

Local Strategic Planning for Apprenticeships

For Local Enterprise Partnerships

Autumn 2018

*In January 2016, NIACE and the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion
merged to form Learning and Work Institute*

Learning and Work Institute

Patron: HRH The Princess Royal | Chief Executive: Stephen Evans
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Learning and Work Institute is a new independent policy and research organisation dedicated to lifelong learning, full employment and inclusion.

We research what works, develop new ways of thinking and implement new approaches. Working with partners, we transform people's experiences of learning and employment. What we do benefits individuals, families, communities and the wider economy.

We bring together over 90 years of combined history and heritage from the 'National Institute of Adult Continuing Education' and the 'Centre for Economic & Social Inclusion'.

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Background

Late in 2017/18, £5,000 was made available to all Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), to develop and deliver a programme of apprenticeship engagement and readiness activities to local employers.

In addition, ESFA have funded a parallel programme of support to LEPs offered by Learning and Work Institute (L&W). This programme of support builds on activities delivered by LEPs in 2016/17 and the L&W Good Practice Guide for LEPs. In consultation with LEPs a need for support was identified to assist their role to drive and strengthen local delivery of apprenticeships in order to ensure that it effectively meets the needs of the labour market and young people, supports inclusive growth, and aligns with wider local priorities.

In response, and with support from colleagues from Lancashire Enterprise Partnership, York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Enterprise Partnership, and Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership we have developed this document to provide clear, practical insights and guidance which can be used to support LEPs to develop and influence strategic approaches and plans for apprenticeships.

During the period of this programme of work, Department for Education has been developing the Skills Advisory Panel (SAP) programme for LEPs and Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs). This has been in trial with 5 LEPs and 2 MCAs and is expected to roll out across all LEPs and MCAs later this year and early into 2019. At the time of writing there is not much information publicly available on the content or expectations of the programme. Our intention is that the content of this document will support your strategic approach when specifically considering apprenticeships locally in the immediate term, and in the future, as you move into full implementation and delivery of the SAP programme.

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Introduction

Around 500,000 people start an apprenticeship each year, a significant rise over recent decades. Most recently the Government's target for three million apprenticeships by 2020 has been a major focus for policy. Alongside this has been one of the biggest policy reforms in recent memory, including the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy on the largest employers and changes to the development and funding of apprenticeships. These changes have been big and bold, and we have welcomed their principles and the renewed focus on apprenticeships.

We are now well over a year into the new system and the number of apprenticeship starts is around one third lower than last year. Debate rages over whether this represents teething troubles (employers have up to two years to spend their levy funds while they get to grips with the new system), a rise in quality (as the proportion of starts at level 3 and above rises, which some argue is where greater productivity improvements are found), or a fundamental problem (as employers can't get what they want and so are disengaging). In truth it is too early to tell.

Now the levy and wider reforms have been in place for a year, attention is also turning to next steps. Should the levy be expanded to cover more employers and more forms of training? What role should cities and local areas have in commissioning apprenticeship provision or working with employers to raise demand? How can we make sure we have world class apprenticeships accessible to all?

These are big questions. An apprenticeship revolution is underway and LEPs and MCAs in their roles to support the supply of skills to an area, are key players in this revolution. Most LEPs and MCAs will have strategies which have a focus on increasing skills in response to local economic needs however, given the changes to apprenticeships over the past 18 months its likely these need a refresh to ensure they remain current. We encourage LEPs and partners to consider the information contained in this document alongside existing or developing strategies for apprenticeships and/or skills more broadly.

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The developing role of LEPs

As detailed in the government's recent publication '[Strengthening Local Enterprise Partnerships](#)'¹, the roles of LEPs and MCAs are being strengthened to support the supply of skills to an area as they respond to the Skills Advisory Panels programme and feed into the development of Local Industrial Strategies agreed by government by 2020.

