

Rochdale

Data from the Greater Manchester
Local Skills Improvement Plan



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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 Rochdale 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 Rochdale. These major initiatives, such as the Atom Valley Mayoral Development Zone, represent substantial investments in Rochdale. 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.



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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.

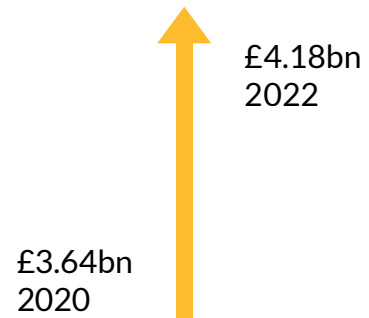
This report is a vital output from the research conducted for developing and implementing the GM LSIP and positioned as a resource for local stakeholders to inform their strategic planning. It provides an evidence-based overview of expected labour market shifts, highlighting where job demand is likely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

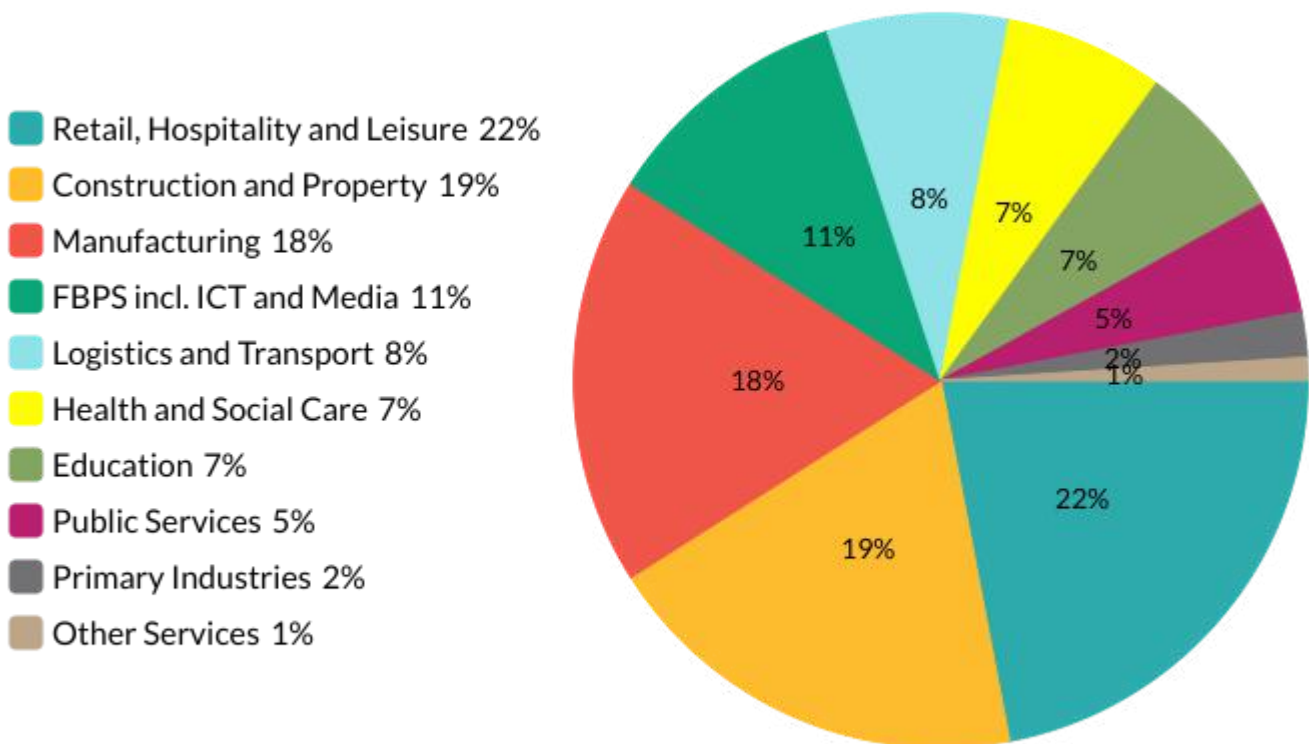
For local councils and business organisations, this report offers insights for workforce development. Using the insights contained in this report about job creation and skills demand, they can encourage stronger partnerships between employers, educators and business representative organisations to ensure 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 Rochdale

- In 2022, retail, hospitality and leisure; construction and property; and manufacturing were the largest three sectors by GVA.
- The GVA of the retail, hospitality and leisure; and construction and property sectors grew steadily between 2016 and 2022.
- The GVA of the financial, business, and professional services (FBPS) sector, including ICT and media, increased by 28.6% between 2021 and 2022, and was the sector that grew the most in this period.



