



ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23



Annual General Meeting
Charnwood Campus
10 October 2023

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INTRODUCTION

Co-Chair Andy Reed OBE



Credit: Loughborough University

In my introduction to last year's Annual Report I observed that LEPs were operating in an uncertain environment.

The Government's Levelling Up White Paper had indicated our future role may change, with powers potentially being devolved to local authorities.

A few months later, Government had outlined our potential future role, asking all LEPs to set out how we intended to use each of our core functions.

Then, in the Spring Budget of March 2023, the Chancellor indicated withdrawal of central support for LEPs. Ministers confirmed five months later that central funding for LEPs would cease from April 2024.

This time last year, I wrote that the LLEP's day job would continue throughout the uncertainty; this Annual Report demonstrates how that was subsequently achieved.

It sets out a number of gains made under the four pillars of our Regional Economic Growth strategy: productivity, inclusion, sustainability, and innovation.

For wider context, it's perhaps worth looking slightly beyond the 2022-23 reporting period. In June 2023, for example, the LLEP took swift action to commence an orderly transition which will preserve the legacy of our work. Directors also promptly confirmed funding for the LLEP's core functions through to March 2024 and the Careers Hub to end of this academic year.

As ever, what has been achieved could not have happened without the support of our directors, officers, and stakeholders - past and present.

I thank them all for their contribution to delivering the mission of the LLEP - not just last year, but ever since 2011.

INTRODUCTION

CEO Phoebe Dawson



Commencing work at the LLEP in May, I had a recent full year of LLEP activity to review. So what does our Annual Report for 2022-23 show?

It shows firm progress in all four projects funded through our £20m from the Getting Building Fund. Three are fully operational, while SportPark 4 officially opens this autumn. Designed to deliver a post-Pandemic boost to the local economy, these projects are creating jobs, developing transport infrastructure, and unlocking further development opportunities.

It shows investment in developing new assets in our Enterprise Zones. It shows our Careers Hub continuing to grow as a flagship for the Careers and Enterprise Company, working with every school and college in the LLEP area to develop skills and employment. Dozens of local business leaders are now working with us to strengthen connections between education and industry.

It shows progress through our own Digital Skills Partnership, through seven local projects, each focussed on addressing a strand of the digital divide exposed by Lockdown: skills, connectivity, and devices.

It shows our Growth Hub making key interventions as the final full year of ERDF-funded services drew to a close, supporting businesses with grants and a series of programmes.

And it shows how winning £1.2m to lead the East Midlands Create Growth programme will get dozens of local businesses scaling - hopefully with many becoming active in the LLEP-led Innovative Leicestershire collaboration.

Launched in February, it is already pulling together the full scope of activity going on under our Innovation Board - not least our biggest Innovation Festival to date in February 2023.

GOVERNANCE

The LLEP is committed to being an open and transparent organisation. All Board members and officers adhere to the Nolan principles of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership. They sign a code of conduct.

Our local assurance framework is regularly reviewed and refreshed, and sets out how we make decisions. Detailed information about our process can be found on the LLEP website.

All LEPs are subject to an annual performance review (APR), which is conducted by the Communities and Local Growth Unit Area Team. Through the process, LEPs are monitored on Governance, Strategic Impact, and Delivery. Each receives a grading of either 'met' or 'concerns identified'. LLEP Governance received a 'met'.

We will continue to monitor the performance of projects within our Local Growth Fund and Getting Building Fund until 2025.

Our Board

Eighty percent of our Board members are from the private sector. Of these, 47% are female. This exceeds the Government expectation of 33% of all Board members being female. We are on track to meet the 50% requirement by 2023.

Board Members play a key role in helping the LLEP to shape the local economy. They influence local and national government, as well as providing effective governance to the partnership. All of our Directors act as ambassadors for Leicester and Leicestershire at local, national, and international level. The roles are unpaid and last for a minimum term of three years.

It has been three years since the LLEP incorporated into a company limited by guarantee. In line with our Articles of Association, seven directors were renewed in post by the members at our 2022 Annual General Meeting.

Understandably, some board directors took the opportunity to stand down. This included the Chair, Kevin Harris. Following an internal review, the Board took the decision to temporarily appoint two Co-Chairs, Andy Reed OBE and Anil Majithia.

New Directors

Following a public recruitment exercise during the summer of 2022, the LLEP members appointed three new directors:

- Dr Glynis Wright MBE
- Jo Tallack
- Gosia Khrais

Departing Directors

We would like to thank those who have stepped down from the Board over the last year for giving their time freely and supporting the LLEP:

- Kevin Harris
- Clare James
- Jaspal Minhas

Jo Tallack is Senior General Manager at Highcross Leicester



Dr Glynis Wright MBE is Director of GW Growth Consultancy

Gosia Khrais is the Commercial and Marketing Director of Charnwood Campus



GROWTH HUB



The Business Gateway Growth Hub is a 'one stop shop' for business support in Leicester and Leicestershire. It helps businesses navigate the support landscape, ensuring they find accurate information and signposting at the right time. Its programmes of activity increase productivity, encourage innovation and embrace sustainability.

