

ANNEXE B

In line with DfE LSIP guidance (October 2022) the Chamber, as designated ERB, developed a robust and comprehensive evidence gathering and engagement framework for the project. This was underpinned by using a range of research methods to maximise levels of engagement across the local business community within Tees Valley.

Preliminary work

On designation as the ERB we undertook early consultation with stakeholders including:

- Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) – Officers and wider stakeholders through the Education, Employment and Skills Advisory Group
- Further Education providers
- Employer representative bodies including CBI and FSB
- Employers themselves via the Chamber’s pre-existing networks, such as our Employment and Skills Forum

This early engagement helped shape our approach in line with the three identified stages of LSIP activity.

Stage A: Articulating Employers Skills Needs

a) Prioritising sectors

To determine which sectors would be considered as part of the Tees Valley LSIP we used a number of data sources including job vacancy data (EMSI Burning Glass), demographic and educational data (ONS Mid Year Estimates) and ESFA data. We also reviewed and considered relevant strategic plans produced by TVCA including the Net Zero Strategy for Tees Valley (March 2023). We consulted a number of stakeholders on the pipeline of significant new investments expected to come into the economy over the next three years, their expected geographical location, number of jobs and likely skill requirements.

Following initial consultations an approach was developed which would look at immediate skills requirements, medium term requirements (one to two years) and longer term requirements three years. The criteria for assessing specific sectors was:

- What are the sectors with the highest level of vacancies? (immediate need)
- What are the growing sectors expected to have a significant skills requirements over the next 3 years? (longer term)
- What significant investments are expected over the next three years which will have a significant direct skills requirement AND are likely to impact on other businesses working in the sector or supply chain?
- What skills are common to most businesses where there are significant shortages (regardless of sector)? (cross cutting themes)

Having determined this approach, we then undertook further consultation with stakeholders on the proposed priority sectors. To avoid duplication we also identified a number of sectors where a significant amount of work has already been done on determining overall skills requirements. We therefore focussed the LSIP on sectors where skills requirements and employer demand had been explored in less depth. Following further consultation and engagement at

TVCA's Education, Employment and Skills Advisory Group and with officers at TVCA, we were able to select the priority sectors and confirm cross cutting themes.

The Chamber is also the ERB for the Tees Valley Strategic Development Fund (SDF) 2 Programme. The selection of green energy and net zero as a sector ensured close alignment with the SDF as well as fulfilling the relevant requirement of the LSIP guidance.

b) Methodologies and approaches

To engage with the largest number of employers possible a range of methods were used:

- 121 in-depth interviews
- Surveys - sector specific and cross cutting
- Events - sector specific and cross cutting
- Roundtable discussions
- Engagement via other ERBs – Event attendance, consultation with skills groups, circulating surveys, consideration of existing research
- Telephone interviews

In line with the LSIP guidance it was important that we developed an approach that engaged widely beyond existing Chamber membership to ensure as representative selection of employer views as possible. In particular this needed to include methods to reach and consult with SMEs and employers who struggle most to get their voices heard by providers. We addressed this by working closely with other ERBs including Northern Offshore Federation, FSB, CBI, Constructing Excellence North East (CENE), Tees Business, Tees Valley Business Club, North of England Armed Forces Business Forum, Stockton BID, Darlington Business Club, Teesside University Together with Business and Tees Valley Skills For Growth. We also tailored our methods to the sector being researched. For example, when approaching health and social care providers we recognised that potential respondents would be unlikely to be able to leave their premises to attend events, and therefore prioritised the use of digital and telephone research methods.

As an example, we obtained 488 responses to a general survey of the wider business community. Companies for this exercise were identified using the Fame database. Tees Valley specific findings are presented below:

Tees Valley

Breakdown of survey respondents by geographic area:

- 9.4% Hartlepool
- 29.0% Stockton on Tees
- 9.9% Darlington
- 21.6% Redcar and Cleveland
- 29.0% Middlesbrough
- 1.2% North East wide (multiple sites/offices including Tees Valley premises)

Are you experiencing any sector specific skills shortages?

65% of respondents said 'yes'. Of these:

- 14.3% identified a lack of digital skills
- 10.5% identified a lack of professional service skills such as finance and project management

What business skills do you consider most important for your employees to have?

- 43.8% wanted customer service and people skills
- 27.2% identified general communication skills such as a good standard of reading and writing
- 27.2% identified skills that could be considered 'soft' such as organisation, managing workload and being a team player
- 12.3% identified professional skills such as project management or finance

Thinking specifically about digital skills what skills does your business require?