GVA by sector in 2022



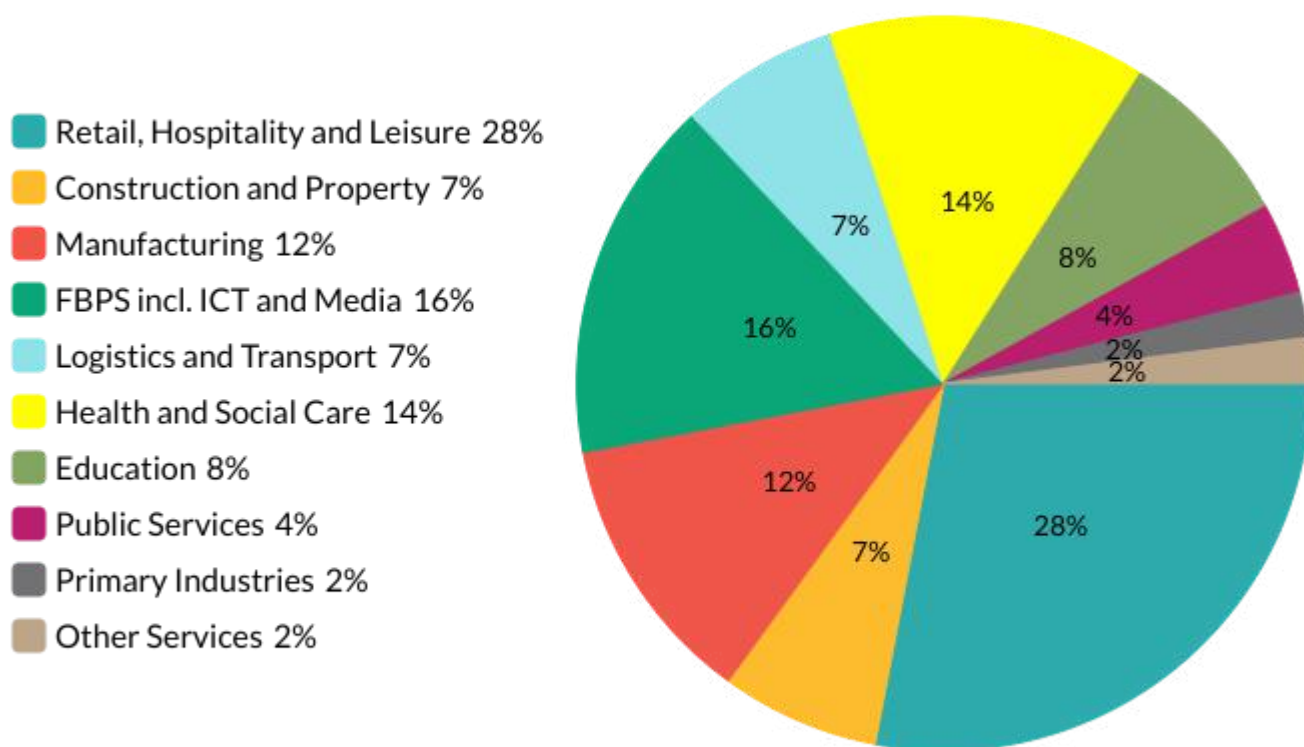
Source: ONS

Employment in Rochdale

Total employment in 2023 - 84,250

- The sectors with the highest number of employees in 2023 were retail, hospitality and leisure; FBPS including ICT and media; and health and social care.
- Other services, primary industries and public services were the sectors with the lowest number of employees in 2023.
- The number of employees working in the health and social care and retail, hospitality and leisure sectors increased steadily between 2020 and 2023