The Growth Hub delivered on the LLEP's Economic Growth Strategy through:

- Leveraging additional funding and resources through collaborative working
- Increasing engagement and partnership working with strategic partners and private sector
- Emphasising delivery of provision to promote inclusivity, supporting business-owners with physical and digital accessibility and those with protected characteristics

ERDF programme

The Growth Hub was part ERDF-funded to provide:

- Core information service. A first point of contact for business support, which received more than 38,400 unique visitors to its website alone
- Access to finance. A dedicated grant scheme offering 35% funding for growth businesses and access to complementary schemes,
- Business-related events. These included strategic workshops and conferences;
- Enhanced business support. This included a dedicated Scale Up Programme, Investor Readiness Programme, and property support service.

Performance measures

The Growth Hub's Annual Report to Government demonstrated its positive impact locally:



- 248 businesses - with combined turnover of £2.11 billion and employing 2,390 people - received medium density support
- 930 businesses - with combined turnover of £1.06 billion and employing 11,795 people - received high density support
- 522 individuals were helped to start a business through grants and programmes
- 550 businesses referred to a mentoring, finance or funding programme
- 689 businesses received 'light touch' support following triaging by frontline advisers

Business satisfaction

Feedback from businesses receiving programme support was positive. In response to surveys and case studies, 90% of businesses said they would use the Growth Hub again, while 28% and 16% said advice provided was extremely helpful or very helpful.

Events

The Growth Hub delivered business support



through 29 in-person workshops, 69 webinars, events and conferences.

Cost of Living Event

A conference at the Morningside Arena in April (above) covered cost-of-living and doing-business challenges. Energy audits, apprenticeship advice, and wellbeing at work strategies were some of the topics covered.

Hosted by LLEP Board Members Sonia Baigent and Glynis Wright MBE, 150 attendees gained practical tips and advice from more than a dozen presenters. Attendees were also able to meet representatives of 17 local organisations, offering free advice and support.

Digital Marketing Conference

Businesses learned about the latest digital marketing trends and updates at the Digital Marketing Conference in June 2023.

The event saw 200 delegates in attendance. Updates on search engines, use of ChatGPT, paid digital advertising, and content creation were amongst an array of topics covered by digital specialists.

Growth Hub Celebratory Event

This event in June 2023 (previous page) marked the end of the ERDF partnership project. More than 100 attendees learned how future support will be

channelled through the Growth Hub as it continues to provide guidance and signposting.

Presentations detailed the impact of the partnership, setting out how 4,000 businesses accessed support over the last four years, with 212 jobs created, and more than £2m in grants secured for businesses. £3.6m in private-sector funding was leveraged.

Keynote by Tajinder Banwait described the journey of her fragrance brand, Urban Apothecary London, from startup in Leicester to international markets.

Partnerships

The Growth Hub sought to improve service, through intelligence from business advisers, to create programmes related to issues faced by businesses. Our Manufacturing Growth and Ambition to Grow programmes were procured following challenges faced by the manufacturing sector during Covid-19 and energy crises.

The Growth Hub was successful in winning the joint Made Smarter programme submission with the East Midlands Cluster. Delivery of the programme brings an additional £3m investment across three LEP areas to support manufacturing companies. The Growth Hub further enjoyed success in leading regional partners in a bid for the Create Growth Programme; awarded more than £1.2m to scale up high-potential creative businesses, increase jobs, and boost the economy.

The Growth Hub was the first to collaborate with Microsoft to devise and pilot the LEAP initiative and then went on to pilot the MS Small Business Services, a suite of free toolkits made available by Microsoft to support business productivity.

It was also the first to partner with Santander Navigator to offer an exclusive package of products supporting international trade to businesses on a complimentary basis. More than 150 businesses were referred to an international trade support programme.

Strong and inclusive partnerships continue to be cultivated with the private sector, including with Barclays Eagle Labs and Natwest Bank. In particular, joint events with British Business Bank and Natwest, on unlocking Leicestershire's diverse entrepreneurial ecosystem, are highlighting diversity and inclusion challenges in access to investment and finance.

CAREERS HUB

Our Careers Hub supports Careers Leaders in all secondary schools and colleges as they develop career programmes.

These programmes align with the Gatsby Benchmarks, which serve as the gold standard for high-quality careers education for every young person.

- Our Enterprise Coordinators work closely with 91 Careers Leaders and 85 Enterprise Advisers, who are volunteers from local businesses. This strengthens connections between education and industry
- More than 75% of our institutions now meet the Gatsby Benchmark denoting institutions that have a career education programme understood by students, parents, teachers, and employers
- Fifteen institutions are now participating in our intensive careers transformation programme. This involves collaborating with stakeholders including parents, carers, young people, businesses, education professionals, and career experts to develop comprehensive career plans
- We launched a progressive Careers Curriculum for every school to use. This comprehensive program covers topics such as well-being, work-life balance, volunteering and opportunities within the Green Economy

Local Skills Improvement Plan

Elsewhere, our collaboration with the East Midlands Chamber on the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) has been recognised nationally. We actively consult with Careers Leaders, the Youth Advisory Board (YAB), and Parents' forums on the Collective Intelligence Skills Observatory (CISO). This provides resources and support for institutions to incorporate LSIP information into their curriculum planning.

