

Review of Highlands and Islands Regional Skills Investment Plan (2014-2018)



1. Introduction

The Highlands and Islands Skills Investment Plan¹ (SIP) was published at the Convention of Highlands and Islands (COHI) on 27th October 2014.

At that time, a commitment was made:

- To progress the actions identified under the five themes in the Highlands and Islands SIP
- To establish a Programme Board to oversee implementation of the Highlands and Islands SIP Action Plan
- For local authorities to lead on the development of local responses to the challenges identified in the Highlands and Islands SIP

This paper has been prepared to provide COHI members with an update of:

- The role of the Programme Board
- Progress against each of the actions identified in the original Highlands and Islands SIP
- Additional activity that has been delivered in support of the ambitions of the Plan over the last four years
- The development of local responses to the SIP
- Wider policy and strategic drivers influencing current and future SIP delivery
- Suggested next steps

1.1 The Role of the Programme Board

The Highlands and Islands SIP Programme Board was formed from the COHI Short Life Working group and developed the Highlands and Islands SIP Action Plan. The Programme Board is chaired by Norman MacDonald, Convenor of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and has met 10 times since November 2015 in venues across the Highlands and Islands.

The Programme Board meetings enable partner updates and discussion on regional/local skills issues, talent attraction initiatives and Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) activity. The Programme Board agenda has included presentations and discussion on: The Federation of Small Businesses (SME workforce research); HIE Inclusive Growth; SDS development of the Apprenticeship Family; Regional Talent Attraction Strategy; UHI Regional Outcome Agreement and Skills and Education in Highlands and Islands Post 2020 (COHI-related theme).

A Highlands and Islands SIP Evidence Advisory group was also set up through the Programme Board to provide greater co-ordination of regional and local research and analysis and has led on: validating and disseminating Regional Skills Assessments (RSA) and disaggregating RSAs for

¹ <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0046/00461469.pdf>

Highland and Argyll & Bute; Gaelic Related Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) research and supported Public Sector research to inform Islands Deal.

Three Progress Reports of the Highlands and Islands SIP have been prepared and presented to COHI since October 2015.

1.2 The Five Themes

The five themes of the Highlands and Islands SIP are:

- **Theme 1** – Our investment in skills must meet the needs of employers - Lead Partners: Skills Development Scotland (SDS), Scottish Funding Council (SFC), Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) and Further Education (FE) Regional Board
- **Theme 2** – Planning for the future (Lead Partners: SDS, SFC, local authorities, and UHI)
- **Theme 3** – A region for young people (Lead Partners: SDS, SFC, HIE, UHI, and FE Regional Board)
- **Theme 4** – People attraction and place attractiveness (Lead Partners: HIE and local authorities)
- **Theme 5** – Strengthening the employer voice in the skills system (Lead Partners: SDS, HIE, and UHI)

Since its launch, the Highlands and Islands SIP has achieved significant traction across the region from government agencies, local authorities, and Higher Education (HE) and Further Education (FE) partners, who have worked collaboratively to deliver the actions in all five key themes.

Lead partners were asked to identify their activity against each theme and this has been collated and progress is presented using the following appraisal method:

N/A - no longer an action	No progress - not complete	Some progress-development activity occurred, partially complete	Good progress – almost complete	Met aspiration or target – action complete	Exceeded aspiration or target – action complete
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This review of progress should set a firm basis for:

- Identifying what actions have been delivered by partners
- What actions need to be intensified
- Where there might be the need for new actions or activity to address issues that have emerged since the publication of the Highlands and Islands SIP (e.g. Brexit; City/Regional Growth Deals)

Progress of each theme is reviewed in turn.

2. Theme 1 – Our investment in skills must meet the needs of employers

Of the eight actions attached to this theme; four met the aspiration or target; three made good progress and one made some progress.

1.1 Increase the uptake of MAs in Highlands and Islands.	1.2 Establishing industry led skills provision.	1.3 Meet the immediate needs of employers in key sectors.	1.4 Regional Outcome Agreement to support Growth Sectors.	1.5 Develop innovative career pathways.	1.6 Develop skills provision for professional chefs.	1.7 Support skills and pathways in Forestry	1.8 Enable increased entrepreneurship in the region.
Met aspiration or target – action complete	Met aspiration or target – action complete	Met aspiration or target – action complete	Good progress – almost complete	Good progress – almost complete	Some progress-development activity occurred, partially complete	Met aspiration or target – action complete	Good progress – almost complete

Information, data and activity provided by partners for each target that was used to evidence progress is set out below.

1.1 Increase the uptake of MAs in Highlands and Islands with a target of 2,500 MAs.

Lead partner(s): SDS Supported by: UHI and Regional Colleges
Met aspiration or target – action complete

- From 2013/14 to 2017/18 there have been 12,354 Modern Apprenticeship starts delivered across the Highlands & Islands region. 2,758 MA starts were delivered in 2017-18 which is 10% above target set in the Highlands and Islands SIP.
- SDS and UHI have helped develop 12 Foundation Apprenticeships (FA) frameworks and 11 are currently on offer in Highlands and Islands: Accountancy; Business Skills; Civil Engineering; Engineering; Financial Services; Food and Drink Technology; IT Hardware; IT Software; Scientific Technologies; Social Services and Healthcare, and Social Services and Young People. 420 FA starts were awarded across the region in the 2018/20 contracting period. This is an increase from 94 starts achieved in 2016/18.
- Developed a Graduate Apprenticeship programme, at SCQF level 8-10 with nine frameworks available in: Engineering (design and manufacture); Engineering (instrumentation, measurement and control); Business Management; Business Management (financial services); Civil Engineering; Construction (built environment); IT Cyber Security; IT Software and IT Management for Business.

- Facilitating growth of the Apprenticeship Family through the UHI Work Based Learning (WBL) Hub. The WBL Hub facilitated delivery of 25% of the total national Foundation Apprenticeship in the initial trial and development phase. UHI have prepared a collaborative regional college bid for MA contracts to facilitate an increase in MA numbers, development of good practice and deliver economies of scale that support rural colleges and communities.

In addition to the above, partners also provided additional activity in support of **increasing MA uptake**:

- SDS also introduced a Rural Uplift payment to support training providers who deliver remote rural apprenticeship programmes.
- A national MA Equality Plan has been produced and is helping to drive innovation and partnership working in support of equality and diversity in the MA programme.
- UHI led a Graduate Apprenticeship pathfinder in Civil Engineering at SCQF Level 8.
- A recent MA promotion event at Inverness College UHI attracted over 50 employers and 500 potential apprentices giving an indication of the local and regional appetite for MA growth.

