



The Surrey Skills Plan

Executive Summary

The Surrey Skills Plan (SSP) forms the strategic basis for delivering skills priorities in Surrey. This is a plan for all of Surrey's businesses, skills providers and people.

Our vision is for a dynamic, demand-led skills system which hones Surrey's leading edge, recognises the needs of all businesses and maximises inclusion, whilst powering economic growth across the UK.



Figure 1: Objectives of the Surrey Skills Plan

Executive Summary

The Plan's main purpose is to articulate the medium-term skills needs of employers and set out actions to take within the next three years that will drive real change in Surrey's skills system, including as part of the Surrey and Mid/North Hampshire Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP).

It also includes short-term actions to be delivered within one year which reflect the need to respond to immediate skills demand and existing challenges.

Actions in the Surrey Skills Plan will be delivered through a range of mechanisms and by a number of owners. Taken together, these mechanisms offer meaningful ways to create change in our skills system and interface with the broader policy context for Surrey. As the strategic and policy context changes over time new mechanisms are likely to become available, and others will be superseded.

The Surrey Skills Plan promotes flexibility in the approach to delivering change, with regular review points built into delivery to ensure that a focus on achieving our key objectives is retained.

This document sets out a summary of the logic chain which informs the Surrey Skills Plan. It then sets out a vision for the skills system in Surrey, supported by specific objectives and priorities for change, and sets of short- and medium-term actions which will move us from where we are now, to where we want to be.



A man with dark hair and a beard, wearing a light-colored shirt and a white face mask, is focused on working on a small, yellow and black engine. He is in a workshop setting with shelves in the background holding various items, including green containers. A large green circular graphic is overlaid on the bottom left of the image, containing white text.

A dynamic, demand-led skills system which hones Surrey's leading edge, recognises the needs of all businesses and maximises inclusion

Executive Summary

Where we are now	Priorities	Skills Plan Objective	Actions (now/within one year)	Actions (within three years)
Our economy is strong. But our businesses, large and small, are constrained by difficulties in finding workers with the technical and general skills they need. This is true for our foundation sectors and our leading edge sectors. Our business base is growing more slowly as a result, and we have fewer high-growth firms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address the skills gaps which inhibit growth • Support employers to shape the skills system as key partners • Support the efficient delivery of high quality training across Surrey at all levels that promotes work-readiness • Help business owners and managers develop the skills they need to recruit, retain and develop their staff 	<p>① Supporting Business:</p> <p>Help businesses prosper by making our skills system more responsive – both to immediate and medium-longer term needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surrey Skills Demand Framework pilot, which can be expanded and applied to other sectors • Enable more businesses (large + SMEs) to inform skills provision planning, for general and technical skills ♦ • Map existing business support services and connect SMEs to them to support workforce development • Develop a campaign targeted at business owners and leaders to raise awareness of importance of leadership, people/talent development and support to identify/articulate needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish mechanisms to gather intelligence and anticipate skills demand via regular, robust industry foresight • Develop and promote courses to keep pace with industry demand and support reskilling ♦ • Review and consolidate the business support programmes on offer which focus on workforce development • Support more businesses to invest in training and skills development

Figure 2: Theory of Change for the Surrey Skills Plan

Key

Bold text = already underway

♦ = likely LSIP alignment

Executive Summary

Where we are now	Priorities	Skills Plan Objective	Actions (now/within one year)	Actions (within three years)
<p>Not all our people share in the County's overall success.</p> <p>We have acute pockets of education deprivation, large differences in workplace and resident earnings, and residents who struggle to access employment.</p> <p>Our high cost of living and wider place challenges create further barriers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help people move between jobs to develop their career locally • Promote access to good quality jobs across foundation sectors • Enable access to opportunities for work progression • Ensure those traditionally excluded from sharing in Surrey's economic success are given the targeted support to enable them to do so • Tackle cold spots in support, education and training provision 	<p>② Supporting People:</p> <p>Support inclusive access for Surrey's residents to improved careers education, information and guidance, linked to clear learning, work and training pathways.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No One Left Behind research to undertake in-depth discovery of those left behind in Surrey and develop a profile • Skills and Employment Network to bring together the region's employment support providers in a more effective network; link into the SSLF • Delivery of Year 1 of the Multiply programme to support the increase in adult numeracy levels • Develop a Surrey County Council skills action plan which recognises the county's role as a leader, employer, procurer and provider • Establish annual Skills & Careers Festival, which engages businesses, learners and skills providers on the opportunities in Surrey • Pilot a collaborative approach to careers advice, working with a range of partners and employers, with focus on maximising inclusion and diversity • Produce baseline evaluation of current employment support and impact assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote work placements and establish local forum for offering and finding work placement opportunities • Promote technical routes, T-Levels and apprenticeships (at all levels) across all sectors as alternative pathways into employment ♦ • Develop employer led, sustainable model of vocational pathways, careers advice and guidance, fit for the future of work, and encompassing non-university routes ♦ • Put in place career pathways to professional level for all key occupational routes in Surrey ♦ • Years 2 and 3 of Multiply programme

Figure 2: Theory of Change for the Surrey Skills Plan

Executive Summary

Where we are now	Priorities	Skills Plan Objective	Actions (now/within one year)	Actions (within three years)
<p>Surrey's unique mix of successful large businesses, skills providers, research assets and anchor institutions make valuable individual contributions, but more could be done to maximise their impact and to connect them – to each other and our small businesses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote system-wide collaboration between all partners • Ensure clear governance and operational systems facilitate partnership working • Leverage the corporate capacity of our large firms to support our SMEs 	<p>3 Enabling Collaboration:</p> <p>Deliver a step change in our skills system through enhanced and purposeful collaboration between and across our businesses, anchor institutions and skills providers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify the SSLF's role, membership and remit and strengthen its ability to lead system-wide skills change in Surrey, including delivery of the Surrey Skills Plan on behalf of the Growth Board. • Hold a Surrey Skills Summit to convene partners and create a shared platform for change • Map skills provision across Surrey to develop a clearer picture of provision (and gaps) ♦ • Pilot easily accessible labour market information for providers to inform future provision • Pilot business to business peer mentoring and support schemes • Pilot syndicated training purchasing across businesses • Pilot a business to provider co-mentoring scheme • Engage large businesses in understanding the benefits and potential structure of a mechanism to pool local apprenticeship levy funds and redesign SCC's levy transfer scheme to support a wider range of businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand sector clusters, promote technology clusters, and develop cross-sector working through the SSLF • Develop systems for sharing labour market intelligence via a single portal that all employers and providers access • Establish a formal partnership of providers to coordinate activity and bid for funding • Embed business-to-business mentoring support as part of social value return in procurement • Create mechanism to pool apprenticeship levy funds and help large businesses support training for smaller businesses in their supply chains

