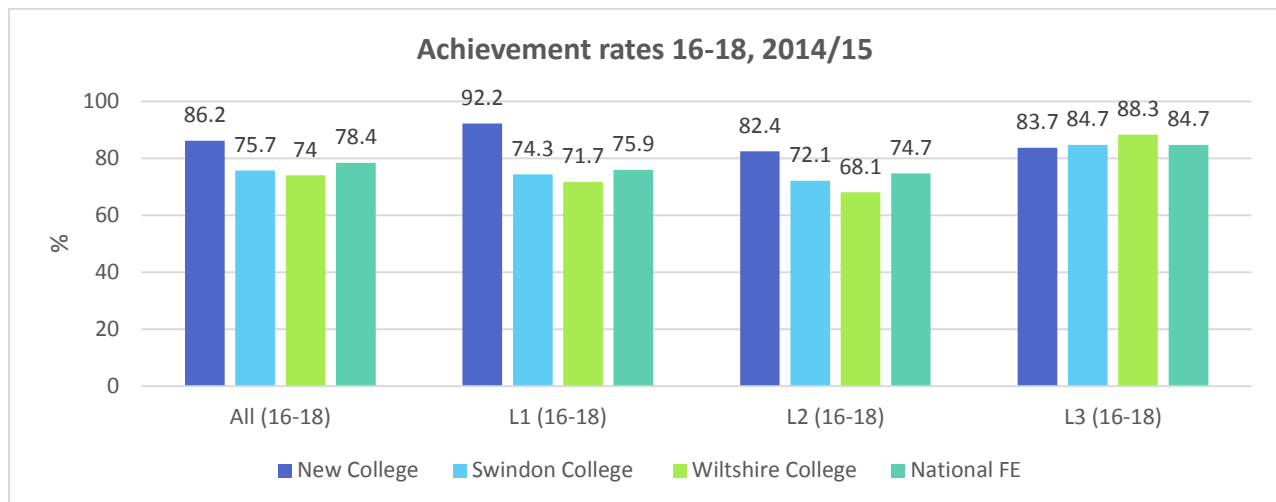
20. The colleges (particularly Swindon and Wiltshire Colleges) have to deliver significant amounts of English and maths to post 16 learners and adults. In 2014/15 our 3 colleges delivered learning to around 4,000 students in basic English and maths with 2,800 learners pursuing GCSEs in English and maths. 4,700 of these learners were aged 16-18, suggesting that despite high GCSE attainment in Wiltshire, too few of our young people attain good enough core qualifications to progress to the higher levels which the local economy needs. Fewer than 50% of 16-18 learners at Swindon College and Wiltshire College have GCSE maths compared with over 90% at New College.
21. In Swindon, no A level provider reaches the national average points (APS) per student threshold (calculated by the DfE by assigning points to exam grades)², although Ridgeway School and New College are closest. Similarly, no provider reaches the average national performance in relation to 3 A levels at A*-E, but New College is the best performing provider. Only New College attains a positive added value score for academic learning in Swindon. By contrast, Wiltshire is ranked 30th in the country for its A level performance, however, the average is brought up by excellent performance in a few schools and 13 of the 22 state institutions providing A levels in Wiltshire do not reach the national APS threshold. Disaggregation of the data for Wiltshire shows that highest attainment is concentrated in north-west Wiltshire and Salisbury, with the lower populated areas of central Wiltshire (Calne, Devizes, Amesbury and Westbury) having much lower APS scores.
22. In Wiltshire, many of our sixth forms are small, which means it is difficult for them to provide the breadth of offer, but because of their rurality and transport issues students lack the means to travel to alternative providers to extend their choice.
23. It should be noted that students at our two Swindon colleges serve a disproportionate number of disadvantaged people, with between 18% and 19% of their cohorts from the highest quintile of deprivation; twice as high as are present in the area review cohort, and this may be expected to impact on aspiration and attainment. At Wiltshire College, recruitment patterns are closer to the average with 5% of learners from the highest quintile of deprivation.
24. In relation to technical attainment at KS5, both Swindon and Wiltshire's APS (Average Point Score) per student is below average, with Swindon and Wiltshire Colleges' performance well below the average and New College consistently above it. However, it should be noted that many key qualifications such as City and Guilds are not graded and are excluded from the calculations, this means the data is not representative of the whole KS5 cohort and as can be seen in Chart 2 below, FE Level 3 attainment rates are generally good. None of the 3 colleges achieved a positive value added score for technical learning in 2014/15.
25. KS5 destination measures have been published since 2012 as "experimental statistics" and there are still high percentages of activity not captured in the key stage 5 measure, largely relating to those who enter

