



SOLENT
LOCAL
ENTERPRISE
PARTNERSHIP

ANNUAL REPORT



#solent2050

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1. FOREWORD

Building a brighter future

Anne-Marie Mountifield,
Chief Executive



Uniquely placed to champion our economy's growth prospects and truly global reach, we have taken great strides in the past year to shape our region's recovery from the pandemic.

Standing shoulder to shoulder with private, public and education sector partners, we have risen to the immediate challenge of helping businesses in all parts of our economy to survive through essential support.

As we continue to emerge from the impact of Covid, the task of enabling access to crisis loans and grants has moved to one of helping employers consolidate and come back stronger while laying solid foundations for long-term growth and stability.

It's all about delivery. Our strategic leadership has translated into real, on-the-ground action to improve infrastructure, skills, innovation and sustainability.

As our region's trailblazer for economic development, we led the bid to establish a freeport in the Solent - a once-in-a-generation opportunity to unlock billions of pounds' worth of investment, create

tens of thousands of new jobs and level up our important coastal communities. Our case to government was predicated on sustainable growth and partners working together towards a net-zero carbon economy.

Even before the bid, we had made substantial progress on green investments such as the University of Portsmouth's Centre for Enzyme Innovation, a world-leading resource to develop solutions for the breakdown of plastics.

The Solent has a track record in translating innovation and new technologies into commercial success, and the Solent Freeport will see investment targeted at state-of-the-art growth sectors and ground-breaking approaches to decarbonisation. Partnerships with our three world-class universities and research assets, alongside a dedicated Solent Freeport Green Growth Institute will provide a centre of excellence in green skills and jobs to ensure local communities - and in particular our young people - can benefit from opportunities created. At

the same time, we have created Maritime UK Solent, a unique regional body to represent industry and supply chain employers and support our globally recognised, £5.8 billion maritime sector cluster.

Through the government's Getting Building Fund (GBF), we continued to deliver our £15.9 million to safeguard or create more than 1,800 construction jobs, unlock much-needed home building projects and deliver investment in commercial and green spaces.

This has included an £8 million GBF contribution to the new Horizon Terminal at Port of Southampton. This innovative zero emissions facility directly supports the shift to a cleaner cruise industry by enabling ships to 'plug into' state-of-the-art green shore power. A huge number of jobs and businesses in the Solent depend on having maritime activity that is busy and thriving. Strengthening Southampton's status as the largest turnaround port in Northern Europe, the new terminal demonstrates much-needed confidence that essential infrastructure is in place to recover from the pandemic and re-energise our globally significant port activities.

This annual report contains statistics on seven priority areas that demonstrate our value in making the case to government for the Solent to receive the support and resources it needs. Never has that been more important than in this pivotal time of pandemic recovery.

We look forward to continuing our role as the catalyst for building a brighter future for our communities based on green growth, skills, job creation and sustainable infrastructure.

2. INTRODUCTION

Investment and growth

Solent LEP Chair Brian Johnson explains how our Economic Recovery Plan directly supports the government's Levelling Up ambitions for the UK economy.



deployed most effectively as the economy restarts.

The plan is integral to our overall economic strategy, Solent 2050, which is designed to deliver across our seven key priorities now and in the years to come.

Our region is rich in heritage and culture, with a beautiful and unique landscape of coast and countryside; and a successful cultural and tourism sector will play a key role in our economic recovery from the pandemic. We are working with partners, such as the Southampton 2025 UK City of Culture bid to foster a business environment in which this sector can thrive and I was delighted to hear the bid made the final shortlist. We are proud to back this bid and committed to working with the City of Culture team, highlighting the important role the creative industries play in our regional economy. We are also working with the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, supporting nature-based solutions to mitigate and reduce the impact of nitrates on the Solent, allowing the provision of much-needed housing at the same time as restoring and enhancing the natural environment.

By continuing to work together, establish the Solent Freeport, and build on Maritime UK Solent alongside our other achievements, we will play a key role in helping the Solent navigate its recovery from the pandemic and return to a trajectory of long-term growth while supporting the government's Levelling Up ambitions.