Figure 2: Theory of Change for the Surrey Skills Plan

Executive Summary

Where we are now	Priorities	Skills Plan Objective	Actions (now/within one year)	Actions (within three years)
<p>Surrey's skills providers must balance responding to near-term skills demand with anticipating and preparing for employers' future skills needs, taking a longer-term view of skills needs in emerging sectors. The future skills pipeline must meet the needs of all our sectors and businesses of all sizes, but one major, imminent cross-sector inhibitor of business growth is the need for green skills, particularly in technical roles.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve labour market information about future skills needs across all our sectors • Identify emerging green skills needs across industry clusters • Establish key cross sector vocational pathways e.g. green skills pathways across construction/innovation 	<p>4 Future Proofing:</p> <p>As part of a thematic focus on skills of the future, strengthen the pipeline of priority skills to meet employer demand, recognising the needs of both SMEs and larger businesses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete and evaluate pilot heat pump training programme • Prepare a Surrey Green Skills plan to support a cross-sectoral pipeline of green-skills provision across sectors • Promote awareness of the opportunities for workers in the green transition, particularly for technical roles ♦ • Develop a specific STEM careers strategy for Surrey • Skills Development Fund projects completed, and lessons embedded into future skills planning ♦ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop sector-specific Skills Plans and explore sector-specific delivery models e.g. green skills • Develop new courses to support upskilling and reskilling across sectors ♦ • Raise industry's role in designing and delivering training by focusing on emerging skills needs across sectors

Figure 2: Theory of Change for the Surrey Skills Plan



A Plan for all of Surrey's businesses, providers and people

Introduction

The Surrey Skills Plan (SSP) forms the strategic basis for delivering skills priorities in Surrey. This is a plan for all of Surrey's businesses, providers and people.

Home to 1.2 million residents, **Surrey is a strategically important economic powerhouse** which contains a productive and highly skilled workforce across a mostly-rural geography without a single major conurbation. The region supports the UK's economic growth: it is home to world-leading research and innovation assets, highly successful large and small businesses, and a rich cultural heritage that provides residents with access to good work and a high quality of life.

Yet Surrey also contains people and areas which do not share in this success and are adversely affected by the very high cost of living and barriers to education and employment for those furthest from the labour market.



Introduction

The Surrey Skills Plan's main purpose is to articulate the medium-long term skills needs of employers and set out actions that will drive real change in Surrey's skills system. It also includes short-term actions which reflect the need to respond to more immediate skills demand and existing challenges.

The Plan is designed to support all people across the learning and work lifecycle. It seeks to ensure inclusive access to high quality skills provision for all our residents. It also seeks to ensure all our businesses – small and large – can access the talent they need, and are empowered to engage with and shape Surrey's skills system.

To create lasting change across all stages of the learning and work lifecycle the Surrey Skills Plan adopts a theory of change which links the **evidence** on our economy and skills system with priorities and **objectives for change** based on a vision we want to achieve and **sets out short and medium-term actions** for delivering those objectives. As activities are delivered **progress is evaluated**, and objectives and further action will be calibrated accordingly.

This document sets out a summary of the theory of change and actions to take to move us from where we are now, to where we want to be – our vision as **a County with a dynamic, demand-led skills system which hones our leading edge, recognises the needs of all businesses and maximises inclusion, whilst powering the wider economic success of the whole of the UK.**



Figure 3: Stages of the learning and work lifecycle



Figure 4: Surrey Skills Plan Theory of Change

Developing and delivering the plan

The Plan is the culmination of several strands of work gathering insight into Surrey's labour market challenges and skills needs.

The Plan incorporates the views of a broad range of Surrey businesses, providers, local government and other institutions. Important conduits for these views have been the One Surrey Growth Board (OSGB) and Surrey Skills Leadership Forum (SSLF), and Surrey Business Leaders' Forum (SBLF) which have shaped this Plan and will lead on many actions it contains.

The Skills Plan sets out actions to take within the next three years. This aligns with a range of existing delivery mechanisms which will be core drivers of technical training over the next three years, notably the Strategic Development Fund being delivered by a consortium of local training providers, and the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), which covers Surrey and Mid/North Hampshire and is being developed by the Surrey Chamber of Commerce, for publication in May 2023. The Surrey Skills Plan is a plan for all of Surrey's

people, employers and providers and therefore has a broader remit than the LSIP, which is specifically about post-16 technical education. The Surrey Skills Plan will be a core input into the LSIP, including for priorities and actions.

This Plan has been developed during a time of considerable economic and policy uncertainty, heightened by short-term challenges. It is difficult to predict future economic conditions, but it is likely that different priorities and delivery mechanisms will emerge during the three-year lifespan of this Plan.

For this reason the Plan deliberately embeds a flexible approach, focused on identifying broad objectives that Surrey skills partners should aim for, while recognising that the actions required to meet these objectives may change over time, as progress is evaluated and new opportunities or challenges arise.



A low-angle shot looking up at a large, black quadcopter drone with a camera mounted on its underside. Two men are positioned around the drone, looking up at it. The man on the left is wearing a green shirt and glasses, and the man on the right is wearing a grey jacket and glasses. They appear to be in a modern building with a large, circular skylight in the background. The drone has various wires and components visible, and a small label with the number '10.5.24' is attached to its frame. The overall scene suggests a collaborative effort in a technical or research environment.

**Making Surrey's skills system
more agile and responsive to
changing market needs**

Strategic context

The Surrey Skills Plan sits within a busy policy and strategy landscape.

At a national level, the Levelling Up White Paper and Skills for Jobs White Paper advocate for an increased role for employers in anchoring local skills systems. At a regional level, the work undertaken by Skills Advisory Panels and respective strategic economic visions published by the LEPs covering Surrey (Enterprise M3 and Coast to Capital) also centre on cultivating a dynamic skills system as a means of improving residents' quality of life and supporting the continued growth of leading-edge sectors and industry specialisms.

Skills policy does not exist in a vacuum. Many challenges businesses face to accessing talent have causes which are outside the skills system, particularly the high cost of living and housing in Surrey, a lack of employment-friendly childcare provision, and poor public transport across Surrey's rural geography. These issues and others are addressed in linked strategic agendas for Surrey, and achieving Surrey's vision for skills is contingent on being able to address these wider place challenges.

National strategies	Regional skills strategies	Local/SCC skills strategies	Linked strategic agendas in Surrey
Skills for Jobs White Paper	A Strategic Economic Plan for the Enterprise M3 area 2018 - 2030	Strategic Development Fund bid	Surrey Transport Plan
Innovation Strategy		UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plans	Surrey Affordable Housing Strategy
Net Zero Strategy	C2C LEP: Build Back Stronger, Smarter and Greener	Surrey 2050 Place Ambition	SCC Organisational Strategy 2021 - 2026
Levelling Up White Paper	EM3 LEP: Skills Action Plan	Surrey's Economic Future: Forward to 2030	Surrey's Greener Future
National Infrastructure Strategy		Surrey district and borough strategies	Surrey Rural/Countryside strategies, statements and guidance
UK Shared Prosperity Fund/Multiply		Surrey early learning and development	Community Vision for Surrey by 2030
	<i>Forthcoming</i>		Health and Wellbeing Strategy
	Surrey and Mid/North Hampshire Local Skills Improvement Plan*	Surrey and Mid/North Hampshire Local Skills Improvement Plan*	Innovation and Infrastructure Strategy
		No One Left Behind*	County Deal

* Particularly important to the SSP

Strategic context

Of the various strategies which inform the Surrey Skills Plan, Surrey's Economic Future and the No One Left Behind research are particularly relevant.

Surrey's Economic Future - Surrey County Council's (SCC) economic strategy statement - articulates the Council's and the OSGB's strategic ambitions for the County up to 2030. The four priorities outlined in the economic statement are targeted at bringing partners in business, education and local government together to build on Surrey's existing strengths whilst nurturing a resilient, productive and high-value economy that contributes to growth across the UK.