² For calculations, see:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/516434/16_to_18_calculating_the_average_point_scores_2015

employment. The data relates just to those studying for a Level 3 or equivalent qualification, which of course means that large proportions of students at Swindon College and Wiltshire College are excluded from the data. Latest data published in 2016 relates to students' destinations in 2013/14. Alternative data collected by the colleges is not gathered in a consistent format so with the above caveats - and acknowledging that the data includes a high proportion of 'unknowns', the measures show that overall, both authorities achieve below average performance in relation to the percentage progressing to positive destinations from FE Colleges.

26. For 16-18 year olds, there is room to improve attainment at Levels 1 and 2 for those pursuing technical routes at Swindon and Wiltshire Colleges, though attainment rates at Level 3 are good. More recent data shows that Wiltshire College's achievement rates have improved to above the national average (no data on the other colleges):



Source: National Achievement Rate Tables 2014/15

Chart 4: Achievement rates for 16 – 18 learners

For older learners, Swindon College achieves outcomes well above average and Wiltshire College achieves well above average at Level 3:

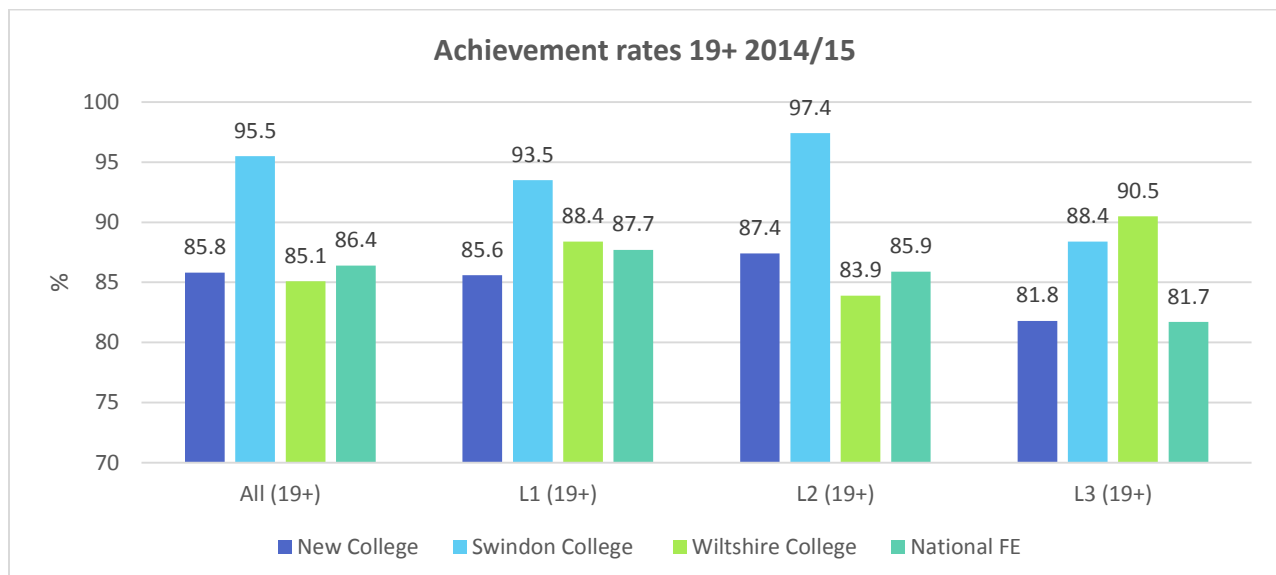


Chart 5: Achievement rates for 19+ learners

27. Our workforce is not sufficiently skilled to take advantage of the growing demand for higher level skills. Swindon's working age population is relatively poorly qualified compared to England as a whole, and whereas Wiltshire's working age population is relatively well qualified, the picture is not consistent across the county, with some areas having very low levels of graduate residents.

