



# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2021-22



# LLEP co-chair Andy Reed OBE

The year covered by this report concluded with Government issuing a LEP Review reiterating the importance of our work to local economies. It pointed the way to a future at the heart of business-led decision-making.

Our plan going into 2021-22 was to create economic prosperity through Healthy Growth, Healthy People and Healthy Business. Our intention was to deliver through four strands of our work: developing strategy, allocating funds, co-ordinating partners, and being an independent voice for our area.

This report sets out what happened next.

It includes significant steps forward, including publication of the LLEP's 10-year Economic Growth Strategy and the confirmation of East Midlands Freeport.

Yet colleagues remain acutely aware that it was again a difficult environment for many local businesses. Predicted mass unemployment reversed into a labour shortage as local employers struggled to fill vacancies and locate skills needed as the UK economy reopened after Lockdown.

The impact of the Covid-19 continued to be felt throughout the region, with pressures on market demand, supply chains and business resilience. Many SMEs remained significantly stretched.

Then, as the year drew to a close, war in Ukraine created a

humanitarian and economic disaster of which UK business is still gauging the implications - most obviously in terms of energy.

Meanwhile, the LLEP area's Logistics sector continues to boom. Elsewhere, projects stemming from our Pandemic response began to go live.

The Getting Build Fund alone has resulted in transformation at St Margaret's Bus Station and SportPark4 - all delivered as the UK began to emerge from the Pandemic and we implemented key interventions from our Covid-19 Economic Recovery Plan.

Elsewhere, our Enterprise Zones continue to thrive, with investment in Charnwood Campus and MIRA Technology Park continuing to attract world class innovators.

This was all delivered through local partners working together.

It is clearly more important than ever that we have strong and productive relationships with all our partners as we deliver the innovative, sustainable, productive and inclusive future captured in the four pillars of our Economic Growth Strategy.

LEPs everywhere operate in an uncertain environment. Proposed devolution in the East Midlands continues to be widely discussed. Our aim remains to be a helpful and independent partner in those conversations - while maintaining close focus on doing all we can to enhance the long-term prospects of our regional economy.

*It is more important than ever that we have strong and productive relationships with all of our partners*

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# Governance

## Priorities

- Review Board membership of existing Governance structures
- Support the development of new Governance:
  - Finance and Audit Committee
  - Scrutiny Committee
  - Innovation Board
- Refresh the Local Assurance Framework to reflect changes in governance
- Review our Stakeholder Engagement Plan
- Commence process for election/re-election of Chair of the Board
- Review Directors' terms
- Undertake a Skills Audit among Board members and utilise findings in Board recruitment and training opportunities


The LLEP was incorporated in April 2019 as a company limited by guarantee. Its Board is a business-led partnership of leaders from the private, public and education sectors.

The Board is supported by four advisory boards, which provide strategic guidance for our programmes of work set out in the Economic Growth Strategy 2021-30. Advisory Boards also provide oversight of the main Board.

As a LEP, we are committed to a policy of being open and transparent. Our Assurance Framework sets out how the LLEP is governed and was updated in line with the National Assurance Framework in September 2021.

All Board members and staff adhere to the Nolan principles of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

Both Board members and staff sign a Code of Conduct in addition to any register of interests.



We are committed to having a Board which embraces diversity and promotes equality. Our diversity champion, Rani Mahal, continues to share best practice and encourages diversity and inclusion across the LLEP work streams.

In addition, the recently refreshed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy includes three key objectives for the diversity champion:

- Actively promote and raise awareness of equality, diversity, and inclusion issues
- Identify areas in which the LLEP can improve equality, diversity, and inclusion outcome
- Ensure that all decisions take into account and value the community which the LLEP represents

Our SME representative, Jaspal Singh Minhas, continues to provide the SME business voice on the Board.

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2021/22

- Revised Terms of Reference across all boards
- Removed references to outdated legislation
- Led the development of a new Innovation Board
- Updated definition on co-opted Board members
- Published expenses policy and register
- Updated responsibilities of the Accountable Body
- Published scoring criteria for project appraisals
- Updated commitment to supporting Social Value Act
- Revised Local Assurance Framework to ensure compliance with v4 2021 National Assurance Framework
- Published a Monitoring and Evaluation plan





## LLEP Board changes

Our Board Members play a key role in helping us to shape the local economy. They do so by influencing local and national government, as well as providing effective governance to the partnership.

Board Members make key investment decisions and oversee our spending. They are responsible for ensuring that the partnership's investments deliver value for money and achieve maximum economic impact.

