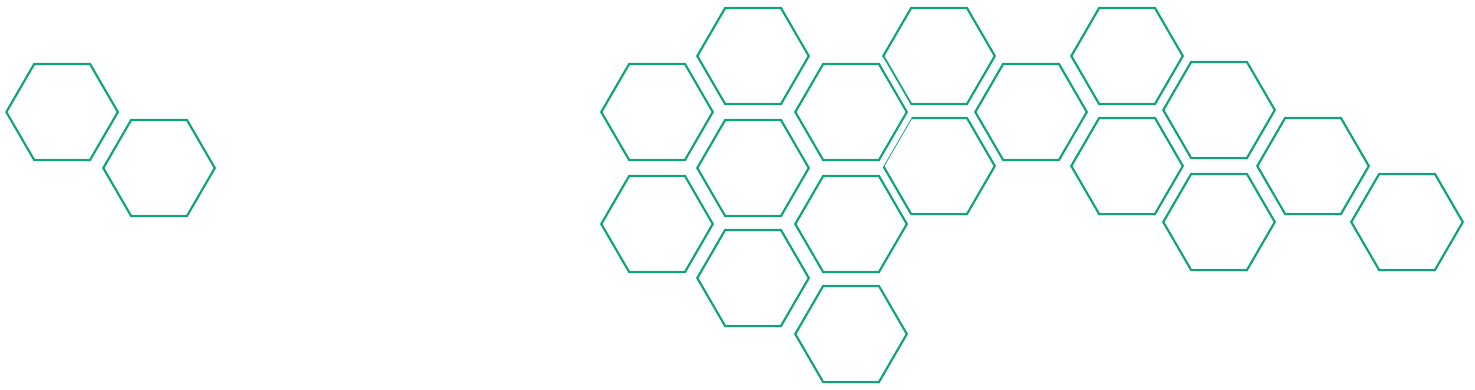
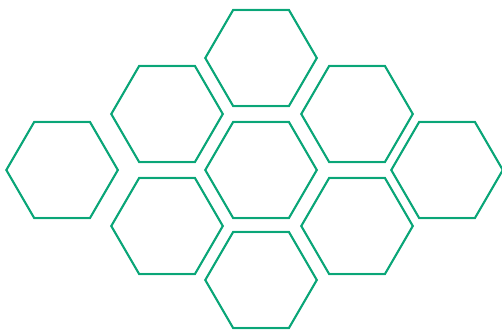
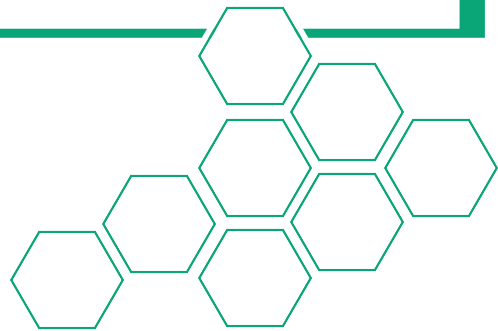
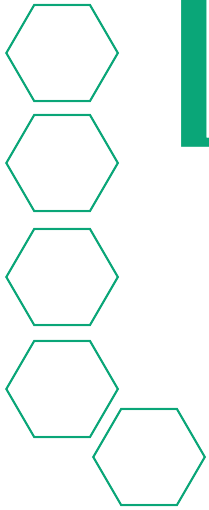




Bolton

Data from the Greater Manchester
Local Skills Improvement Plan



**Funded by
UK Government**



Greater Manchester
Chamber of Commerce

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Introduction

Understanding the ever-evolving employment landscape is critical for nurturing a workforce that is well-prepared for future opportunities and enabling local economies to thrive.

This report, produced as part of the Greater Manchester Local Skills Improvement Plan (GM LSIP), is one of a series of ten reports, each focusing on a different local authority area in Greater Manchester. The aim of this report is to provide a comprehensive breakdown of how employment patterns in Bolton may change over time. By providing this detailed breakdown, this report will help stakeholders including colleges, independent training providers, councils and businesses to foresee trends in the local labour market and align skills provision with future demand.

Central to this report is an assessment of the local economy, beginning with an overview of Gross Value Added (GVA) sourced from the Office for National Statistics (ONS). Employment statistics, drawn from the ONS' Business Register and Employment Survey, have been included to present a baseline for understanding workforce distribution across different industries. Understanding the qualifications held by residents offers valuable insight into the workforce's readiness for both current and emerging job opportunities. For this, the report includes information on qualification levels of the local population.