They will be expected to develop even stronger local labour markets and skills governance through Skills Advisory Panels (where possible, using existing infrastructure). These boards will convene local employers, learning providers and other partners, to achieve a better alignment of the local employment and skills offer. Although at time of writing the details of the Skills Advisory Panels 'programme' is limited, we anticipate a requirement for local quantitative mapping and analysis of local skills needs which will drive local investment decisions and inform national policy levers.

Although this document focusses predominately on apprenticeships, it is important that we acknowledge this is just one element of the local skills offer with a range of other skills solutions and policies being available.

With the wider skills agenda in mind, this document has been developed to support LEPs and MCAs to further develop and reflect upon their existing strategic approach at a local level and to identify opportunities to strengthen the engagement, access, delivery and outcomes specifically of apprenticeships, to meet local priorities.

¹ Strengthening Local Enterprise Partnerships, 24 July 2018, Gov.uk, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strengthened-local-enterprise-partnerships>

Strategic Apprenticeship Planning

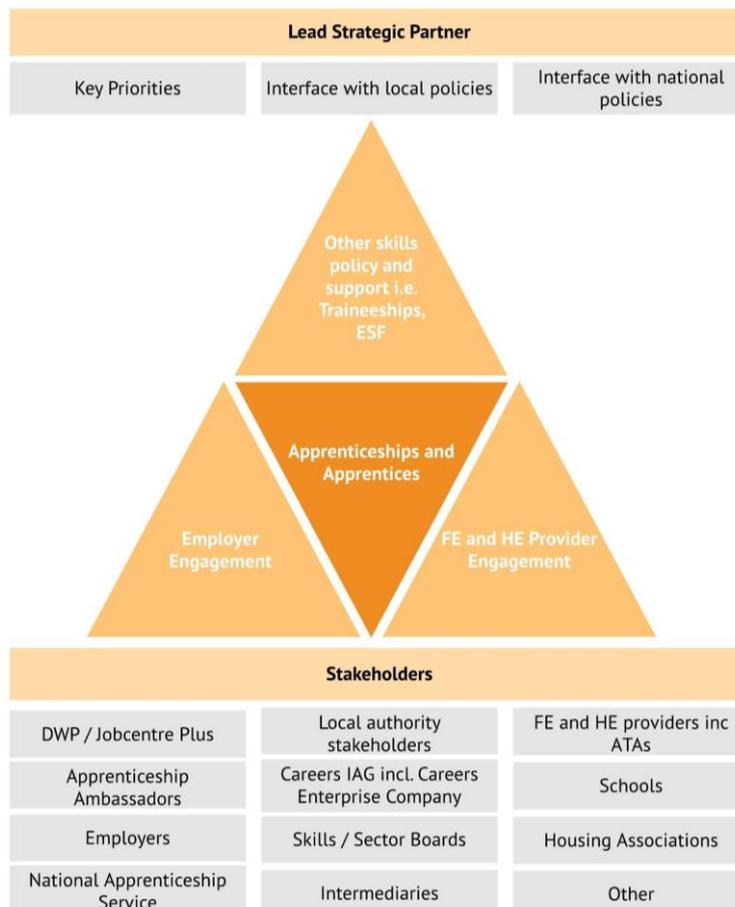
Creating a collaborative approach

LEPs and MCAs are well positioned to support the supply of skills to an area as they respond to the Skills Advisory Panels programme. They will be expected to develop even stronger local labour markets and skills governance through Skills Advisory Panels (where possible, using existing infrastructure). These boards will convene local employers, learning providers and other partners, to achieve a better alignment of the local employment and skills offer.

Government is positioning LEPs and MCAs with this strengthened role, it is clear that this will be one of strategic leadership and co-ordination of a range of partners and stakeholders to achieve the desired impact and outcomes.

Critical to the development of any local strategy for apprenticeships are the partners and stakeholders who will be delivering the programmes and outcomes. Within a locality there are a number of key strategic partners and influencers although not exhaustive Figure 1 below provides an overview of these relationships, where the LEP/MCA would be the Lead Strategic Partner.

