

# Summary of Glos Skills Strategy (This forms Section 2 of the Strategy)

## What we plan to do and why

### Support local employers to attract, recruit and retain the staff they need

#### Why?

For several years, employers in key sectors in Gloucestershire have been affected as ageing workforces and other structural issues have resulted in the loss of skills and knowledge from their organisations. The impacts of the Covid pandemic and EU Exit have intensified this trend and have led to a smaller pool of talent available for local employers. This means that some employers need to review and alter their recruitment, learning and development approaches to attract and retain staff. Strategically, there is a need to attract and retain more young people to work in Gloucestershire businesses, the majority of which are small to medium enterprises (SMEs).

#### We will do this through:

- Helping businesses to enhance their strategic workforce planning capabilities and inclusive employment practices (Workstream 2)
- Helping businesses, especially SMEs, to maximise non-pay benefits such as work-life balance, childcare, flexible working, inclusive work practices, which have been proven to help attract and retain employees, including young people (Workstream 2)
- Helping local employers to attract a more diverse workforce, so widening the pool of talent available to them (Workstream 2)
- 'Growing our own' staff through Apprenticeships and T-Levels and ensuring local training providers offer the programmes local employers need (Workstream 1)
- Helping key local sectors to develop and promote clearer pathways into these sectors, especially where there is lack of awareness of opportunities (Workstreams 2,3, 5)
- Helping key local sectors form local/sub-regional centres of specialisation to build on clusters that already exist or are developing (e.g. cyber) (Workstream 3)

### Support local employers to upskill and train their staff to invest in them and increase productivity

#### Why?

Employers will increasingly need to invest in their staff to retain their talent and improve business productivity.

#### We will do this through:

- Delivering skills that are needed across many sectors e.g. cyber, digital, leadership & management, customer service, sustainability (Workstreams 1, 2,3, 5 in our Action Plan)
- Delivering sector-specific skills needs e.g. Engineering skills in a range of disciplines are needed in the agri-tech sector, the construction sector requires sustainable building skills. (Workstreams 1, 2,3, 5)

- Taking employers' training needs into account by matching local apprenticeships, T-levels and technical education programmes to local employers' needs (Workstreams 1, 2,3, 5)
- Involving employers and trade unions in the promotion and delivery of training programmes for employees (Workstreams 1, 2,3, 5)

## **Ensure everyone in Gloucestershire has the opportunities and skills to enable them to work**

### **Why?**

Recent economic changes have resulted in some residents needing to seek careers and job roles in different sectors and organisations.

### **We will do this through:**

- Making career and job-change pathways clearer and easier to access (Workstreams 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5)
- Work with delivery partners to ensure individual residents tackle their barriers to employment or training (Workstream 2)
- Joined-up local provision and co-ordinated support (Workstreams 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5)
- Working with local employers to enhance their inclusive employment practices (Workstream 2)
- Seeking and securing resources to tackle digital poverty and digital exclusion, including the provision of digital skills at the levels required by local residents (Workstream 3)

## **Maximise the local employment opportunities presented by local developments**

### **Why?**

Contracts issued by local organisations provide substantial opportunities to build in guaranteed apprenticeships, employment and skills for Gloucestershire residents. These are not yet being fully utilised, even for major infrastructure or service delivery contracts.

### **We will do this through:**

- Using and promoting good practice in the use of Social Value and Section 106 (Workstream 2)
- Continuing to bid for projects and facilities that will provide employment and skills opportunities in the County e.g. the Severn Edge STEP nuclear fusion project at Berkeley and Oldbury (Workstream 2)
- The work of the 'anchor institutions' in Gloucestershire (Workstream 2)

## **Highlight and seek wider changes needed to support the improvement of recruitment and skills in the County**

### **Why?**

Changes to the employment and skills system in isolation are not enough. Other system changes are required to generate the conditions needed for employers to recruit, retain and train the staff they need and for individuals to work effectively.

**We will do this through:**

- Feedback and lobbying with local and national politicians, funding agencies and national bodies (Workstreams 1 and 5)
- Examples include: Rural transport, broadband and digital poverty, pay and conditions in certain sectors/job roles, automation/robotics, improved funding for and access to further education and sustainable sixth-forms
- Working with inward investment partners to ensure that, wherever possible, they can recruit Gloucestershire residents with the required skills and qualifications (Workstream 5)

**Co-Ordinate and collaborate to simplify the local employment and skills landscape and maximise the impact of limited local resources on the local employment and skills system****Why?**

The employment and skills 'landscape' is complex, with many stakeholders. Businesses and individuals need help navigating their way through multiple, sometimes competing provision. Limited local resources can be more effectively and efficiently directed to helping local businesses and residents if this work is co-ordinated and undertaken collaboratively.

**We will do this through:**

- 'One front door' working with employers and residents, linking them with the right careers, employment and training providers for them (Workstreams 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)
- Coordinated and joined-up working between local employment and skills providers and organisations and employers (Workstreams 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)
- Collaborative bids to support the priorities outlined in this strategy (Workstream 5)
- Improving careers support and experience of the world of work for young people (Workstreams 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)
- Helping employers to connect effectively with the education system so they can help develop the next generation of employees (Workstreams 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

**For more detailed information about the actions we plan to take, please see our Employment & Skills Action Plan**

This is provided for GEGJC members with this summary.