The above demographic information is followed by an in-depth analysis of job demand, using two distinct data sources: vacancy information from Adzuna and responses from the surveys conducted to gather labour market intelligence for the GM LSIP. The survey specifically asked business respondents to list job titles that they had attempted to recruit for, as well as "hard to fill" roles, which are jobs the respondents found difficult to recruit for.

It is important to note that there may be differences between these two data sets. While certain jobs may be in high demand, businesses may not always struggle to recruit for them if the supply of qualified candidates is sufficient. Conversely, some roles may be particularly hard to fill, reflecting a mismatch between employer needs and the available talent pool. This variation highlights key recruitment challenges in specific sectors and underscores the importance of targeted skills development.

Going beyond current job demand, this report includes an analysis of significant projects that are set to reshape the employment landscape in Bolton. These major initiatives, such as Northfold - Wigan and Bolton Growth Corridor, represent substantial investments in Bolton. Such projects are often in addition to plans for new residential and commercial developments and, collectively, they are expected to generate considerable employment demand, both during the building phase and as businesses establish themselves in these new developments.



Subrah Krishnan-Harihara
Deputy Director of
Research, Greater
Manchester Chamber
of Commerce

Introduction

During the initial construction phase, there will be increased demand for construction workers such as those skilled in trades such as electrical work, plumbing, bricklaying and site management. Because of the volume of construction projects planned, this phase alone will create numerous opportunities for local employment in construction. Consequently, there is the need to maintain and expand provision for vocational training and apprenticeships in construction trades.

Notably, the impact of these projects extends well beyond construction. As developments are completed, they will give rise to new job opportunities across a diverse range of sectors. For example, the completion of a large-scale logistics hub will drive demand for warehouse operatives, supply chain managers, and transport coordinators. Similarly, investments in health or education facilities will necessitate a skilled workforce of nurses, medical technicians, teachers and tutors.

To provide clarity on these developments, this report includes a key table (on page 11) outlining major projects within the local authority, detailing their objectives and sectoral priorities. This is followed by a sector-specific evaluation, mapping out how these projects will translate into job creation. It categorises anticipated roles across industries such as construction, manufacturing, health and social care, etc. An extensive amount of research has gone into identifying job roles and the key skills that these job roles will require. Although the report does not claim to have an exhaustive list of job roles and skills, the structured approach enables all stakeholders to gain a clear picture of where employment opportunities are likely to arise and what skills will be in demand.

By highlighting the interplay between development initiatives, potential growth in sectoral employment and skills requirements, this report will help inform strategic workforce planning at the local authority level. The report thus underscores the importance of aligning training programmes with the needs of growth sectors and emerging requirements.

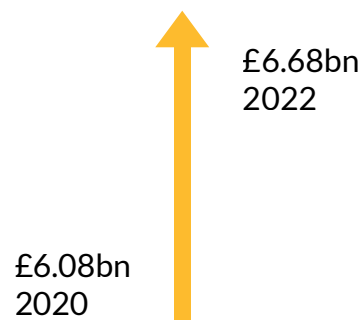
This report is a vital output from the research conducted for developing and implementing the GM LSIP and positioned as a resource for local stakeholders to inform their strategic planning. It provides an evidence-based overview of expected labour market shifts, highlighting where job demand is likely to grow and where potential skills gaps may arise.

For colleges and independent training providers, the report serves as a valuable reference point for curriculum planning. Nonetheless, the findings in this report should not be interpreted as a directive for immediate changes to course provision. Instead, the insights should be used to inform long-term curriculum planning and ensure that training programmes evolve in line with broader economic trends and emerging labour requirements.