During the year, we saw two changes to our Board Membership:

- Councillor Nick Rushton was replaced by Councillor

Peter Bedford as  
the Board member for  
Leicestershire County Council

- The retirement of Professor Robert Allison as Vice-Chancellor of Loughborough University led members to vote for Professor Nishan Canagarajah, President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Leicester, as the Board's Higher Education Lead.

As a company limited by guarantee we continue to seek applications for LLEP membership.

# Strategy

## Priorities

- Implement the key interventions from the short-term Covid-19 Economic Recovery Action Plan, focused on the priority themes of:
  - Business
  - People, employment and skills
  - Innovation
  - Low Carbon
  - Infrastructure
- Launch the LLEP Economic Recovery Strategy
- Prioritise three pieces of research to support and inform our strategy:
  - A 12-month Business Tracker Survey to monitor and measure business sentiment over the year
  - A Natural Capital Evidence Review to assess current levels of data, identify gaps, and make recommendations as to how this can be used as part of policy-making
  - Sectoral Research into the impact of the economic shock across the LLEP area

## ECONOMIC GROWTH STRATEGY 2021-30

The LLEP Economic Growth Strategy (EGS) 2021-2030 was launched in December. It includes a framework of priorities to aid recovery from the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and create economic prosperity.

In preparing the strategy, the process of understanding local economic priorities involved us conducting an evidence review of existing local strategies and action plans.

In addition, we led a series of workshops, involving 120 participants representing various partners. Themes covered during these workshops included skills, enterprise, infrastructure and climate change.

Following this process, and subsequent public consultation, the EGS was created and published to a positive reception from local partners. It is underpinned by four key pillars:

- Productive
- Innovative
- Inclusive
- Sustainable

## SECTOR PROFILES

To articulate the strengths and challenges of the local economy, a decision was taken to develop a profile on each of 15 key sectors of interest within the LLEP region.

This process would help to inform and ensure the effectiveness of any potential interventions, strategies and plans moving forward. Furthermore, the profiles would provide a detailed insight into the key business issues emerging as a consequence of both Covid-19 and EU Transition.

They would also include input from sector representatives and feed into the development of priorities contained within the EGS. This ensured the EGS was reflective of local business sentiment.

As well as providing an understanding of the current position of each sector, the profiles highlighted future skills challenges. They were published in Autumn 2021 and can be found on the LLEP website.

## BUSINESS TRACKER SURVEY

The second and third fieldwork period of the Business Tracker Survey were conducted during this financial year.

Its focus is on business performance, export and import, environmental issues, and issues related to business support.

The survey was vital in informing development of the EGS and ensuring support is appropriately targeted via the Business Gateway Growth Hub. Its key findings were:

- More than a third of organisations had experienced difficulties with recruitment
- One in five need to develop new digital skills in the workforce
- Two in five had taken environmental action in six months prior to taking part in the survey. This was an upward trend since the first wave

- The EU remains the most important trading partner for both imports and exports
- More than a quarter expected to increase the amount of remote working as part of their long-term planning
- Almost 9 in 10 businesses felt confident about the future, while almost 2 in 3 were predicting growth in the next 12 months

## NATURAL CAPITAL STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT

A strategic assessment was conducted to understand how our natural capital assets could help us and our partners to achieve local economic and social development ambitions.

The assessment fulfilled four key aims:

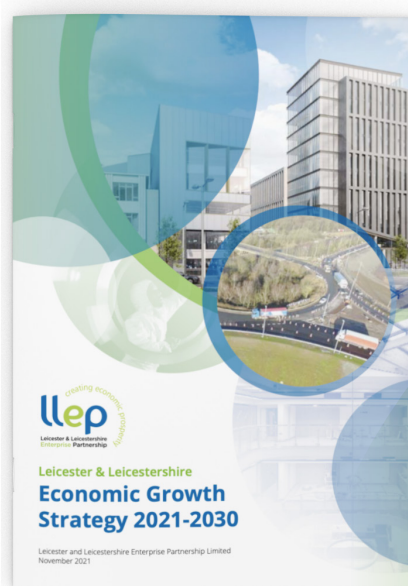
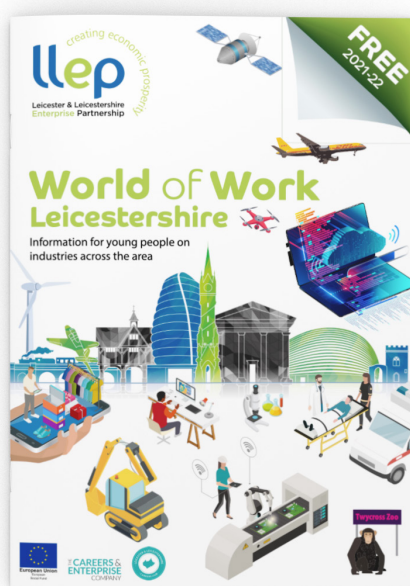
- It presented a review of the current evidence on natural capital and identified any gaps in knowledge
- It presented a high-level review of the national and local policy and institutional frameworks that are likely to drive investment into natural capital
- It included a SWOT analysis of the policy review, informed by a stakeholder workshop
- It suggested an appropriate work plan to deliver a Natural Capital Investment Plan for Leicester and Leicestershire

## BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

The LLEP produced several documents to inform partners of the local picture. These included the Business and Economic Intelligence Report, which was introduced in 2020 to track the ever-changing economic picture. It can be considered a living document, in that it is updated and circulated monthly.