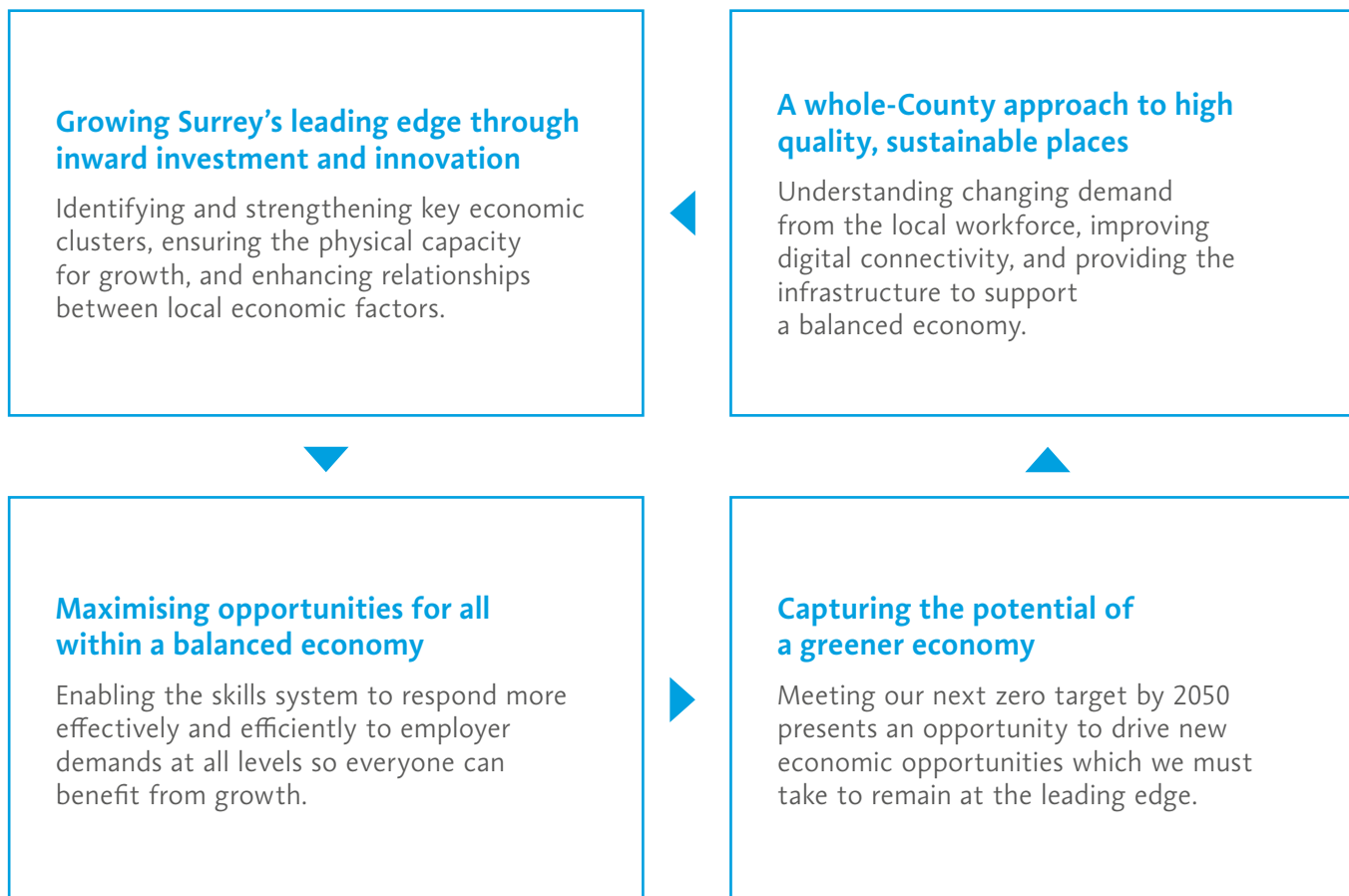


Figure 6: Economy and Growth strategic ambitions for Surrey County up to 2030

Strategic context

The SSP will directly contribute to these priorities, for instance by helping to make the region's skills system more agile and responsive to changing market conditions whilst focused on achieving sustainable and inclusive growth.

Surrey's **No One Left Behind programme** will take collective and collaborative action to identify and tackle the challenges faced by those furthest from the labour market in Surrey, and to develop people for the jobs of the future.

It focuses on those aged 16+ who are at severe risk of being economically excluded without additional support to access skills development or employment.

The Surrey Skills Plan is closely linked with the **No One Left Behind programme**, as both an input into the programme's design and as a mechanism for change. The Surrey Skills Plan incorporates some actions from the No One Left Behind programme, such as to connect SMEs to existing business support services to support workforce development, and to develop employer led, sustainable model of careers advice and guidance, fit for the future of work, and encompassing non-university routes.



Surrey County Council's role as system leader employer, procurer and service provider

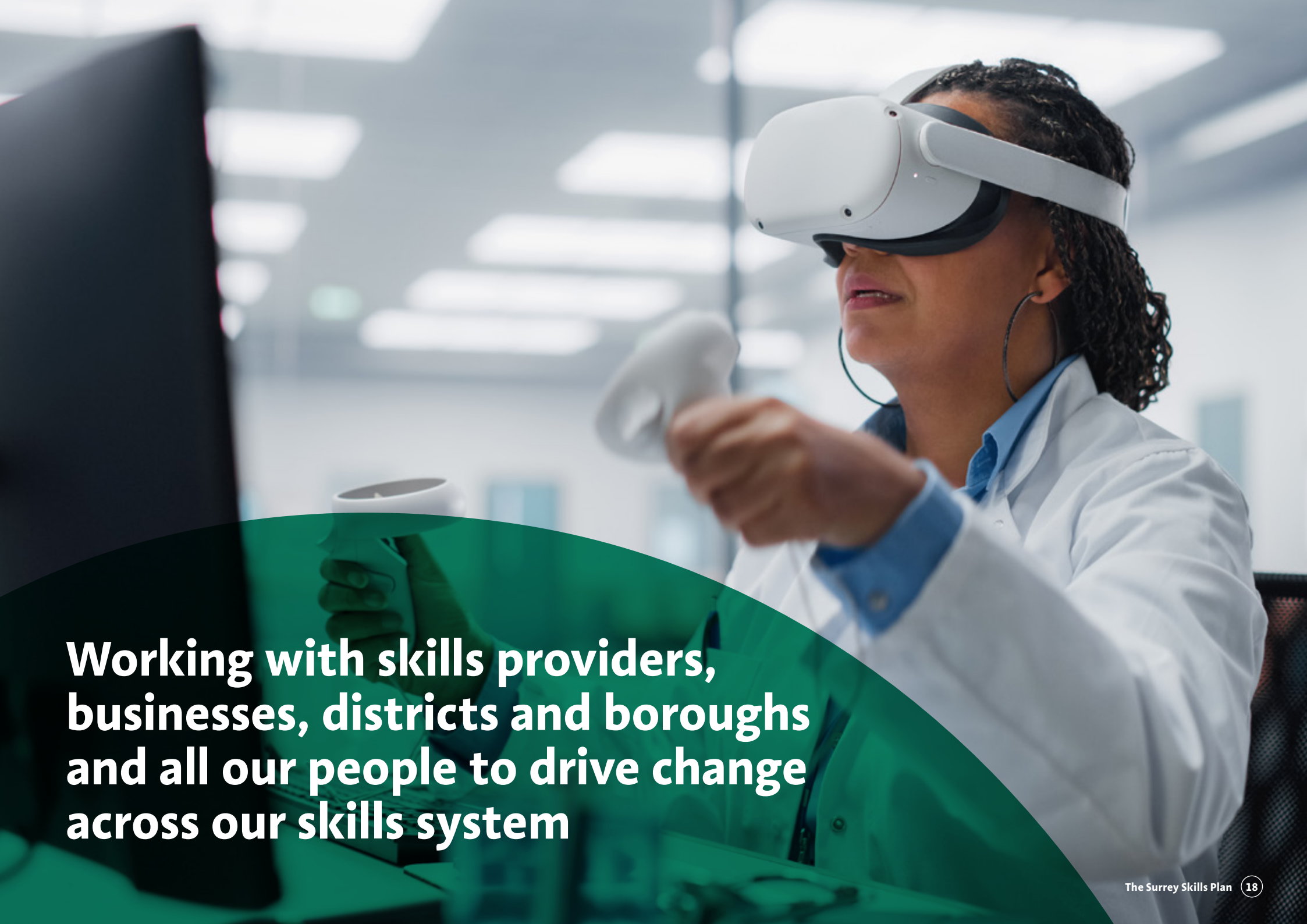
Working with the One Surrey Growth Board, Surrey County Council (SCC) has developed this Plan in recognition of our role as a key influencer and enabler in Surrey's skills system.