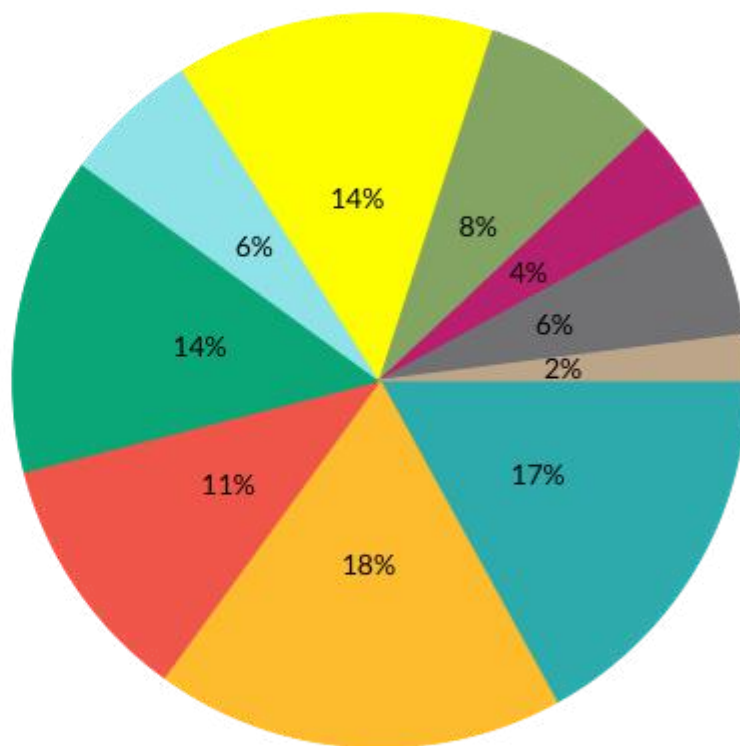
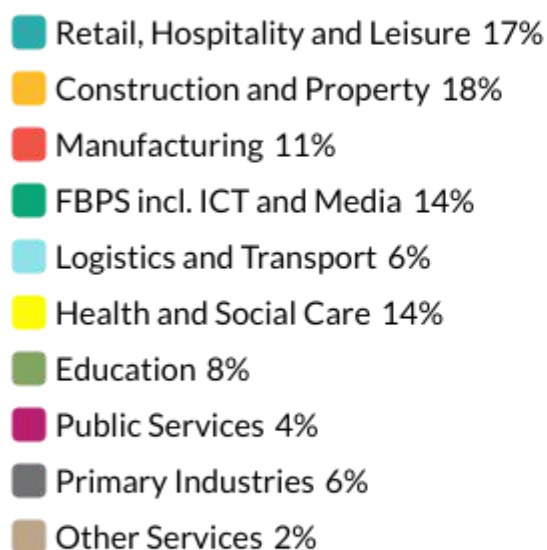
For local councils and business organisations, this report offers insights for workforce development. Using the insights contained in this report about job creation and skills demand, they can encourage stronger partnerships between employers, educators and business representative organisations to ensure that Greater Manchester's workforce remains competitive and resilient and, ultimately, contributes to a more dynamic and responsive local economy.

Gross Value Added (GVA) in Bolton

- The sectors with the highest GVA in 2022 were: construction and property; retail, hospitality and leisure; and Financial, Business and Professional Services (FBPS), including ICT and media.
- The GVA of the construction and property sector grew steadily between 2019 and 2022.
- The sectors with the greatest increases in GVA between 2021 and 2022 were primary industries and public services.
- The GVA of the health and social care sector decreased the most between 2021 and 2022.