Employment by sector in 2023

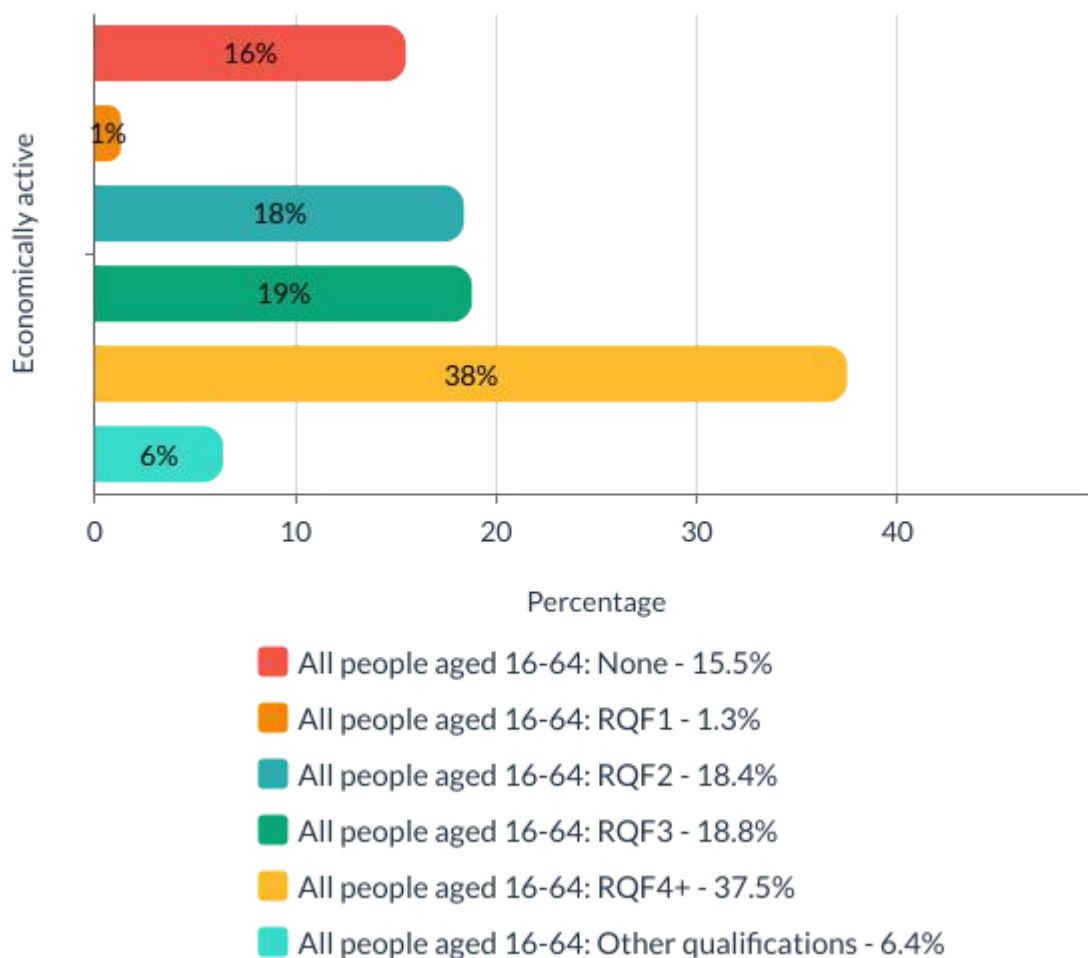


Source: ONS

Economic activity levels in Rochdale

- 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.
- The majority of the population in Rochdale that were economically active had RQF4+ (Regulated Qualifications Framework Level 4) qualifications .
- The economically active population with RQF2 and RQF3 were around 18% and 19% respectively.
- The portion of the economically active population with no qualifications was higher than those with other qualifications.

Percentage of economically active population with qualifications



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	Quantity surveyor
	Technical coordinator
	Site administrator
	Painter
	Site manager
Education	SEN teacher
	Early years teacher
	Director
	English teacher - secondary school
	Design and technology teacher
	Mathematics teacher - secondary school
	Head of department
	Humanities teacher
	Science teacher - secondary school

Occupations in high demand - continued

Sector	Job titles
FBPS including IT	Executive
	Manager
	Software developer
	Brand Ambassador
	Firmware engineer
	Human resources generalist
	IT technician
	Database developer
	Contracts officer
	Sales executive
Health and social care	Social care worker
	Home care aide
	Healthcare support worker
	Nurse unit manager
	General nurse
	Medical administrative assistant
	Ophthalmic nurse
	Home manager
	Service assistant
Manufacturing	Engineer
	Product quality inspector
	QA/QC analyst
	Test technician
	Production engineer
	Electronics engineer
	Development manager
	Technician
	Service engineer

Occupations in high demand - continued

Sector	Job titles
Retail, hospitality and leisure	Store assistant
	Shop manager
	Sous chef
	Shift manager
	Cook
	Chef
	Head chef
	Team leader
	Delivery driver
	Retail sales adviser
	Manager
	Security guard

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
Account manager	Engineer
Production operative	Manager
Teacher	
Engineer	
Manager	

Ongoing/future investment projects

The main investment projects planned for Rochdale over the next five years are presented in this section. This list is not exhaustive and rather includes the projects that have the potential to impact the labour market.