Other reports included:

- Monthly Labour Market Profiles, at LLEP and district level
- Annual Economic Profiles, bringing together data from a variety of sources to help provide a snapshot of the local economy in LLEP, local and district authority areas





# Investment

## Priorities

- Identify the right type of investment to deliver maximum impact and value for money
- Find innovative solutions to drive economic growth and programme delivery
- Execute delivery plans that meet the expectations of funders and local needs
- Deliver the relevant impacts, outcomes and outputs

## Getting Building Fund

The Government made £900 million available through the new Getting Building Fund (GBF) in 2020. This was for investment in local, shovel-ready infrastructure projects to stimulate jobs and support economic recovery across the country.

We were allocated £20m from the GBF for a wide-ranging package of projects that will deliver a boost to the local economy. Four projects were chosen based on their impact on the region's economic growth - both in the short and long-term - and their strategic fit with current economic priorities.

### ST MARGARET'S GATEWAY £10.5 MILLION ALLOCATED

Work on the new carbon neutral bus station was completed in summer 2022. It is believed to be the first bus station in the UK to be built to net zero carbon standards.

Its design includes LED lighting, mechanical ventilation with heat recovery, air source heat pumps and 750 square metres of solar panels. These will generate enough energy to power the station and feed extra energy back into the grid.

There will also be increased capacity for national and regional bus services, with the number of bus bays increasing from 18 to 24. Electric bus charging points will be installed, and the new building will feature secure storage for up to 150 bicycles.

Other project outputs:

- 17 jobs created (including 12 in construction)
- 8 apprenticeships created
- 1,475 metres of cycle lanes created
- 900 metres of pedestrian facilities improved





### **M1 JUNCTION 23 AND A512 IMPROVEMENTS** **£1.8 MILLION ALLOCATED**

This project upgraded 2.5km of single carriageway to dual carriageway and remodelled five junctions on the A512. It also constructed a new access roundabout and resulted in improvements to Junction 23 of the M1.

By reducing congestion and improving accessibility, the scheme will improve resilience on a key route linking Loughborough with the M1 and the wider Strategic Road Network.

The project supports further development of the Loughborough and Leicester Science and Innovation Enterprise Zone, Loughborough University Science and Enterprise Park (LUSEP) and Charnwood Campus. This will bring job and business opportunities to the area. The project will improve access to LUSEP in particular.

The work, which was completed in May 2021, will also facilitate planned growth in the Loughborough area. It will bring forward development of the West of Loughborough Sustainable Urban Extension (WOLSUE) and the smaller Shepshed housing sites.

### **SPORTPARK PAVILION 4** **£6 MILLION ALLOCATED**

This project supports the ambition to complete the SportPark development by constructing Pavilion 4 - a 2,000 square metre extension included in the original building design.

The previous three pavilions have provided 6,000 square metres

of accommodation and have been a great success, achieving very high levels of occupancy, excellent collaboration and interaction. They have supported the creation of 600 jobs.

SportPark provides the office headquarters for many of the country's top sports governing bodies and national sports organisations, confirming Leicestershire's leading place in the sports economy.

Other project outputs:

- 165 jobs created
- 125 construction jobs created
- 10 businesses assisted

### **GRANBY STREET/ST GEORGE STREET REGENERATION GATEWAY** **£1.7 MILLION ALLOCATED**

This project facilitates sustainable travel into and across Leicester city centre by creating and improving pedestrian/cycle facilities and public realm. It will create four construction jobs and three apprenticeships

The project will create a gateway to the city centre that will support strong links between the railway station and Leicester's two bus stations.

It also enhanced important links to the Cultural Quarter, improving access to work, leisure and tourist destinations across the city centre. Around 2,600 square metres of public realm will be improved, as well as 390 metres of footway.



# Investment

## Local Growth Fund

With all Local Growth Fund (LGF) allocation successfully distributed in 2020/21, our focus in 2021/22 was to obtain and report on the deliverable outputs and outcomes achieved by each project.