GVA by sector in 2022



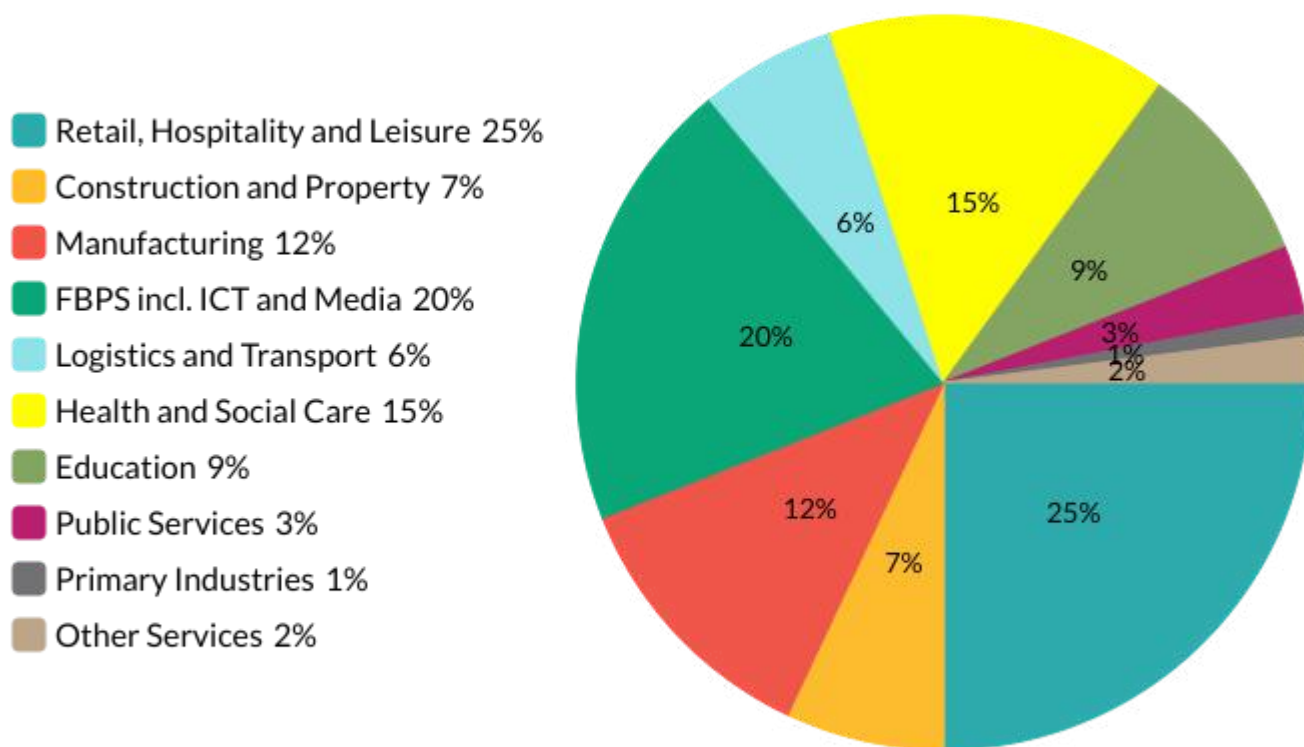
Source: ONS

Employment in Bolton

Total employment in 2023 - 116,100

- The sectors with the largest proportion of employees in 2023 were: retail, hospitality and leisure; FBPS, including ICT and media; and health and social care.
- Primary industries, other services and public services were the sectors with the least employees.
- The manufacturing sector grew the most between 2022 and 2023, as the number of employees increased by 7.7%.