On behalf of the One Surrey Growth Board, SCC's role as strategic lead enables us to convene partners and offer a 'One Surrey' voice, working with our skills providers, businesses, Surrey's 11 districts and boroughs, anchor institutions and all our people to help drive change across our skills system. It is this responsibility for strategic system leadership which is at the heart of the County's role in the Surrey Skills Plan.

SCC is also a significant employer, spender and service provider in the regional economy, and as such plays a key direct role in creating opportunities for residents. Examples include the work we are doing to utilise our apprenticeship levy through direct employment or transfers to local businesses, and through our approach to social value through procurement which supports employment and skills outcomes.

Specific actions we are taking, which are embedded into this Plan, include the Surrey Highways Innovation Academy and the Social Children's Services Academy. We recognise the size and scale of our organisation is a positive and we must harness this to help create high quality opportunities for our residents.



A woman with dark curly hair, wearing a white lab coat over a blue shirt and a large hoop earring, is using a white VR headset. She is holding a white VR controller in her right hand and looking towards the left. The background is a blurred office environment with large windows and modern lighting. A large green circular graphic is overlaid on the bottom left of the image, containing white text.

**Working with skills providers,
businesses, districts and boroughs
and all our people to drive change
across our skills system**

The economy, labour market and skills in Surrey

This section sets out the evidence which informs the objectives and actions of this Plan.

It summarises the economic context, labour market, employer skills demand and the current provision landscape. From this evidence it draws out priorities, which are then linked to the objectives which are the focus of the Plan.

Additional detail on the evidence is included in the Supporting Analysis documents which accompany this report.

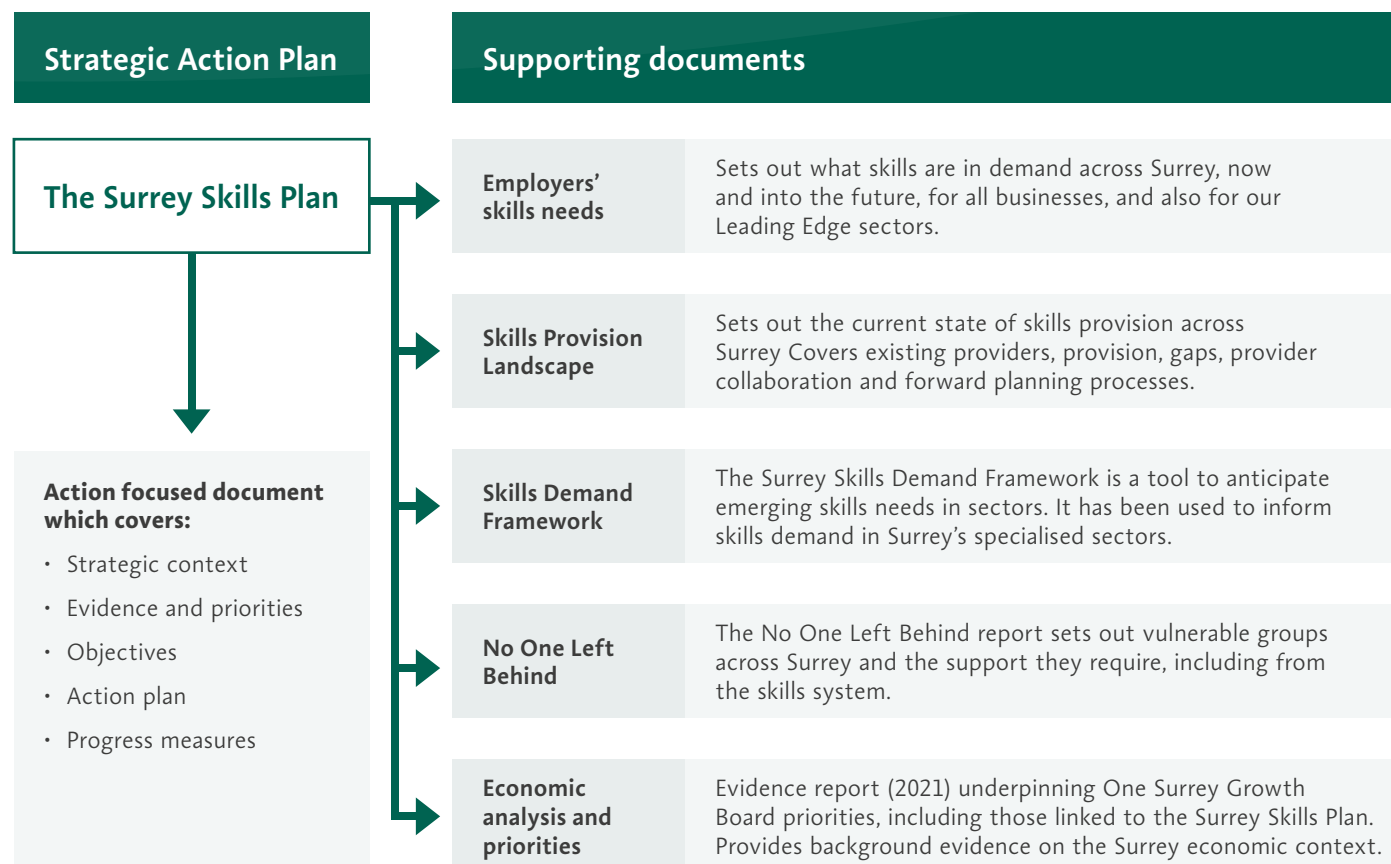


Figure 7: Supporting analysis for the Surrey Skills Plan

Rationale for change: Economic context

Evidence & priorities

Objectives

Actions

Measuring progress

Strengths

Surrey has the economic structure that most places in the UK strive for: a diversified, high-skilled, high-wage, high-employment, knowledge-driven economy, with sector specialisms that are the key to the UK's future.