Learners with Special Educational Needs/ Disabilities (SEND) and vulnerable learners.

28. Overall, whilst numbers of pupils with an identified SEND are relatively stable, there is growing demand for specialist places, creating place pressure in the system and adding to the financial pressures. Planned housing developments and the Army Basing plans will see the numbers of pupils with SEND rise along with the overall rise in numbers of young people.
29. The main change through time has been an increase in young people with Aspergers and Mental Health Needs in Swindon; in Wiltshire there has been an increase in resident 16-18 year olds with multiple disabilities, no doubt reflecting fewer going out of county to learn.
30. In 2015/16, 762 learners in the SWLEP area were identified as High Needs learners. The majority of these learners are catered for by the FE sector and Swindon and Wiltshire Colleges are in the top 20 colleges nationally for their numbers of High Needs students and there are limited out of area placements. There have been some key developments in provision for the SEND group, including Supported Internships but numbers are small. A wider strategy is needed to improve outcomes and progression for this cohort, with below average proportions of KS5 SEND learners achieving positive outcomes or paid employment relative to national figures.
31. As is outlined below, other vulnerable groups of learners have poor attainment and progression outcomes across the area and do not perform as well as the national average. 'Narrowing the gap' is a key priority for the area.

5 Gaps in provision

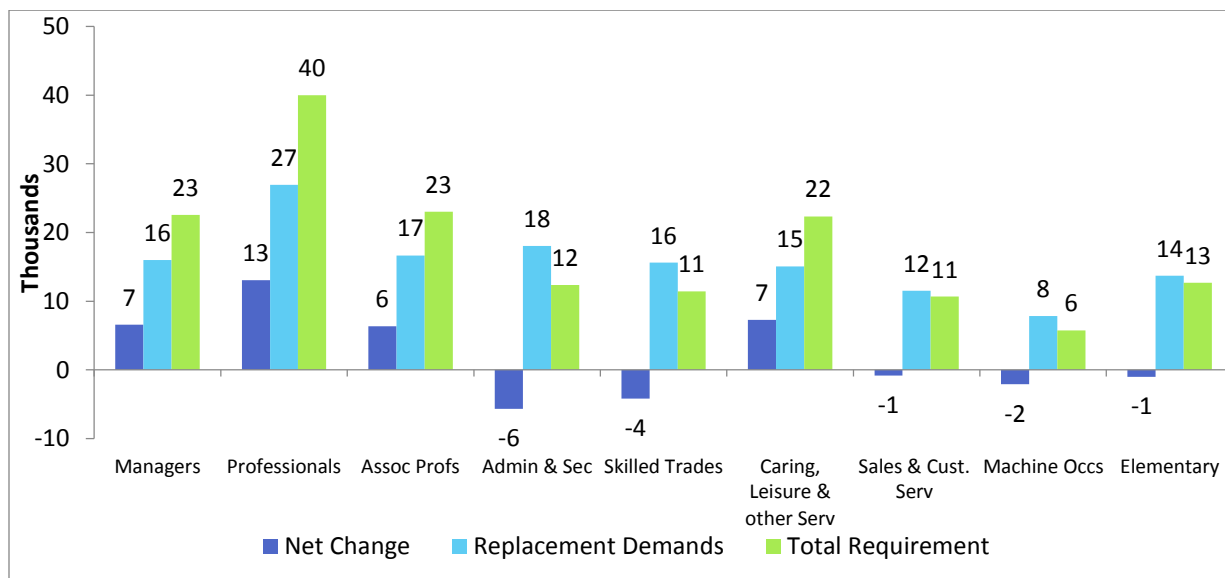
32. One of the LEP's priorities is to secure better higher education provision. Both Swindon and Wiltshire have **below average proportions** of young people who entered A levels or other Level 3 qualifications progressing to Higher Education. HE progression in Swindon is amongst some of the very lowest in the country. HEFCE 'cold spot' data shows that there are 9 wards in Wiltshire and 10 in Swindon where HE participation is not only at low levels (in the lowest 2 quintiles nationally) but is also far lower than might be expected given prior attainment.
33. By 2024, the LEP is expected to have a population of three quarters of a million and without any significant change in the provision of higher level learning, none of these residents will have ready access to Higher Education which meets the needs of local employers. At present, Swindon and Wiltshire is the only LEP in the country without a university campus. Recent BIS research on local competitive advantage demonstrates the LEP's weak position in this regard, being one of only two LEPs in the country which does not have the capacity to deliver STEM degrees to meet its employers' needs.
34. The local colleges' strategic plans acknowledge the shift in qualification needs and need for higher skill levels and are developing their plans for shaping how HE in FE over the next five years develops for mutual benefit, but historically there has been little change. If we are to achieve our ambitions for

