

For publication

Skills Action Plan 2023-2027 (EG030)

Meeting:	Joint Cabinet and Employment and General Committee
Date:	18 th July 2023
Cabinet portfolio:	Economic Growth
Directorate:	Economic Growth
For publication	

1.0 Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To update Cabinet on the development of the Skills Action Plan, including the establishment of the Chesterfield Skills and Employment Partnership.
- 1.2 To seek Cabinet approval for the refreshed Skills Action Plan 2023-2027.
- 1.3 To seek Cabinet approval for the appointment of a new fixed term post to support the delivery of the UKSPF Skills Brokerage Project.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 To approve the refreshed Skills Action Plan 2023-2027.
- 2.2 To approve the proposed appointment of new fixed term post to support the delivery of the UKSPF Skills Brokerage Project.
- 2.3 To authorise the Service Director for Economic Growth, in consultation the Service Director – Finance, to finalise arrangements in respect of the procurement for commissioned activity contained within the Skills Action Plan.
- 2.4 To delegate authority to the Service Director for Economic Growth, in consultation with the Leader, to make minor amendments to the final version of the Skills Action Plan prior to publication.

3.0 Reason for recommendations

- 3.1 To secure the adoption of the Skills Action Plan (2023-2027).

3.2 To ensure the successful delivery of activity within Skills Action Plan (2023-2027), including the People and Skills Investment Priority of the Chesterfield UKSPF Investment Plan.

4.0 Report details

4.1 The purpose of the Skills Action Plan (appended at Appendix 1) is to provide a framework of activity that supports the overall aim of the Chesterfield's Growth Strategy 2023 - 2027, which seeks *'to make Chesterfield a thriving borough, delivering environmentally sustainable growth that benefits local people.'* Specifically, the skills action plan responds to the objective within the growth strategy to: ***'ensure local people have the right skills to support progression in the labour market and benefit from future employment opportunities.'***

4.2 The refreshed skills action plan updates its predecessor plan (2017-2020) and the activities contained within the subsequent Economic Recovery Plan and as such has firm foundations in delivering change and impact and partnership working on which to build. Key deliverables from the earlier Plan include:

- Delivery of Apprentice Town initiative, creating an online web resource, apprenticeship vacancy search tool, annual apprentice round table event and a suite of marketing and social media assets. Since 2019, CBC have directly supported 67 apprentices and 179 apprenticeships have been enabled as a result of 'local labour activity'.
- Creation of My Future Online Careers Portal that has generated over 2200 unique page views.
- Over £4.7m skills capital and revenue funding secured for the delivery of Construction Skills Hub, DRIIVE and UKSPF People and Skills Activity
- Successful delivery of annual skills and employability conference.
- Over 970 young people engaged through a rail related careers programme (HS2 & You) between 2019 and 2020.
- Supported DWP and East Midlands Chamber of Commerce December 2021-2022 to support the Kickstart programme that generated 683 vacancies and 305 Kickstart placements for 18-24 year olds.
- 20 students engaged in the 'Future Makers' mentoring project between following successful delivery of 'women in construction' mentoring pilot in 2020.
- Delivery of the successful 'Careers Made in Chesterfield' pilot between December 2022 and July 2023. The pilot saw 20 professionals from 11 local

property and construction businesses delivering a careers workshop programme to 110 year 10 students from Parkside School. 44% of the students completing the programme expressed high interest in working in the construction sector, rising from just 20% at the start of the programme. 14 quality work placements have been secured for students taking part in the programme.

- Local labour clauses have continued to be agreed on 100% of eligible developments and in 2022/23 608 local jobs and 40 apprentices have been enabled with over £34.6m of contracts awarded to local supply chain businesses as well as creating a number of other social value outputs including careers support, school visits, partnerships with FE colleges and work experience.