- We have a **large, highly productive economy** which contributes £45.5bn in GVA and boasts the highest GVA per head (£37,806) outside of London.
- **65,000 businesses**, including a high proportion of very large businesses and of small businesses.
- **Sector specialisms** in high-knowledge, high-innovation industries, such as aviation, digital, professional services, life sciences and advanced manufacturing. However, the bulk of Surrey employment remains in foundation sectors common to all economies, including retail, health and education.
- We are home to **big businesses, HQs and R&D anchor institutions** with the financial and human capital to drive innovation and promote corporate social responsibility.
- Surrey's sectors, institutions and natural capital mean it is ideally placed to lead the UK's **green transition**, given enough workers with the right skills.
- Our mix of cultural, creative, historic and natural assets make Surrey an **attractive place to live**.

Challenges

Surrey's business base lacks dynamism, caused in part by skills shortages. A lack of affordable housing, coupled with a high cost of living threatens our attractiveness and competitiveness.

- The rate of **business base growth in Surrey has slowed** (19.1% since 2012 compared to 30.6% in England) and the number of high growth firms is below the national average.
- Proximity to London supports our economy but also leads to a **high cost of living and doing business**.
- We need substantial **transport and digital infrastructure** investment to remain competitive, particularly in our rural areas where poor infrastructure inhibits access to education and employment.
- There has been a **sharp decline in housing affordability**, more pronounced in Surrey than nationally.
- **Meeting net zero targets** will require substantial economic change.
- We must ensure employees and firms are resilient and adaptable to the **consequences of innovation and automation** (particularly those employed in low value add services).

Priorities

- Address the skills gaps which inhibit growth (**Supporting Business**)
- Tackle cold spots in support, education and training provision (**Supporting People**)
- Leverage the corporate capacity of our large firms to support our SMEs (**Enabling Collaboration**)
- Identify emerging green skills needs across industry clusters via an approach which can be applied to other arising skills needs (**Future Proofing**)

Rationale for change: Labour Market

Evidence & priorities

Objectives

Actions

Measuring progress

Strengths

Unemployment in Surrey is low and many workers are in senior occupations. Our highly qualified residents are a key asset in driving our competitive edge.

- We are a **high employment economy** (82.2% of working age residents are economically active) with a generally tight labour market. We have a strong concentration of high-skilled occupations – for instance the proportion of managers, directors and senior officials in Surrey is 51% higher than the national average.
- We have a **high-wage, knowledge-intensive economy**. The average annual resident earnings in Surrey (£38,646) is well above the South East (£33,983) and England (£31,490) averages.
- Surrey's **claimant count is lower than the national average** (2.1% vs 3.7% nationally).
- **Highly skilled workforce** with 54% of residents degree-level qualified or higher. A very low proportion of residents have no qualifications.
- **1 in 4 jobs are in knowledge intensive industries** compared to 1 in 5 across England, which, coupled with our concentration of innovation and R&D assets, gives Surrey a strong competitive advantage. Proximity to London is an additional advantage.

Challenges

Our two-tier economy, evidenced by pockets of deprivation and stark gap in workplace vs residents' earnings, requires intervention to ensure no one is left behind and all residents share in Surrey's success.

- **An inclusive growth challenge exacerbated by our high cost of living**, with small pockets of entrenched deprivation adjacent to high income areas. In these places, education deprivation is in the top 20% nationally.
- There is a **large gap between workplace and resident earnings** – people who live and work in Surrey earn 9% less than those who live in Surrey but work elsewhere – mostly in London. This creates a two-tier economy.
- Outside of our knowledge-intensive industries it can be **difficult for residents to find quality work** which offers progression.
- Our **largely rural geography**, without a single dominating conurbation, creates access barriers to education and employment for our more isolated residents.
- Rates of long-term unemployment in the County consistently track lower than UK averages, but Surrey does still have **challenges with long-term unemployment** for those furthest from the labour market. The No One Left Behind research points to additional barriers for vulnerable groups.

Priorities

- Address the skills gaps which inhibit growth (**Supporting Business**)
- Help people move between jobs to develop their career locally (**Supporting People**)
- Ensure those traditionally excluded from sharing in Surrey's economic success are given the targeted support to enable them to do so
- Enable access to opportunities for work progression (**Supporting People**)
- Improve labour market information about future skills needs across all our sectors (**Future Proofing**)

Rationale for change: Employer Demand for Skills

Evidence & priorities

Objectives

Actions

Measuring progress

Skills in demand

Across all sectors, employers look for people with the right mix of behaviours and transferable skills to complement the specialist skills of a job. They have a preference for employment pathways which deliver workers ready for the workplace. Employers value opportunities to shape the skills system.

- There is **clear demand for transferable skills** across the breadth of our sectors, including: communication, critical thinking, problem solving, attention to detail and adaptability.
- **Skills needs are underpinned by a set of behaviours** - willingness to learn, enthusiasm, punctuality and reliability – that are applicable to all roles, grades and industries.
- Surrey's employers also require **sector specific skills and expertise**. These are typically clustered around techniques and technologies specific to sectors, but also include cross-cutting skills such as data analysis and sales.
- Some businesses have **established cycles and tools for assessing future skills needs**, allowing them to be proactive in building a talent pipeline.

Challenges to accessing talent and understanding trends

Future skills needs are hard to predict, particularly in Surrey's fast-moving Leading Edge sectors. Provision lags industry needs and competition for talent is high. Wider place challenges restrict the skills pipeline.

- **Rapidly shifting skills needs** present challenges for anticipating and responding to these needs. More could be done to track wider sector/professional trends and apply these in a Surrey context.
- **Workplace readiness** is a consistent challenge for employers, many of whom lack the time and resources to engage in internal skill development activities.
- **Attracting experienced hires** with the right skills is challenging and our tight labour market leaves smaller businesses struggling to compete for talent.
- **Career pathways can be limited** (typically centred around Higher Education), and learners are not always aware of the training routes or opportunities to break into key sectors.
- There is **scope to increase how businesses engage with learners** to generate awareness of career opportunities at a younger age (or early on in the learning journey).
- **High living and housing costs** present challenges in attracting a diverse workforce.
- **Poor transport access in rural areas** inhibits potential workers from accessing workplaces, limiting labour supply.

Priorities

- Address the skills gaps which inhibit growth (**Supporting Business**)
- Support business owners and managers to develop the skills they need to recruit, retain and develop their staff (**Supporting Business**)
- Promote system-wide collaboration between all partners (**Enabling Collaboration**)
- Provide pathways across all levels for workers into green jobs (**Future Proofing**)

Rationale for change: Current Provision Landscape

Evidence & priorities

Objectives

Actions

Measuring progress

Strengths

Surrey boasts a dynamic provider network which offers a diverse blend of courses targeted at our foundation and Leading Edge sectors. There is strong appetite across the skills system to maximise opportunities for collaborative and integrated working.

- There is a **broad provider base** including research-intensive Universities, four Further Education colleges (across six campuses), a wealth of independent training providers, and secondary and primary schools.
- While new, the **Skills and Employment Network**, set up as part of the No One Left Behind Programme, is helping to connect Surrey's providers and support organisations.
- There are examples of **providers working with employers** to shape training, which could be scaled up.
- The **nature of provision is changing**, such as through T-Levels, new Apprenticeship Frameworks and the forthcoming work experience requirement, which may help learners and parents make more informed decisions about career paths.
- Surrey's FE colleges have a **track record of collaborating** on strategic projects to secure investment.
- Our **large employers invest in L&D**, resulting in CPD materials and knowledge which can be shared across the supply chain.