Figure 1.



Achieving the vision and ambitions of your local strategy will need all parties to be an enthusiastic and driven part of the effort. All too easy to say; another thing entirely to make happen. They must know what they are doing, why they are doing it, and above all, must be fully committed to doing what they are doing.

If your approach to strategic planning enables every single partner to know what they are doing, and why, and to be committed to it, then the process of turning strategy into action is likely to be successful.

Actions for you to consider:

- What existing governance / infrastructure do you have in place which would support the development (and commit to) a strategic approach?
- Do you have the most critical stakeholders and partners on board and if not, how will you go about achieving this?
- Boards / panels are usually made up of representatives, what is your role in working with the wider skills partners and stakeholders and how will you get their buy-in?
 - Perhaps hosting local networking opportunities for wider stakeholder to get together and discuss issues
 - Could you ask wider skills partners and stakeholders to pledge their commitment and perhaps even take the opportunity to get some local PR activity?
 - Might you be able to insist in any procurement or grant opportunities that stakeholders commit to the local strategy?

Ambition and Vision

Your strategy or plan should be based on the ambitions you have as a LEP/MCA and collectively the vision and plans you have with your key partners and stakeholders to achieve your goals and outcomes. Setting out a clear ambition and vision will not only help you to communicate your messages but also to mobilise partners and stakeholders to align with this and use as a guide to implement their own plans and deliverables.

It's recommended that you use this section of your strategy or plan to set out why apprenticeships matter to you and your geographical area. There are a wide range of reasons why apprenticeships might matter to you, the following are common examples:

- Local employers reporting recruitment/skills gaps
- A need to respond to high levels of NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) and/or unemployment figures
- A solution to support growth sector areas, new business development and inward investment, and specific sectors with an ageing workforce.
- General need to up-skill and improve qualification levels in the area

In addition, it may be beneficial to think about how skills development will contribute to the wider economic context and key priorities set out in your LEP/MCA. For example, if your area has priorities surrounding transport and infrastructure or a housing crisis, will these require a skills response?

Data and intelligence

Understanding your local data and intelligence is key to informing your strategy and plans. Apprenticeship data is available via the localities data cube issued by ESFA. The purpose of the data cubes is to provide LEPs and MCAs with data from the Individualised Learner Record (ILR). Whilst this is an essential resource in understanding existing apprenticeship activity there is a wider data set to be considered when developing an apprenticeship strategy. In discussion with a number of LEPs we have identified the following minimum dataset which should provide a good initial baseline of intelligence to develop a strategy from:

Vacancy Data	Relevance	Data source	Caveats
Vol. of job vacancies by qtr. for last 2 years by sector <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Of which how many were for Apprenticeships? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Average number of applications per apprenticeship vacancy 	Understanding the volume of vacancies in your locality will help you to identify the sectors and the skill levels which are recruiting. Exploring how many of these were for apprenticeships and the applications per vacancy will help inform you about the candidate pool available.	ESFA	Publicly available vacancy statistics are available for regions only. LEP level vacancy statistics are confidential and only available from the ESFA via special request.
Vol. of job vacancies by qtr. for last 2 years by Skill level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Of which how many were for Apprenticeships? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Average number of applications per apprenticeship vacancy ▪ Of which how many were for traineeships? 	Information on traineeships will aid with better understanding progression routes, opportunities as well as some of the apprenticeship pipeline.		