Development of Refreshed Skills Action Plan

- 4.3 The refreshed Skills Action Plan has been developed following an extensive evidence review, consultation and input from a dedicated steering group. Chesterfield Borough Council has worked with a steering group of partners to develop the plan (attached at Appendix 1), ensuring it is owned and will be delivered collaboratively by those who can make a difference, with governance through a newly established Skills & Employment Partnership.
- 4.4 As a partnership plan, funding and delivery opportunities are captured through activity which includes a mix of direct delivery by Chesterfield Borough Council and delivery with partners, The Plan makes clear:
- which actions will be led by Chesterfield Borough Council
 - which actions will be led or supported by other partners
 - where there are opportunities to affect change through strategic influence

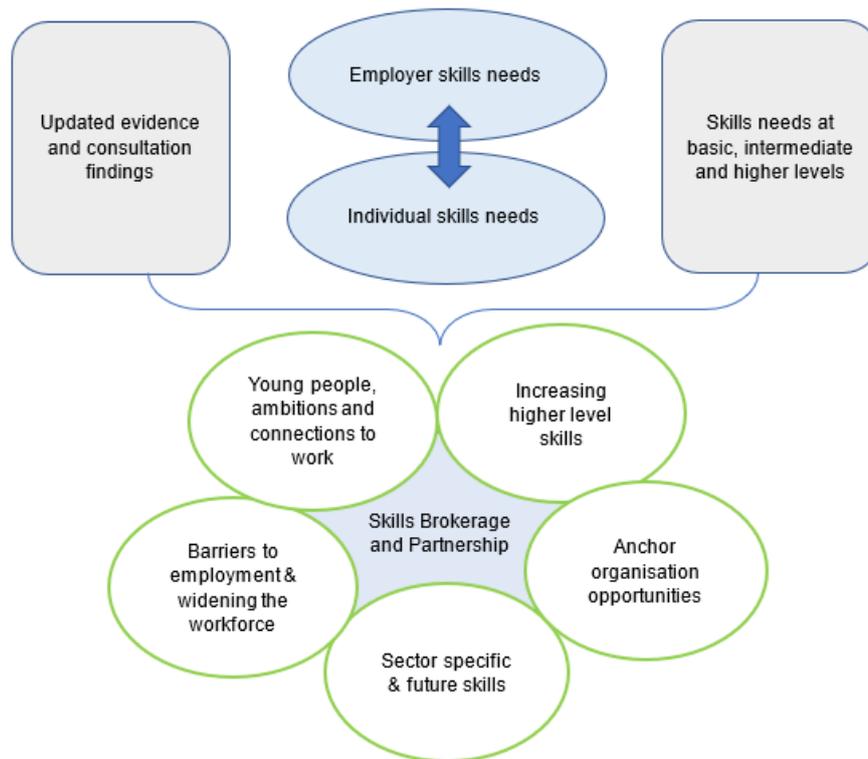
Chesterfield Skills and Employment Partnership

- 4.5 As part of the Council's aspiration within the Council Plan 2023-27 **'to ensure that local people have the right skills to support progression in the labour market and benefit from future employment opportunities'**, there is a commitment to establish a Skills and Employment Partnership.
- 4.6 The Skills and Employment Partnership will sit alongside other strategic community wellbeing partnerships within the Chesterfield System Framework, formalising existing partner and stakeholder relationships to provide a forum from which to support delivery of and maximise the benefits of national and regional funding; thereby creating a mechanism for better and stronger delivery of skills activity in Chesterfield. Appendix 4 details the terms of reference for the partnership and shows the structure of the Chesterfield Community Wellbeing Systems Framework.