Challenges

Funding restrictions and finding appropriately qualified teachers are notable barriers to providers' ability to meet skills needs. Targeted intervention is required to further enhance the accessibility of provision for our hard-to-reach groups.

- Training providers of all types, but particularly in vocational education, find **it difficult to access appropriately qualified teachers with industry-relevant skills**. Further, it is a challenge to keep teaching staff up to date with industry trends.
- Provision is typically planned on annual cycles which limit how responsive providers can be to immediate skills needs.
- It is **difficult for employers to understand the full scale** of provision across the County. Employers are willing to look beyond Surrey's borders to find the right training.
- Due to the nature of funding, **provision can be driven by government policy** rather than by employer demand.
- **Competition between training providers** presents challenges for meaningful collaboration.
- **Access to reliable, frequent and cheap public transport** is a barrier to education for many of our vulnerable residents, particularly in more rural areas. Learners are typically willing to travel to access more specialised or high-level provision.

Priorities

- Support employers to shape the skills system as key partners **(Supporting Business)**
- Support the efficient delivery of high quality training across Surrey at all levels **(Supporting Business)**
- Ensure clear governance and operational systems facilitate partnership working **(Enabling Collaboration)**

Our ambition and objectives for skills in Surrey

Evidence & priorities



Objectives



Actions



Measuring progress

The ambition of the Surrey People and Skills Plan is to build a **dynamic, demand-led skills system which hones Surrey's leading edge, recognises the needs of all businesses and maximises inclusion, whilst powering economic growth across the UK**. We have set objectives to help us achieve this ambition, taking us from where we are now to where we want to be. Across all of these objectives there is a commitment from Surrey partners to spread the benefits and share best practice with others beyond our boundaries.

Where we are now

Our economy is strong. But our businesses, large and small, are constrained by difficulties in finding workers with the technical and general skills they need. This is true for our foundation sectors and our leading edge sectors. Our business base is growing more slowly as a result, and we have fewer high-growth firms.

Where we want to be

Our businesses can recruit, retain, and develop a talented workforce, supported by a skills system with high-quality training provision, which anticipates and meets their needs to support growth.

Priorities

- Address the skills gaps which inhibit growth
- Support employers to shape the skills system as key partners
- Support the efficient delivery of high quality training across Surrey at all levels that promotes work-readiness
- Help business owners and managers develop the skills they need to recruit, retain and develop their staff, increasing skills development as a business priority

Skills Plan Objective

① Supporting Business::

Help businesses prosper by making our skills system more responsive – both to immediate and medium-longer term needs.

Continues >

Our ambition and objectives for skills in Surrey

Evidence & priorities



Objectives



Actions



Measuring progress

Where we are now

Not all our people share in the County's overall success. We have acute pockets of education deprivation, large differences in workplace and resident earnings, and residents who struggle to access employment. Our high cost of living and wider place challenges create further barriers.

Where we want to be

Our people can access opportunities via an inclusive skills system, which recognises the range of barriers to securing employment and helps people access new and better jobs, thereby raising wages and easing cost of living pressures.

Priorities

- Help people move between jobs to develop their career locally
- Promote access to good quality jobs across foundation sectors
- Enable access to opportunities for work progression
- Ensure those traditionally excluded from sharing in Surrey's economic success are given the targeted support to enable them to do so
- Tackle cold spots in support, education and training provision

Skills Plan Objective

② Supporting People:

Support inclusive access for Surrey's residents to improved careers education, information and guidance, linked to clear learning, work and training pathways.

Continues >

Our ambition and objectives for skills in Surrey

Evidence & priorities



Objectives



Actions



Measuring progress

Where we are now

Surrey's unique mix of successful large businesses, skills providers, research assets and anchor institutions make valuable individual contributions, but more could be done to maximise their impact and to connect them – to each other and our small businesses.

Where we want to be

Partners working together to drive skills innovation, leveraging existing capacity to diffuse best practice across businesses of all sizes, and supporting an agile, responsive skills system.

Priorities

- Promote system-wide collaboration between all partners
- Ensure clear governance and operational systems facilitate partnership working
- Leverage the corporate capacity of our large firms to support our SMEs

Skills Plan Objective

③ Enabling Collaboration:

Deliver a step change in our skills system through enhanced and purposeful collaboration between and across our businesses, anchor institutions and skills providers.

Continues >

Our ambition and objectives for skills in Surrey

Evidence & priorities



Objectives



Actions



Measuring progress

Where we are now

Surrey's skills providers must balance responding to near-term skills demand with anticipating and preparing for employers' future skills needs, taking a longer-term view of skills needs in emerging sectors. The future skills pipeline must meet the needs of all our sectors and businesses of all sizes, but one major, imminent cross-sector inhibitor of business growth is the need for green skills, particularly in technical roles.

Where we want to be

Supporting all our businesses to grow and innovate via access to workers with the skills they need, including capturing the inclusive economic growth potential of a greener economy by meeting cross-sector demand for Surrey workers with green skills at all occupation levels.

Priorities

- Improve labour market information about future skills needs across all our sectors
- Identify emerging green skills needs across industry clusters
- Establish key cross sector vocational pathways e.g. green skills pathways across construction/innovation

Skills Plan Objective

④ Future Proofing:

As part of a thematic focus on skills of the future, strengthen the pipeline of priority skills to meet employer demand, recognising the needs of both SMEs and larger businesses.

Our plan for change

Evidence & priorities



Objectives



Actions



Measuring progress

We have a range of current mechanisms to deliver actions, as listed in the table below. Most current mechanisms are linked to central Government funding and so limit the ability of Surrey partners to shape the local skills system. Other mechanisms, chiefly a County Deal, offer chances to shape a more distinctively 'Surrey' skills system over time, by changing the ways stakeholders operate and collaborate. Taken together, these mechanisms provide meaningful ways to create change in our skills system and interface with the broader Surrey policy context. As the context changes over time new mechanisms will become available, and current ones will be superseded. The Surrey Skills Plan promotes flexibility in the approach to delivering change while ensuring a focus on achieving our key objectives is retained.

Mechanism	Purpose	Supporting Business	Supporting People	Enabling Collaboration	Future Proofing
System leadership (OSGB/SSLF)	The OSGB, SSLF and Business Leaders' Forum will lead implementation of the Plan, supporting collaboration, evaluating progress and updating the Plan as required.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Local Skills Improvement Plan	The LSIP sets out the key priorities and changes needed to make post-16 technical education more responsive to the local labour market.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Strategic Development Fund	The SDF provides capital investment to reshape training provision and update training facilities to support the LSIP.	✓	✓		
UKSPF/Multiply Investment Plans	UKSPF plans, prepared by districts and boroughs, contain a range of actions to support people and skills, and to support local business. Multiply funding is used to improve adult numeracy skills.	✓	✓		
Surrey County Deal	A County Deal could provide new levers for a local role in tackling skills challenges and shaping skills provision around local priorities, including local control of the Adult Education Budget.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Skills and Employment Network	Established to support the No One Left Behind (NOLB) programme, the SEN brings together Surrey's skills and employment support providers to support those furthest from the labour market		✓	✓	
Surrey County Council operations	SCC is an important employer, procurer and deliverer of services in its own right, with the ability to directly impact employment outcomes for residents. Projects span a range of purposes.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Careers and Enterprise Company	The CEC works with schools, colleges and employers to provide careers advice and guidance, and to promote pathways into education and employment for young people.	✓	✓		
Surrey Chambers of Commerce	Regional support organisation which helps businesses by connecting, promoting, supporting and representing them. The Chambers are also the employer representative body developing the LSIP.	✓		✓	✓

Figure 8: Mechanisms for actions to achieve the objectives of the SSP

We have prioritised actions into time periods: those to occur within one year, and those to occur within the next three years. All actions will follow a common process of design, implementation and review over time. The tables below set out the actions to deliver our objectives.