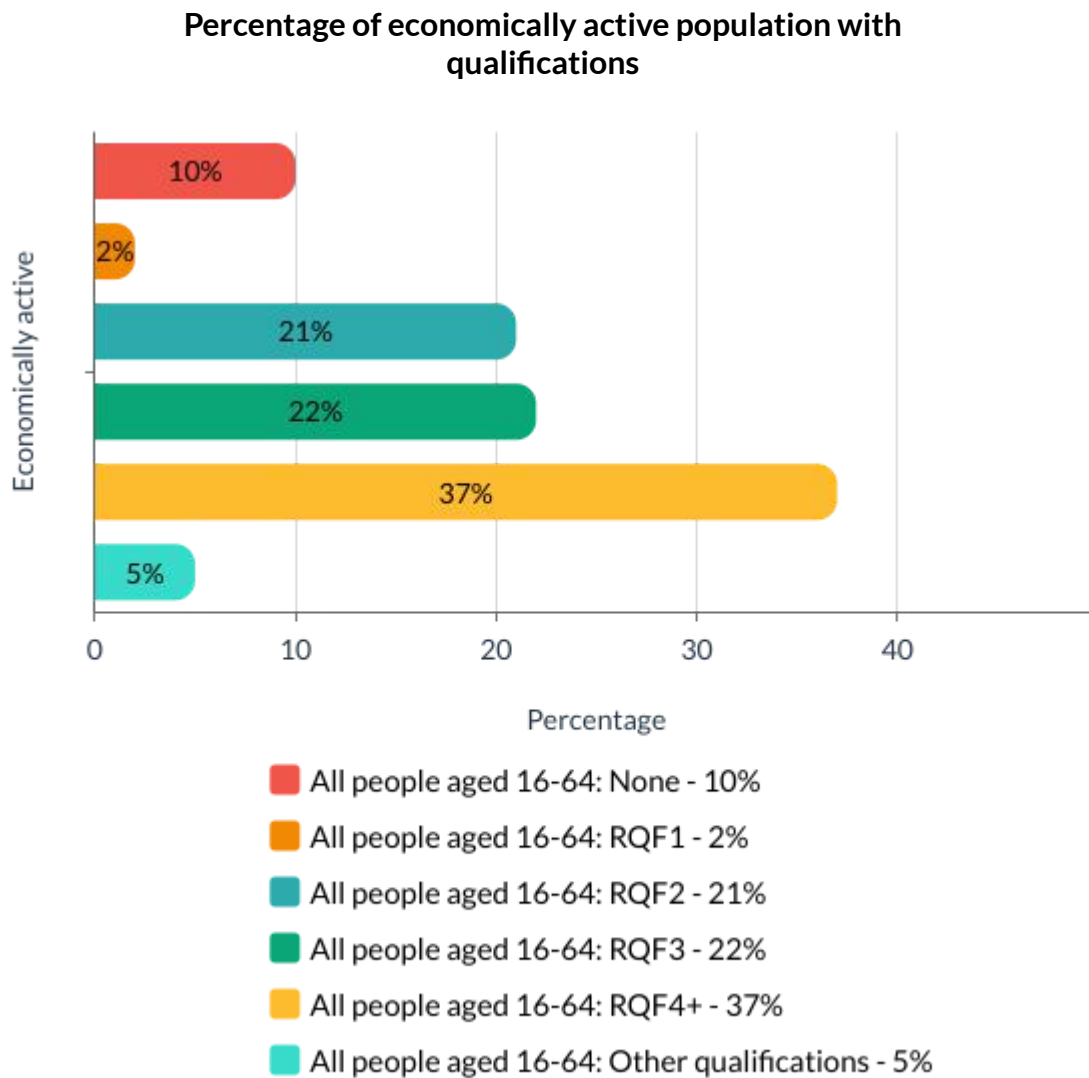
Employment by sector in 2023



Source: ONS

Economic activity levels in Bolton

- The information for the total number of economically active people in the local authority and those with different levels of qualifications has been taken from the ONS Annual Population Survey. In light of recent concerns about some ONS statistics, there could be revisions to some data points.
- In Bolton, the most economically active people had RQF (Regulated Qualifications Framework) Level 4 or above qualifications, similar to the previous NVQ4+.
- The economically active population with RQF2 and RQF3 qualifications ranges between 20% and 25%.
- The economically active population with no qualifications is slightly higher than those with RQF1.



Source: ONS

Occupations in high demand

In general, Adzuna's data categorises job postings based on the sector of the employer advertising the position, rather than the sector typically associated with the job title itself. For example, if a college advertises a vacancy for a caterer, the job would be classified under the education sector rather than the hospitality sector, even though catering roles are traditionally linked to hospitality. This classification occurs because the job posting originates from an educational institution. However, for the purposes of this report, the data has been reclassified to align job postings with the sectors most commonly associated with their respective job titles. This adjustment ensures a more accurate representation of industry trends by reflecting the nature of the job rather than the employer's sector. The occupations with the highest demand according to Adzuna data are listed in the following table. These job titles had the highest number of vacancies between May and October 2024.

Sector	Job titles
Construction and Property	Trade operative
	Plasterer
	Electrician
	Plumber
	Joiner
	Roofer
	Contracts manager
	Cleaner
	Management surveyor
Education	Early years teacher
	English tutor
	SEN primary school teacher
FBPS including IT	Mortgage broker
	Telesales executive
	Sales executive
	Commercial sales representative
	Sales consultant

Occupations in high demand - continued

Sector	Job titles
FBPS incl. IT - continued	Customer consultant
	Paralegal
	Helpdesk coordinator
	Legal assistant
	Customer service consultant
	Financial planning analyst
	Credit manager
Health and Social Care	Social care worker
	Carer team leader
	Fundraising assistant
	Healthcare support worker
	Practice nurse
	Community support worker
Manufacturing	Project engineer
	Engineer
	Manufacturing engineer
	Maintenance planner
	Manager
	Technical analyst
	Project manager
	Electronics design engineer
	Vehicle technician
Retail, Hospitality and Leisure	Store assistant
	Sales assistant
	Delivery driver
	Shop manager
	Retail sales adviser

Occupations in high demand - continued

Sector	Job titles
Retail, Hospitality and Leisure - continued	Merchandiser
	Chef
	Management assistant
	Shift manager
	Crew member
	Kitchen assistant
	Laundry attendant
	Head chef
	Lifeguard

The high-demand occupations and the hard-to-fill occupations, according to Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce's survey, are shown in the table below. High-demand occupations refer to roles that many employers attempted to recruit for, while hard-to-fill occupations refer to roles that employers struggled to recruit. This data covers the period from June 2023 to December 2024.

High-demand occupations	Hard-to-fill occupations
Sales representative	Security guard
Security guard	Fitter's mate
Project manager	Chef
Chef	IT field engineer
Engineer	
Cleaning operative	
Teacher	

Ongoing/future investment projects

The main investment projects that are taking place in Bolton, or that are planned for the next few years, are presented in this section. This list is not exhaustive, but includes the projects that have the potential to impact the labour market.