Youth Advisory Board

The YAB (above) serves as the platform for



engagement, information sharing, and influencing the networks of the LLEP. Members represent the interests of their respective institutions to amplify the importance of work experience for young people and a focus on opportunities in Green Skills to raise the profile key sectors and skills demands in the region .

Cornerstone Employers

Chaired by Cadent Gas, our Cornerstone Employers group actively participates in our research projects, helping us focus on removing barriers for young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) as they enter the workplace or their next phase of education. This includes apprenticeships and T-Levels.

Unbox Your Future

This year we piloted Unbox Your Future (UBYF). This is a flexible workplace experience programme providing 176 students with more meaningful and extended opportunities, as compared with traditional work placements. UBYF connected groups of students with employers, engaged them



Credit: Loughborough College

in real projects, and provided workplace visits. The pilot will now scale up to include more schools and young people.

We Discover

We Discover supports the most disadvantaged young people across Leicester and Leicestershire. The Careers Hub has a suite of projects to achieve this:

- We Discover Transitions. We are working with nine SEND schools to support young people to successfully transition to their next destination. This enables them to meaningfully employ their time after education
- We Discover Careers Conversations. Supporting families with low social capital to access local growth sectors of digital, logistics, and green means they can support their young people to make informed decisions about their future career opportunities
- We Discover Apprenticeships. Providing more

access for young people to current apprentices and developing hands-on opportunities to experience technical and vocational routes

- We Discover EAL (English as an Additional Language). Celebrating the multilingualism of our young people, and demonstrating the transferable skills and abilities they inherently have, supports them to use their skills to achieve their aspirations.

Elsewhere, our Careers Hub Education-Business Links Steering Group, SEND, and Local College Communities of Practise, Enterprise Adviser Network forums, Careers Leaders development days and Cornerstones group continue to deliver impact for our young people.

The strength in our convening power means we can evidence what works to ensure we help every young person take their best next step.

SKILLS

Our area Skills Advisory Panel (SAP) concluded in March 2023, having worked closely on the Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) which each LEP area will have from Summer 2023.

Leicestershire has been a Government trailblazer for LSIPs, with the SAP working to support new LSIP arrangements to meet the Government's ambition of a local skills system led by Employer Representative Bodies (ERBs).

The SAP will work to convene influential local partners to support the implementation of the LSIP and inform local providers and businesses of labour market needs. SAP successes include:

- Local Skills Reports, improving understanding and resolution of local skills mismatches
- Covid recovery skills action plans activity, including Digital Skills Partnership work, Kickstart extension scheme and area redundancy support
- Being strategic lead for area European Social Fund skills support, with circa 35,000 people supported up to mid-2022.

Skills Support for Employers: Building the Workforce of the Future

The LLEP created a snapshot guide, with local case studies, bringing together typical business skills challenges. It showed how offers such as apprenticeships, T-levels, work experience, and work placements can bring business benefits as well as addressing skills issues.

The guide supports wider aims to make skills offers clearer and more accessible to local SME employers, in order to encourage wider skills offer take up.

The guide was created in partnership with local universities, colleges, DWP, Business Gateway Growth Hub, Careers Hub, and other partners.

The LLEP also supported several partner events in



2022-23, with updates and insights on Building the Workforce and skills activity.

Apprenticeships

To support and drive forward apprenticeships we released our area Apprenticeship Strategy and Action Plan. Activity in 2022-23 included:

- Inspiring Apprenticeships, supported skills for life with an event, with around 60 attendees, showing apprenticeships are for all ages
- Coordinating an area-focused apprenticeship provider forum
- Creating an online area provider matrix of provision
- Work with the Careers Hub to encourage local young people and adults to become Apprentice Ambassadors.

Encouraging entrepreneurship

The LLEP worked with Leicester Startups in January 2023 to create a summary snapshot for young people and adults to consider starting a business.

This has been embedded onto the LLEP web pages for young people and adults, with more activity to follow to support entrepreneurship.

World of Work Leicester and Leicestershire

This skills resource was created to better link local people to local businesses and is used by partners that support adults into work (below).

It brings together easy-use information and data about the LLEP area, also signposting to agencies which can help adults to upskill. The guide includes information on:

- Key sectors, skills in demand
- Overview of Enterprise Zones
- What employers want
- Working for SMEs
- Area job vacancy information

A total of 5,000 copies were issued across the LLEP area in February 2023, including to key partners such as DWP, Work and Skills Leicestershire, Leicester Adult Education, and Leicestershire Adult Learning, along with wider groups that help adults into work.

A second version of World of Work Leicester and Leicestershire is also available for young people; 27,000 copies are issued across schools and colleges each year to support awareness of careers and opportunities in the LLEP area.

Microsoft and employability

The LLEP piloted a range of employability resources available locally through Microsoft's Get On initiative. More than 900 local people have accessed the links since they went live in Summer 2022.

