

EVIDENCE & COMMENT FROM ENTERPRISE M3 LEP FOR HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY (SKILLS)

Looking to the future , Enterprise M3 would like to highlight five interrelated opportunities and challenges for enhancing skills in the LEP area (not in any particular order) :

- The impact of AI on certain jobs and areas of employment
- The need to upskill and reskill existing work forces
- The need for technical / associated professional skills
- The skills requirements / opportunities for an ageing but economically active , experienced and productive workforce and population
- The imperative to prepare young people and the next generation of the workforce with good information and guidance about the changing nature of the labour market and employment landscape. This should include a particular emphasis on the increasing demand for higher skilled people who are “tech savvy” , and comfortable and confident in digital skills.

An important goal for education and training providers of each of these five is to ensure opportunities are inclusive and open to all groups of workers of both genders and at all skills levels , especially those at risk of exclusion such as people with disabilities and special educational needs and ethnic minorities.

Enterprise M3 LEP would also like to emphasise the importance of developing a robust evidence base to inform a thorough understanding of the local labour market and demand for skills. These should also be founded on a comprehensive insight into employers’ needs and a gathering of reliable business intelligence. Achieving this will be one of the main aims of the Skills Advisory Panels which LEPs are convening as part of the Government’s Industrial Strategy.

The impact of other factors on the Hampshire economy and skills supply are also pertinent, including impact of cost of housing (particularly in relation to incomes) ; infrastructure: transport and broadband connectivity .

There is a long term national issue about the funding of FE colleges, which in turn raises issues about the quality of FE provision. Although the policy decisions on this are beyond the scope of the County and the LEP, it may be worth considering how FE colleges can be best supported by local organisations and businesses to maximise their efficiency and performance.

More information and evidence on all of these points can be accessed in two substantial pieces of evidence:

Deborah See’s report on Skills needs in B’stoke commissioned by Enterprise M3 LEP, Hants CC & B& D Boro’ Council – although focused on one locality , the messages are relevant countywide (attached)

The Enterprise M3 LEP new Strategic Economic Plan [link here](#)