Project	Project description	Project priorities
Hawks View housing development in Castleton	Kellen Homes is building a major residential development in Castleton, called Hawks View.	• Residential development • Sustainability
	Status: Construction work started in early 2025. The development is expected to be completed in 2025.	
	Residential space: The development will consist of 191 houses.	
	Sustainability: The houses will feature charging points for electrical vehicles.	
	Economic impact: It is expected that the new residents will spend around £2.6m per year in the local community.	
Residential development in Littleborough	Bloor Homes has plans to build a residential development in Littleborough which will include community facilities.	• Residential development • Primary school
	Status: There is no expected start or completion date of the construction.	
	Residential space: 315 houses will be built.	
	Education facilities: A primary school will be included in the development.	
Rochdale Train Station	Rochdale Council is seeking to regenerate the area around Rochdale railway station as part of wider rail corridor plans.	• Leisure • Hospitality and retail
	Status: Works are expected to start in early 2025. There is no expected completion date for the wider plans.	
	Community space: A park and a new public square will be built adjacent to the station.	

Ongoing/future investment projects - continued

Project	Project description	Project priorities
Touchstones Cultural Hub	The Touchstones cultural venue in Rochdale Town Centre is being renovated.	• Leisure • Creative and culture
	Community space: The venue will include renewed creative and performance spaces, studios, meeting rooms, galleries and a new dining space.	
	Status: The work is expected to be completed in 2025/early 2026.	
Atom Valley Mayoral Development Zone	The Atom Valley Mayoral Development Zone (AVMDZ) is being developed across three sites in Bury, Rochdale and Oldham. It is a public-private partnership, with an approximate investment of £1bn. Once fully developed, it will form a cluster of companies specialised in advanced manufacturing and materials.	• Advanced manufacturing • Logistics • Sustainable materials • Innovation • Commercial development • Business growth and expansion • Economic expansion • Inward investment • Residential development • Transport Infrastructure
	The three sites are the Kingsway Business Park (Rochdale), Stakehill (spanning Rochdale and Oldham), and the Northern Gateway (spanning Rochdale and Bury).	
	Status: Phase 1 of Northern Gateway is already under construction at South Heywood. The next major step is the construction of the Sustainable Materials and Manufacturing Centre (SMMC) at the Kingsway Business Park. (See below)	
	Commercial space: The project will cover 17 million sq ft of employment space across the three sites. It will mainly host advanced manufacturing, machinery, and advanced materials businesses. It will also include research facilities and business support services.	
	Residential development: The target is to build 7,000 homes within the AVMDZ.	

Ongoing/future investment projects - continued

Project	Project description	Project priorities
Atom Valley Mayoral Development Zone - continued	Transport infrastructure: Highway infrastructure will be upgraded to better connect the Northern Gateway with highways M60 and M62. The project includes increased bus services between the employment sites and Rochdale, Bury and Oldham.	
	Economic impact: The creation of 20,000 jobs is expected across the three Atom Valley sites.	
Sustainable Materials and Manufacturing Centre (SMMC)	The Sustainable Materials and Manufacturing Centre (SMMC) will be built at the Kingsway Business Park. The centre will support manufacturing businesses involved in sustainable materials, advanced machinery and industrial digitalisation.	• Advanced manufacturing • Sustainability • Innovation • Incubation/start up space • Business growth and expansion • Economic expansion
	Status: Planning permission was granted for the SMMC in November 2024. The centre is expected to open its doors in Autumn 2026.	
	Facilities: The SMMC will have an area of 2,724 sq m, and will include laboratories, workshops, design and analysis studios, metrology space, office space, and a lecture theatre.	
Tram-train extension to Heywood and Metrolink to Middleton	Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) has secured funding to undertake business cases for two major rapid transit proposals.	• Transport • Economic growth • Rail and rapid transit engineering
	The first is funding for a tram-train pathfinder scheme.	
	The second relates to Metrolink to Middleton.	
	Status: No specific timescale as further stages of business case development and approvals would be required.	