- 63.1% wanted a basic ability
- 21.3% Microsoft suite, 9.9% specified Excel
- 18.4% specified social media and marketing skills
- 10.6% wanted web development

Results exclude respondents who said they had no requirements.

c) Engagement measures

Throughout the duration of the project we categorised our levels of engagement into the following three tiers of intensity:

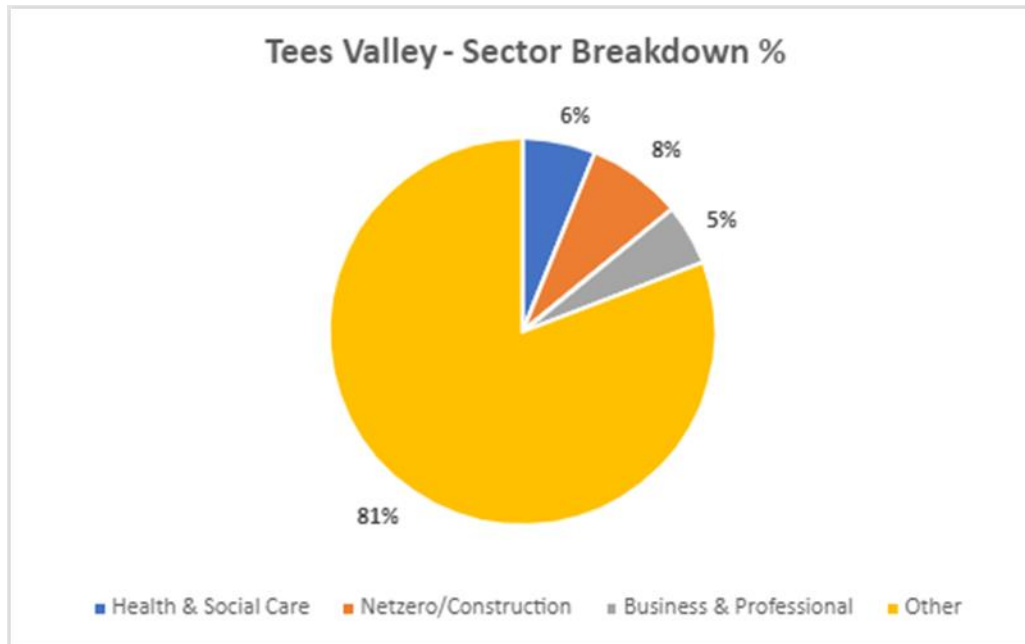
- **Tier 1** – In depth and intensive engagement through 121 (face-to-face and virtual), roundtable discussion, telephone interview
- **Tier 2** – Significant engagement through attendance at shorter events, completed a survey, provided written feedback
- **Tier 3** – Brief engagement through brief recorded discussion at events, light touch feedback, engaged through use of rapid digital consultation tools like Slido at non-LSIP specific events

Throughout the project LSIP staff have attended and/or presented at general networking and industry events often organised through other ERBs. We have also utilised marketing, publications and social media to raise wider awareness of the LSIP process.

The engagement figures set out below are based on positive business engagement at tiers 1, 2, and 3 of the framework.

Tees Valley	Overall Contacts
Tier 1 or 2	1060
Tier 3	410
Total	1470

Overall Tier 1 or 2 engagement by sector	Tees Valley
Health & Social Care	65
Net Zero/Construction	84
Business & Professional	54
Other	857
Total	1060



Stage B: Translating Employer Skill Needs

We have engaged with the FE Colleges in the Tees Valley area and those colleges which have an interest in and/or students who travel to learn from the local area.

- Darlington College
- Stockton Riverside College
- Middlesbrough College
- Hartlepool College
- Hartlepool Sixth Form College
- Redcar and Cleveland College
- New College Durham IOT
- Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College
- Northern School of Art
- New College Durham

We have also engaged with private training providers through the Tees Valley Learning Provider Network (TVLP) and North East Learning Providers (NELP) and TVCA throughout the LSIP drafting process and have continued this in identifying the “priorities for change”. Contact has included direct discussion of the priorities following compilation of the first draft of the LSIP and continued through May. The Chamber has also collaborated closely with the consortium submitting an EOI for the Local Skills Improvement Fund.

Stage C: Addressing Learner Demand and Employer Engagement

We have begun the process of developing the necessary learner demand via the following activities and relationships.

a) Supporting Net Zero Targets - Green Energy and Net Zero Skills/Industrial Decarbonisation

Green skills are central to the Tees Valley LSIP as one of the key sector focuses is on renewable energy generation and industrial decarbonisation. This is based on a number of significant investments in the Tees Valley Area in green technology and Net Zero being a priority for the TVCA. The SDF 2 project in the Tees Valley is also based around green technology on the Teesworks site and the LSIP closely aligns.

Green apprenticeships have also been considered as part of the focus on the new technologies in the construction sector.

a) MCA and wider engagement

TVCA has been engaged throughout the process from designation to completion. The LSIP Team worked with TVCA to ensure co-ordination and alignment with TVCA priorities. The MCA were consulted on the sectoral focus of the LSIP and there have been regular liaison meetings between the teams. There was also close collaboration on the data and evidence base for the LSIP.

The TVCA data team has been instrumental in providing a significant amount of data underpinning this LSIP.

Throughout the LSIP process we have continued to attend and updated TVCA's Education, Employment and Skills Advisory Group (which includes Job Centre Plus and representatives from CEIAG services) and Economic and Labour Market Intelligence Group, as well as presenting at the Tees Valley's Local Enterprise Partnership Board.