growth and innovation then we need to raise aspirations, awareness and attainment so that all our residents to have the skills to compete for the high value jobs we are seeking to bring to the area and we want to explore all financially viable options to achieve this.

35. Another particular concern relates to the outcomes for our vulnerable learners (SEND/FSM/care leavers). At KS4 our vulnerable pupils not only fare less well than their counterparts but worse than nationally. These attainment gaps continue through to the age of 19, when in both authority areas young people eligible for free school meals (FSM) or identified as SEND attain L2 and L3 at below national average rates. Subsequent progression rates to Higher Education for those eligible for FSM are amongst the lowest in the country.
36. The growth of apprenticeships is the governments key strategy to improve skill levels for competitiveness and this is an area that requires a strategic approach to growth across the FE sector.

5 Skills

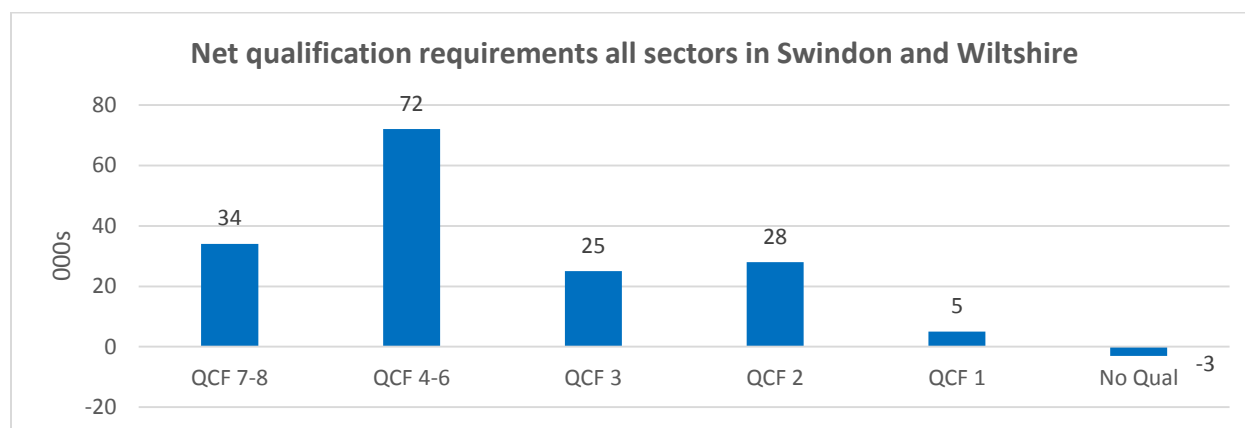
37. The LEP's key objective in relation to skills and talent is that **"We need an appropriately skilled and competitive workforce to achieve our growth ambitions."** We have a vibrant and competitive economy with high employment rates and good growth prospects.
38. Projections prepared by Working Futures show that the economy is expected to grow in line with the national average, generating 19,500 new jobs to 2022 (+5%). An additional 141,000 jobs will come about from replacing workers leaving the workforce.
39. Professional services will see the fastest level of growth at 16% or 13,000 jobs. A range of other services will also prove to be important sources of growth through replacement demand with Wholesale and retail and Health and social work generating 43,000 jobs between them.
40. In terms of occupations, Professionals, Managers and Associate professionals together with Care, leisure and other service jobs will account for **68%** of all job openings to 2022.