Reports

Several useful skills reports and action plans were released during 2022-23. These supported wider partnership work, including:

- LLEP Skills Action Plan
- The Future Workforce of Leicestershire
- Leicester and Leicestershire Economy

Partnerships

Across the LLEP area, many partners work to support area skills initiatives. Partnership work is key to promoting skills opportunities to both employers, and young people and adults.

The LLEP works closely with local authorities, DWP, businesses, universities, schools, colleges, training providers, and the voluntary community.

The LLEP skills team coordinates several working groups to support skills including Education-Business Links, LLEP ESF Provider Forum, LLEP Digital Skills Partnership, LLEP Building the Workforce group, and LLEP Apprenticeship Provider Forum.



GETTING BUILDING FUND

In June 2020 the LLEP received £20m from the Government's Getting Building Fund (GBF). This was allocated to four 'shovel ready' projects - each aimed at stimulating jobs and supporting local economic recovery.

The 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 the LLEPs economic priorities.

Despite some minor delays, as of December 2022 all four projects had successfully claimed all funding. Monitoring of the projects will continue until 2025.



Credit: Loughborough University

SportPark Pavilion 4

This project represented a key step in further expansion of Loughborough University Science and Enterprise Park (LUSEP). It supported the ambition to complete the SportPark development by constructing Pavilion 4, a 2,000m² extension which was included in the original building design.

Pavilion 4 now provides sufficient space to enable the growth of the successful sports cluster at LUSEP. It confirms Leicestershire's leading place in the sports economy.

The project was completed and handed over in February 2023, with Passivhaus certification received in April 2023.

Financial

Grant allocation	Grant claimed to date
6m	6m

Project Outputs

	Forecast output	Actual output
Jobs created	165	Figure expected March 2025
Construction jobs	125	410
Businesses assisted	10	Figure expected March 2025
Commercial Floorspace	2000 sqm	2100 sqm



Credit: Leicester City Council

Granby Street / St Georges Street Regeneration Gateway

This project facilitated sustainable travel into and across Leicester city centre. It involved improvement of pedestrian/cycle facilities and the public realm.

Pedestrianisation of part of Granby Street enabled the creation of a high-quality gateway into the city centre from Leicester railway station.

Improvements and priority works to St George Street now link together a major mixed-use city centre regeneration site to the railway station and wider city centre.

A gateway to the city centre has been created that will enable strong links between the railway station and Leicester's two bus stations, while enhancing important links to the Cultural Quarter.

As a result, it has improved access to work, leisure and tourist destinations across the city centre.

Financial

Grant allocation	Grant claimed to date
1.7m	1.7m

Project Outputs

	Forecast output	Actual output
Construction jobs	4	1
Apprenticeships	3	1
Public realm or green space improved or created	2,600 sqm	2,600 sqm
Length of footway improved	390 metres	390 metres



M1 Junction 23 & A512 Improvements

The project consisted of successfully upgrading 2.5km of single carriageway to dual carriageway; remodelling of five junctions of the A512, including construction of a new access roundabout; and improvements to Junction 23 of the M1.

By reducing congestion and improving accessibility the scheme has improved resilience on the key route linking Loughborough with the M1 and the wider Strategic Road Network.

In a wider context, the project supported the development of the Loughborough and Leicester Science and Innovation Enterprise Zone sites, LUSEP and Charnwood Campus, bringing job and business opportunities to the area, with specific access improvements to LUSEP subsequently aiding delivery at the science park and benefitting the wider economy.

Financial

Grant allocation	Grant claimed to date
1.8m	1.8m

Project Outputs

	Forecast output	Actual output
Total length of newly built roads	2.5km	2.5km
Jobs created	Nothing due until 2025	
Housing units unlocked	2,600 sqm	2,600 sqm



Credit: Leicester City Council

St Margaret's Gateway

The UK's first Net Zero carbon neutral bus station completed in Leicester in summer 2022.

Bus passengers now benefit from a completely redesigned and improved internal layout. The bus station has better seating, a new café, modern toilets (complete with a Changing Places accessible facility), and real time digital passenger information.

The new station also includes LED lighting, mechanical ventilation with heat recovery, air source heat pumps, and 750 square metres of solar panels, which powers the bus station and feeds extra energy back into the grid.

Connectivity to Leicester railway station has been improved and there is increased capacity for national and regional bus services, with the number of bus bays increasing from 18 to 24. Electric bus charging points have been installed, and the new building now features secure storage for up to 150 bicycles.

Improvements have also been made to footpaths and roads immediately surrounding the bus station, with better facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, and better and safer crossings to soften the impact of the ring road.

Financial

Grant allocation	Grant claimed to date
10.5m	10.5m

Project Outputs

	Forecast output	Actual output
Jobs created	5	5
Construction Jobs	12	12
Apprenticeships	8	TBC
Cycle lane created	1,475 metres	700 metres
Pedestrian facilities improved	900 metres	900 metres

BUSINESS RATES POOLING

The Business Rates Pool is a unique fund, which 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.