Project	Project description	Project priorities
Crompton Place Shopping Centre Redevelopment	Bolton Council will redevelop the Crompton Place Shopping Centre.	• Residential development • Hospitality and retail • Office space
	Status: The existing shopping centre is due to be demolished in 2025 and will be redeveloped afterwards. There is no information about the completion date.	
	Residential and commercial space: The Council aims to build a mix of residential, hospitality and office spaces. There are no details on how many homes will be built or how much space will be allocated for commercial purposes.	
Residential and hospitality development in Church Wharf area	Watson Homes is to build a mixed-use development in the Church Wharf area.	• Residential development • Hospitality and retail • Hotel
	Status: Construction work could start in 2025 and completed in 2027/2028.	
	Residential space: Developers will build 417 new homes.	
	Commercial space: The development will include bars, restaurants, cafes and other retail spaces.	
	Accommodation: A 120-bed hotel will be built.	
	Economic impact: The economic impact expected is £75m of direct spending in the construction, the creation of 1,500 jobs, and £7m of household expenditure each year on local shops and services.	

Ongoing/future investment projects - continued

Project	Project description	Project priorities
Creams Mill Housing Development	Watson Homes is building two residential developments close to Little Lever, called Creams Mill and Hall Lane.	• Residential development • Sustainability • Green infrastructure
	Status: Construction work commenced in 2023. The completion date has not been disclosed.	
	Residential space: The development will consist of 250-300 homes across the two sites. It will be a mix of apartments and houses.	
	Green space: Regeneration of the Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal for public use, and creation of public spaces near the canal.	
	Sustainability: Homes will feature air source cylinders for hot water and PV panels for electricity.	
District Heat Network	Bolton was awarded £11m from the Green Heat Network Fund to develop a heating system that would generate heat using the town's sewerage.	• Low-carbon energy system • Sustainability
	Status: The start and completion dates have not been disclosed.	
	Sustainability: The system will use a heat pump to extract heat from the sewage and hot wastewater. The network will heat over 30 sites across Bolton, including public and residential buildings.	
Northfold - Wigan and Bolton Growth Corridor	Northfold is one of the six Greater Manchester growth locations, and as such, there are plans to develop the area further to include more industrial units and housing developments. Northfold falls within Wigan and Bolton.	• Residential development • Industrial units • Transport infrastructure
	Status: The area is undergoing further development.	

Ongoing/future investment projects - continued

Project	Project description	Project priorities
Northfold - Wigan and Bolton Growth Corridor - continued	Commercial space: The target was to develop 1million sqm of employment space between 2022 and 2039. Most of this space will be for manufacturing (especially food), logistics and distribution businesses.	
	Residential space: 13,000 homes would be delivered in the period 2022-2039.	
	Transport infrastructure: The project includes new roads and highways to connect the M6 and the M61, increased bus provision, increased rail lines use and potential new stations along the Bolton-Wigan railway line.	
Wingates Industrial Estate Expansion	Harworth Group is to expand the Wingates Industrial Estate located in Westhoughton.	• Logistics • Manufacturing
	Status: The expansion was expected to start by the end of 2024, but it is not clear whether it happened. The completion date has not been disclosed.	
	Commercial space: The first phase involves the construction of 1.1 million sq ft of logistics and manufacturing space, while a further phase involves an additional 3.6 million sq ft.	
	Economic impact: The project is expected to create 6,000 jobs over the next 10-15 years.	
The Wellsprings Workspace Opening	The Wellsprings flexible workspace will open in Bolton town centre. It was designed to support SMEs, especially those in the creative, digital and innovation industries.	• Office space for businesses to start, develop, grow and thrive • Creative, digital and innovation
	Status: The construction was completed in September 2024 and the space is expected to open this year.	
	Commercial space: The workspace features offices, co-working spaces and meeting rooms. It will offer in-house business support with funding opportunities, business growth, hiring, etc.	

Sector priorities

This section introduces the Council's priorities and targets for each of Bolton's principal sectors. The jobs and skills that are needed to achieve these ambitions are included in the analysis.

Sector: Construction and Property

Initiatives/Priorities:

There are many upcoming construction projects in Bolton, especially residential developments and industrial parks. The demand for construction workers will likely remain high.

Places for Everyone construction plans:

- It was established that 13,379 new homes, 705,861 sqm of industrial floorspace and 70,739 sqm of office space would be delivered across the borough by 2039.

Housing:

- There are plans to build 13,000 homes across the Northfold growth location (Bolton and Wigan) by 2039.
- In the 2030 Vision, the Council set out a plan to redevelop Bolton town centre to include 1,800-2,000 new homes.
- New housing developments are under construction in Little Lever and Farnworth.

Industrial units:

- Around 1million sqm of industrial space for manufacturing and logistics uses will be developed by 2039 in the Northfold growth location, across Wigan and Bolton. This includes the expansion of Wingates Industrial Estate.