Our plan for change

Evidence & priorities



Objectives



Actions



Measuring progress

Objective ① : Help businesses prosper by making our skills system more responsive – both to immediate needs and those presented in the medium-longer term.

Priorities	Actions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address the skills gaps which inhibit growth • Support employers to shape the skills system as key partners • Support the efficient delivery of high quality training across Surrey at all levels • Support business owners and managers to develop the skills they need to recruit, retain and develop their staff, increasing skills development as a business priority 	Now (within 1 year) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable more businesses (large + SMEs) to inform skills provision planning, for general and technical skills ♦ • Map existing business support services and connect SMEs to them to support workforce development • Develop a campaign targeted at business owners and leaders to raise awareness of importance of leadership, people/talent development and support to identify/ articulate needs 	1–3 years <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish mechanisms to gather intelligence and anticipate skills demand via regular, robust industry foresight. • Develop and promote courses to keep pace with industry demand and support reskilling ♦ • Review and consolidate the business support programmes on offer which focus on workforce development • Support more businesses to invest in training and skills development
Key delivery mechanisms: System leadership, LSIP, SDF, UKSPF, County Deal levers, Surrey Chambers of Commerce		
Examples of delivery already underway: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surrey Highways Innovation Academy • Surrey Skills Demand Framework pilot, which can be expanded and applied to other sectors 		

Key ♦ = likely LSIP alignment ** = alignment to high level action plan of the Surrey No One Left Behind Programme

Our plan for change

Evidence & priorities



Objectives



Actions



Measuring progress

Objective ② : Support inclusive access for Surrey's people to improved careers education, information and guidance, linked to clear learning, work and training pathways.

Priorities	Actions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help people move between jobs to develop their career locally • Promote access to good quality jobs across foundation sectors • Enable access to opportunities for work progression • Ensure those traditionally excluded from sharing in Surrey's economic success are given the targeted support to enable them to do so • Tackle cold spots in support, education and training provision 	Now (within 1 year)	1–3 years
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Surrey County Council skills action plan which recognises the county's role as a leader, employer, procurer and provider • Establish annual Skills & Careers Festival, which engages businesses, learners and skills providers on the opportunities in Surrey • Pilot a collaborative approach to careers advice, working with a range of partners and employers, with focus on maximising inclusion and diversity • Produce baseline evaluation of current employment support and impact assessment ** 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote work placements and establish local forum for offering and finding work placement opportunities • Promote technical routes, T-Levels and apprenticeships (at all levels) across all sectors as alternative pathways into employment, with a focus on groups who are often excluded from training/employment ♦ • Develop an employer led, sustainable model of vocational pathways, careers advice and guidance, fit for the future of work, and encompassing non-university routes ♦ ** • Put in place career pathways to professional level for all key occupational routes in Surrey ♦ • Deliver Years 2 and 3 of Multiply Programme • Improve links between existing volunteering programmes and training provision ** • Support employers to see the value of, and embed, more inclusive employment practices, particularly for groups traditionally furthest from employment

Key delivery mechanisms:

System leadership, LSIP, SDF, UKSPF/Multiply, Skills and Employment Network, DWP, Careers and Enterprise Company

Examples of delivery already underway:

- Social Children's Services Academy
- No One Left Behind research to undertake in-depth discovery of those left behind in Surrey and develop a profile **
- Skills and Employment Network to bring together the region's employment support providers in a more effective network; link into the SSLF
- Delivery of Year 1 of the Multiply Programme to support an increase in adult numeracy levels

Our plan for change

Evidence & priorities



Objectives



Actions



Measuring progress

Objective ③: Deliver a step change in our skills system through enhanced and purposeful collaboration between and across businesses, anchor institutions and skills providers.

Priorities	Actions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote system-wide collaboration between all partners Ensure clear governance and operational systems facilitate partnership working Leverage the corporate capacity of our large firms to support our SMEs 	Now (within 1 year) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Map skills provision across Surrey to develop a clearer picture of provision (and gaps) ♦ Pilot easily accessible labour market information for providers to inform future provision Pilot business to business peer mentoring and support schemes Pilot syndicated training purchasing across businesses Pilot a business to provider co-mentoring scheme Engage large businesses in understanding the benefits and potential structure of a mechanism to pool local apprenticeship levy funds and redesign SCC's levy transfer scheme to support a wider range of businesses 	1–3 years <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand sector clusters, promote technology clusters, and develop cross-sector working through the SSLF Develop systems for sharing labour market intelligence via a single portal that all employers and providers access Establish a formal partnership of providers to coordinate activity and bid for funding Embed business-to-business mentoring support as part of social value return in procurement Create mechanism to pool apprenticeship levy funds and help large businesses support training for smaller businesses in their supply chains

Key delivery mechanisms:

System leadership, LSIP, Strategic Development Fund, Skills and Employment Network, County Deal, Surrey Chambers of Commerce

Examples of delivery already underway:

- Clarify the SSLF's role and strengthen its ability to lead system-wide skills change in Surrey, including through delivery of the SSP
- Hold a Surrey Skills Summit to convene partners and create a shared platform for change
- Skills and Employment Network to bring together the region's employment support providers in a more effective network; link to the SSLF **

Our plan for change

Evidence & priorities



Objectives



Actions



Measuring progress

Objective ④: As part of a thematic focus on skills of the future, strengthen the pipeline of priority skills to meet employer demand, recognising the needs of both SMEs and larger businesses.

Priorities	Actions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve labour market information about future skills needs across all our sectors • Identify emerging green skills needs across industry clusters • Establish key cross sector vocational pathways e.g. green skills pathways across construction/innovation 	Now (within 1 year)	1–3 years
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare a Surrey Green Skills plan to support a cross-sectoral pipeline of green-skills provision across sectors • Promote awareness of the opportunities for workers in the green transition, particularly for technical roles ♦ • Develop a specific STEM careers strategy for Surrey • Skills Development Fund projects completed, and lessons embedded into future skills planning ♦ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop sector-specific Skills Plans and explore sector-specific delivery models e.g. green skills ** • Develop new courses to support upskilling and reskilling across sectors ♦ • Raise industry's role in designing and delivering training by focusing on emerging skills needs across sectors
Key delivery mechanisms: System leadership, LSIP, County Deal, Surrey Chambers of Commerce		
Examples of delivery already underway: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare a Surrey Green Skills plan to support a cross-sectoral pipeline of green-skills provision across sectors • Complete and evaluate pilot heat pump training programme 		

Actions, timing and delivery mechanisms

Evidence & priorities

Objectives

Actions

Measuring progress

All actions will follow a common process of design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation over time. The SSLF will own the Plan, oversee implementation, and measure progress. In this sense delivery of the Surrey Skills Plan could form a standing item on future SSLF agendas, with key points escalated to the OSGB as required via a consistent reporting cycle, including to ensure that skills system decisions interface with the wider remit for economic development in Surrey. The SBLF should also be regularly consulted and informed. The table below summarises the year one priority actions included in the Surrey Skills Plan (not including those already underway), listing the delivery mechanisms and action owners which have been identified.