1.2 Establishing industry led skills provision across the Highlands and Islands.

Lead partner(s) SDS Supported by HIE, UHI and NHS

Met aspiration or target – action complete

- Two care-related FA frameworks are now available in the region. The region had the largest cohort awards in 2018/20 contracting of 144 combined places across the two frameworks.
- Digital Xtra, a digital project, was launched in May 2016 and distributes funds to organisations delivering extracurricular activities including Code Clubs. The Fund also supports expansion of Apps for Good and builds on STEM promoting concepts.
- Delivered 1,212 Transition Training Fund interventions to help upskill, retrain or gain accreditation for individuals facing redundancy who were working (or had worked) in the Oil and Gas sector to enable them to get a new job in Oil and Gas, the wider Energy sector or Engineering/Manufacturing. Funding covered a contribution or 100% of training costs up to a maximum of £4,000.
- A Recruitment Sustainability Steering Group (Care) was established and the Care Academy is being progressed by UHI, NHS Highland and others.

In addition to the above, partners also provided additional activity in support of **establishing industry led skills provision:**

- SDS and HIE are currently assessing demand for a new Graduate Apprenticeship (GA) in Food Science & Technology. This new GA has the potential to address a long-standing skills gap/shortage that the sector has faced, particularly in the roles of New Product Development and Quality Control. Businesses in the region are currently being canvassed regarding their interest in the new qualification and seeking their support in the development.
- As part of the Food & Drink SIP, HIE have led on an aquaculture skills study to support the Aquaculture 2030 strategy. This work is now complete and has been well received by industry. Partners and stakeholders are currently considering how best to take forward an Action Plan that will address the main recommendations.
- As part of the food and drink SIP, Food & Drink Federation Scotland are leading on a series of teacher and careers staff CPD visits to a variety of food and drink manufacturing sites, to provide a better understanding of the industry. The aim is to raise awareness of the food and drink sector and the diverse careers on offer. This will hopefully support and stimulate interest in the new Foundation Apprenticeship in Food & Drink Technology.
- Processed and approved 160 Low Carbon Skills Funds (LCSF) applications in the Highlands and Islands. LCSF was available to business with under 100 employees and offered the opportunity to apply for up to £12,500 worth of funding towards training costs in relation to upskilling in renewable energy, energy efficiency, waste management and reducing carbon in supply and energy management.
- Ensured delivery of HE course development in areas that support key sectors that engaged approximately 25,380 students during academic years 2014-17.
- Research and action plan to address gender imbalance in the Digital Technology sector.

1.3 Meet the immediate needs of employers in key sectors

Lead Partner(s): SDS Support by: Regional College/UHI and Training Providers

Met aspiration or target – action complete

- Developed a short course pathway in partnership with Scottish and Southern Energy and UHI with two cohorts of the Transmission Construction Programme (in 2016).
- Established a series of National Union of Journalist Media programmes in a number of Highland Schools. The programme developed teacher training in producing news articles, feature-writing techniques, script writing for radio, and editing news writing, which were cascaded to pupils.
- World Host customer training programme, a modern, interactive and energetic programme of training, providing the principles of great customer service was developed in Highlands, Argyll & Bute, Moray, Orkney, Shetland and Outer Hebrides.
- 2,500 additional Scottish Funding Council funded places 2012 -2016, linked to employer demand.

In addition to the above, partners also provided additional activity in support of **meeting the immediate needs of employers in key sectors:**

- Developed Local Skills Plans in Orkney, Shetland, Outer Hebrides, Moray and Caithness and Sutherland. This involved research and analysis that provided a comprehensive socio-economic profile of the area and identified key themes to ensure the current needs of employers were identified and addressed and there was a mechanism to identify future workforce skills and business development and innovative career pathways are in place and effectively promoted.
- Working to deliver Creative Media FA through partnership between West Highland College UHI and Lews Castle College UHI and discussion ongoing on apprenticeship development through the £500 million BBC Alba media hub in Stornoway, which will develop Gaelic programmes.
- Businesses in Highlands and Islands are engaging in The Apprenticeship in Hospitality Scotland Programme which helps to deliver an exceptional apprenticeship that meets the needs of the 5-star accommodation sector. In 2017, Rosie Wilkins, MA at the Torridon Hotel in Wester Ross, was awarded Scotland's Apprentice of the Year at the Apprenticeship Awards.
- Developed an online customer service knowledge base building on a local culture, heritage and environment programme in partnership with Outer Hebrides Tourism Partnership which was delivered to local businesses.

1.4 Use the Regional Outcome Agreement (ROA) to support Growth Sectors.

Lead Partner(s): SFC Supported by: UHI and FE regional board

Good progress – almost complete

- SFC supported FE provision through allocations totalling approximately £124,009,800 during academic years 2014-17²
- SFC supported HE provision and research with £98,157,059 for teaching and £8,608,000 for research and knowledge exchange during academic years 2014-17.
- UHI FTE student increase of 685, from 2,872 to 3,556.
- Increased Higher Education FTE by 23.8% since 2013/14 with a further allocation of an additional 1,300 HE places over the period 2018-2020:
 - 21% FTE increase in Business, Management and Leisure
 - 10% FTE increase in Creative and Cultural Industries
 - 45% FTE increase in Humanities, Education and Gaelic.

In addition to the above, partners also provided additional activity in support of **using the ROA to support growth sectors:**

- Developed the UHI Higher Education offer to include: BScH's in Interactive Media and Sport and Fitness; BAH's in Adventure Performance and Coaching, Marine and Coastal Tourism, Contemporary Art & Contextualised Practice, Contemporary Film Making, Gaelic Scotland, Politics Philosophy and Economics, Sociology and Criminology, and Cert HE in Tour Guiding Northern Highlands.
- Continued development of Gaelic Teacher Education Courses to provide flexible entry routes for new entrants and innovative upskilling of those already in the teaching profession.
- West Highland College has advanced plans for a new Centre for Science and Technology in Fort William, which will provide a sub-regional specialist centre for UHI to expand local capacity in Engineering, Construction, Robotics, Digital and Health/Care related qualifications. This centre will also cater for Marine Engineering and Technology requirements as part of the planned £80

² Figure does not include capital funding

million expansion of Mallaig Harbour, alongside a planned new local college centre in Mallaig to address maritime skills training and the wider blue economy needs of Mallaig local businesses.