In its Levelling Up White Paper, the government explicitly recognises both the Solent Freeport status and the establishment of Maritime Solent UK. This is only because ministers are confident these initiatives, driven by the LEP in collaboration with partners, will stimulate economic prosperity and benefit local communities hit hard by two years of the pandemic.

Like many coastal communities, parts of the Solent were already witnessing major change as they respond to de-industrialisation, trends in tourism and globalisation.

Establishing a Freeport will enable us to support these communities' development and growth by promoting regeneration, innovation and increased throughput of trade.

We estimate that freeport status for the Solent will help create more than 16,000 jobs in our region and attract £1.6 billion in investment.

In addition, because of the Solent's existing trading links, we expect a further 16,000 jobs and £1.9 billion in GVA to be generated for the rest of the UK.

As the nation's global gateway, Solent Freeport will be critical in ensuring the UK can remain competitive on an international stage.

Our coastal renaissance will also be driven by revitalising communities through the direct input of Maritime UK Solent.

We have established this sector-based cluster and employer representative body specifically to help thousands of businesses in our region to realise their full potential.

Maritime UK Solent will play a key role in levelling up our important coastal communities by encouraging investment, driving innovation, pioneering green technology and skills opportunities for our young people to thrive.

We and our partners in business, education and local government still have much to do on our Economic Recovery Plan.

It is structured on a transition from survival to stability to growth, reflecting how activities and resources can be

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Skills

- **85** institutions are signed up to the Solent LEP Enterprise Adviser Network - this includes alternative provision, SEND and mainstream schools and colleges.
- **98%** of current Enterprise Advisers (EAs) are matched to a Hub school or college.
- **96%** of matched schools completed the Compass self-evaluation tool in the 2021-2022 academic year autumn term (above the national average of 95%)
- The Solent SEND Community of Practice, established September 2020, is a network of career professionals and wider stakeholders who support young people with additional needs to develop life, educational and employment skills.
Currently **23** institutions are involved in the network, this includes alternative provision, SEND and mainstream schools and colleges with a high proportion of students with SEND

Business Support

- The number of businesses accessing high intensity business support increased **over ten times** in the past year
- **£375,000** Awarded in ERDF grant funding (Restart and Recovery & Kickstarting Tourism Grant fund)
- **£15.9m** secured for the Solent via Government's Getting Building Fund, safeguarding or creating over 1800 construction jobs
- **£229,993** Invested through Crowdfunder programme, set up to help small businesses survive COVID impact
- Our team hosted or attended **over 90 events** to help businesses with the impact of the EU exit
- **36%** Female participants in peer networking business support programme, 2% higher than national average
- **98%** Satisfaction rate with peer networking programme; 4% above national average