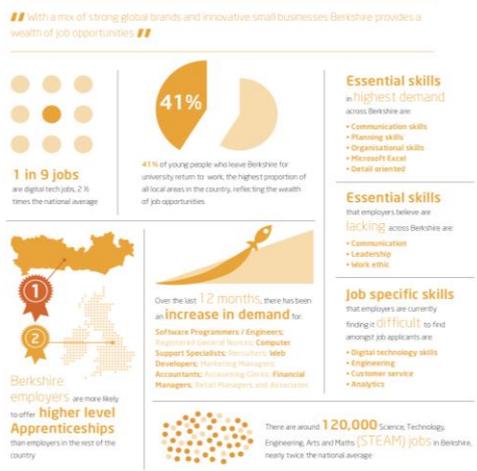
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Average number of applications per traineeship vacancy 			
Population / Census / Schools Data	Relevance	Data source	Caveats
<p>Vol of working age population by skill level</p> <p>Vol of school leavers (yr11) annually for next 5 years</p> <p>Vol of working age population due to retire in next 5-10years (60+ at present day)</p>	<p>It's crucial that you have a good understanding of the working population and particularly new entrants and those due to retire so that you can identify any potential issues and make plans to take appropriate action.</p>	<p>ESFA, student projections and destination statistics</p> <p>ONS, population projections</p>	
Employment Stats	Relevance	Data source	Caveats
<p>Local employment and unemployment (job seeking) volumes during last 2 years</p>	<p>This will provide good baseline intelligence and help you to understand the employment market</p>	<p>Annual Population Survey, ONS via NOMIS</p>	
Employers	Relevance	Data source	Caveats
<p>Volume of employers by size and sector during last 2 years</p> <p>Company Names by sector, employer size, levy payers.</p>	<p>Understanding your employer base will help to identify specific sectors of need as well as indicating the volume of levy paying organisations.</p> <p>Identify businesses that take on apprenticeships in the LEP area, including levy paying</p>	<p>Business Register and Employment Survey, ONS via NOMIS</p> <p>Blue Sheep Ltd</p>	<p>Some missing codes so not 100% coverage. Dataset is confidential.</p>

FE Supply / Provision	Relevance	Data source	Caveats
<p>businesses and cross tab with ESFA data cube variables.</p> <p>Vol of individual Apprenticeship standards and frameworks being delivered in the local area, grouped by Sector Subject Area during last 2 years</p> <p>Who are the providers are delivering these apprenticeships during last 12 months</p> <p>Which of these providers are not located in the local area?</p> <p>Vol. of traineeships delivered by quarter during last 2 years</p>	<p>This will provide you with an overview of activity to date – is it right to have more of the same or are there gaps within the offer and supply of apprenticeships?</p> <p>Information on traineeships will aid with better understanding progression routes, opportunities as well as some of the apprenticeship pipeline.</p>	<p>ESFA</p>	<p>In-year data: since providers report some of their data for this period later in the year, the data are subject to change (in either direction and so these figures are referred to as ‘reported so far’ or ‘reported to date’ to reflect this.</p>
Learner Characteristics	Relevance	Data source	Caveats
<p>Apprentice sector breakdown by age, gender</p>	<p>This will be particularly important for baselining if you have ambitions to change the demographics and characteristics of learners accessing apprenticeships.</p>	<p>ESFA</p>	

Learning and Work Institute has developed a simple data tool which can extract the key data and intelligence for a local area, if you would be interested in accessing data for your area please contact enquiries@learningandwork.org.uk with the reference: *Local dataset request*.

Data of this nature can be helpful to your partners and stakeholders, so you may wish to consider how this can be best presented. Below are a few examples of content and styles from LEPs which are in an easily digestible format for local partners to use:

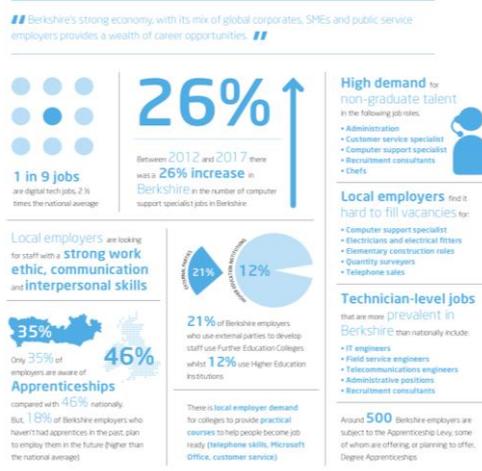
Job opportunities in the Berkshire economy