- UHI continues to work to enrol additional students on to HNC Childcare programmes and BA Childhood Practice in response to the Government commitment to increasing the early learning and childcare free entitlement to 1,140 hours per year by 2020.

1.5 Develop innovative career pathways.

Lead partner(s): SDS Supported by: UHI and Local Authorities

Good progress – almost complete

- Developed FA and Graduate Apprenticeship frameworks to support entry to key sectors.
- Increased the number and range of MAs across all parts of the Highlands and Islands.
- UHI developed the Civil Engineering GA pathfinder. Some 12 GA starts were recorded in Civil Engineering in Highlands and Islands in 2015/16 and additional starts for 2017/19.
- School leavers in Highlands and Islands progressing to a positive destination increased by 2.2 percentage points from 93.1% in 2014/15 to 95.3% in 2016/17, above the national rate (93.7%).
- School leavers in Highlands and Islands going directly into employment increased by 2.6 percentage points from 34.5% in 2014/15 to 37.1% in 2016/17.
- The Participation Measure within Highlands and Islands (16-19 year olds) has increased by 1.4 percentage points from 91.3% in 2015 to 92.7% in 2017.
- Developed and promoting entry routes in Gaelic Education - including; a national campaign “Thig gam Theagasg” which encompasses school visits by Teacher Development Officer; a dedicated website; social media and other marketing activity. Funded a Gaelic Outdoor Learning Apprenticeship.

In addition to the above, partners also provided additional activity in support of **developing innovative career pathways**:

- Digital Schools – a partnership between SDS, Education Scotland and Scottish Government to address the challenges in computing science education at schools. Projects related to this include:
 - Piloting remote delivery of computing science school curriculum with e-Sgoil.

- Undertaking research to understand/present recommendations to address the under supply of Computing Science teachers.
- Working with SQA to develop online e-CPD for Computing Science teachers.

1.6 Develop skills provision for professional chefs.

Lead Partner: SFC Supported by UHI and Regional Board
Some progress- development activity occurred, partially complete

- West Highland College UHI offering in HNC Professional Cookery in 2018/19. This action is also supported through the co-ordinated Modern Apprenticeship contracting being developed through UHI, which offers greater flexibility in the delivery of a range of frameworks (includes MAs in Food and Drink) across the FE colleges in the region.

1.7 Support skills and pathways in Forestry

Lead Partner(s) UHI Supported by SDS and SFC
Met aspiration or target – action complete

- Forestry Industry Leadership Group established, and sub-groups formed to support aspect of promotion of career opportunities and skills development.
- Curriculum review by the School of Forestry (Inverness) completed.
- Forestry Trees and Timber Skills and Scoping Study published.
- Forestry Ambassadors Scheme close to launch (May 2018).

In addition to the above, partners also provided additional activity in **supporting skills and pathways in Forestry:**

- Publication of Gender and Diversity in Forestry in Scotland.
- Honours year added to BSc Forestry Management.
- Network of Forestry Ambassadors established.
- Distance Learning PDA in Forestry and new SVQ and technical apprenticeship being developed to support the sector.

- Supported National Council of Rural Advisors workshops.

1.8 Enable increased entrepreneurship in the region

Lead Partner(s) HIE Supported by: UHI

Good progress – almost complete

- UHI CREATE centre for entrepreneurship and Perth College's Centre for Enterprise have continued to work with employers to develop CLPD provision.
- Development of a PG Cert in Global Entrepreneurship.
- Business support for SME development in partnership with Business Gateway.
- Business case for a practitioner-led Entrepreneurship Academy in development.

3. Theme 2 – Planning for the future

Of the seven actions attached to this theme; three met the aspiration or target; one made good progress and three made some progress.

2.1 Future skills research across key sectors.	2.2 Business services skills assessment.	2.3 Construction provision research.	2.4 Using the single Highlands and Islands Regional Outcome Agreement.	2.5 Highland and Islands Science Skills Academy.	2.6 Inward Investment opportunities across the region.	2.7 Healthcare skills partnership.
Some progress-development activity occurred, partially complete	Met aspiration or target – action complete	Met aspiration or target – action complete	Met aspiration or target – action complete	Some progress-development activity occurred, partially complete	Some progress-development activity occurred, partially complete	Good progress – almost complete

Information, data and activity provided by partners for each target that was used to evidence progress is set out below.

<p>2.1 Future skills research across key sectors Lead Partner(s): SDS/HIE Some progress- development activity occurred, partially complete</p>

- SDS and HIE supporting the Aquaculture 2030 strategy.
- SDS, Moray and Inverness Colleges establishing demand for craft brewing skills.
- Key Sector Skills Investment Plans include regional (Highlands and Islands) specific considerations.
- Skills Assessment for Business Services in the Highlands and Islands complete 2015.

In addition to the above, partners also provided additional activity in **future skills research across key sectors**:

- Regional Skills Assessment (RSA) data is integral to development, delivery and monitoring of UHI ROA and meeting the needs of the regional and local economy. RSA data is approved by SFC to ensure FE/HE provision is aligned to the needs of the economy of the region.
- The Digital Skills Academy was launched in 2015.

- Delivery of the ICT and Digital Skills Transition Training Fund to attract and train individuals to enter the sector in the Highlands and Islands

2.2 Business services skills assessment

Lead Partner(s): SDS/CITB

Met aspiration or target – action complete

- Skills Assessment for Business Services in Highlands and Islands complete 2015.

In addition to the above, partners also provided additional activity in **supporting business services**:

- A Financial Technology (FinTech) strategy has been put in place. FinTech refers to the rapid advancement in tech applications, Artificial Intelligence and the potential disruptive impact on delivery of Financial Services (includes digital banking leading to decline in footfall in branches, Bitcoin and other crypto-currencies etc). The strategy aims to develop Scotland as a hub for FinTech and includes a skills and talent workstream. A main focus is agreeing a set of industry messages that can be used with secondary school age pupils.

2.3 Construction provision research

Lead Partner(s): SDS/CITB

Met aspiration or target – action complete

- UHI research on needs of construction completed 2015.
- CITB local construction skills research completed in 2018.
- Research and recommendations influencing SDS work-based learning (WBL) contracting and local skills discussion.