Objective	Action to take within one year	Mechanisms	Owner
① Supporting Business	1. Enable more businesses (large + SMEs) to inform skills provision planning, for general and technical skills	System leadership, LSIP	SSLF, SBLF
	2. Connect SMEs to existing business support services to support workforce development	System leadership	SEN, SSLF
	3. Develop a campaign targeted at business owners and leaders to raise awareness of importance of people/talent development and support to identify/articulate needs	New mechanism required	
② Supporting People	4. Develop a Surrey County Council 'Skills Action Plan' which recognises the county's role as leader, employer, procurer and provider	SCC project	SCC
	5. Establish annual Skills & Careers Festival, which engages businesses, learners and skills providers on the opportunities in Surrey	System leadership	SSLF
	6. Pilot a collaborative approach to careers advice working with a range of partners and employers, with focus on maximising inclusion and diversity	System leadership, Careers and Enterprise Co	SSLF, CEC
	7. Produce baseline evaluation of current employment support and impact assessment	Skills and Employment Network/NOLB	SEN, SSLF
③ Enabling Collaboration	8. Map skills provision across Surrey to develop a clearer picture of provision (and gaps)	LSIP	LSIP delivery
	9. Pilot easily accessible labour market information for providers to inform future provision	System leadership	SSLF
	10. Pilot business to business peer mentoring and support schemes	System leadership, Surrey Chamber of Commerce	SCC
	11. Pilot syndicated training purchasing across businesses	System leadership	SCC
	12. Pilot a business to provider co-mentoring scheme	System leadership	SSLF, SBLF
	13. Engage large businesses in understanding the benefits and potential structure of a mechanism to pool local apprenticeship levy funds and redesign SCC's levy transfer scheme to support a wider range of businesses	System leadership	SCC
④ Future Proofing	14. Prepare a Surrey Green Skills plan to support a pipeline of green-skills provision across sectors	SCC project	SCC
	15. Promote awareness of the opportunities for workers in the green transition, particularly for technical roles	LSIP, System leadership	LSIP delivery
	16. Develop a specific STEM careers strategy for Surrey	System leadership	SSLF
	17. Strategic Development Fund projects completed, and lessons embedded into future skills planning	Strategic Development Fund	SDF delivery partners

Figure 9: Actions, timing and delivery mechanisms – Year One priorities

Actions, timing and delivery mechanisms

Evidence & priorities

Objectives

Actions

Measuring progress

The table below summarises the potential actions to take within the three year delivery window of the plan, noting that as delivery mechanisms and the policy context change these actions may need to be refined or reconsidered.

Objective	Action to take within three years	Mechanisms
① Supporting Business	1. Establish mechanisms to gather intelligence and anticipate skills demand via regular, robust industry foresight.	System leadership
	2. Develop and promote courses to keep pace with industry demand and support reskilling	LSIP
	3. Review and consolidate the business support programmes on offer which focus on workforce development	System leadership
	4. Support more businesses to invest in training and skills development	System leadership
② Supporting People	5. Promote work placements and establish local forum for offering and finding work placement opportunities	
	6. Promote technical routes, T-Levels and apprenticeships (at all levels) across all sectors as alternative pathways into employment, with a focus on groups who are often excluded from training/employment	LSIP, System leadership
	7. Develop employer led, sustainable model of vocational pathways, careers advice and guidance, fit for the future of work, and encompassing non-university routes	LSIP, NOLB, System leadership
	8. Put in place career pathways to professional level for all key occupational routes in Surrey	LSIP
	9. Deliver years 2 and 3 of the Multiply Programme	SCC project
	10. Improve links between existing volunteering programmes and training provision	System leadership
③ Enabling Collaboration	11. Support employers to see the value of, and embed, more inclusive employment practices, particularly for groups traditionally furthest from employment	System leadership, NOLB, LISP
	12. Expand sector clusters, promote technology clusters, and develop cross-sector working through the SSLF	System leadership
	13. Develop systems for sharing labour market intelligence via a single portal that all employers and providers access	System leadership
	14. Establish a formal partnership of providers to coordinate activity and bid for funding	System leadership
	15. Embed business-to-business mentoring support as part of social value return in procurement	New mechanisms required
	16. Create mechanism to pool apprenticeship levy funds and help large businesses support training for smaller businesses in their supply chains	New mechanism required
④ Future Proofing	17. Develop sector-specific Skills Plans and explore sector-specific delivery models	System leadership
	18. Develop new courses to support upskilling and reskilling across sectors	LSIP, System leadership
	19. Raise industry's role in designing and delivering training by focusing on emerging skills needs across sectors	System leadership

Figure 10: Actions, timing and delivery mechanisms – priorities within three years

Measuring progress

Evidence & priorities

Objectives


Actions

Measuring progress

The Plan's progress should be reviewed at key points, such as progress at the point of the LSIP's publication and after one year, and to coincide with key milestones in the academic year. The Plan should be reviewed regularly to respond to contextual changes. The table below sets out some wider data indicators relevant to the state and direction of travel of Surrey's skills system. The Plan will need a full, specific measurement process to be developed via an impact evaluation framework which will enable progress to be measured against other objectives, such as Enabling Collaboration.

Objective	Progress measure	Surrey baseline	UK baseline	Desired direction	Data source
① Supporting Business	Proportion of Surrey businesses reporting a skills gap or skills-shortage vacancy	19%	17%	↓	Employer Skills Survey, table 53: Skills deficiency summary (2019)
	Number of Surrey businesses investing in training and skills development	61%	61%	↑	Employer Skills Survey, table 78: Establishments funding or arranging training (2019)
② Supporting People	Gap between workplace and resident earnings	9%	4%	↓	Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (2020)
	Proportion of 16-17 year old Surrey residents Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET)	1.4%	2.8%	↓	NEET and participation: Local authority figures, table 7 (2021)
	Economic inactivity rate	17.5%	21.2%	↓	Annual Population Survey (2021)
③ Enabling Collaboration	Measures to be determined				
④ Future Proofing	Proportion of high-growth firms in Surrey's business base	0.3%	0.4%	↑	Beauhurst (2021)
	Proportion of workplace employment in knowledge-intensive jobs	25%	21%	↑	Business Register and Employment Survey (2019)
	Proportion of Surrey training provision incorporating relevant green skills			↑	To be determined
	Unique job postings in 'Green' occupations in past 12 months	TBC	n/a	↑	Lightcast, Surrey 'green jobs' report, Sep 2021-2022

Figure 11: Proposed progress measures linked to Surrey Skills Plan objectives

A man with dark hair and a beard, wearing a light blue button-down shirt over a white t-shirt, is focused on a laptop. He is in a factory or industrial setting, with blue lighting and machinery visible in the background. The image has a blue and green color scheme with abstract shapes.

Should you wish to get in touch about anything in this plan, please contact Surrey County Council's Economy and Growth team via economy.growth@surreycc.gov.uk