During 2022-23, the following projects were completed:

Cattle Market Phase 2 - £80,000

Funding for a feasibility study relating to the former Melton livestock market being turned into an open-air food and events hub. The venue will provide food, drink and a rural economy hub. New facilities and services will attract visitors, skills, and innovation to catalyse the growth of small food and drink sector businesses, establishing Melton Mowbray as a rural capital of food and drink.

Leicester Museums & Galleries Development Programme - £2.5m

Following the discovery of King Richard III, there has been an increase in the number of tourists to the city. This project will create a new visitor attraction at the Jewry Wall site to add to the heritage/cultural offer in the city, creating a network of high-quality attractions telling the rich story of the City's history. This will enhance the impact of Leicester's tourism offer, attracting more people to visit and explore the city.

Phoenix 2020 - £400,000

Leicester City Council submitted a bid, on behalf of Leicester Arts CIC, to support redevelopment of the Phoenix, a centre for film and digital arts. Phoenix 2020 is a major scheme to safeguard and double its economic and cultural contribution and attract more investment in the city. The project has expanded and created new cinema screens, and a roof bar and terrace which is the largest public roof bar/garden in the area.



Credit: Leicester City Council

Connecting Neighbourhoods- £500,000

This project aims to improve walking and cycling connectivity in Leicester city, accessibility and wayfinding to key local centres, and employment and education in the north west of the city. The proposal aims to encourage a modal shift to active travel leading to better air quality, and health and wellbeing improvements.

Braunstone Gate - £600,000

This project improved Braunstone Gate by reallocating road space to footways and cycleways, and restricting outbound traffic movements to buses, taxis and cycles (above). It promotes sustainable transport, significantly improves the urban realm, and helps local bars and restaurants create a café culture in this important local centre.

GROWING PLACES FUND

To counteract the impact of the Pandemic on the Leicester and Leicestershire economy, the LLEP Board repurposed £1.6m of the Growing Places Fund to a range of projects.

Digital Skills Partnership

We are working in partnership with De Montfort University and Dr Ismini Vasieiliou, Associate Professor in Information Systems (right). The DSP aims to foster partnerships across the public and private sector, to boost skills to enable us to a world-leading, inclusive digital economy.

Through the partnership, we aim to ensure there is a cohesive digital skills offer across the LLEP area, ranging from basic skills to high level technical qualifications.

The DSP will foster partnerships with the private sector and look for integration opportunities with the proposed new local Cyber Cluster.

Digital Poverty

The pandemic highlighted the digital divide and the high number of individuals with an inability to access or utilise digital technologies effectively.

A grant of £300,000 was awarded to seven community organisations to address the challenges faced by people when trying to access online services, such as applying for a job, making an appointment, doing homework or keeping in touch with family and friends. This may be due to a lack of devices, connectivity, or basic skills.

3 Digital Cs (WEA)

Employment prospects for disadvantaged adults will be improved through community-based education workshops and tailored 1-1 support. This will develop digital confidence, creativity and competence among low-income workers to support career progression. Volunteer 'digital buddies' will be available for 1-1 help and operate



at various locations in the city and county.

Successes:

- 4 groups completed Sept 2022; 3 groups completed Jan 2023; 3 groups currently in process May 2023)
- 1 digital buddy recruited
- 84 attendees on courses to date

Highfields Digital Hub (Highfields Community Association)

Establishing a Digital Hub at Highfields Centre (opposite) provides free digital access and training to a large and diverse population in Highfields and Greater Highfields. The project will address digital poverty issues affecting young people, adults, older people, those on low incomes and the unemployed.

Successes:

- Number of learners receiving 120 learning hours: 180
- Number of learners receiving IAG: 180



Essential Digital Skills (Acorn Training Ltd)

Essential Digital Skills support was provided to a minimum of 75 individuals across North West Leicestershire and Charnwood by employing a dedicated team and access to technology to break down critical barriers to engagement and participation. The project established two new digital hubs, in Coalville and Loughborough.

Breward's Hub – Student Assisted Technology Coaching (Homefield College)

Homefield College students provide the elderly, jobseekers, and disadvantaged people within the Mountsorrel area access to the internet, devices and technological support on a weekly basis.

This project will be based at the college's coffee shop, Breward's, an enterprise run by students who are autistic and / or have learning and communication disabilities.

It helps break down technological barriers in the local community. Students acting as technology coaches will develop their social, communication and employability skills in the process.

Reaching people - Refurb, Reuse, Include project

Reaching People brings together frontline voluntary and community organisations in

Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. The grant was used to establish a Leicester-based community business that promotes better use of pre-owned IT equipment.

The Refurb, Reuse, Include project acquired and formatted obsolete IT equipment from local businesses, before gifting it to local charitable groups for use by people who would otherwise be digitally excluded.

To date, the project has received more than 40 IT items from businesses for refurbishing for digitally excluded people.

GPF also funded the Zellar project and East Midlands Airport decarbonisation study. See Page 21 for more details.