2.4 Using the single Highlands and Islands Regional Outcome Agreement

Lead Partner(s): SFC, UHI, FE Regional Board
Met aspiration or on target – action complete

- Exceeded Further Education regional core funded student allocation year on year and secured additional activity through the DYW ESIF programme. 50% of total FE student activity is allocated to learners in the 16-19 year old category.
- Evidence based approach to curriculum portfolio development.
- New products introduced (e.g. FAs) in line with SDS Labour Market Information (LMI).
- Development of a single UHI contract for FAs, MAs and GAs across the region (except Shetland College).
- UHI leading employer engagement activities and developed a five-year strategy which has been updated and renewed.
- UHI CRM system to track employer engagement, and expansion of Key Account system.
- Development of Gaelic Teacher Education Courses to provide flexible entry routes for new entrants and innovative upskilling of those already in the profession

2.5 Highland and Islands Science Skills Academy

Lead Partner(s): SDS, HIE, Highland Council
Some progress- development activity occurred, partially complete

- City Region Deal Funding secured to set up four Newton Room models in Highland Council area with the first of Scotland's Newton Rooms on the North Highland College campus at Thurso by August 2018. The Highland and Islands Science Skills Academy has also created a local steering group in Lochaber to create a Newton Room facilities in West Highland.

In addition to the above, partners also provided additional activity in **developing Highlands and Islands Science Skills Academy**:

- SDS established the Digital Hub to provide skills and awareness raising to school pupils and CPD for teacher in Inverness. Since its opening in August 2016, 6,000 pupils have engaged in STEM awareness activities and 600+ teachers have undertaken STEM related CPD.
- STEM promotion being explored through Argyll & Bute, Moray and Islands Deal.

2.6 Inward Investment opportunities across the region

Lead Partner(s): HIE, SDS

Some progress- development activity occurred, partially complete

- Support with Contract for Difference bid - Supply Chain Skills Plans, for the Moray offshore windfarm.

2.7 Healthcare skills partnership

Lead Partner(s) NHS, UHI

Good progress – almost complete

- NHS Highland and UHI working to address Health sector recruitment difficulties and skills gaps through development of a Care Academy that articulates clearly identified career pathways for the sector in support of smooth transition from school through FE/HE pathways into employment
- Discussions between, the NHS Highland Workforce Planning and Development Manager, the curriculum managers for Care across the UHI partnership and the Subject Network Leader for Care concluded that the UHI curriculum portfolio was fit for purpose.

4. Theme 3 – A region for young people

Of the nine actions attached to this theme; one exceeded aspiration set; six met the aspiration or target; one made good progress and one made no progress.

3.1 Enhance Careers Information Advice and Guidance services.	3.2 Commission for DYW.	3.3 Energy Future Workforce Programme.	3.4 Apps for Good.	3.5 Go-North: Digital skills for young people.	3.6 STEMNET teacher/pupil events in Life Sciences	3.7 Certificate of Work Readiness.	3.8 Scotgrad.	3.9 Young People in Highland and Islands Research Commission.
Met aspiration or target – action complete	Met aspiration or target – action complete	Met aspiration or target – action complete	Exceeded aspiration or target – action complete	Good progress – almost complete	No progress – not complete	Met aspiration or target – action complete	Met aspiration or target – action complete	Met aspiration or target – action complete

Information, data and activity provided by partners for each target that was used to evidence progress is set out below.

<p>3.1 Enhance Careers Information Advice and Guidance services Lead Partner(s): SDS Met aspiration or target – action complete</p>

- SDS Careers Information Advice and Guidance (CIAG) services in all local authority areas with 143,000+ CIAG sessions (including group work) delivered across the region during 2014-2018.
- Interactive and engaging digital based CIAG offer developed and extended to primary schools in 2016/17.
- Highly positive Education Scotland CIAG Service reviews in Highland, Shetland, Orkney and Argyll & Bute, with reviews pending in Moray (2018) and Outer Hebrides (2017).

In addition to the above, partners also provided additional activity to **enhance Careers Information Advice and Guidance Services:**

- Developed and implementing the national Career Education Standard to improve the quality and consistency of learning about the world of work and careers for children and young people and sets out what parents/carers, teachers, practitioners, employers and SDS will do to support their learning.
- Established a network of Digital Champions (DCs) within SDS CIAG service. DCs proactively promote opportunities in the Digital Technologies sector in schools. The activity is enhanced by the appointment of two Digital Development Officers by Education Scotland to support teachers and schools in curriculum development, career awareness and relationship building between education and enterprise.
- SDS established the Digital Hub to provide skills and awareness raising to school pupils and CPD for teacher in Inverness. Since its opening in August 2016, 6,000 pupils have engaged in STEM awareness activities and 600+ teachers have undertaken STEM related CPD. Also established a new Careers Hub in Mareel Centre on Shetland and delivering outreach STEM activities to schools across the Shetland Islands.
- Supported annual Gaelic careers event “Siuthad” to encourage young people to continue to study Gaelic in the senior phase of the curriculum.

3.2 Commission for Developing Scotland’s Young Workforce

Lead Partner(s) SDS, SFC, Local Authorities, UHI and HIE

Met aspiration or target – action complete

- Eight DYW groups established in the Highlands and Islands, clear future visions developed.
- In addition to the above, partners also provided additional activity to support the work of DYW:
- Future regional DYW groups KPIs will contribute to:
 - Increasing the percentage of employers recruiting young people directly from education
 - Reducing to 60% the percentage of Modern Apprenticeship frameworks where the gender balance is 75:25 or worse by 2021
 - Increasing the number of looked after children in positive destinations

- Increasing the number of MA starts from minority ethnic communities.
- A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed with Founders4Schools and their service is now accessible on Marketplace accessed through my world of work so that teachers can make asks of employers through this in addition to booking offers on Marketplace.
- An evaluation of a select group of regional DYW (including Inverness and central Highland) has taken place

3.3 Energy Future Workforce Programme

Lead Partner(s): SDS and Energy North

Met aspiration or target – action complete

- Ten schools from the Highlands attended the Big Bang Scotland (STEM career) Fair (2017).
- Energy North completed a study on the perceptions of young people on careers in the Oil and Gas Sector Survey. Report published and promotional materials distributed across the Highlands and Islands.