Source: Working Futures 2012- 2022, UKCES

Chart 6: Net change, replacement demand and total demand by occupation in Swindon and Wiltshire 2012-2022

41. The shift in the occupational structure of employment towards higher level, more skilled occupations, inevitably has implications for the qualifications required to fulfil demand for skilled labour.
42. The overarching picture is that around 106,000 new workers with **qualifications at L4 and above will be required accounting for 66% of all future demand**. Comparison of demand with the supply of post 16 learning shows that whereas there have been falls in the amount of provision at L2 and below (all ages) the shift to the provision of higher level skills is not happening fast enough and without change there will be shortfalls of people with L4+ qualifications in every key growth sector.



Source: Working Futures 2012- 2022, UKCES

Chart 7: the changing demand for qualifications in Swindon and Wiltshire 2012-2022

43. In addition to qualification needs, local employer research has shown that **technical, practical or job specific** skills are a priority for most sectors. As well as specific technical skills, employers were clear on the need for recruits to have improved **leadership and management, employability skills, communication skills, numeracy and literacy as well as corporate and behavioural/soft skills**.
44. The FE Choices Survey for 2014/15 showed Swindon College was in the top 5 in the country for employer satisfaction with a score of 9.4. Scores for New College (8.6) and Wiltshire College (8.0) were also relatively high suggesting that there are strong foundations on which to build.
45. The LEP has identified a number of priority sectors which are driven by innovation and contribute significantly to productivity but which do not all necessarily generate significant job opportunities. The common characteristics of these sectors is a need for **STEM skills** and high level technical skills. The Local Authorities have responded to their needs for STEM and higher level technical skills by developing UTCs in Swindon and Salisbury and the LEP has responded by the development of the City Deal Higher Futures programme. However, it is clear that there is a need for greater higher level provision, through FE, HE and apprenticeships to ensure that local residents have the skills to take advantage of the opportunities provided by these sectors.

6 Recommendations

46. We want to create the appropriate infrastructure for the future to support the delivery of high quality academic and technical learning across Swindon and Wiltshire, which raises aspirations and improves attainment and progression. We have a short term decline in numbers, combined with significant variations in learner outcomes across providers and significant gaps in attainment between vulnerable young people and the whole population. The current post 16 offer does not sufficiently enable routes

to employment, particularly apprenticeships or progression to higher level learning for all young people. The rural dimension in Wiltshire means that not all learners can access a broad academic or technical offer. In Swindon, a number of young people are choosing academic learning outside the area including Cirencester. The forecast changes in the labour market require more young people in the future to have higher level skills and with Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects.

Configuration of Provision

47. The infrastructure needs to support an integrated approach to technical and academic learning in line with the Sainsbury Review. This will require a strategic approach and forward planning with other providers i.e. schools, school sixth forms and training providers.
48. Learners need access to a full offer, regardless of where they live. In Wiltshire, there needs to be a broad academic and technical offer across the county with the FE College, school sixth forms and other providers working collaboratively.
49. We need to reduce duplication in both academic and technical provision and build on individual provider strengths. This should include strategic and collaborative approaches across the area with specialisms, ensuring duplication is limited. Options to ensure the colleges in Cirencester and Swindon are sustainable given the increase in sixth form provision need to be explored. In Swindon, the need to improve outcomes for learners and to offer a high quality broad academic and technical offer suggests that there would be significant advantages in collaborative approaches or a formal merger of the two colleges. This would be more sustainable than the current arrangement.

