

# Construction & Built Environment WDP Minutes

## 21<sup>st</sup> May 2026

**Date: 21st May 2026**

**Time: 9:30 – 11:30**

**Venue: Newbury College, Monks Lane, Newbury,**

Attendees		
Simon Barrable <b>TVCC</b>	Pamela Farries <b>TVCC</b>	Mark Andrews <b>North Kent College (SECTEC)</b>
Ed Collett <b>Abingdon &amp; Witney College</b>	Matt Durant <b>BAM Construction</b>	James O’Conner <b>Bowmer &amp; Kirkland</b>
Jenni Pun (Student) <b>Bowmer &amp; Kirkland</b>	Terry Watts <b>Built Environment Schools Trust</b>	David Allen <b>CECA</b>
Nicola Hieatt <b>CiTB</b>	Shaun Britton <b>CiTB</b>	Sandra Stevens <b>CiTB</b>
Graham Smith <b>City &amp; Guilds</b>	Matt Hyde <b>Darke &amp; Taylor</b>	Sonia Bradford <b>DWP</b>
Graham Roberts <b>Ethical Reading</b>	Kerry Winter <b>Verdancy</b>	Charlie Green <b>M Group</b>
Hannah Mills <b>M Group</b>	Rob Jones <b>MTT</b>	Sally Downing <b>MWA Projects</b>
Liam Faughnan <b>Newbury College</b>	Emma Guthrie <b>New College Swindon</b>	Tyron Wain <b>NOCN Group</b>
Liz Furnish <b>NOCN Group</b>	Lucy Turner <b>Oxford Brookes University</b>	Leonard Sackey <b>River Learning Trust</b>
Saloni Radia <b>Royal Borough Windsor &amp; Maidenhead</b>	Mark Pope <b>CoTrain   SECBE</b>	Peter McCullen <b>TECC</b>
Karen Geran <b>Thames Water</b>	Ce’Nedra Goosen <b>TVCC</b>	Siobhan May <b>TVCC</b>

Actions			
	Actions	To Be Followed Up	Proposed Working Group Members *
1	Promote the growth and successful outcomes of the local Electrotechnical Training and Careers Alliance	TVCC	ETCA with an LSIP rep to join
2	Develop regional training and funding “landing page” for employers	TVCC	SECTEC
3	Progress FE Reservist / Industry Exchange pilot model within Thames Valley	TVCC	TVCC/SECTEC/AT LEAST ONE EMPLOYER AND ONE PROVIDER
4	Strengthen approach to coordinated work experience and employer engagement via a Thames Valley pilot programme	TVCC	TVCC/AT LEAST ONE COLLEGE, ONE SCHOOL AND ONE EMPLOYER
5	Explore provision gaps for 18-year-olds and links to DWP programmes	TVCC	TVCC/ A LOCAL COLLEGE/DWP
6	Share LSIP KPIs, resources, and existing frameworks across partners	TVCC	N/A
7	Engage HE partners and Tier 1 contractors (contractors then convene their supply chains) in future discussions	TVCC	N/A

**\*Working Group members will meet periodically, usually online, to drive forward their action(s) and report back on them at the following WDP meeting.**

**At least 2 of the 4 working groups to be convened between now and our next meeting.**

1.	<p><b><u>Welcome   Introduction</u></b></p> <p>The meeting opened with introductions and an overview of the purpose of the Workforce Development Partnership (WDP) within the Construction &amp; Built Environment and wider LSIP delivery framework. It was noted that the WDP plays a critical role in articulating clear employer need, validating occupational requirements, and agreeing priorities and actions.</p> <p>The group discussed the importance of employer engagement and strengthening links between employers and providers, ensuring co-working and collaboration across the system. The WDP was reaffirmed as a mechanism for prioritising actions and supporting delivery of the LSIP roadmap through coordinated working groups.</p>
2.	<p><b><u>Skills Policy Update: What Employers Need to Know</u></b></p> <p>An update on national skills policy developments was provided. From April 2026, the Growth and Skills Levy will introduce more flexible training funding, allowing employers to utilise funds for shorter apprenticeship units in priority areas such as AI, engineering, and green skills.</p> <p>Incentives to recruit young people were highlighted, including grants for youth employment and apprenticeships, alongside potential wage subsidies depending on local rollout. Apprenticeships are becoming shorter and more flexible, with minimum durations reduced and English and maths requirements relaxed for adult learners.</p> <p>Looking ahead, the Lifelong Learning Entitlement from 2027 will enable modular higher-level study, supporting ongoing workforce upskilling. It was noted that local influence on skills provision is increasing through LSIPs and devolution, giving employers more opportunity to shape provision.</p> <p>The Thames Valley Skills Unit will continue to provide updates and guidance to help employers maximise funding opportunities and access talent.</p>
3.	<p><b><u>Roadmap Actions &amp; Priorities</u></b></p> <p>The group reviewed key LSIP roadmap priorities. There was strong support for continuing and strengthening the Construction Workforce Development Partnership, ensuring sustained employer leadership aligned to housing, infrastructure and Net Zero priorities.</p> <p>The development of the Electrotechnical Training and Careers Alliance (ETCA) was highlighted as a critical priority to address shortages of electricians and support low-carbon and retrofit delivery.</p> <p>The need to embed stronger supervisory, leadership and site management capability across the sector was emphasised, particularly within SMEs. This included improving progression routes from trade roles into management positions.</p> <p>Curriculum reform was discussed, including expansion of T Levels, introduction of V Levels, and development of Level 2 pathways. These reforms aim to improve productivity, reduce recruitment pressures and enhance work-readiness.</p>