Transport infrastructure:

- Highways, roads, bus stations and potential railway stations will be built in the Northfold growth location.
- The housing developments in remote areas such as those in Little Lever will include new transport infrastructure.

Sector priorities - continued

Sector: Construction and Property - continued

Initiatives/Priorities:

Commercial space:

- The plan to redevelop Bolton town centre includes constructing new hospitality, retail and leisure spaces. Among these is the renewed Crompton Place and a new 120-bed hotel in Church Wharf.

Offices:

- The plan to transform Crompton Place includes creating new office space.

Job Creation	Anticipated Skills Requirements
Electrician, Plumber, Welder, Roofer, Tile fitter, Plasterer, Painter, Bricklayer, Carpenter, Ceiling fixer, HVAC technician, Heavy equipment operator, Water resource operative, Smart meter installer, Site engineer, Mechanical engineer, Civil engineer, Electrical engineer, Architect, Landscape architect, Quantity surveyor, Urban planner, Environmental consultant, Retrofit coordinator, Sustainability officer, Real estate agent, Facilities manager, Construction manager, Structural steel fabricator, Steel erector, Steel fixer, Scaffolder, Highway operative.	Planning Project management Quantity surveying Construction and site planning Procurement and purchasing Civil and structural engineering Knowledge of building regulations and safety codes Operation of heavy machinery Ability to use CAD software (for engineers, architects and high-skilled technicians) Ability to use BIM software (for engineers, architects and high-skilled technicians) Green skills Retrofitting SMART buildings Carbon literacy Social Value

Sector priorities - continued

Sector: Retail, Hospitality and Leisure

Initiatives/Priorities:

- In the 2040 Vision, the Council established that culture and visitor economy were two of its priorities. Its aims are to attract more visitors to Bolton and to increase footfall in cultural spaces like the Bolton Museum and the Octagon Theatre. They have plans around creating and supporting young talent from the creative community.
- The transformation of Bolton town centre will bring more retail and hospitality businesses. An example is a hotel in the Church Wharf area.
- These projects ensure a steady demand for workers in the hospitality and leisure sector.

Job Creation	Anticipated Skills Requirements
Cleaner Food and beverage assistant Kitchen assistant Chef Waiter/Waitress Barperson Barista Cashier Delivery driver Shop assistant Sales associate Shift manager Shop manager Leisure centre assistant Leisure centre manager Receptionist	Nutrition Food preparation Leadership and team management Sales Customer service Inventory management Store Operations Marketing and communications HR Ability to use POS systems Digital skills and AI Strong communication and conflict resolution

Sector priorities - continued

Sector: Manufacturing

Initiatives/Priorities:

- In the 2040 Vision, the Council committed to maximizing manufacturing strengths.
- Bolton Council is working to attract more investment into the Northfold growth location. There is a focus on food manufacturing.
- Bolton was the borough with the greatest allocation of industrial space in the PfE plan. This will likely increase the number of manufacturing businesses.
- More manufacturing businesses would increase the demand for skilled technicians.

Job Creation	Anticipated Skills Requirements
Food production operative Production operative Process operator CNC machinist Industrial electrician Metal fabricator/welder Fitter CAD technician Engineering manufacturing technician Electrical engineering technician Mechanical engineering technician Electrical engineer Mechanical engineer Manufacturing engineer Operations manager Production manager	Manual dexterity Machine operation Ability to read blueprints Ability to use CAD software Digital fluency Knowledge of electrical systems specific to a manufacturing setup Welding skills Numeric and mathematical skills Understanding of engineering concepts and principles Knowledge of health and safety regulations Knowledge of their specific field of engineering Product development Quality assurance Continual improvement Carbon literacy/Net zero Lean manufacturing Critical thinking Problem solving

Sector priorities - continued

Sector: Logistics

Initiatives/Priorities:

- The increase in employment land projected in the PfE plan will create more opportunities for logistics and warehousing businesses to set up and grow in the borough. The most relevant project is the expansion of the Wingates Industrial Estate.

Job Creation	Anticipated Skills Requirements
Warehouse operative Inventory controller Warehouse manager Warehouse engineer Delivery driver Transportation manager Logistics coordinator Logistics analyst Logistics manager	Forklift operation Physical strength Knowledge of health and safety regulations Driving skills and license Ability to use inventory software Ability to use shipping software Data analysis Analytical skills Teamwork Problem solving Leadership Project management

Sector priorities - continued

Sector: Financial, Business and Professional Services, including ICT and Media

Initiatives/Priorities:

- In the 2040 Vision, the Council stated it would prioritise jobs in the digital sector.
- The opening of The Wellsprings workspace will create more opportunities for small businesses to establish and grow.
- The demand for workers in professional and administrative services will remain at a similar level.