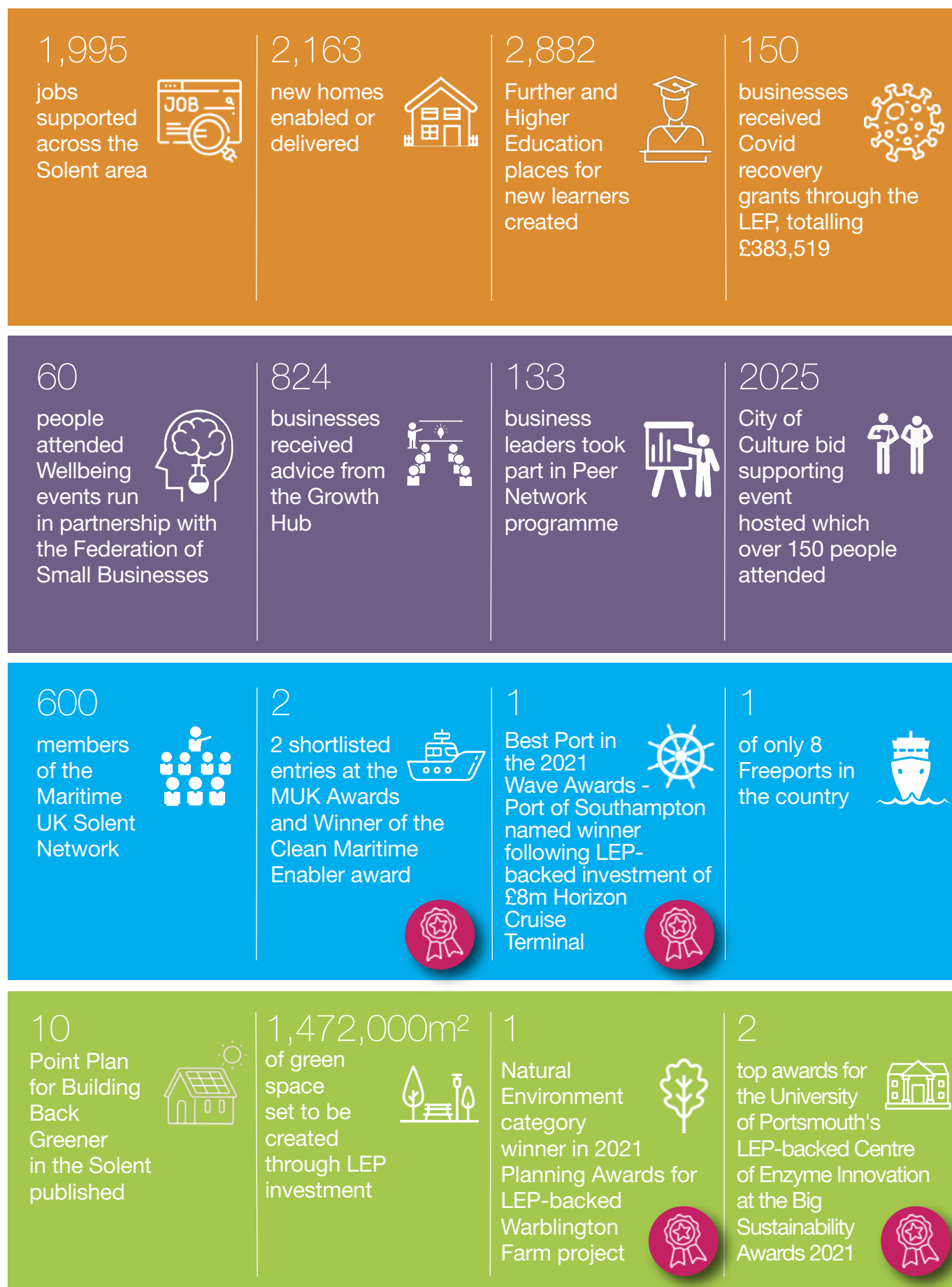
Strategic Sectors

- Solent was **1 of 8** Freeport bids shortlisted by Government
- **30** members of newly established Construction Forum
- **£8m** contribution to new cruise terminal at Port of Southampton
- **429** businesses engaged with Maritime UK Solent
- New National Maritime Systems Centre and Innovation and Collaboration Hub at Portsdown Technology Park opened by The Princess Royal in May 2021, following our **£5m investment** in the new building to facilitate stronger partnership working between the defence sector and SMEs
- A new tenant has been secured for Dunsbury Park leading to the build out of 120,000 sq ft manufacturing unit. This follows our **£4,540,000** investment into the road infrastructure to support the new business park