thamesvalleyberkshire.co.uk

Reference: Career Opportunities in Berkshire - Infographic for Career

Skill needs of the Berkshire economy



thamesvalleyberkshire.co.uk

Reference: Skills in Berkshire - Infographic for FE Colleges and ITPs

Skills policy and funding

Although the focus of this document is apprenticeships, it would be difficult to write a strategy without paying due attention to the wider skills policies and funding that is available. In the table below, we have set out key recent national skills and employment policy developments (including initiatives cited in the [Industrial Strategy White Paper](#)) and provide an indication of the relationship these have with apprenticeships.

National Policy	Summary	Relationship with apprenticeships
Post-16 Skills Plan	The government’s plan to support young people and adults to secure skilled employment and meet the needs of the economy.	Apprenticeships and T levels will be based on the same set of standards designed by employers and others but there will be differences in the overall content of each programme, to reflect that apprenticeships are mainly delivered in the workplace, and T levels will mainly be delivered in the classroom. The ongoing development and access to relevant higher and degree apprenticeships as progression routes for T-level students is worth influencing and mapping.
T-levels	Introduction of a common framework of 15 routes into technical employment across all technical education at levels 2 to 5, encompassing both college-based and employment-based learning.	
Local Area Reviews	Area reviews were reviews of the post-16 education and training sector which ran from 2015 to 2017.	Local changes or further planned changes to the FE provider base will impact on apprenticeship plans and delivery.
Devolution of adult skills funding	The government is seeking to transfer control of the Adult Education Budget (AEB) to local government areas through devolution agreements.	With devolved commissioning power, areas can look to target priority areas that could complement and reduce barriers into apprenticeships and also offer an alternative

		route-way where an apprenticeship is not the best solution.
Universal Credit	Universal Credit is a new benefit for working-age people, replacing six benefits (income support, income-based job seekers allowance, income-related employment and support allowance, housing benefit, child tax credit and working tax credit). It is designed to ensure that no-one is better off claiming benefits than working.	<p>Young people aged 18 to 21, are expected to take part in a Youth Obligation for the first six months after making a claim for Universal Credit.</p> <p>After six months, individuals are expected to apply for an apprenticeship or traineeship, gain work-based skills or go on mandatory work placement.</p>
Access to Work	The Access to Work scheme is run by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and gives grants to help disabled people start working or stay in work.	Apprentices fall within the scope of Access to Work payments and assistance.
National Careers Strategy	Key recent national skills and employment policy developments plus Statutory guidance for schools on providing careers guidance	Ensuring that NCS provider/local staff, CEC staff /local enterprise advisers and other careers intermediaries, e.g. ASK providers are conversant with the local strategy and priorities for apprenticeships is key. These stakeholders hold important qualitative and quantitative data.
Institute of Technology	Plans to introduce Institutes of Technology (IoTs) to provide technical education in STEM subjects at levels 3, 4 and 5	A future IoT in the locale would support the need for further mapping of the relevant entry and progression routes which should include apprenticeships.

	<p>them for their future careers by helping them to become 'work ready'.</p> <p>Designed to help young people aged 16 to 24 who don't yet have the appropriate skills or experience, traineeships provide the essential work preparation training, English, maths and work experience needed to secure an apprenticeship or employment.</p> <p>For further information on growing traineeship programmes and/or maximising progressions into apprenticeships and employment you can access our resources at:</p> <p>https://www.learningandwork.org.uk/our-work/work-and-careers/traineeships/</p>	
<p><u>Advanced Learner Loans</u></p>	<p>Advanced Learner Loans help people aged 19 and over undertake general and technical qualifications at levels 3, 4, 5 and 6. Loans provide a source of fees support for learners, enabling them to reap the personal and financial benefits of their study, which in turn will support the economy.</p>	<p>These loans are currently the only form of government support for individuals wishing to undertake qualifications which fall outside of national entitlements and/or apprenticeship delivery.</p> <p>Apprenticeships may not be suitable for all individuals, so these loans could be the only route for some to access the career development and progression they aspire to.</p>