Job Creation	Anticipated Skills Requirements
Bookkeeper Accounting assistant Purchase ledger administrator Credit manager Accountant Management accountant Finance manager Paralegal Solicitor Administrator Receptionist IT technician Data analyst Software developer	Accounting Bookkeeping Database management Proficiency with Microsoft Office Suite Ability to use accounting software Ability to use CRM (Customer Relationship Management) software Knowledge of law Programming skills Scripting Cyber security AI/Innovation Decision making Critical thinking Negotiation Commercial awareness Presentation skills Problem solving

Sector priorities - continued

Sector: Education

Initiatives/Priorities:

- Bolton's population grew at an annual rate of .73% between 2014 and 2023 (ONS, 2024). The population in the 0-15 age group increased in this period as well. If these trends continue, the demand for educational services will increase.
- More schools and education services will be needed to support the new housing developments in remote areas.
- The demand for school teachers, teaching assistants and related occupations will remain high.

Job Creation	Anticipated Skills Requirements
Nursery nurse / Early years practitioner Primary school teacher Secondary school teacher Teaching assistant SEND teacher Tutor	Tutoring Teaching Motivating students Working with children Understanding learning difficulties Digital literacy Diversity and inclusion Careers advice Mental health and wellbeing

Sector priorities - continued

Sector: Health and Social Care

Initiatives/Priorities:

- Bolton's population in the 65+ age group has increased over the past 10 years. This trend is expected to continue and thus the demand for adult health and care services will increase.
- The new housing developments will increase the need for more health and care services in those areas.
- Nurses, healthcare workers and related occupations will remain essential.
- The Council has huge ambitions around health innovation. They are working to improve skills provision in the borough to attract more health innovation businesses. The University of Bolton is looking to expand its academic offerings to support this ambition.

Job Creation	Anticipated Skills Requirements
Care worker Support worker Healthcare support worker/ Healthcare assistant Nursing associate Nurse General Practitioner Recreational therapist Occupational therapist Dental nurse Dental technologist Dental hygienist Dental practitioner Medical and dental specialties Healthcare innovation consultant Digital transformation consultant Health data Scientist Clinical data manager	Knowledge on patient safety Knowledge of health and safety regulations Check and monitor vital signs Ability to use digital devices and applications to record patients' data Care specialist skills Digital skills Carbon literacy Physical strength (for care workers, nurses and roles in between) Knowledge on the specific field of medicine/dentistry ESOL Communication Leadership Adaptability Customer service Respond to emergency situations Empathy Sensitivity Data analysis (for health innovation roles) Research skills (for health innovation roles) Entrepreneurial skills (for health innovation roles)

Conclusions

This local authority level report offers an in-depth analysis of the current and projected employment landscape within Bolton. By incorporating information on the local economy and the anticipated impact of significant development projects, the report provides a comprehensive overview of the local labour market's dynamics.

A noteworthy aspect of this analysis is the examination of discrepancies between high-demand roles and those identified as hard-to-fill by employers. Recognising the distinction between the two is necessary to address immediate recruitment needs. The exploration of major development initiatives, such as the Creams Mill Housing Development and the Crompton Place Shopping Centre Redevelopment, will enable stakeholders to develop long-term workforce development strategies. The projects included in the table starting on page 11 are poised to shape local labour requirements, initially driving demand for construction-related roles and subsequently generating opportunities across a range of sectors.

This report is a critical component of the Greater Manchester Local Skills Improvement Plan (GM LSIP), which aims to align technical and vocational education with the actual needs of the local economy. Integrating this report into the broader context of the GM LSIP offers updated insights that complement the existing analyses and reports. This positioning also ensures that training and skills development interventions are tailored to address both Bolton-specific and Greater Manchester-wide skills priorities.

To maintain its relevance and accuracy, this report will undergo a comprehensive refresh every 18 to 24 months. The updates will incorporate the latest data and developments, ensuring that all stakeholders have continued access to current information. It is anticipated that this report will serve as an invaluable resource for strategic skills planning in Bolton. For policy makers, it offers evidence-based insights into current and emerging labour market trends while aiding colleges and independent training providers in making informed decisions about curriculum development and training provision. While the report is not intended to prompt immediate curriculum changes, it should inform medium- to long-term planning to ensure that available training meets employers' needs and also evolves in tandem with the shifting economic landscape.

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