Consultation

- 4.7 The establishment of the Chesterfield Skills and Employment Partnership has been developed alongside the work to refresh the Skills Action Plan. The first Skills and Employment Partnership meeting was held on 28th June 2023.
- 4.8 To support the development of the Skills Action Plan a steering group was established in February 2023, consisting of representatives from Chesterfield College, University of Derby, Derbyshire County Council (Skills and Employment and Public Health), businesses, Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and Chesterfield Borough Council (CBC). Steering group members were selected on the basis that they are existing key stakeholders in local skills delivery and will also be core members of the Skills and Employment Partnership and as such, provide a bridge between the development of the Skills Action Plan and the establishment of the Skills and Employment Partnership. The steering group have been key to supporting consultation activity on the refreshed Skills Action Plan and have provided input at key touch points throughout the development of the plan.
- 4.9 Consultation activity has been delivered through two rounds of consultation; the first round reaching 21 distinct organisations and consisting of 14 one-to-one interviews and 2 workshops; one with wider stakeholders and one with local employers.
- 4.10 Details of consultees and findings of the first-round consultation are detailed in the consultation summary report (attached at Appendix 3), which, together with the updated skills evidence-based report (attached at Appendix 2) has informed the priorities and activities that provided a framework to develop a draft skills action plan that formed the basis of the second round of consultation.
- 4.11 The second round of consultation involved more detailed discussions with key delivery partners to agree actions areas within the plan.
- 4.12 The final draft of the Skills Action Plan was presented to the Skills and Employment Partnership Board on 28th June. There were positive discussions and contributions made on the content of the plan and the plan was endorsed by the Partnership Board.
- 4.13 The priorities and actions that have emerged are grounded in evidence and seek to meet employer demand for skills and to equip local people with the skills they need to access and progress in work, whether at basic, intermediate or higher level. Diagram 1 below shows the relationship between these elements and the six priority focus areas within the plan.

Diagram 1: Summary of priority focus areas and the factors informing them.



Local, national and regional policy drivers

- 4.14 In addition to responding to the evidence base review and consultation findings; national, regional and local policy context has significant influence on local skills delivery and as such have been key drivers to the development of the plan.
- 4.15 Since 2020, in response to the corona virus pandemic, EU Exit, drive towards net zero and ongoing uncertainty in Europe, there have been a number of changes at national level that have introduced existing and emerging initiatives that will influence local skills delivery.
- 4.16 Activity within the plan responds to the Levelling Up agenda, in particular opportunities that have been presented through UKSPF (UK Shared Prosperity Funding) and Towns Deal Funding, as well as proposals set out in the Skills for Jobs White Paper, published in January 2021.
- 4.17 Through Towns Deal and UKSPF Funding, Chesterfield and Staveley will directly benefit from £4.75m of skills related funding that will see the development of DRIIVE and the Construction Skills Hub and a programme of activity delivered through UKSPF People and Skills Investment Priority (detailed in table 2) are embedded within the plan. In addition, residents and businesses stand to benefit from wider levelling up funding portfolios and from a proportion of £3.7m of UKSPF Multiply Funding allocated to Derbyshire County Council (DCC).

- 4.18 Following initial proposals for their introduction in the Skills for Jobs for White Paper, Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) are currently being rolled out across all LEP areas. LSIPs set out the key priorities and changes needed in the local area to make technical education and training more responsive to the local labour market. The development of the D2N2 LSIP has been led by the Federation of Small Business (FSB) who submitted the final report to the Secretary of State at the end of May 2023 and which is expected to be approved at the end of July 2023, with view to the final report being published on 28th July 2023. The D2N2 LSIP sets out 18 actionable priorities across five themes that employers, providers and stakeholders in a local area can get behind. The refreshed Skills Action Plan has been developed in parallel with the LSIP process and as such has sought to align with the themes and actionable priorities within the LSIP, particularly with digital, net zero and essential transferable skills themes.
- 4.19 On the 30th August 2022 proposals for an East Midlands Devolution Deal were announced. Consultation on the proposals concluded on the 9th January 2023. The proposals set out plans to bring £1.14bn of funding to the region that would see the establishment of a Mayoral Combined Authority (MCCA) with powers to improve transport, adults skills training, housing and the environment. In respect of skills, it is proposed that the Adult Education Budget would be devolved from academic year 2024/25, providing more flexibility to meet needs of people in local communities to develop the skills they need to access employment opportunities.
- 4.20 Locally, as outlined in paragraph 4.1, the Skills Action seeks to contribute to the direct delivery of the Councils Corporate Plan and Growth Strategy (2023-27).
- 4.21 It is also important to consider the *Chesterfield Borough Local Plan* (adopted 2020) that makes provision for an additional 4,080 homes by 2035, allocates 50 ha of land for new employment uses, and supports proposals to strengthen Chesterfield and Staveley town centres. Alignment via the Skills Action Plan will link this to the new Construction Skills Hub and application of local labour clauses in major planning applications will be key to connecting local people to the employment and skills opportunities that flow from this.