In addition to the above, partners also provided additional activity to **support skills in the Energy related workforce**:

- Delivered 1,212 Transition Training Fund interventions to help upskill, retrain or gain accreditation for individuals facing redundancy who were working (or had worked) in Oil and Gas sector to enable them to get a new job in Oil and Gas, the wider Energy sector or Engineering/Manufacturing. Funding covered a contribution or 100% of training costs up to a maximum of £4,000.
- Supported by Transition Training Fund, in collaboration with Moray Chamber of Commerce a programme was created to assist those from the Oil and Gas industry who have been made redundant in managerial and executive roles to reconnect and diversify into new sectors (April 2018).
- In conjunction with SubseaUK, SDS and partners commissioned a report which sets out the findings into the future skills requirements for sat divers operating in the UK subsea diving industry. The research - which included a mix of desk based research and analysis and an extensive industry and stakeholder interview programme - sought to identify the forecast longer term numbers of sat divers needed to support UK operations, as opposed to short term requirements.

- In an ongoing response to support the diving community within Scotland, the Dive Challenge Fund was established- £400,000 secured from Scottish Government in 2017/18 to support the subsea sector and reduce risks of future skills shortages in the commercial diving sector. SDS providing 50% funding for closed bell, air diving and ROV operations training.
- In 2018, work is being commissioned by SDS in collaboration with SE Decommissioning Action Plan to provide a robust skills narrative around decommissioning in Scotland. This work will support current and projected decommissioning work programmes by informing future skills planning and investment activities.

3.4 Apps for Good

Lead Partner(s): HIE, Local Authorities, SDS and UHI
Exceeded aspiration or target – action complete

- Some 24 schools engaged, against a target of 10-15 in 2014/15.
- A total of 288 beneficiaries engaged.

3.5 Go-North: Digital skills for young people

Lead Partner(s) HIE, SDS and UHI
Good progress – almost complete

- Digital World events held in Shetland, Orkney and Fort William.
- Discover the Digital World events held in Inverness and Oban, two additional online interactive events.
- Inverness College UHI project received Digital Xtra funding and is using computing lecturers to train primary teachers and school helpers in the Highlands and Islands to deliver Computing Science skills to multiple cohorts of pupils, creating a sustainable teaching approach.
- Annual GoNorth conference is Scotland's leading Creative Industries business-to-business conference and showcase event. The event is made up of workshops, panel sessions and speakers, as well as showcases of local talent.

In addition to the above, partners also provided additional activity to **promote Digital Skills to young people:**

- SDS worked with industry to develop Digital World, a multi-channel marketing campaign promoting the range of exciting careers available in Scotland's Digital sector. Launched in October 2015 and still active, the focus of the campaign is to challenge preconceptions about the sector, to present Digital Technologies as a career of choice, and to inspire people to explore the options open to them. Key audiences include school pupils, students, recent graduates, potential career switchers and women and girls, as well as career influencers such as parents and teachers.
- Discover Cyber programme commenced in 2017 to deliver the Cyber Skills programme comprising of dedicated face-to-face events, online sessions, meet the expert sessions, employer awareness sessions and an online toolkit. SDS's My WoW Live team ran a Cracking Cryptography workshop in partnership with Police Scotland focusing on cyber security/safety and the career options. Three schools from the Highlands area signed up to attend on the day with a total of 60 pupils in attendance.

3.6 STEMNET teacher/pupil events in Life Sciences

Lead Partner(s): SDS and STEMNET

No progress – not complete

- No programme of activity defined – ad hoc activity such as Royal Society of Biology event for school teachers at UHI (2016).

3.7 Certificate of Work Readiness

Lead Partner(s): SDS and HIE lead partners

Met aspiration or target – action complete

- Ironworks Pilot was delivered in partnership with SDS to target disengaged young people who may be interested in the creative sector. The Pilot was designed to build capacity through work experience for Creative Industries. The Pilot was successful in enabling the young people to access work experience within creative employers using Iron Works venue and partner organisations.
- A further pilot using Certificate of Work Readiness (CWR) took place in Spring 2015 with Scottish and Southern Energy and other energy/utility partners. The Energy Training Initiative was a 10-week programme, targeting 16 -29 year olds and included delivery of industry standards qualifications and work experience. A total of 17 young people completed the programme and 70% progressed onto full-time paid employment. No further delivery of CWR had taken place since the pilot in 2015.

- Delivered 3,190 Employability Fund starts from March 2013 to December 2017.
- CWR provision in all Local Employability Partnership areas.

3.8 Scotgrad

Lead Partner(s): HIE

Met aspiration or target – action complete

- Scotgrad programme – since 2014, there have been 132 graduates who have been offered up to 12 months graduate level work experience across a range of sectors in businesses across the Highlands and Islands.

3.9 Young People in Highland and Islands Research Commission

Lead Partner(s): HIE

Met aspiration or target – action complete

- Young People and Highlands and Islands – Attitudes and Aspirations Research – a wide-ranging study to explore the attitudes and aspirations of young people in relation to the Highlands and Islands. In total 4,409 young people contributed to the research, sharing their views on the region as a place to live, work and study. This study is being refreshed in 2018 and will help inform the Regional Talent Attraction Strategy 2015 work.

5. Theme 4 – People attraction and place attractiveness

Of the four actions attached to this theme; one made good progress and three made some progress.

4.1 Regional and local marketing campaigns to promote the career and lifestyle opportunities in the region.	4.2 Establish campus facilities/lifestyle experiences.	4.3 Talent Highland and Islands.	4.4 Rollout of Superfast Broadband.
Some progress- development activity occurred, partially complete	Some progress- development activity occurred, partially complete	Some progress- development activity occurred, partially complete	Good progress – almost complete

Information, data and activity provided by partners for each target that was used to evidence progress is set out below.

<p>4.1 Regional and local marketing campaigns to promote the career and lifestyle opportunities in the region. Lead Partner(s): HIE and Local Authorities Some progress - development activity occurred, partially complete</p>

- The Highlands and Islands Regional Talent Attraction Strategy and Action Plan is in place with discussion ongoing to coordinate partner delivery.
- Highlands and Islands proposition on National Webservice Talent Scotland and Highlands and Islands regional marketing campaign to take place in 2018.
- Partnership with Entrepreneurial Scotland - The provision of support by leading experts (such as new product development experts and leading universities/practitioners) makes the region more attractive and demonstrates that entrepreneurs do not have to leave the Highlands and Islands to source quality support. It brings high-profile speakers and entrepreneurs to deliver lectures and talks in the region, raising the profile of the region.
- Renewed the National Gaelic Plan 2018-2023, which has the overall aim to ensure that Gaelic is used more often, by more people and in a wider range of situations, including the workforce and the workplace.

