



Committee: Thriving People

Date: 16th July 2026

Subject: West Lindsey Employment and Skills Strategy and Delivery Plan 2026–2030

Report by:

Sally Grindrod-Smith, Director Planning, Regeneration and Communities

Contact Officer:

Amanda Bouttell, Senior Project Officer – Employment and Skills

Amanda.Bouttell@west-lindsey.gov.uk

Executive Summary:

To present the West Lindsey Employment and Skills Strategy 2026–2030 and supporting Delivery Plan for consideration and approval, establishing a clear framework for how the Council will work with partners, employers and providers to improve skills, increase access to employment and support inclusive economic growth across the district.

Appendices to Report

- Appendix 1 – Employment & Skills Strategy
- Appendix 2 – Employment & Skills Delivery Plan

RECOMMENDATION(S):

1. That Committee approves the Strategy as the Council's framework for supporting skills development, employability and employer engagement across West Lindsey.
2. That Committee endorses the Delivery Plan as the supporting implementation framework for the Strategy.
3. That Committee delegate authority to the Director of Planning, Regeneration and Communities, following consultation with the Chair of this committee, to make final presentational, factual and typographical amendments prior to publication.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Employment and Skills Strategy 2026–2030 sets out the Council's strategic approach to strengthening the local skills pipeline, improving pathways into work and ensuring residents can benefit from economic growth. The accompanying Delivery Plan translates the Strategy into a practical framework for partnership working, employer engagement and measurable outcomes.
- 1.2 The Strategy supports the Council's wider economic ambitions by focusing on the people, skills and labour market conditions needed to sustain growth. It places particular emphasis on young people, residents facing barriers to work, local employers experiencing recruitment and skills challenges, and the opportunities arising from priority sectors and major investments, including STEP Fusion.
- 1.3 Given the absence of dedicated programme funding, the proposed approach is intentionally focused on leadership, coordination and influence. The Council's role is to align partners, shape local priorities, support delivery through existing provision and maximise external opportunities and investment where these benefit West Lindsey residents and employers.

2 Background and Rationale

- 2.1 West Lindsey has strong economic potential but continues to experience challenges linked to workforce participation, skills gaps, access to training and recruitment pressures in key sectors. Rurality, transport barriers, health-related inactivity and uneven progression routes into skilled employment all affect residents' ability to access opportunity and employers' ability to recruit and retain staff.
- 2.2 The proposed Strategy responds to these challenges by setting out a focused, place-based and partnership-led approach. It complements the Council's Economic Growth Strategy 2025–2030 by ensuring that local people are better equipped to access jobs created through business growth, regeneration and inward investment. It provides a strategic framework for aligning employment and skills activity to emerging sector opportunities and long-term economic priorities.

3 Main Considerations

- 3.1 Strategic fit - the Strategy has been developed to support inclusive growth, strengthen workforce resilience and improve progression into employment across West Lindsey. It aligns with the Council's wider economic objectives and provides a clear policy basis for employment and skills activity over the period 2026–2030.
- 3.2 Delivery approach - the supporting Delivery Plan sets out priority actions, delivery partners, desirable outcomes, key performance

indicators and wider success measures. This provides a practical implementation framework while recognising that delivery will depend on partnership working and alignment of existing resources rather than direct commissioning by the Council.

- 3.3 Target groups and sectors - the Strategy prioritises young people, adults facing barriers to work, residents with low or outdated skills, people affected by rural isolation, and employers within key growth and shortage sectors. It also identifies wider workforce reskilling and progression as an enabling theme to support long-term productivity and labour market resilience.
- 3.4 Major opportunity - the Strategy recognises STEP Fusion as a major long-term opportunity to shape higher-value skills development, employer engagement and workforce pathways. Early strategic alignment will help maximise local benefit and create stronger conditions for a lasting employment and skills legacy.

4 Governance and Next Steps

- 4.1 Subject to approval, the Strategy and Delivery Plan will provide the Council's agreed framework for employment and skills activity through to 2030. Progress will be reviewed through relevant internal and partnership governance arrangements, with periodic review of priorities to reflect labour market conditions, delivery progress and external funding opportunities.

Alternative Options

Two alternative options were considered alongside the recommended approach. These are set out below to support Member consideration.

	Option	Rational for not recommending
1	Do not adopt the Employment and Skills Strategy and Delivery Plan currently.	This is not recommended because it would leave the Council without an agreed strategic framework for coordinating employment and skills activity, weaken the ability to align partners and priorities, and reduce confidence in the Council's approach to securing local benefit from emerging opportunities.
2	Adopt the Strategy in principle but defer approval of the Delivery Plan pending further development.	This is not recommended because the Delivery Plan provides the practical implementation framework needed to translate the Strategy into action. Deferring approval would reduce clarity over delivery; delay coordinated implementation and weaken accountability for outcomes and progress

		monitoring.
--	--	-------------

ASSOCIATED IMPLICATIONS

Legal:

Adoption of the Strategy provides a clear policy framework for the Council's employment and skills activity and supports transparent decision-making and partnership engagement.

Financial:FIN/24/27/TPE/AP

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Staffing:

Existing officers within the West Lindsey Communities and Growth teams.

LGR implications:

Not applicable.

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights:

A core purpose of the Strategy is to improve access to opportunity for residents who face the greatest barriers to work and progression. Delivery should therefore continue to apply an inclusive and accessible approach.

Data Protection Implications:

The strategy itself does not require the routine processing of personal data. However, some delivery activity may involve the collection or sharing of personal information relating to residents participating in employment and skills support. Any such activity must comply with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, with appropriate data sharing arrangements, privacy notices and impact assessments in place where required.

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities:

No direct environmental impacts arise from adoption of the report itself, although the Strategy supports workforce development linked to sectors including clean growth, retrofit and sustainable economic transition.

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations:

No direct crime and disorder implications have been identified arising from adoption of the Strategy and Delivery Plan. Indirectly, the proposed focus on employability, progression and reducing barriers to work may support wider community wellbeing and help address some of the underlying factors associated with exclusion and disengagement.

Health Implications:

The Strategy and Delivery Plan is expected to have a positive indirect impact on health and wellbeing by improving access to skills, employability support and pathways into work.

Risk Assessment:

Without a clear strategic framework, there is a risk that employment and skills activity may become fragmented, reactive or insufficiently aligned to local economic need. There is also a risk that major investments and sector opportunities do not generate maximum local benefit.

This risk will be mitigated through the adoption of the Strategy and Delivery Plan, regular performance and governance review, continued partnership working, and ongoing alignment of activity to labour market intelligence, employer need and emerging opportunities.

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

West Lindsey Skills Insight Report (Nov 2023) - <https://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/jobs-volunteering-employment/employment-skills>

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

Yes

☒

No

☐

Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

Yes

☐

No

☒