Christ Church Community Hub (Christ Church PCC)

The Christ Church Community Hub, in Thurnby Lodge, provides free-to-use community access wi-fi. This includes a weekly session where anyone can use either tablets or laptops to access the free wi-fi and receive regular instruction.

Support will be available for the most vulnerable, either through age related issues or through low incomes, to have access to the Internet as council services and benefits go online.

Other projects

KickStart Enhancement

Employer skills surveys cite 'having relevant work experience' as being critical to recruitment.

Following the Government's national Kickstart scheme to fund job placements for young people aged 16-24 years who are claiming Universal Credit benefits for a six-month period, the LLEP Board agreed to fund a further 6-month extension to the local programme.

To date, more than 125 businesses have supported 157 young people into paid employment.

NEET Prevention

The pandemic had a disproportionate impact on young people, who have not only experienced disrupted education but are far more likely to have worked in a sector negatively impacted by the crisis such as retail, hospitality, and customer service.

During the course of the programme, 21 young people engaged in a series of sessions based upon their individual skills and interests. These included developing their employability skills through motivational training or gaining qualifications such as Level 2 in Customer Services.

Decarbonisation

The Growing Places Fund also supported the Zellar project and East Midlands Airport decarbonisation study. See Page 23 for more details.

CREATE GROWTH



The LLEP led a consortium of regional partners bidding for a share of the Government's Create Growth Programme.

It was one of six successful regional bids from outside of London, each of which was awarded more than £1.2m to scale up high-potential creative businesses, increase jobs, and boost the local economy.

The bid was submitted by the LLEP in September as part of a collaboration with De Montfort University Leicester (DMU), University of Lincoln, and University of Derby.

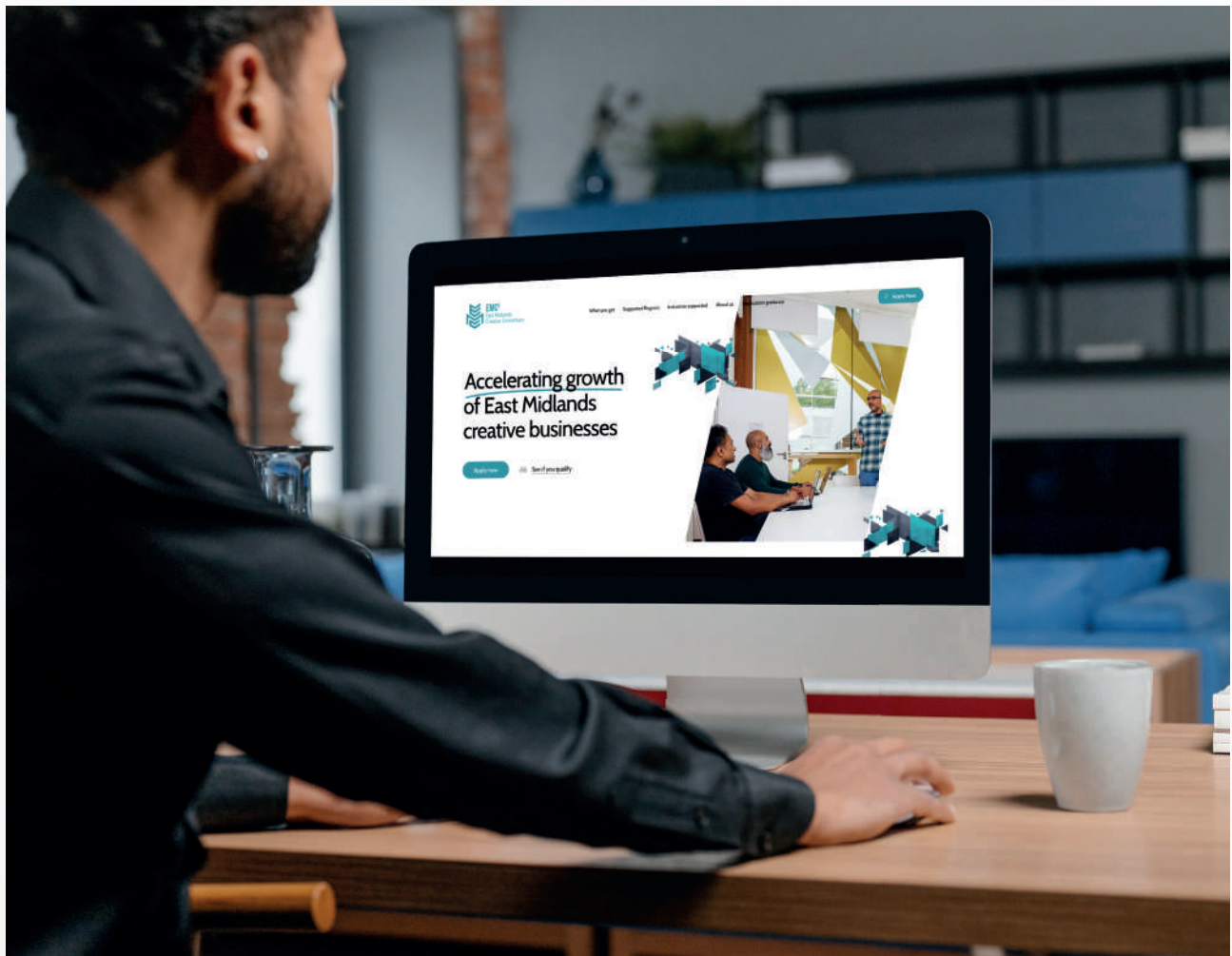
The programme will run across Leicester and Leicestershire, Derby and Derbyshire, Rutland, and

Lincoln and Lincolnshire until March 2025.