European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF)	<p>The combination of RDF, ESF and part of EAFRD into a single 'EU Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) Growth Programme'. Notionally allocated to LEPs areas to meet the top priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ innovation and research and development ▪ support for small and medium-sized businesses ▪ low carbon ▪ skills ▪ employment and social inclusion 	<p>Progression into apprenticeships, sustainable work and the upskilling of individuals are frequent outcomes measures/targets of ESIF so it is worth reviewing which projects could contribute to the wider apprenticeship strategy.</p>
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Determining the capacity and resources to deliver

Each local area will have a unique set of apprenticeship support structures, provider and wider stakeholder mix which can be confusing and complex. Where there is a key organisation, network, group or even website resource with a relevant function in the local area, it is useful to describe this so that interested parties can make relevant enquiries. This could include:

- Growth or apprenticeship hubs
- Provider networks
- Ambassador networks
- ASK project partners

Working with and supporting the provider market

Recognising that getting full engagement and commitment from key partners, employers and stakeholders isn't always easy; finding the time to even read a strategy, let alone contribute and develop plans for action can be challenging. It may be worth considering how to simplify your strategy messages for your key audiences, if you grouped your audiences / stakeholders could there be a small number of key actions you would want them to commit to?

For example, for training provider, college and higher education leaders:

Work with us to:

- improve the supply of higher-level skills into the local economy
- develop and grow high quality employability and traineeship provision to support better access routes into apprenticeships
- provide training provision that helps employers to identify the business impacts/return on investment.

Business organisations and employers work with us to:

- Provide more work inspiration and work experience placements
- Use the 'find an apprenticeship' free vacancy service so that students and applicants have more visibility of the opportunities and in turn this should diversify recruitment to address skills gaps
- Consider transferring any unspent apprenticeship levy to local employers to keep funds in the region

We suggest designing a 'summary slide' of key strategy messages (with speaker notes) that any LEP or board member could include in employer-facing, relevant presentations or meetings.

Links with your local and regional network of Employer Apprentice Ambassadors should add real value as they are targeting local employers to engage or grow

apprenticeships, finding ways to strengthen and improve communication flow with this network can only be useful.

Local Apprenticeship Ambassador Chairs (as at July 2018)

LAAN AREA	LAAN Chair	Email Address
South East	Elizabeth Flegg	Elizabeth.flegg@westsussex.gov.uk
	John Druce	john.druce@arqiva.com
London	Neil Weller	N.Weller@tbanda.com
East Midlands	David Hughes	david.hughes@uniper.energy
East of England	Matt O'Conner	matt@johnoconner.co.uk
North East	George Ritchie MBE	George.ritchie@pxlimited.com
North West	Mark Donnelly	mark.donnelly@baesystems.com
South West	Nigel Fenn	nfenn@southwestwater.co.uk
West Midlands	Jenny Conlon	j.conlon@kmf.co.uk
Yorkshire and Humber	Frank Clayton	frank.clayton@ngbailey.co.uk

Engaging with the learner / apprentice market

Engaging with individuals will be critical to the success of your strategy. You will want to be clear about who is engaging with individuals and what the purpose and the content of this engagement in order to identify any gaps and actions needed to support. It may be helpful to carry out a simple mapping of the activity similar to the following example:

Stakeholder	Purpose of engagement	Action
Schools and parents	Pro-active: options for school leavers, informing parents with the voice of business/employment opportunities	Develop infographic which shows local labour market needs and opportunities and prospects for young people/job seekers.
National Careers Advice Service	Re-active: responding to contact for advice and guidance	Develop career information sheets for priority skills areas