The group also noted the importance of modular and digital training aligned to SME demand, alongside embedding digital tools, BIM capability and AI skills within construction curricula.

4. **Exemplar Delivery: SECTEC Update**

Mark Andrews presented a Year 1 review of the South East Construction Technical Excellence College (SECTEC). The initiative aims to strengthen construction skills provision, improve teaching quality, increase employer engagement and investment, and create clear progression pathways into employment.

SECTEC represents the largest Construction TEC in England, operating across a significant regional footprint with extensive collaboration between FE colleges.

A detailed overview of sector challenges was provided. While skills shortages remain significant, it was noted that barriers to housebuilding are also driven by wider issues including viability, planning constraints, regulatory complexity and market conditions.

Key skills gaps were identified across pre-construction, site-based roles, building services, compliance, and Modern Methods of Construction. Growing demand in low-carbon and electrotechnical roles was emphasised.

The Regional Knowledge Centre was highlighted as a key development, addressing the FE technical teacher shortage through CPD, industry engagement and new delivery models. The FE Reservist model was discussed as an innovative approach to bringing industry professionals into teaching via flexible arrangements.

Strong emphasis was placed on employer collaboration, regional skills planning, and improving SME engagement with the training system. Tools such as Industry 4 Councils, group training models, and SME resource frameworks are being developed to support this. Year 2 priorities include expansion of curriculum development in key areas, rollout of the Knowledge Centre, implementation of the Teacher Industry Exchange programme, and strengthening regional governance structures.

Local reflections for Thames Valley highlighted demand linked to infrastructure, housing growth, and emerging needs such as EV installation and microgeneration. The importance of avoiding duplication and aligning with national initiatives was stressed.

5. **Electrotechnical Training and Careers Alliance (ETCA)**

An overview of the ETCA initiative was provided. The alliance brings together industry bodies, training providers, employers and stakeholders to address skills gaps and strengthen the electrotechnical pipeline.

The ETCA aims to promote high standards, improve collaboration, influence skills planning, and support progression into apprenticeships and recognised training routes. It also plays a role in representing industry voice at both local and national levels.

Within the Thames Valley, a key priority is the development of a regional landing page to improve visibility of training provision and funding opportunities for employers.

Discussions highlighted the need for consistency in training standards, increased resource investment, and local coordination to ensure delivery. Challenges around the cost of training

electricians and ensuring progression to fully qualified status were also raised, alongside opportunities to use funding more effectively as a “finishing school” model.

**6. Wider Sector Insights and Discussion**

The group discussed broader system challenges and opportunities. There was a strong emphasis on the need for greater collaboration, reducing duplication, and creating a more joined-up system across employers, providers and stakeholders.

Issues identified included fragmentation due to geography, complexity of the skills system, and the burden placed on employers to engage. A more coordinated regional approach to work experience and employer engagement was recommended, including the use of consortia models and supply chain agreements.

Concerns were raised regarding gaps in provision for 18-year-olds not entering college or apprenticeships, and the need to better connect provision with DWP and employment support programmes.

The importance of improving careers advice, engaging young people and parents, and changing perceptions of the sector was also highlighted. Built Environment Schools Trust activity was noted as a positive example of early engagement, broadening awareness of careers across planning, design and construction.

Participants emphasised the need to strengthen links with higher education, address shortages in specific roles such as site managers, and ensure that large infrastructure projects are aligned with skills planning.

The value of data, reporting and consistent communication to Skills England and other bodies was also discussed, alongside the need for shared platforms and curriculum resources.

**7. Evidence, Validation and Reporting**

The group confirmed that employer feedback will continue to be captured through WDP discussions and formal minutes, alongside outputs from working groups.

These insights will feed into LSIP monitoring and reporting, including the development of skills priority statements and ongoing evaluation of progress.