The project is supported by a coalition of partners including regional universities, Innovate UK, local businesses, and non-profit organisations.

Following the initial launch more than 79 businesses expressed an interest in the programme. The target is to support:

- 100 businesses enrolled on the talent programme
- 100 businesses with scale-up business plans
- 45 investment partnerships
- 10 accelerated knowledge transfers



ENTERPRISE ZONES

MIRA Technology Park Enterprise Zone

MIRA Technology Park (MTP) is a world-leading research and development park which is home to international businesses at the cutting edge of new mobility technologies.

Investment in a new £6.25m gateway infrastructure project was announced in June. The LLEP provided funding to MTP, in partnership with Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council (HBBC), towards a new security interchange and welcome centre, road infrastructure, and associated utilities.

The project will immediately unlock development sites for new buildings, create jobs, and act as a catalyst for opening up the next major phases of land earmarked for future development.

Further investment was announced into a £5m green infrastructure project that will support tech companies as they focus on developing low carbon technologies.

The new Low Carbon Innovation Hub will result in the £2.5m refurbishment by HORIBA MIRA of an existing technology building fronting on to the A5. This is supported by a £2.5m investment from the LLEP and HBBC in the installation of significant electrical vehicle (EV) and hydrogen infrastructure. This will aid safe testing and handling of EV and related systems.

Loughborough and Leicester Science and Innovation Enterprise Zone

LUSEP

One of the UK's largest combined university and science parks, LUSEP features clusters of knowledge-based, high growth businesses across several sectors. These include energy and low carbon technologies, advanced engineering, and sports technology.

The Restocking the Business Base project took on its third cohort. The project extends the services of LUinc. (the Loughborough University incubator) to



Credit: HORIBA MIRA



Credit: Loughborough University

business founders from outside the university. It is part of a partnership with the LLEP and Charnwood Borough Council (CBC).

The project aims to develop a new generation of local businesses which are 'fit for the future' in their agility, focus on emerging markets, and commitment to scale-up, and growth. LUinc. provides a six-month programme aiming to increase productivity and job creation by incubating innovative new businesses. The first two cohorts helped launch 12 new businesses, supported 304 individuals through events or 1-2-1s, and steered 24 businesses to enterprise or start-up support.

Charnwood Campus

Charnwood Campus is a business-led life sciences ecosystem in Loughborough. It provides world-class flexible laboratories, specialist manufacturing facilities and a comprehensive support package



Credit: Charnwood Campus

for life science and associated companies. The modern facilities create the ideal conditions for start-ups and established enterprises to grow their businesses. Charnwood Campus was the first Life Sciences Opportunity Zone (LSOZ) in the UK.

Charnwood NHS and Academia Collaboration Platform (NACP) is a new partnership launched with the University of Leicester.

It will work to identify and tackle barriers to innovation and growth within the scientific research space. This will enable closer collaboration between researchers, university-led programmes and innovators, and entrepreneurs. The platform will play an instrumental role in driving change and contribute to the UK's ambition to become a scientific superpower.

Leicester Waterside

Leicester Waterside is a gateway to the city and split across two sites: Waterside and Space City. Waterside is a key regeneration area, identified for high-value employment and Grade A office space, while Space City is an innovation-based community. It is a unique location for collaborative research and development.

Space City launched in early 2023 and is the UK's definitive cluster for space research, production, manufacture, and development. It supports any business in the knowledge economy looking for a world-class business location and is centred around Space Park Leicester.

Space Park Leicester has attracted new businesses, including companies challenging the climate crisis, as well as gaining funding to coordinate space activity and encourage collaboration and inward investment in the Midlands.

NET ZERO

The UK Government has legislated for the reduction in carbon emissions by 78% by 2035 and Net Zero by 2050. The LLEP is supporting our economy to meet those commitments at a local level.

Together with partners, our primary aim is to encourage and support, where possible, significant reductions in carbon emissions. This means moving to green energy supplies, as well as supporting our communities, as we transition to a more sustainable economy.

Zellar

In June 2021 the LLEP, in partnership with sustainable business Zellar, commissioned 100 free licences to give away to businesses, with the aim of encouraging them to switch to a green energy supplier and then begin reducing their energy usage.

To date, 97 businesses have signed up. Of these, 43 have calculated their current carbon emission usage (995 kg CO₂) and commenced actions to reduce it. Eighteen have completed the Behavioural Action Survey, reviewing their energy and consumption practices, and 10 have appointed a Sustainability Officer.