4.2 Establish campus facilities/lifestyle experiences

Lead Partner(s): UHI and HIE

Some progress - development activity occurred, partially complete

- Inverness Campus opened May 2015, new Inverness College UHI building opened August 2015.
- SFC funded Student Representation project, Highland and Island Student Associated formed (2015/16).
- Programme of events have been delivered e.g. taster sessions, employer engagement events etc.
- Development of two phases of student residences (300 beds) opened since 2014.
- Range of sports and other interest groups established by the Highlands and Islands Students Association.

4.3 Talent Highland and Islands

Lead Partner(s): HIE, Local Authorities, and SDS

Some progress - development activity occurred, partially complete

- Highlands and Islands Regional Talent Attraction Strategy and Action Plan in place with discussion ongoing to co-ordinate partner delivery.
- Highlands and Islands proposition on National Webservice Talent Scotland and Highlands and Islands regional marketing campaign to take place in 2018.

In addition to the above, partners also provided additional activity to **attract talent to Highlands and Islands**:

- New PhD scholarship funding is available to UHI students and helping to expand student numbers in the Highlands and Islands. The Environmental Research Institute at North Highland College has 15 students completing PhD research degrees on various aspects of environmental science.
- The development of the School of Health and associated 'allied health' provision constitutes a key strand of the UHI talent attraction activity. Student nursing numbers are expanding and planning is well-advanced to launch Ophthalmology through an industry partnership at Moray College UHI and Inverness College UHI.

- West Highland College UHI is part of the Lochaber Delivery Group which is developing a local plan for Skills and Talent attraction in the context of the Lochaber Economic Development Programme. This includes development of a local branding strategy led by HIE, in partnership with Highland Council, SDS and the local Chamber.
- West Highland College UHI has a small, but highly successful tourism research centre, Centre for Recreation and Tourism Research (CRTR), providing research and consultancy for nature-based and adventure tourism. The CRTR has expanded its staff base in recent years, including PhDs, and operates a wide range of multi-national research projects. It created and now coordinates an annual international Adventure Conference.
- Adventure Tourism Innovation Partnerships (AVIP) -The overall aim of AVIP is to develop the digital marketing and product innovation skills of entrepreneurs, employees and students in the adventure tourism sector.

4.4 Rollout of Superfast Broadband

Lead Partner(s): HIE

Good progress – almost complete

- HIE have managed the rollout of a fibre network (contract with BT), reaching up to 86% of the region and continue to work with Scottish and UK governments to deliver full coverage.
- HIE and Digital Scotland are investing £146 million to roll out a fibre network across Highlands and Islands region.

In addition to the above, partners also provided additional activity to **support access and use of Superfast Broadband:**

- HIE have launched awareness-raising activities to help prepare communities and businesses of the potential to be gained through enhanced connectivity. Through the Digital Communications Plan, an IT Business and Community Engagement Programme was implemented and has been integrated with National DigitalBoost initiative, reaching over 4,500 businesses, with events and masterclasses and one-to-one support.
- As part of the Digital Action Plan, a digital demonstration centre, #hellodigital, has opened in the new HIE headquarters in Inverness, which provides broadcast and recording equipment and enables online video feed.

6. Theme 5 – Strengthening the employer voice in the skills system

Of the three actions attached to this theme; one met the aspiration or target; one made good progress and one made some progress.

<p>5.1 Ongoing programme of sectoral research and strengthening of evidence base to inform curriculum development and future investment in skills</p> <p>Good progress – almost complete</p>	<p>5.2 Regional employer panels</p> <p>Met aspiration or target – action complete</p>	<p>5.3 Employer engagement in learning</p> <p>Some progress – development activity occurred, partially complete</p>
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Information, data and activity provided by partners for each target that was used to evidence progress is set out below.

<p>5.1 Ongoing programme of sectoral research and strengthening of evidence base to inform curriculum development and future investment in skills. Lead Partner(s): SDS Good progress – almost complete</p>

- Regional Skills Assessments (RSAs) provide a coherent evidence base on which to base future investment in skills, built up from existing datasets and are used by SDS and its partners, including HIE and Local Authority Economic Development Groups, to inform skills planning. RSAs highlight economic and labour market data, offering trends and forecasts and include an introduction to the region's economy, place and people; past, current and forecast employment demand; and implications for planning. SDS provides RSA reports for the Highlands and Islands region, Inverness and Highland City Deal and for each Local Authority area. In addition, a composite report for Orkney, Shetland and Outer Hebrides has been developed to support Islands Deal. Sub-level disaggregated RSA reports are also prepared for Argyll & Bute's four administrative areas and the three areas of Highland which are served by distinct DYW groups.
- UHI FE/HE employer engagement strategy has continued the development of employer advisory groups, engagement with business development practitioners and collaboration with public sector partner agencies. UHI has also appointed four employer engagement staff to help develop HE curriculum with more input from employer.
- Providing funding and resources to support Inverness City and Rural Growth Deals to enable development of digital innovation projects in Inverness City Deal and business case development for innovation projects in Argyll & Bute, Moray and Islands Deal.

- Supporting DYW groups and their liaison with schools and local businesses to ensure DYW groups have a good understanding of business support services across the region. SDS also provide extensive reports on MA activity in DYW group areas.

In addition to the above, partners also provided additional activity on **sectoral research strengthening evidence to inform the curriculum:**

- Gaelic Labour Market Research - In the summer of 2017, SDS commissioned a piece of research on Gaelic Labour Market Information to assess the key drivers for growth (political, economic, social, technological – PEST) with a view to identifying opportunities and threats and to define and quantify the evidence base for Gaelic language and Gaelic skills. The final report will be shared with partners in summer 2018 and work progressed to implement the key recommendations.
- Public Sector Research in support of Islands Deal – SDS has provided match funding to the Islands Deal network of partners to research the skills and recruitment issues of the public sector in all three Island local authority areas. The Island areas have significantly high levels of public sector employment and experiencing difficulties with replacement demand due to an ageing workforce and recruitment of a skilled workforce in health and public services.
- Renewed UHI FE/HE employer engagement strategy (2018-2022) and continued development of employer advisory groups, engagement with business development practitioners and collaboration with public sector partners agencies. UHI has also appointed four employer engagement staff to help develop HE curriculum with more input from employer.