Of the 20 LGF projects, eight have reported on all deliverables, six of which reported all figures in 2021/22. These are detailed here.

A further five projects are expected to provide all output and outcome figures by the end of financial year 2022/23. The remaining projects continuing to report on outputs, such as new housing and job creation figures, up until 2026.

Key outputs and outcomes of the six LGF projects completed in 2021/22 are:

### **MARKET HARBOROUGH LINE SPEED IMPROVEMENT**

**£13 MILLION ALLOCATED**

Improved journey times for non-stop passenger and freight train services through realignment of rail infrastructure, at up to 85mph line speed,. Also station improvement works, with new footbridge constructed.

### **NORTH CITY CENTRE ACCESS INVESTMENT PROGRAMME**

**£8.96 MILLION ALLOCATED**

More than 6km of new or resurfaced roads, cycleways and footways completed. Improved links to Charter Street, with a new bridge constructed.

### **A50/A6-LEICESTER NORTH-WEST MAJOR TRANSPORT INVESTMENT CORRIDOR**

**£16.2 MILLION ALLOCATED**

More than 12km of new or resurfaced roads, cycleways and footways. A total of 57 pedestrian crossing facilities created.

### **SUPERFAST LEICESTERSHIRE**

**£3.1 MILLION ALLOCATED**

Superfast broadband coverage extended to eligible SMEs. Total of 5,528 supported. Increased broadband coverage in Leicester from 91.9% to 98.91%.

### **LOCAL SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT FUND (LSTF) HINCKLEY**

**£3.64 MILLION ALLOCATED**

More than 26km on new cycleways, plus 20 pedestrian counts.

### **RIVER SOAR FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT**

**£7.5 MILLION ALLOCATED**

Savings arising from reduced flood damage have been estimated at £54.9 million. A total of 1,852 homes have been safeguarded.

## Growing Places Fund

Progress continues to be made on the Repurposed Growing Places Fund (GPF) funding of £1.6m. This was allocated in 2020/21 to aid economic recovery following the Pandemic.

The decision will result in more than £1.6m of funding to support:

- An Employment and Skills Fund to address digital poverty and enhance NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) support
- Business Grants for SMEs
- Place marketing and tourism promotion
- SME (Kickstart) extension
- MIT REAP seed corn funding delivery
- Low Carbon delivery

All the scheme projects became operational during 2021-22.







## Business Rates pooling

### Priorities 2021/22

- This unique fund retains and combines the business rates growth funding from all nine local authorities
- It is administered by the LLEP to invest in economic development priorities, driving productivity and growth across Leicester and Leicestershire
- £24.4m of funding was approved to support projects going into 2021/22
- A series of projects were completed in 2021/22

### BLABY DIGITAL TOURISM AND HERITAGE TRAIL £50,000 ALLOCATED

This project created a digital tourism and heritage trail, in partnership with Blaby District Tourism Partnership.

The trail will link diverse attractions including Everards Meadows, Fosse Park, Huncote BMX Track, High Cross monument, the Ice House on Bouskell Park, Bakers Arms, Kirby Muxloe Castle, Glenfield Tunnel and Stoney Cove.

### CONNECTED LEICESTER £37,000 ALLOCATED

Funding enabled the extension of the wayfinding system which has improved pedestrian and cycle links between the city centre and outlying attractions that are within walking or cycling distance.

Its aim is to increase the number of visitors to these sites by foot or bicycle - simultaneously reducing traffic congestion.

### RURAL / MARKET TOWNS BUSINESS SUPPORT PROGRAMME

**£750,000 ALLOCATED**

Led by Leicestershire Rural Partnership, this was a small-scale grant programme for businesses in Rural Leicestershire and Market Towns. These included farmers, tourism businesses, creative businesses and retailers.

### ST MARY'S NEW STATION, MARKET HARBOROUGH £50,000 ALLOCATED

This project is to undertake a feasibility study for redevelopment of the Market Harborough railway station and adjacent developments. It envisages the area as a mixed-use quarter to retain and attract investment, both economic and social.

### CONNECTED MARKET £337,500 ALLOCATED

The emphasis of this project was on improving Leicester's retail offer by creating enhanced links between important areas of retailing in the city centre.

There was particular consideration of areas where a significant proportion of the businesses are small independent units. This will increase footfall around these businesses and improve links to larger retail areas nearby.

# Business Gateway Growth Hub

## Priorities

- Provide a 'wraparound service' of business support, selected from a wide range of local and national support and funding, for existing and start-up businesses
- Develop and enable entrepreneurial, resilient and high growth businesses to thrive and grow
- Delivery of a series of specialist 1-to-1 business support, interactive workshops and webinars
- Maximise stakeholder engagement to deliver best practice business and mentoring support across a range of business sectors

The Business Gateway Growth Hub supported more than 1,500 small businesses - with a combined turnover in excess of £2 billion - during 2021/22.

