



Committee

Committee report

POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS AND REGENERATION

Date

6 JULY 2023

Title

ISLE OF WIGHT SKILLS PLAN

Report of

DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION

SUMMARY

1. This paper highlights the key issues in the IW Skills Plan and the progress being made on the implementation of the action plan as a key area which can help drive regeneration and economic growth.
2. The IW Skills Plan was adopted by the IWC in December 2022 and developed following consultation with key agencies engaged in the learning and skills agenda including training providers and business representative organisations.
3. The Skills Action Plan is delivered via the Isle of Wight Skills Board, which is made up of representatives from the council, training providers (IW College and HTP), business associations (Chamber and FSB), schools and regional bodies including the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership (SLEP).
4. The paper summarises that good progress is being made on delivery of the action plan and in particular the recent focus on the development and submission to government of the Solent Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) which has been led by the Hampshire and IW Chambers of Commerce. The LSIP is intended to set out the key skills needs of the area as identified by businesses and will be a key document in ensuring the Island has access to future funding to train its workforce in order to meet the needs of the local economy and help drive sustainable growth.

BACKGROUND

5. The three (3) key objectives of the Skills Plan are:
 - Aligning aspiration and opportunity to better meet employers skills needs
 - Developing a highly skilled, productive and future ready workforce
 - Enabling opportunities for all and a more inclusive approach to growth

These objectives can be achieved by:

Developing a Skilled Workforce:

- Identify and address skills gaps and shortages in the local workforce.
- Promote lifelong learning and upskilling opportunities to adapt to changing job market demands.

Increasing Educational Attainment:

- Enhance educational quality and access for all residents.
- Improve literacy, numeracy, and digital skills across the Island.

Promoting Entrepreneurship and Innovation:

- Foster a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation.
- Provide resources and support for individuals and businesses to develop new ventures.

Improving Careers Information and Guidance:

- Enhance the provision of careers information, advice, and guidance services.
- Equip individuals with the knowledge and resources to make informed education and career decisions.

Enhancing Collaboration and Partnerships:

- Foster collaboration between educational institutions, businesses, government agencies, and community organizations.
- Create a cohesive ecosystem to address skills gaps, promote employment opportunities, and support economic growth.

6. The main actions of the Skills Plan are:

a. Aligning aspiration and opportunity to better meet employer skills needs

- LSIP model- Engage employers in a more detailed dialogue to better understand their needs
- Promote and grow apprenticeships and technical education
- Focus careers programmes on areas of current and future labour market needs

b. Develop a highly skilled, productive and future ready workforce

- I-spire and Uni Connect
- Increase Level 4/5 technical and work based skills provision
- Lifetime skills guarantee- mobilising it on the IOW

Enabling opportunity for all and a more inclusive approach to growth

c. Participation 16-18/target groups

d. Virtual college

e. Specialised Training and Employment Programme (STEP)

- f. Sector-based work academy programme (SWAP's)
 - g. Skills boot camps
 - h. Focus Adult Community Learning (ACL) programmes on areas of greatest need
 - i. Meeting the needs of priority groups
7. The Isle of Wight Skills Plan aims to develop a skilled workforce, increase educational attainment, promote entrepreneurship and innovation, improve careers guidance, and enhance collaboration and partnerships.
 8. By implementing the outlined main actions, the plan will address skills gaps, provide relevant education and training opportunities, support entrepreneurship, and create a cohesive ecosystem that drives economic growth and prosperity on the Isle of Wight.
 9. Regular monitoring and evaluation will ensure the plan's effectiveness and allow for adjustments based on emerging needs and changing circumstances.

SKILLS PLAN ACTION – PROGRESS

10. Skills Assessment and forecasting – the IW Skills Board actively contributed to the development of the Solent LSIP which is a government mechanism for identifying industry skills needs in the local area. An employer workshop was held on the Island, Friday 24 February, helped inform a regional report to be submitted to government in June. This will be followed by a bid for LSIP funding to support its implementation. Training providers, such as the Isle of Wight College and HTP, are required to pay due regard to LSIP when developing curriculum and to make explicit reference to LSIP priorities in their accountability statements.
11. Education/Industry partnerships - deep dives – Skills Board invited key employers from Health and Social Care and Hospitality and catering sectors to present their concerns – both sectors have recruitment difficulties – actions to promote range of careers available and look at ways of improving workforce retention including building direct relationships between key employers and providers/board members.
12. Education and training enhancement and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) – raising awareness of Apprenticeships as a career route – improvement in take up:

For academic year 19-20		For academic year 20-21		For academic year 21-22	
Intermediate	220	Intermediate	270	Intermediate	250
Advanced	460	Advanced	420	Advanced	460
Higher	260	Higher	240	Higher	280
TOTAL	940	TOTAL	930	TOTAL	990

13. Higher level skills – development of the University Centre IOW in partnership with Portsmouth University including Higher Education (HE) courses in areas of industry demand at Level 4-6: engineering; ICT; childcare/education; business.

14. Partner in Solent Institute of Technology (£2m capital investment in Isle of Wight College) Higher Technical Qualifications: Engineering; marine; digital; creative industries; business; construction.
15. Digital Skills – development of Digital Island strategy and future engagement with a new initiative being led by Solent LEP (Digital Skills Partnership and Solent Tech Talent Taskforce).
16. Work based learning – Multiply programme being delivered by the IWC's ACL to improve numeracy skills in the workforce (173 adults supported in year 1; target of 301 for year 2) and an increase in the reach and take up of ACL (from 700 enrolments to 830).
17. Island Futures – delivering the Island Careers Strategy and in particular (and in the context of rising of young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)) support for vulnerable groups; plus rolling out the post 16 Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Employability Hubs – providing new pathways for young people with SEND to access employment opportunities working with local businesses to widen the talent pool, address recruitment challenges and ensure equal access to jobs and careers.
18. Reaching those furthest from the labour market to help address income poverty and broaden the skills pool is the focus for the “Skills for work” programme. Funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund this two year programme delivered on the Island in partnership with local housing associations helps those seeking to return to work with one to one support.

CONCLUSION

19. The Isle of Wight Skills Plan sets out a framework to develop a skilled workforce, enhance educational attainment, promote entrepreneurship and innovation, improve careers guidance, and foster collaboration.
20. By seeking adequate resources, implementing the proposed actions, and continually evaluating progress, the plan will contribute to the growth, prosperity, and sustainable development of the Isle of Wight.
21. It is crucial to maintain policy alignment, raise awareness, and remain adaptable to emerging trends and challenges in order to ensure the long-term success of the plan. Through the collective efforts of the council, officers, and members, the Isle of Wight can build a resilient and dynamic skills ecosystem that benefits individuals, businesses, and the entire community.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

22. IW Skills Plan 2021

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