Evidence based review.

- 4.22 The refreshed skills action responds to key findings and implications from the evidence review that was completed in February 2023. Section 3 of the Skills Action Plan (attached at Appendix 1) provides a detailed summary of the key findings and particularly highlights the need to address gaps in the levels of qualification, youth unemployment, and barriers to employment and the promotion of good jobs and progression. The plan also responds to opportunities highlighted in the evidence-based review to focus on future skills needs and employment opportunities in key sectors including health and

care, construction, engineering and manufacturing and in low carbon and digital roles.

4.23 The need for a partnership approach was consistently emphasised in both consultation activity and the evidence base review as being vital to tackling the range of skills and employment challenges and opportunities in the borough, including brokerage to connect key audiences to available support.

4.24 The Skills Action Plan sets out 12 actions across 6 priority themes. The table below sets out the priority themes and actions selected on the basis of evidence and consultation inputs, and which seek to meet employer demand for skills, and to equip local people with the skills they need to access and progress in work. More detail in respect of wider partners, resources and delivery routes are set out within the body of the Skills Action Plan which is (attached at Appendix 1).

Table 1: Summary of Priority Themes and Actions

Priority Theme	Priority Actions	Lead Partner	Outputs (per annum)
Young People, Ambitions and Connections to Work	Deliver a Careers Made in Chesterfield programme	D2N2 Careers Hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 120 students per year engaged in sector specific careers activity. Teacher CPD delivered to key staff in at least 2 secondary schools with the borough. Delivery of annual Community Careers Engagement Event.
	Review and revitalise Apprentice Town	Chesterfield Borough Council	Evaluation of Apprentice Town Initiative
	Support and enhance the Youth Hub	DCC / DWP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 270 Young People engaged & have a Career Plan in place & reviewed regularly. 90 Young People progressing on to work experience, volunteering, 90 Young people progressing on to Training. 50 young people Introduce an outcome for referrals to specialist support. 90 Young people into employment/apprenticeship. <p>NB – output targets are annual and relate to total you people engaged through the Chesterfield Youth Hub, some of whom may reside outside the borough. % of Chesterfield Borough Residents receiving support will be captured though monitoring activity</p>
Increasing Higher Level	Increased delivery of Higher-level Skills	University of Derby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment and delivery of executive leadership programme