East Midlands Airport Feasibility Study

A £40,000 East Midlands Airport Feasibility Study



has now been commissioned, with City Science being awarded the contract. Both the Airport and the Freeport have agreed to fully support the study.

We have also teamed up with the University of Nottingham and EPRI, who are carrying out a similar study at the Airport of Ontario (California, USA). Both studies are expected to compliment each other, thereby widening our knowledgebase.

The work is expected to be completed in February 2024.

Other projects

The LLEP is a key stakeholder in a number of projects specifically aimed at having a better understanding of the circular economy.

Other areas of work we are involved with our partners, includes:

- East Midlands Hydrogen Network, with an event held in September 2023 and led by Cadent
- Thinking Outside the Can, with the University of Oxford and Leicestershire County Council, to gain a better understanding of our local agriculture and food production sector
- Re-designing Leicestershire Nutrient Flows, a 12-month project led by Oxford and Lancaster Universities in collaboration with Leicestershire County Council, looking at local waste management, water and air quality, food supply and soil management
- Green Living Leicestershire and Net Zero: Pioneer Places, projects supported by the LLEP, aiming to strengthen local partnerships in taking joint actions to tackle climate change.

The LLEP Board signed up to the Leicestershire Climate and Nature Pact, committing us to working together with our local partners to strengthen climate change actions which supports sustainable, resilient and inclusive growth, together with accelerating and taking decisive action to 2030.

INNOVATION



Leicestershire Innovation Festival 2023 attendances hit new highs as fresh records were set at the fifth annual event. Several events sold out this year - including the flagship LeicestershireLive Innovation Awards - during a festival themed around increasing productivity among small businesses.

LIF2023 launched at Loughborough University Stadium on 6 February, with more than 100 guests seeing Dr Nik Kotecha OBE DL, Innovation Board chair, unveil a new Innovative Leicestershire brand and website which will support the development of a regional innovation ecosystem.

Innovation Board

During the year, the Innovation Board launched its 10-point Delivery Plan.

The Delivery Plan sets out practical activity needed to embed innovation in all aspects of local businesses to improve productivity and create growth.

In doing so, it will contribute to a regional uptick in productivity needed to grow the local economy at 5% above the national average.

Innovation Priorities

Priorities within the delivery plan include the need to simplify communications with businesses to make innovation more accessible, streamlining business support programmes to avoid duplication, and an ambition across the Innovation Board to develop business exemplars and case studies that champion the positive impacts of innovation on SMEs.

Following sign-off of the Delivery Plan in January, a series of task and finish groups consisting of Innovation Board members and local innovation experts were established to support delivery of these priorities.

Innovation Dashboard

The year also saw the development of the Innovation Dashboard, a set of measures that will



Credit: Will Johnston

act as a point of reference for the Innovation Board to track year-on-year performance of the region's innovation ecosystem.

Its primary purpose is to support the development, implementation and monitoring of future actions in line with the priorities of the regional Economic Growth Strategy.

Measures including GVA growth, R&D spend, and inward investment growth will be monitored to ascertain the impact of interventions that the Innovation Board has implemented to boost productivity.

Innovation Festival

Audience registrations across LIF2023 increased by more than a quarter year-on-year to top 1,200 over the course of the festival fortnight.

This came after the LLEP-led festival organisers reduced the overall number of events to 20 - reduced from last year's 24, so that delegates could more easily get from one venue to the next.



Sixteen of the events were in-person at regional venues including HQ Recording, Charnwood Campus, MIRA Technology Park, and the Manufacturing Technology Centre (MTC). Event hosts included Innovate UK, Leicester Startups, British Business Bank, BeGreat Consulting, and Ruth Coalson Consulting.

Meanwhile, a pre-festival event at the new Barclays Eagle Lab at De Montfort University introduced the idea of Innovation Advocates, business influencers who can spread details of projects within their supply chains, peer groups, and SMEs.

The event capitalised on the notion that businesses see their accountants and lawyers as a 'trusted advisor' and as such would be more receptive to hearing from these 'advisors' regarding some of the innovation support available to them through the LLEP and partners.

Innovation Awards

The LLEP collaborated with media partner Reach PLC on the fifth LeicestershireLive Innovation Awards.

It was the biggest to date, with nominations up around 20% YoY and tickets sold out in advance of the event at the National Space Centre.

The Awards are the flagship event of the annual



Credit: Will Johnston

Innovation Festival. A keynote speech was delivered by the CEO of Innovate UK, Indro Mukerjee.

Earlier in the day, Mr Mukerjee attended an Innovation Board roundtable (top). He praised the work of the Board in raising the profile of innovation and the benefits it could bring to the local economy.

ACCOUNTS



LLEP Operating Budget 2022-23

Income	
Grants	440,000
Contributions	187,500
National and Local Programme Income	1,416,600
Fees, Interest and Other Income	1,751,700
Total income	3,795,800
Expenditure	
Staffing	554,900
Running costs	236,600
Accountable body costs	167,200
Programme delivery	1,317,700
Total expenditure	2,276,400
Net surplus / deficit	1,519,400



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