Ongoing/future investment projects - continued

Project	Project description	Project priorities
Railway Station in Slattocks	Rochdale Council has proposed a new railway station in Slattocks.	• Transport • Economic growth
	Status: Further business case development required.	
	Economic impact: This station would enhance accessibility to existing homes and Stakehill Business Park whilst also providing access to a further 125,000 sq m of new employment floorspace at SBP which is within the AVMDZ.	
New Building at Hopwood Hall College	Hopwood Hall College is looking to construct a teaching building at their Rochdale campus.	• Higher education facilities • Upskilling of residents • Talent development
	Status: There are no official dates for the start or completion of the project.	
	Purpose: The College intends to expand the educational offer for +18-year-old students.	
Star Lakeside Academy	The Star Lakeside Academy high school will open in Littleborough.	• High school
	Educational facilities: The school will have space for 750 pupils.	
	Status: The academy was going to open in 2023, but the opening was delayed for 2027.	

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

Sector: Construction

There are a number of upcoming construction projects, which will keep the demand for construction workers consistently high.

Initiatives/Priorities:

- Places for Everyone (PfE) construction plans - In the PfE plan, it was established that Rochdale would deliver 10,472 homes, 584,883 sqm of new floorspace for industrial uses and 101,002 sqm of new office space by 2039.
- Housing - In the Rochdale Growth Plan 2020-2030, the Council committed to allocate land for 10,000 homes, build 6,000 homes and deliver at least 3,500 homes by 2030.

7,000 homes will be built across the AVMDZ.

- Educational facilities - There are plans to build schools in Heywood, Castleton, Littleborough and Middleton, and a new teaching building at the Hopwood Hall College.
- Transport infrastructure - The plan for the AVMDZ includes building new roads, bus stations and improving existing highway infrastructure around the employment sites.

Proposals are being explored to build a new railway station in Slattocks and bring tram extensions to Heywood and Metrolink to Middleton.

- Industrial parks - The Rochdale Growth Plan 2020-2030 sets out that the Council will expand its strategic industrial sites at Kingsway and Stakehill, further develop the South Heywood employment area and build new industrial units across the borough.

There are plans to build R&D facilities in the AVMDZ through the SMMC.

- Commercial space - In the Rail Corridor Strategy, the Council proposed to develop 4,000 sqm of retail space around the Rochdale station and some commercial space around the Castleton station.
- Offices - In the Rochdale Growth Plan 2020-2030, the Council highlighted that they would build more office spaces across the borough.

Sector priorities - continued

- Heritage projects - The Council is undertaking significant investment in heritage assets such as Rochdale Town Hall, Hopwood Old Hall and Touchstones Cultural Hub.

Shared Prosperity Funding has also supported the development of a Heritage Skills Studio to support restoration work at Rochdale Town Hall.

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, Structural 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, Railway engineer, Conservation builder, Conservation architect, Stained glass conservator, Timber conservator, Stonemason, Social history and decorative arts conservator, Tile restoration	Planning Project management Quantity surveying Construction and site planning Procurement Civil engineering and structural design 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 Repairing and restoring historic structures

Sector priorities - continued

Sector: Retail, Hospitality and Leisure

Initiatives/Priorities:

- According to the Rail Corridor Strategy, new retail and hospitality spaces will be created around the Rochdale and Castleton stations, increasing the number of jobs in the area.
- The Town Hall has now reopened after a significant renovation project and is hosting large scale events and functions.
- The Council considers cultural and creative as a priority industry. Projects like the renovation of the Touchstones Cultural Hub are expected to create job opportunities for local artists.
- The upcoming residential development in Littleborough could lead to the creation of more hospitality services in the town.

Job Creation	Anticipated Skills Requirements
Cleaner Food and Beverage Assistant Kitchen Assistant Chef Waitress/ Waiter Barperson Barista Cashier Delivery Driver Shop Assistant Sales Associate Shift Manager Shop Manager Visual artist Tour guide	Nutrition Food preparation Leadership and team management Sales and customer service Inventory management Store Operations Strong communication and conflict resolution Ability to use POS systems

Sector priorities - continued

Sector: Manufacturing

Initiatives/Priorities:

- With the expansion of Kingsway Business Park and Stakehill Industrial State, along with the development of new industrial units envisioned in the PfE, there will be more opportunities for manufacturing businesses to establish and grow. This will increase the sector's demand for skilled workers.
- In Rochdale, the manufacturing sector has the third highest GVA, accounting for 17.7% of the borough's GVA. This figure highlights that manufacturing is crucial for Rochdale's economic growth and as such, the demand for skilled technicians will remain high.