Skills	Provision		supporting 100 students per year.*20 Chesterfield <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of a suite Health CPD supporting 50 students per year from year 2 • Support creation of 5 new businesses per year
		Chesterfield College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of new Higher Technical Qualification (HTQ) pathways • Increased promotion of higher-level skills and professional qualification pathways through delivery of HE Careers Fair • Working with University of Derby, delivery of 105-degree level apprenticeships through the Construction Skills Hub (from year 3)
Barriers to Employment & Widening the Workforce	Deliver Digital Inclusion and Work Readiness programmes.	Chesterfield Borough Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 120 people supported with access to employability and basic skills (2024/25)
	Deliver DWP programmes to help more people to gain and stay in work	DWP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 96-100 customers to receive a Mid-life MOT information session. • 30 sector-based work academies delivered per year supporting 300-360 people supported and a minimum of 240 job outcomes. <p>NB – Output targets are annual but subject to annual review and alignment with any changes in DWP policy.</p>
Anchor Organisation Project	Establish an Anchor Organisation Project	Chesterfield Borough Council / Skills & Employment Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage anchors via existing Partnership / Board arrangements to gain commitment to an anchor project, review position and identify action opportunities.
Sector Specific and Future Skills	Deliver the Construction Skills Hub	Chesterfield College Chesterfield Borough Council	Over 4 years: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 251 learning outcomes • 137 Build-Up programme learners • 105 HE Learners (from year 3) • 1430 individuals accessing career insight programme
	Deliver DRIIVe rail innovation & training centre	Chesterfield Borough Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1423spm of R&D, training and commercial office and workshop floor space • 22 jobs • 1680 training days per year

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community outreach programme reaching up to 1,000 individuals per year-by-year 10
	Deliver Workforce Upskilling (digital and green) Programme and Future Skills Development Fund	Chesterfield Borough Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support 60 people to gain green or digital skills that will help them to progress within employment. (2024/25) Support 30 people to upskills within work and 20 people to gain a qualification (2024/25)
Skills Brokerage and Partnerships	Establish the Chesterfield Skills & Employment Partnership	Chesterfield Borough Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery annual skills & employability conference Increased co-ordination and stronger mechanism for local skills delivery.
	Develop and deliver a Skills Brokerage Service	Chesterfield Borough Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 65 local businesses will receive support and increased access to skills and funding provision to up-skill/re-skill their workforce

Monitoring and Evaluation

4.25 Activity within the Skills Action Plan will be monitored by the council's skills delivery function, who will monitor progress of the plan on behalf of the Skills and Employment Partnership and who will, in conjunction with delivery partners, provide regular updates to the Skills and Employment Partnership. Monitoring will utilise input from partners where lead delivery responsibility falls outside of the council and also take into consideration existing monitoring arrangements that are already in place, including for Local Labour, Towns Deal and UKSPF projects.

5.0 Alternative options

5.1 The alternative option is for the Council not to seek to refresh the Skills Action Plan that was previously approved in 2017. This option is not considered to be appropriate. Indeed, as can be seen from this report, whilst still relevant, many of the priority activities have been delivered or are in the process of being delivered. In addition, the skills landscape and the local economy have changed as a result of the covid 19 pandemic, EU Exit and drive towards net-zero. A refreshed plan will allow skills delivery to remain current and ensure Chesterfield is able to respond to emerging priorities.

5.2 Another option could be to produce a plan for Chesterfield Borough Council focussed delivery only. This would be much narrower, limiting the outcomes for local people and not allow partners to be strategically engaged.

5.3 The preferred option is as outlined in this paper. The refresh of the Skills Plan following detailed review of evidence base and significant consultation with partners.

6.0 Implications for consideration – Financial and value for money

- 6.1 Activity within the Skills Action Plan that is to be led by CBC will be funded through a combination Towns Deal, UKSPF and Business Rate Retention Funding (BRRF). Towns Deal Funding of £3,735,000 and £467,000 will support the delivery of Staveley Town Deal Capital Projects DRIIVE and the Construction Skills Hub, respectively.
- 6.2 There is an allocation of £580,000 via the Chesterfield UKSPF Investment plan; £500,000 from the People and Skills Investment Priority that will be delivered in year 3 of the programme (2024/25) and £80,000 from the Business Support Investment Priority that will be delivered from year 2 (2023/24). Table 2 Below summarises UKSPF People and Skills Activity and associated funding allocations.