Outcomes for learners

50. There is a need to improve attainment in technical subjects, particularly at Levels 1 and 2 and to provide learning that adds value. At Level 3 we need to ensure that learners are able to achieve good outcomes across all provision and progress to higher levels.
51. We also need to drive up English and maths attainment pre 16 and by the age of 19 to give learners the foundations for progression and for employment. This is currently a presenting a barrier to progression.

Learners with Special Education Needs & Disabilities (SEND)/vulnerable young people

52. A particular concern is for vulnerable young people who have not achieved well in the past and we wish to explore a range of options to improve attainment, raise aspirations and improve outcomes.
53. We need to ensure that young people with SEND and other vulnerable groups have high quality options which enable them to achieve successful outcomes, including employment and apprenticeships.

Apprenticeships

54. The Apprenticeship levy provides new opportunities and there is a need to build up the numbers of employers and learners engaged in apprenticeships, particularly at higher levels as a route to providing the skills the economy needs. There is also mileage in providers working collaboratively to agree opportunities for specialisms, building on current strengths.

Progression into employment and Higher Education

55. There is scope for greater specialisation and we want to see clear progression pathways to higher education and employment, particularly in STEM subjects to provide the skills that employers need. There is a need to consider whether an Institute of Technology would support the shift to higher level skills provision.
56. The college offer needs to include clear pathways into employment including apprenticeships with opportunities for further learning and progression in partnership with employers so that employees are

able to gain higher levels of skills in the short or longer term. This is particularly the case in STEM subjects to provide the skills that employers need.

57. In the absence of a Higher Education Institution in Swindon and Wiltshire the development of local Higher Education provision and close collaboration with Universities from outside the LEP has a critical role in providing aspirational goals for young people and supporting pathways to learning.

Gaps in provision

58. There are two main gaps in provision; provision at level 2 and below which leads to progression into employment or apprenticeships and meets the needs of vulnerable young people and university level provision (level 4 plus).

Skills

59. We want employers to play a leading role in shaping and contributing to the curriculum to meet future needs and to support the delivery of an integrated approach to skills development with work experience and other experiences to gain an understanding of the world of work, internships and apprenticeships. In addition, the engagement in the curriculum for young people should link to a wider engagement in skills development for the workforce at all levels.
60. The skills system needs to respond to the increasing demand for jobs at higher levels and ensure pathways and progression routes to university level provision as well as increased numbers of apprenticeships. Planning of provision also needs to take into account the predicted volumes of jobs required by sector and the implications for up-skilling of the workforce. Large volumes of higher level skills are required in engineering, manufacturing, ICT, professional services and health and social work.

Appendix 1: Swindon and Wiltshire Strategic Economic Plan

Strategic Objective 1 – Skills & Talent. We need an appropriately skilled and competitive workforce to achieve our growth ambitions.

Priority actions

Skills system:

- Ensure there is a robust and responsive post 16 education and skills sector operating to meet the needs of learners and employers which is financially efficient, sustainable and operates from campuses which are fit for purpose;
- Improve progression routes to employment in the post 16 education sector, with strong employer involvement in the curriculum to ensure improved employability;
- Deliver options to enhance higher education participation across Swindon and Wiltshire meeting the demand for higher level and degree-level qualified employees locally; and
- Ensure that the learning and skills offer reflects the needs of the area, including the priority sectors, providing effective Science Technology Engineering and Maths (STEM) skills.

Skills for growth:

- Develop a skilled and competitive workforce meeting the needs of employers;
- Develop higher level skills provision through smarter engagement between the higher and further education sectors and business;
- Achieve a higher proportion of individuals employed in higher skilled and higher value-added roles (Level 4 and above) in priority sectors; and
- Embed apprenticeships as an established route to employment and maximise the opportunities to grow higher and degree apprenticeships.

Skills for inclusion:

- Improve educational attainment, exceeding the national average, at age 16 (including English and Maths) and at age 19;
- Realise the potential of residents with barriers to employment, including young people and older workers and develop innovative approaches to providing support; and
- Ensure impartial and independent professional careers advice and guidance is operating across schools and colleges.

Enabler of other priorities:

- Ensure military service leavers and existing employees have clear pathways to new skills and flexible learning.

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