Job Creation	Anticipated Skills Requirements
Production operative Spray painter CNC machinist Industrial electrician Metal fabricator/welder Electrical/electronics assembler Fitter CAD technician Engineering manufacturing technician Electrical engineering technician Mechanical engineering technician Electrical engineer Mechanical engineer Manufacturing engineer Operations manager Production manager	Manual dexterity Ability to read blueprints Ability to use CAD software 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

Sector priorities - continued

Sector: Advanced Manufacturing

Initiatives/Priorities:

- Advanced manufacturing and the development of the AVMDZ are top priorities for Rochdale Council.
- Rochdale Council and the Rochdale Development Agency are working to bring inward investment in AVMDZ and attract more businesses specialised in advanced manufacturing.
- As a next step of the AVMDZ development, the SMMC will be built in the Kingsway Business Park.
- The focus on advanced manufacturing and upcoming developments will create demand for highly skilled workers in the fields of advanced machinery, sustainable materials and industrial digitalisation.

Job Creation	Anticipated Skills Requirements
3D printing technician Mechatronics technician Robotics technician Mechatronics engineer Robotics engineer R&D engineer Design engineer Materials engineer Computer hardware engineer Software engineer	Ability to use CAD and CAM software Advanced mathematical skills Strong understanding of engineering concepts and principles Understanding of electrical control systems Performing computational modelling of systems Data analysis Research skills (R&D engineer, design engineer and materials engineer)

Sector priorities - continued

Sector: Logistics

Initiatives/Priorities:

- The logistics sector is a major employer in the borough, accounting for 7.1% of Rochdale's workforce (ONS, 2024).
- Logistics will continue to play a future role within the Atom Valley MDZ.

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 licence 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 (FBPS)

Initiatives/Priorities:

- In the Rochdale Growth Plan 2020-2030, the council highlighted that they would support creative, digital and professional services businesses, mainly through the development of office space.
- Alongside this, Rochdale was the local authority with the fourth greatest allocation of office floorspace in the PfE plan.
- Both things will facilitate the creation and establishment of FBPS businesses in the borough. There will be continued demand for professionals in these areas.

Job Creation	Anticipated Skills Requirements
Bookkeeper Accounting assistant Purchase ledger Administrator Credit manager Accountant Management accountant Finance manager Paralegal Solicitor Administrator Receptionist IT technician Software developer Network Operations Centre (NOC) engineer	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 Networking

Sector priorities - continued

Sector: Education

Initiatives/Priorities:

- In the Rochdale Growth Plan 2020-2030, the council committed to build primary and secondary schools to support new housing developments in Heywood, Castleton, Littleborough and Middleton.
- Hopwood Hall College will expand its Rochdale campus facilities, increasing the educational offering for +18 students.
- Rochdale's population experienced a steady growth between 2014 and 2023, with an average annual growth rate of 0.82% (ONS, 2024). Furthermore, the population in the 0-15 age group has increased as well. If these trends are to continue, the demand for education services will increase.
- The new schools, along with population growth, will increase the need for more teachers and related occupations.

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

Sector priorities - continued

Sector: Health and Social Care

Initiatives/Priorities:

- The new housing and commercial developments along the Calder Valley railway line will increase the demand for health and social care services around that area.
- Rochdale's population in the 65+ age group increased slightly over the 2014-2023 period (ONS, 2024). If the population in this age group continues to increase, there will be a greater need for adult care and health services.
- The demand of workers in the health and social care area will remain high.

Job Creation	Anticipated Skills Requirements
Care worker Support worker Healthcare support worker/ Healthcare assistant Nursing associate Nurse Radiographer General Practitioner Recreational therapist Occupational therapist Dental nurse Dental hygienist Dental practitioner Medical and dental specialties	Knowledge on patient safety Check and monitor vital signs Ability to use digital devices and applications to record patients' data Physical strength (for care workers, nurses and roles in between) Knowledge on the specific field of medicine/dentistry Customer service Respond to emergency situations Empathy Sensitivity

Conclusions

This local authority level report offers an in-depth analysis of the current and projected employment landscape within Rochdale. 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 Atom Valley Mayoral Development Zone and the Sustainable Materials and Manufacturing Centre 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 Rochdale-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 Rochdale. 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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