Table 2: Summary of UKSPF People and Skills Workstream

Activity	Description	Allocation
Workforce Development Programme		
Future Skills Development Programme	Skills Capital Funding and Future Skills Development revenue funding to increase capacity and support the delivery of future skills development in Chesterfield	£100,000 (Capital) £60,000 (Revenue)
Workforce Skills Training	Digital and green skills training interventions for businesses in Chesterfield seeking to upskill their existing workforce and individuals who are seeking more work or better work.	£120,000 (Revenue)
Work Readiness Programme:		
Work Readiness / Employability Programme	Employment support for economically inactive people. The Work Readiness and Digital Inclusion Programme will support 120 to access basic skills with a particular emphasis on employability skills and digital skills	£100,000 (Revenue)
Digital Inclusion Programme		£100,000 (Revenue) £20,000 (Capital)
Skills Brokerage Project		
Skills Brokerage Project	Provision of specialist account management and business support with view to increasing access to skills provision.	£80,000 (Revenue) *Business Support

- 6.3 In October 2019, Chesterfield Borough Council Cabinet and Council granted approval for business rate income from MVEZ (Markham Vale Enterprise Zone) to be retained by CBC to support local economic priorities. Skills activity receives an annual allocation of £100,000 through the fund to support the delivery of activity seeking to improve the skills of the local workforce and align local people with opportunities created through regeneration activities. The table appended at Appendix 5 sets out the proposed allocation of this funding to support activities contained within the Skills Action Plan, including delivery of the Careers Made in Chesterfield Programme, Apprentice Town, Barriers to Employment and Widening the Workforce and match funding in the first 2 quarters of 2025/26 for the UKSPF Skills Brokerage Project.

Funding allocated to marketing and staff resources will support delivery across all activity detailed within the refreshed Skills Action Plan.

7.0 Implications for consideration – Legal

- 7.1 Delivery of some of the activity contained within the refreshed Skills Action Plan, namely the Careers Made in Chesterfield programme and the UKSPF future skills, work readiness and digital inclusion programmes, will be commissioned activity, procured via open tender and as such will require some support of procurement officers and support with contracting activity from the legal services team.
- 7.2 All services will be procured in accordance with the Council's own procurement policies and in compliance with public procurement regulations.

8.0 Implications for consideration – Human resources

- 8.1 It is envisaged that the delivery of the Skills Brokerage Project will be delivered by Chesterfield Borough Council through the appointment of a specialist business adviser, funded via UK Shared Prosperity Funding and business rates retention funding.
- 8.2 This role of Skills Brokerage Adviser (Job description attached at appendix 8) has been considered by Human Resources and has been subject to job evaluation. The post has been provisionally graded at scale a 10, subject to formal job evaluation (JE) panel. It is proposed that the post is established on a 2-year fixed term contract basis in line with the funding availability. UKSPF funding will be used to support 18 months of project delivery and business rate retention funding for 6 months.

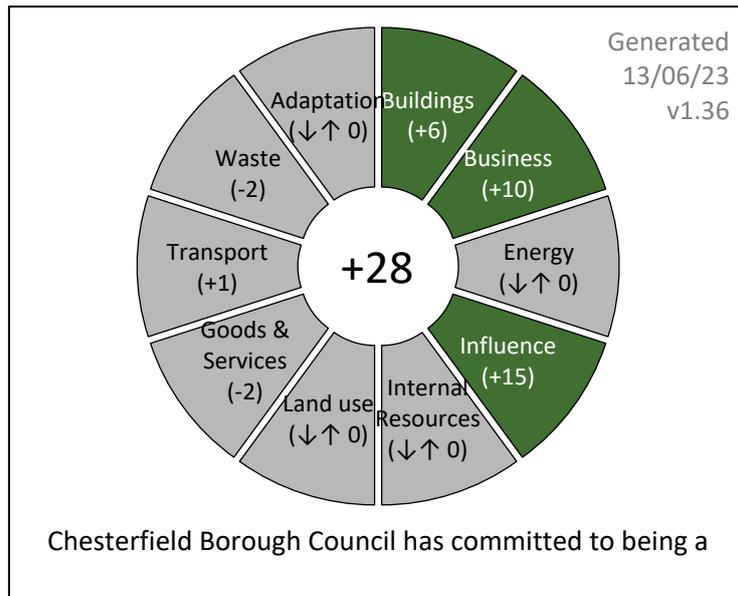
9.0 Implications for consideration – Council plan