It also helped hundreds more people in Leicester and Leicestershire as they started out on their own during the period.

The Growth Hub is ERDF-funded to provide practical help to local businesses. It offers 1-to-1, tailored support and guidance for businesses seeking advice, information and funding.

The Growth Hub is an integral part of the Economic Growth Strategy, operating various programmes helping local businesses innovate, increase productivity and become more sustainable.

Services provided included:

- Core information for online and offline business support
- Localised intensive advice for SMEs
- Access to finance through a dedicated grant scheme
- Business-related events, strategic, technical and specialised workshops

Enhanced assistance, including an Investor Readiness programme and property support.

## BUSINESSES REACHED

The Growth Hub's annual report to Government demonstrated its positive impact on local enterprise as the region emerged from Lockdown:

- 522 businesses - with a combined turnover of £1.15 billion and employing 4,148 people - received medium density support
- 1,013 businesses - with a combined turnover of £1.12 billion and employing 11,412 people - received high density support
- 344 individuals were helped to start a business through a range of grants and programmes
- A further 1,144 businesses received 'light touch' support after making contact with Growth Hub advisers.

## PARTNERSHIP WORKING

The Growth Hub worked on numerous partnership projects during 2021/22.

One programme, created with De Montfort University, offered workshops and 1-1 support in basic business skills for individuals looking to set a sustainable business up in the community. It provided access to prototyping machinery and academic support, and led to 16 potential businesses.

Other partnership projects included:

- The launch of The Fashion Technology Academy in Leicester to help train people in the skills needed for the fashion and textiles industry
- Progressing the LLEP Innovation Board and Steering Group to devise interventions for businesses to promote innovation and productivity
- Encouraging businesses with international trading by working closely with colleagues at the DIT to promote export and trader support
- Working with British Business Bank (BBB) in promoting the £250m Midlands Engine Investment Fund (MEIF). This resulted in 487 enquiries and 165 applications to January 2022, leading to 71 investments in 42 companies totalling £15.35m



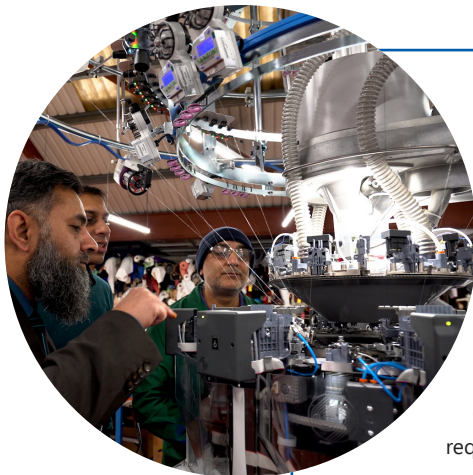
### ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS GRANT SUPPORT

The Growth Hub also worked with District Councils on an innovative programme linking Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) offers to a support programme for businesses which had been trading for less than 36 months. It aimed to support 150 businesses and delivered 172.

### BUSINESS SATISFACTION

Data submitted to the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), contains information which enables Government to assess progress and identify best practice and local innovation.

It describes how more than 90% of a sample of 67 businesses which participated in a Growth Hub Customer Satisfaction Survey said they would not only use the service again, but would recommend it to other businesses too.



## Case study

Shahtex Leicester is a leading manufacturer of knitted jersey fabric, using circular knitting machines.

With a grant from the Business Gateway, the company has invested in new computerised machinery that enables it to develop seamless clothing, requiring minimal stitching works.

These new machines mean Shatex Leicester can enter a new and growing market, believed to be unique in the UK.

This will be a game-changer for the business, in the context of well-documented issues faced by the fashion and textile sector in Leicester, and provide a competitive edge.

The investment will improve efficiency, take advantage of commercial opportunities available and create new jobs such as machine operators.





# Innovation

## Priorities

- Establish an Innovation Board
- Research innovation support provision
- Stage Innovation Festival 2022
- Launch a dedicated innovation page on the Business Gateway website

An innovation strategy has been developed as part of the ongoing implementation of MIT REAP recommendations.

The Innovation Steering Group developed a 'Beacons and Bootstraps' approach to encouraging a culture of innovation and engagement with business support.

The strategy aims to grow the Leicestershire economy by between 5% and 10% over the next five years.

Findings from research undertaken for the Innovation Strategy fed directly into the Covid Recovery Cell and, ultimately, informed the Innovation pillar of the Economic Growth Strategy.

REAP was that there should be measurable outputs associated with the work that is being driven as part of the Innovation pillar. For example, this should consider what success looks like.