5.2 Regional employer panels

Lead Partner(s): SDS, HIE

Met aspiration or target – action complete

- Highlands and Islands Business Panel facilitates information gathering and ongoing discussion with the region's business community to inform and influence demand and provision that supports existing businesses and inward investment opportunities.
- Highland and Islands representation on national Industry Leadership groups including: Oil and Gas; Renewables; Scotland Food and Drink Skills Group; Offshore Renewables Programme Board; Forestry Skills Group; and Early Years Skills Investment.

5.3 Employer engagement in learning

Lead Partner(s): SDS, Local Authorities, and UHI

Some progress – development activity occurred, partially complete

- Four employer engagement staff are now in post at UHI and are working directly with businesses to ensure the University continues to be responsive to local and regional skills needs.
- UHI WBL established to support FA and ensure engagement with local employers and business workplaces to facilitate the practical skills element of the course.
- Adventure Tourism Vocational Education (ADVENT) -The overall aim of ADVENT is to develop education and training programmes to strengthen the skill base of young people and adults working in adventure tourism, through higher education and as continuing professional development. ADVENT will connect with regional SMEs and educational providers to ascertain training needs and gaps.
- North Highland College UHI continue to network with senior managers from the Dounreay Nuclear site through a working group which explore the skills need of this sector. Included within a number of work packages is an initiative to introduce new apprenticeships in Radiation Safety Practice in response to future site project needs.
- Inverness College UHI working with Academy 9 and contractors on the expansion of the A9 to ensure access to a skilled workforce.

7. The role of local authorities

Local authority partners have been active in developing local responses to the Highlands and Islands SIP with support from SDS and Highlands and Islands Enterprise. Examples include:

- Argyll & Bute Council used the Compelling Argyll & Bute study, which provided detailed economic profiling and analysis with a particular focus on skills issues, to inform the actions in their Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) in support of enhanced school curriculum, developments in the FE/HE offer, increased MAs and other key sectoral skills development. Argyll & Bute Council have recently appointed a Talent Management Lead Officer to take forward talent attraction activity working closely with staff within the Economic Growth Team. The local authority has established an Industry and Regional Development Sounding Board where Brexit is the main focus and they plan to commission a study to determine the current skills gaps and workforce needs (2018-2021) in the Food & Drink/Tourism industries in Argyll & Bute which will be used to inform the Argyll & Bute Rural Growth Deal.
- Highland Council continues to implement its City Deal Projects: Transport infrastructure; Housing development, Digital, Health and Life Sciences innovation, Land remediation and STEM Science Academy. Three Highland Developing Young Workforce (DYW) groups are in place and supporting increased employer/school engagement, curriculum development and improvement offer and co-ordination of work experience.
- Moray Council has led on the development of a local skills plan and has worked with partners to refresh the Moray Economic Strategy. The Strategy will provide the context for the emerging Moray Growth Deal and proposals that aim to build capacity and innovation in support on housing and transport development (including community led), business innovation, tourism, healthcare, and other sector specific enhancement that enable the area to compete, contribute and grow in the years ahead. Moray Council is also working to capitalise on the significant socio-economic opportunities offered through major MOD investment at RAF Lossiemouth and proposed large Offshore & Onshore Windfarm developments in the Moray area
- Orkney Islands Council has led on the development of a local skills plan. The local authority has reviewed the Orkney Community Planning Strategic Objectives and the Vibrant Economy has worked to develop actions to ensure that 'Orkney is a location of choice for people to live, work, learn and invest' and it is anticipated that this group will lead on implementing the local skills plan. DYW Orkney has secured funding and appointed a member of staff. Orkney Islands Council is working closely with Shetland Islands Council and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar to develop an Islands Deal. Work is also progressing on the Our Islands Our Futures (three Island authorities' collective) to deliver enhanced powers, decision making and increased island proofing policy through the Islands Bill.

- Shetland Islands Council's main focus has been to identify employers needs through a skills survey and this will help to inform their ten-year plan to attract people to Shetland to live, study and invest (local skills plan) which will be incorporated into the Local Outcome Improvement Plan. The DYW group aims to recruit a member of staff soon. Activity to agree future curriculum offer and governance of Shetland College and North Atlantic Fisheries College is ongoing.
- Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and partners led on development of a local skills plan. The main actions have been incorporated into the Action Plans of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan sub groups (Sustainable Economy and Sustainable Population). An overarching skills group will help co-ordinate implementation, monitoring and reporting on skills related-activity. DYW activity is ongoing.
- Skills planning for Arran - facilitated and funded by SDS, the Training and Employment Research Unit (TERU) at the University of Glasgow carried out both desk-based analysis and consultation with key stakeholders on the island to support the development of the Arran Skills Plan (2016). To implement the recommendations, the Arran Economic Group (AEG) formed the Arran Skills Group, chaired by AEG but with membership including Argyll College, Ayrshire Chamber of Commerce, Arran High School, North Ayrshire Council, Business Gateway, SDS and key local businesses. The Skills Plan is owned by local partners and identifies three key areas of work relating to: the ongoing co-ordination of skills activities to respond to Arran's skills needs; developing a skilled workforce to meet employer demand; and supporting young people to develop careers on Arran.
- To support the implementation of the plan, SDS provided a £5,000 contribution to support a skills co-ordinator and the development of four case study videos of ex-Arran High School pupils who chose to stay and train on, or return to, Arran. SDS is keen to continue to support the work of the AEG and Arran Skills Group, responding to asks as they arise. Partners continue to support the promotion of apprenticeships, with the AEG currently exploring the potential for developing training pathways and shared apprenticeships linked into the development of new build housing on the island with the SDS Key Sector Manager in Construction. The Isle of Arran jobs Facebook page provides an opportunity for employers and job hunters on the island to post their vacancies and availability, however talent attraction and retention remain critical issues for Arran.
- Skills Planning for Ayrshire - SDS continues to work closely with North Ayrshire Council around the development of the Ayrshire Regional Economic Partnership (REP), set up as the regional pathfinder through the Enterprise and Skills Review. Significant support continues to be provided to the ongoing development of the Ayrshire Growth Deal (AGD), through the Steering Group (at Director level) and PMO (by the Regional Skills Planning Lead). Supporting the activities of both the REP and the AGD, SDS will work in partnership to develop a Regional Skills Investment Plan (RSIP) for Ayrshire that will set out opportunities and challenges and the potential implications in terms of the demand and supply of skills in the region over the short, medium and longer

term. Arran and Cumbrae also sit within the footprint of the Ayrshire RSIP. North Ayrshire Council will be part of the Steering Group for the Ayrshire RSIP, which it is anticipated will be commissioned last quarter 2018.