- 9.1 The Skills Action plan aligns with the Council Plan (2023-27) which prioritises making Chesterfield a thriving borough, improving the quality of life for local people and building a more resilient council. The Skills Action Plan contains activity that responds to the aspiration within the Council Plan and objective within the Growth Strategy (2023-27) **to ensure that local people have the right skills to support progression in the labour market and benefit from employment opportunities.**

10.0 Implications for consideration – Climate change

- 10.1 A Climate Change Impact Assessment has been completed and is summarised in diagram 2 below (also appended at Appendix 6)

Diagram 2: Summary of Climate Change Impact Assessment



10.2 The Skills Action Plan has been assessed as having an overall climate change impact score of +28. The score reflects activity contained within the plan that seeks to increase the capacity of green and digital skills delivery, namely DRIIVE, the Construction Skills Hub and UKSPF Future Skills Programme. The assessment has highlighted particular strength in the business and influence categories, reflecting the scope to raise awareness of positive action towards climate change through work with partners, careers engagement and training delivery. Scores are less positive in the areas of resource, goods and services and waste, recognising that activity within the plan includes the construction of two new facilities and seeks to increase the numbers of people within the borough undertaking skills activity which is likely result increased use of services.

11.0 Implications for consideration – Equality and diversity

11.1 A preliminary Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed and this is attached as Appendix 7. It is considered that the Skills Action Plan will not have a negative impact on any of the characteristics and should have a positive impact particularly in relation to 'age' and 'disability and long-term conditions' with its focus on addressing youth unemployment and supporting increased participation in the labour market.

12.0 Implications for consideration – Risk management

12.1 Table 3 below summarises the main risks associated with the delivery of the Skills Action Plan. The highest risks are in relation to the council's ability to recruit key staff and service providers to deliver commissioned activity, in particular activity funded via UKSPF where funding is only available for 12 months. To mitigate this, funding has been levered from unallocated UKSPF funding and the business rates retention fund skills budget to provide match funding for the skills brokerage business adviser over a 2-year period instead

of one. It is envisaged that the skills brokerage adviser will support capacity building activity in the 6-month period prior to delivery commencing.

Description of the Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigating Action	Impact	Likelihood
Failure to appoint key staff and service providers to deliver activity contained within the skills action plan.	H	M	Early market engagement. Clear and Detailed job description and tender specifications.	H	M
Failure to deliver the activities outline in skills action plan.	H	L	Robust management arrangements, establishment of board	H	L
Breakdown of relationships with delivery partners/partners fail to deliver actions highlighted for them within the plan	H	L	Partners have provided input and supported the development of skills action plan and a Governance Structure established via the newly established Skills and Employment Partnership to oversee delivery of the plan and provide governance and monitoring for the plan.	M	L
Failure to comply with funding outputs	H	L	Robust governance and programme management arrangements in place and programme and project level.	M	

Decision information

Key decision number	<i>1186</i>
Wards affected	All

Document information

Report author	
Emily Williams, Skills Delivery Officer, Economic Growth	
Background documents	
These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when the report was prepared.	
Appendices to the report	
Appendix 1	Skills Action Plan (2023-27)
Appendix 2	Evidence Based Report (February 23)
Appendix 3	Consultation Summary Paper
Appendix 4	Employment & Skills Partnership Terms of Reference
Appendix 5	Skills Budget (brf) allocation to skills action plan activities
Appendix 6	Climate Change Impact Assessment
Appendix 7	Preliminary EIA
Appendix 8	Job Description: Business Adviser - Skills Brokerage