A dashboard has been developed to track the annual performance of the region's innovation ecosystem. This will support development, implementation and monitoring actions and match to priorities of the Economic Growth Strategy.

The dashboard has a simplified and robust range of metrics which cover the five key innovation themes identified in the MIT REAP study.

Metrics also align with the key actions that the Innovation Board is looking to influence.

## REACHING ALL BUSINESSES

The 'Must Win Battle' report considered the original objective of how to engage with 'hard to reach' businesses and encourage them to innovate.

The report was agreed in the original MIT REAP Framework and has now been concluded.

## INNOVATION BOARD

Activities are being developed by the Innovation Board, chaired by Dr Nik Kotecha OBE DL, to drive the agenda forward.

It is doing so by building collaborations, growth and opportunities to safeguard the future prosperity and productivity of the region's businesses.

## DASHBOARD

One of the key outputs of MIT







## INNOVATION FESTIVAL 2022

The fourth Innovation Festival launched in February with a packed event at Space Park in Leicester.

An extended fortnight-long schedule of events commenced with an event on the theme of innovation and sustainability.

The festival was the most successful to date, with 25 events attracting 967 registrations and 726 attendees.

The festival featured the fourth annual LeicestershireLive Innovation Awards. Nemaaura was named Innovator of the Year and has been invited to join the Innovation Board.

Plans are now underway for the Innovation Festival 2023

## STRATEGISING INNOVATION

The Innovation Board strategy day was held at Mira Technology Park in March.

It was attended by more than 30 delegates, including Innovation Board members and a range of businesses.

This was a key milestone in the delivery phase of the innovation strategy and a range of ideas were generated.

These will be distilled into five or six strategic options for consideration by the Innovation Board. Implementation will then be the responsibility of the LLEP Innovation Steering Group.

## INNOVATION MANAGER

The contract for Loughborough University to provide a dedicated Innovation Manager, funded by repurposed GPF, ended in August.

Innovation is a significant piece of strategic work for the LLEP and is led by its Economic Strategy Manager.



**Innovative  
Leicestershire**

# Careers Hub and Enterprise Advisers

## Priorities

- All eligible schools and colleges to be part of the Enterprise Adviser Network
- Increase schools and colleges completing a Gatsby Benchmark audit from 94% to 100%
- Increase number of Enterprise Advisers from 65 to 85
- Grow membership of our Cornerstones employer group from six to 10

All eligible schools and colleges in the region are now part of the Enterprise Adviser Network and Careers Hub. This was up from 91% at the beginning of the year.

Our Enterprise Coordinators work with more than 80 Enterprise Advisors, supporting careers leaders in every school and college to make high-quality, 21st Century careers education a reality for everyone, everywhere.

## WE DISCOVER PROJECT

Our two-year We Discover project seeks to support young people with special education needs and disabilities (SEND) to transition into high-quality education, employment, or training.

It is an innovative and intensive programme of activities which seeks to ensure young people can make informed choices and will

have routes to job and skills progression when they transition to their next step.

## VIRTUAL INSIGHTS

Working with local employers including Cadent, Lendlease, Cavendish Nuclear and Leicester City FC, the Careers Hub created more than 200 virtual insight experiences for students in Leicester and Leicestershire.

These interactive live sessions involve employees ranging from senior managers to apprentices working in these companies. Young people had the chance to hear first-hand about career pathways and ask questions.

## BRIGHT GREEN FUTURES

As part of our low carbon work, we launched a Careers Hub climate action strategy entitled Bright Green Futures, which provides all young people with the chance to become agents of change, creative problem solvers and future leaders. It also saves schools money and reduced carbon footprints.

## CORNERSTONE EMPLOYERS

Our group of Cornerstone Employers continued to grow. It has been focused on supporting the Careers Hub on 'We Discover' and a digital skills awareness project linked to our Digital Skills Partnership.







## APPRENTICESHIPS AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROJECT

Working in partnership with all local FE colleges, the East Midlands Chamber of Commerce and the Government's Behavioural Insights Team, we launched an innovative project to support parents and carers of Year 10 students to explore and better understand traineeships, T-levels, and apprenticeships.

This included providing parents with 'conversation starters' to help them better engage with their children on careers education while helping parents and carers to build their own knowledge.

The Careers Hub is one of the first in the country to develop a progressive careers curriculum for schools which is underpinned by a full resource library to help integrate careers into the curriculum and the classroom.