8. Conclusions and Next Steps

Significant progress has been made within the Highland and Islands since the introduction of the Highlands and Islands SIP. Of the 31 actions within the SIP almost half have met or exceeded aspirations (48%):

- One has exceeded aspiration or target
- Fourteen have met aspirations or targets
- Seven have made good progress and are almost complete
- Eight have made some progress and are partially complete
- Only one action has made no progress and is not complete

Table 1 summarises where progress has occurred and where continued effort is required for each the five themes.

8.1 Highlands and Islands SIP Progress

Table 1: Highlands and Islands SIP Progress since 2014

Theme	Progress Achieved	Challenges still needing addressed
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions to increase MAs (starts and frameworks) • Activity to identify and meet industry, sector and employer needs • FE/HE activity aligned through evidence base and the ROA to ensure provision meets needs • Increased innovative career pathways to develop routes into employment, to upskill the workforce and to prepare for the workplace of the future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upskilling the workforce and preparing for the workplace of the future. • Is skills provision fully aligned to local skills needs? • Reflecting the contribution of City/Growth Deals to skills • Responding to implications of Skills Alignment and Enterprise and Skills Review?
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners commissioning and sharing research and analysis to help gain a better understanding of the needs of sectoral and regional skills issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the co-ordination of securing Inward Investment • Improve awareness raising of Inward Investment in relation to skills provision and promoting to education partners

Theme	Progress Achieved	Challenges still needing addressed
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment in programmes and facilities that raise awareness of STEM and partnership working to co-ordinate activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an effective and coordinated response to the needs of Health and Social Care in a region with ageing demographic
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery of high quality CIAG services across the region. Partnership working to help embed DYW activity in support of improving school/employer relationships. Proactive awareness raising of current and future opportunities within Digital Technologies sector Campus development and student accommodation in Inverness. Delivery of skills development initiative supporting the Energy sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the Young People's Perception research leads to an improved employment, training and FE/HE offer that retains and attracts young people to study and work in the region.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced digital connectivity across the region Development of a regional Talent Attraction Strategy to attract/retain young people (including students) Progress towards developing a unique and innovative FE/HE offer within the region, including student accommodation and lifestyle provision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing the actions and recommendations of the Highland and Islands Talent Attraction Strategy and aligning this activity with HISIP Continued alignment of the FE/HE offer to meet the needs of local businesses, potential for Inward Investment and to retain/attract students into the region Continuing to develop skills that capitalise on enhanced digital infrastructure
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of a robust, reliable and regular evidence base to help influence and inform skills planning across local authorities and the region. Coordination of research and analysis to better understand the skills needs and opportunities in unique cultural and sectoral growth areas. Improved liaison between enterprise, skills and education providers to enable them to respond effectively to the needs of employers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the coordination, aspiration and ambition between the efforts of DYW, education and skills Establishing a clear 'employer voice' across the skills system (school and post-school) in a regional and local context

8.2 Policy and Strategy Drivers

Whilst there has been significant progress in implementation of Highlands and Islands SIP Action Plan, the strategy cannot be viewed in isolation. In parallel to delivery of the SIP wider policy and strategic drivers have, and continue to, influence progress. These include:

- An ageing population
- Increasing pressure on the delivery of services in remote areas, compounded by recruitment of health and social care staff
- Out-migration of young people to other regions of Scotland, and further afield
- The potential skills and labour market impact of Brexit – with likely impact on sectors of importance to the region (agriculture, aquaculture, fishing, tourism and hospitality)

To ensure the Highlands and Islands SIP remains responsive to the current and emerging skills issues, the Highlands and Islands SIP Programme Board – endorsed by COHI - has recommended updating the Action Plan to ensure it:

- Responds to key recommendations and integrates the actions from recent and emerging skills analysis on key sectors such as Digital, Energy, Manufacturing, Early Years and Childcare, Agriculture, Aquaculture, Hospitality, Tourism and the needs of Gaelic-related LMI
- Supports the Enterprise and Skills Review and enhanced skills alignment
- Maximises the potential of UHI ROA to support meeting the needs of employers/industry and the ability to retain and attract a skilled workforce
- Meets skills needs arising through projects developed as part of the successful Inverness City Deal and the innovation and infrastructure proposals being developed through Moray Growth Deal, Argyll & Bute Rural Growth Deal and the Islands Deal
- Supports DYW and employer engagement that helps influence the curriculum and raise awareness of local and national opportunities to pupils, parents and teachers
- Supports Regional Improvement Collaborative, Northern Alliance, in its aim to reduce inequality in educational outcomes, enhance employability skills and ensure sustained positive destinations for school pupils

8.3 Next Steps

It is proposed that a Steering Group is formed, led by SDS, and including membership of the Highlands and Islands SIP Programme Board and other relevant individuals/organisation, such as: HIE, UHI, SFC, local authorities, BNG, and the Lead Officer for Northern Alliance.

The Steering Group will manage a review of the Highlands and Islands SIP Action Plan (2014-2018) and an impact assessment of the workforce, economy and population of the region over this period (2014-2018).

The Steering Group will undertake the work to update the Action Plan that will include:

- A consultancy brief to ensure comprehensive socio-economic analysis of the region to identify current and emerging skills challenges and to provide a clear set of actions that maximise opportunities to grow the economy through access to a skilled workforce and a responsive aligned skills provision
- Review of recent sectoral skills analysis and SIPs to identify recommendations and actions that support skills development in Highlands and Islands
- A process of engagement with local authorities, key partners and lead agencies to help identify new actions in support of skills and education
- Engagement with employer and business groups and industry leadership forums to ascertain actions on skills needs
- Engagement with Highlands and Islands DYW Groups to explore opportunities for collective action on business engagement in curriculum design, enhanced work experience and continued development of the apprenticeship family
- Agree a process for implementation and the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the Action Plan
- Secure endorsement and commitment from local authority political leaders and agency CEOs for the updated Action Plan