Young Apprentice Ambassadors Network (YAAN)	Pro-active: to promote apprenticeships and inspire other young people by describing their direct experience.	Support YAAN with revised case-studies – Twice a year
Colleges and Training Organisations	Pro-active: Recruiting suitable candidates for Apprenticeship vacancies	Infographic as per above. Career information sheets for priority skills areas
JobCentre Plus	Pro-active: Recruiting suitable candidates for Apprenticeship vacancies	

Key Performance Indicators and measurements

We hear all too often that a strong and robust strategy has been developed but 6 months, 12 months later there hasn't been the progress that was intended. Success of your strategy may be judged according to a range of different factors – factors that vary from partner to partner and possibly across employers or sectors.

By using key performance indicators (KPIs), you may find it easier to translate your strategy into actions for implementation. A KPI is a measurable value that demonstrates how effectively you are achieving key objectives and deliverables as determined in your strategy. KPIs maybe specifically for your apprenticeship strategy or you might choose to link these to your industrial strategy or wider business plan.

What could you measure?

Your KPIs should be determined collectively with all partners as part of your collaborative approach, you might want to consider:

- Are there specific deliverables which you will want to measure progress against i.e. “Delivery of Local Apprenticeship Awards to Celebrate Success”?
- Do you have any tangible targets you want to measure against i.e. “to increase the number of SMEs accessing Apprenticeships”?

The following table provides some examples of KPIs which you may wish to adapt to meet your requirements:

KPI	Measurement Frequency	Measure	Target
<p>Achieve a diverse and representative apprenticeship population.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apprentice workforce to match the economically active population for BAME, gender, disability & socioeconomic background by 2020 	Annually – based on full academic year data.	<p>Compare ILR cube data with population data</p> <p>Show by % to 1 decimal point</p>	Apprentices to match the economically active population by 2020
<p>Supporting growth in the number of apprenticeship starts in <<insert priority sector>> to meet need</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apprenticeship volumes within the locality is representative of the sectoral needs of the local economy. 	Bi-annually (on release of data cube)	ILR data cube Business Register and Employment Survey	8% year on year
<p>Supporting growth in the number of apprenticeship starts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting apprenticeships to all individuals and employers as a high-quality learning programme, career development pathway and skills solution 	Bi-annually (on release of data cube)	ILR data cube	5% year on year

Think carefully about which indicators you choose to measure, often KPIs can result in ‘data overload’, so think about what you really need to measure and what demonstrates success rather than choosing to measure absolutely everything.

KPI monitoring should be an ongoing process, you will need to decide how often you will monitor your KPIs, how you will do this, who you will do this with and what will you do with the results?

Governance and monitoring

Your governance approach or system will be critical to supporting the development and delivery of your strategy or plan, it should provide strong direction, leadership and control. Your governance should offer transparency and consistency which will assist with the ongoing review and monitoring of the delivery of your aims and objectives.

There are a range of ways to judge whether your strategy or plan is being realised:

- you should be able to look for results and progress on the delivery of your targets and KPIs
- you might want to look for signs that stakeholders and partners are behind the strategy / plan and are driving this forward
- what is the data telling you, is there any change to the baseline data which you established when setting out your plan?

It will depend on your own organisation's governance structures as to how formal a process this is however, as a minimum we would recommend ensuring a quarterly review with your key partners and stakeholders.

When considering the representatives included as part of your formal governance it may be helpful to reflect upon your KPIs and key deliverables in the plan; do you have a relevant representative for each area? Making your strategy and plan happen will be the most challenging of all, having representation from a range of your key partners/stakeholders will ensure you have access to the widest range of skills, talent and experience to support your delivery.

Finally, use your governance and your monitoring processes to keep your plan live and realistic, FE policy, the sector and the economy can change at a pace and your plan will need to keep up with this and adapt to reality.