# Skills & Apprenticeships

## Priorities

- Oversee the skills actions in the Covid-19 Economic Recovery Action Plan Matrix, including repurposing funds to support Covid recovery
- Appoint a Digital Skills Coordinator, to create a Leicester and Leicestershire Digital Skills partnership and lead on area digital skills research
- Create an area wide Apprenticeship Strategy
- Support the development of the Local Skills Improvement Plan and develop an area wide Local Skills Strategy
- Continue to provide real-time labour market information

## SKILLS ADVISORY PANEL

The Skills Advisory Panel (SAP) brings together members of the business community, education and voluntary sector to better understand and address local skills challenges.

The SAP approved funding for three strands of work focussed on improving access to the workforce:

- Kickstart extension programme, to support young people stay longer in a work placement and increase the chances of full-time employment
- NEET reduction programme for young people aged 16-18
- Digital Poverty, seven projects have been funded to support access to devices, connectivity and skills.

Projects cover a wide portfolio of ideas including laptop recycling, creation of digital hubs in communities and digital buddies to provide one-to-one support.

## DIGITAL SKILLS PARTNERSHIP

A Digital Skills Partnership has been established by the LLEP and has engaged more than 70 partners across the county. Sub-groups were established to consider inclusion, support for employees and SMEs, and the workforce of the future.

## OTHER WORKING GROUPS

Our skills team also chair several working groups to drive forward actions to support and address skills challenges:

- The ESF Provider Forum
- Education-Business Links group
- Apprenticeship Provider Forum
- EMEG resources Task and Finish group

## APPRENTICESHIP STRATEGY

An Apprenticeship Strategy was produced and published in March 2022. It outlines actions to be taken to raise awareness of apprenticeships for both young people, adults and businesses.

The LLEP Careers Hub has subsequently secured funding to boost the local Apprenticeship Ambassador Network. This will enable more championing of apprenticeships in the classroom from area apprentices.

## LOCAL SKILLS IMPROVEMENT PLAN

We have also supported the development of an LSIP, which is being led by the East Midlands Chamber and is expected to form a key part of business-led skills decision-making in the future.

The initial pilot finished in March, with a national rollout expected later in 2022.

## LABOUR MARKET INTELLIGENCE

We continued to provide high-quality labour market information.







Examples included:

- Interactive economic dashboards were made available to partners online
- Area economic snapshot reports at district level were produced
- 24,000 World of Work Leicestershire guides were delivered to schools, colleges and partners
- World of Work guide for adults was updated in January 2022
- Two films with partners to promote jobs and opportunities at the growing East Midlands Enterprise Gateway, along with an updated World of Work film to promote the logistics sector

Our labour market resources were highlighted in recent University of Warwick Research as good practice.

A Local Skills strategy is due for completion in early 2022-23. This has been timed to include the findings of the LSIP and Government priorities for LEPs.





# Enterprise Zones

## Priorities

- MIRA Technology Park project commencement
- Charnwood Campus Medicinal and Synthetic Chemistry Research Centre completion
- Leicester Waterside place marketing proposal and project investment commencement
- Restocking the Business Base Project implementation and first cohort



## MIRA Technology Park Enterprise Zone

MIRA Technology Park welcomed Viritech and AIMMO to site. Viritech is developing one of the world's first hydrogen hyper-cars. It is the start point for a cleantech revolution based on zero emissions hydrogen powertrain development. The technology will extend into HGV solutions and marine, aerospace and power generation.

AIMMO offers one of the fastest and most accurate AI modelling and automated data labelling technologies. It is used extensively in the autonomous driving sector.

Evans Randall Investors signed a joint venture agreement with HORIBA MIRA to become the exclusive developer for MIRA Technology Park. They will oversee the next phase of development, which will deliver up to 4m sq ft of new space with a total GDV of up to £500m, encompassing R&D, office, and industrial facilities. This next phase will include

projects funded through LLEP Enterprise Zone Business Rates Reinvestment.

Octopus Hydrogen and Octopus Renewables announced plans to develop a green refuelling forecourt on site providing hydrogen and EV charging facilities. On-site generation will supply sufficient green hydrogen to support the equivalent of 60 cars' worth of fuel per day. High-power EV chargers will deliver up to 300kW and build upon the existing network of more than 70 charging points already onsite.







## Loughborough and Leicester Science and Innovation Enterprise Zone

### LUSEP

Loughborough University, in partnership with Charnwood Borough Council, launched a business start-up accelerator programme. It will help local people work on unique, early-stage products or services.

The two-year Restocking the Business Base programme is delivered by LUinc. (Loughborough University's incubator) and part-funded by £314,000 from a Covid-19 Recovery Fund created using Enterprise Zone Business Rates. It supported 24 pre- and emerging start-ups in its first year, with recruitment of further cohorts underway.

### CHARNWOOD CAMPUS

Charnwood Campus was awarded £3.14m, facilitated through an agreement with Charnwood Borough Council, to part-fund the refurbishment of a substantial three-storey, state-of-the-art laboratory facility for tenant Charnwood Molecular.

Awarded from the Enterprise Zone Business Rates Reinvestment

Fund, it supported the company's expansion on to the site, creating around 300 jobs.

### LEICESTER WATERSIDE

Development of a new place marketing proposal for the Pioneer Park area commenced in summer 2021. Part-funded by the LLEP, it will create a distinctive destination to attract business investment and job creation by raising the profile of the site. Work will be completed and launched in 2022/23.

Several companies and organisations have announced they will locate to Space Park Leicester, including Earthsense, which develops services to provide air quality monitoring on the back of cutting-edge research, and Rolls-Royce, which moved a team onto the site to push forward its work on nuclear power for space travel.

The Government-backed Satellite Applications Catapult expanded into the site, further demonstrating its commitment to supporting and accelerating the growth of the space industry in the UK.

# Zero Carbon

## Priorities

- Agree and implement an overarching Zero Carbon Action Plan
- Provide training to understand how zero carbon impacts across our work programmes and provide place leadership
- Establish Zero Carbon Focus Group, comprising businesses engaged in the sector who will champion the agenda and influence the design of a business support package
- Work with partners to scope and develop a pipeline of potential low carbon investment projects

Government legislation is to reduce carbon emissions by 78% by 2035 and reach Net Zero by 2050. Therefore, we aim to support local businesses as they reduce energy usage and transition to a greener, healthier, and more sustainable economy.

## ZERO CARBON BUSINESS SUPPORT

We used £20,000 re-purposed GPF in June 2021 to commission a low carbon digital platform pilot from Zellar.

This provided 100 free licences to support businesses in reducing their carbon usage, help them switch to greener energy sources, and become greener and more sustainable.

The project is expected to run for approximately 12 months. By March 2022, 93 businesses had signed up, with 43 having already calculated their current carbon emission usage and begun to take action. Of them, 10 have appointed a sustainability officer.

The LLEP Business Gateway Growth Hub team also undertook Low Carbon Literacy Training to strengthen their knowledge in providing informative business support.

## ZERO CARBON TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS

Our area has seen a huge boom in the logistics sector in recent years. Although this brings economic opportunities, it is also a potentially high-carbon sector.

Together with Midlands Connect and the Midlands Net Zero Hub, we supported or commissioned several studies in 2021/22. Our aim was to better understand the needs, gaps and potential of a decarbonised logistics sector and the infrastructure needed to achieve it.

## COP-26

We were invited to present live as the UK hosted the international COP-26 event in Glasgow in November 2021.

This was part of the Midlands Green Regional Roadshow event, demonstrating the work we are doing in the Midlands to reduce our carbon emissions.

Our presentation included a film on the new zero carbon St Margaret's Gateway project in Leicester, which was part-funded by the LLEP through GPF.





# East Midlands Freeport

## Priorities

- Support the development of the Freeport business case for submission to Government in Autumn 2021.

The East Midlands Freeport (EMF) was announced as a successful freeport bid by the UK Government in March 2021.

As the UK's only inland Freeport, it will drive economic regeneration across the East Midlands, focused on creating thousands of jobs, boosting skills and accelerating the region's commitment to decarbonisation and Net Zero through low carbon energy investments.

## PROGRESS TO DATE

Progress on the Freeport during 2021/22 has mainly been around establishing the legal foundations. A confidential outline business case was submitted to the government by the Freeport in September 2021 with formal approval secured in March 2022. A Full Business Case (FBC) was due for submission in early 2022/23.

## PARTNERSHIP WORKING

The LLEP has continued to engage in local conversations as members of working groups around skills and communications, allowing the LLEP to feed into the development of the submitted business case.

Engagement has enabled the LLEP to speak to partners about how the area can meet the forecast demands, for example skills requirements to support advanced manufacturing, logistics and green technologies.

## NET ZERO

Our work considering the decarbonisation of the logistics sector, referred to in our net zero section, is one example of how the LLEP is preparing for the next stage of Freeport development which will see the site become operational.

The demand for LLEP activity around the Freeport is expected to increase during 2022/23 and beyond as the legal and procedure stages are completed and the port becomes active and open for businesses.



# Accounts

LLEP Operating Budget		2021/22 (£000s)
<b>INCOME</b>		
Grants		575
Contributions		265
National and Local Programme Income		1,348
Fees, interest and other income		256
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>2,444</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Staffing		826
Running costs		307
Accountable body costs		145
Programme Delivery		1,474
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>2,752</b>
<b>NET SURPLUS / DEFICIT</b>		<b>(308)</b>



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