Net Zero

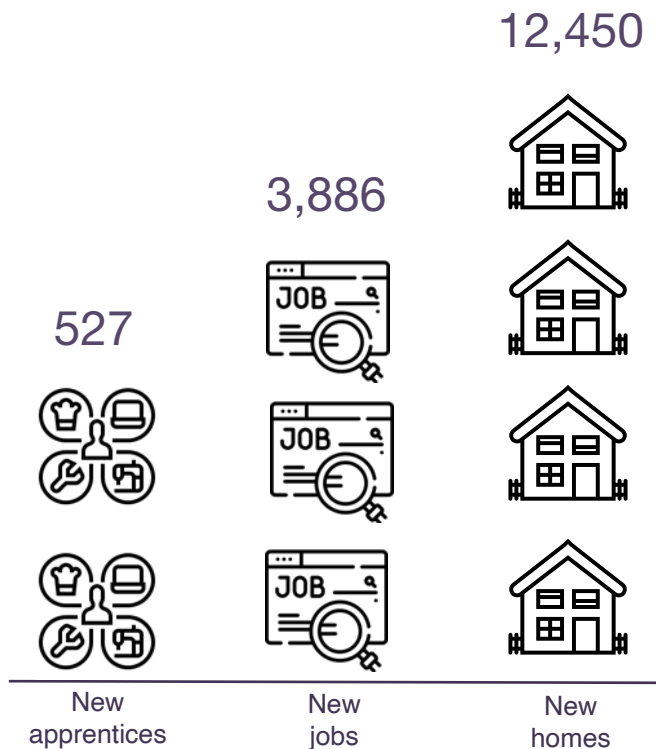
- Improving air quality - **£4.4m** awarded to support development of shore power at the Port of Southampton
- Reducing waste - **£1m** funding towards the Centre for Enzyme Innovation at the University of Portsmouth, delivering transformative enzyme-enabled solutions for the circular recycling of plastics
- Providing green spaces and unlocking housing **£1.35m** investment in strategic green infrastructure through the Solent Recreation Mitigation Partnership (SRMP)
- Encouraging sustainable travel and supporting local tourism - **£700k** towards sustainable transport via the Island Line; new trains and enhanced infrastructure on the Isle of Wight

3. 2021 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

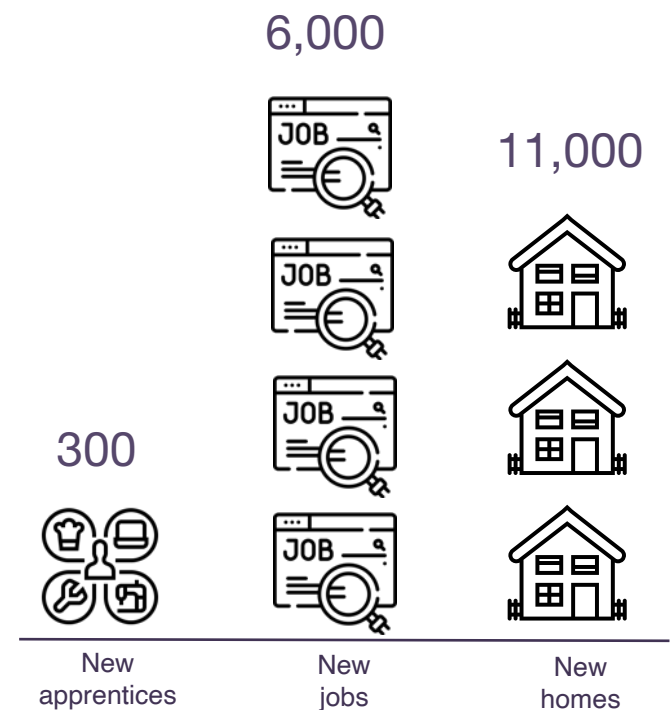


4. SOLENT GROWTH DEAL PROGRESS

Since 2015, Growth Deal investments have seen the creation of:



Towards a 2028 Growth Deal target of:



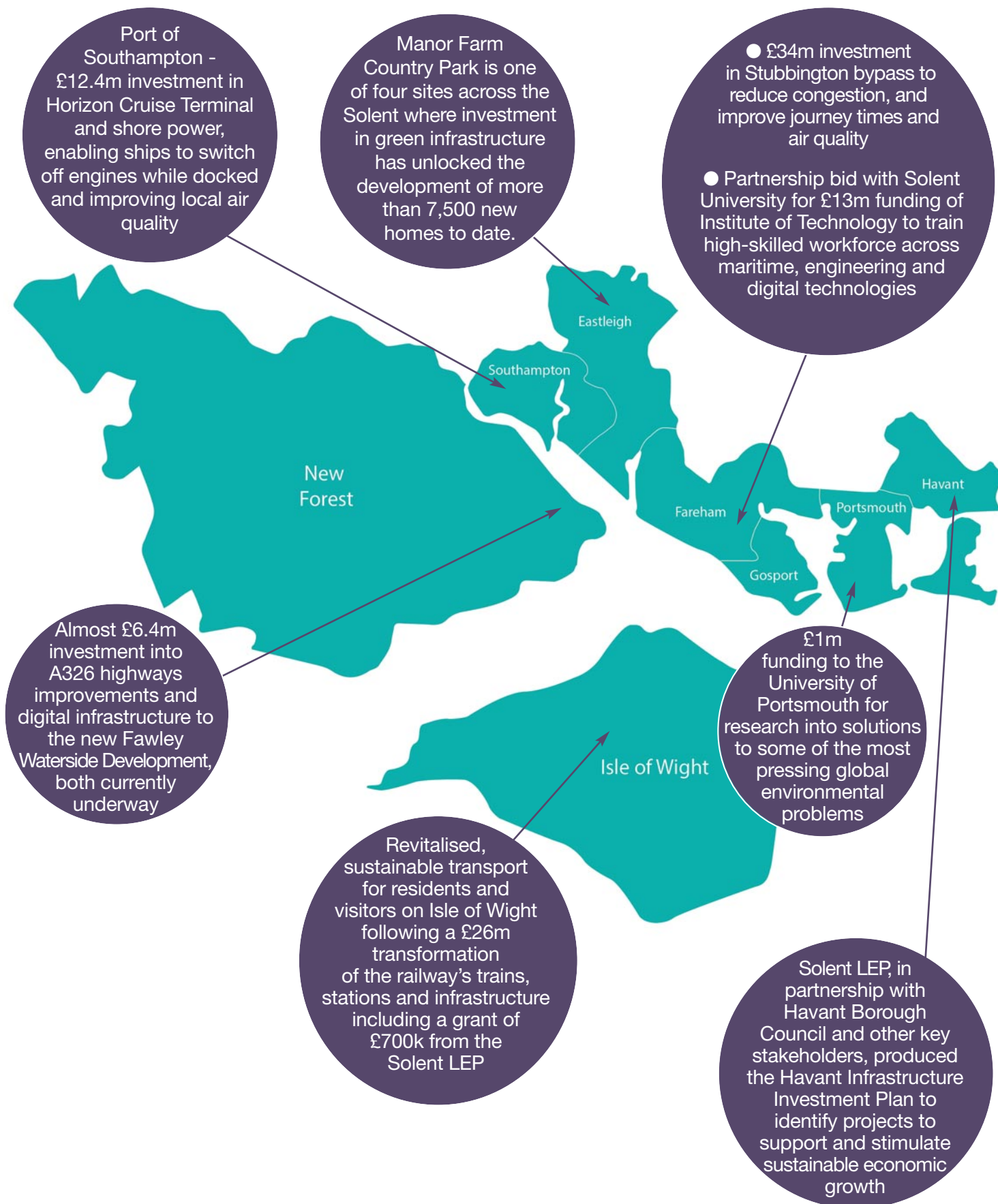
Since 2015, Growth Deal investments have seen the delivery of:

6.2km
of new
cycle ways

933
construction
jobs

31,450
square metres
of land with
reduced flood
risk

5. MILESTONES ACHIEVED IN THE SOLENT DURING 2021



6. SOLENT FREEPORT

The Solent Freeport was one of only eight successful freeport bids in England, announced in the March 2021 Budget. It is a once in a generation opportunity which will unlock billions of pounds' worth of investment, create tens of thousands of new jobs and level up our important coastal communities. As the nation's global gateway, benefitting from a natural geographic advantage that sets it apart from any other UK region while benefiting from exceptional connectivity by rail, road and air, the Solent is in the strongest possible position to expand the UK's trade with new markets following the exit from the EU.

The Solent LEP plays a key role in the development of the Solent Freeport, convening partners and working

with Government. The LEP was instrumental in establishing the Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd, a company limited by guarantee and working with partners to submit the Business Case which is currently being finalised for Government approval.



Watch the video

Watch this **short film** produced to summarise the Solent region's assets and its strengths.



7. SOLENT 2050

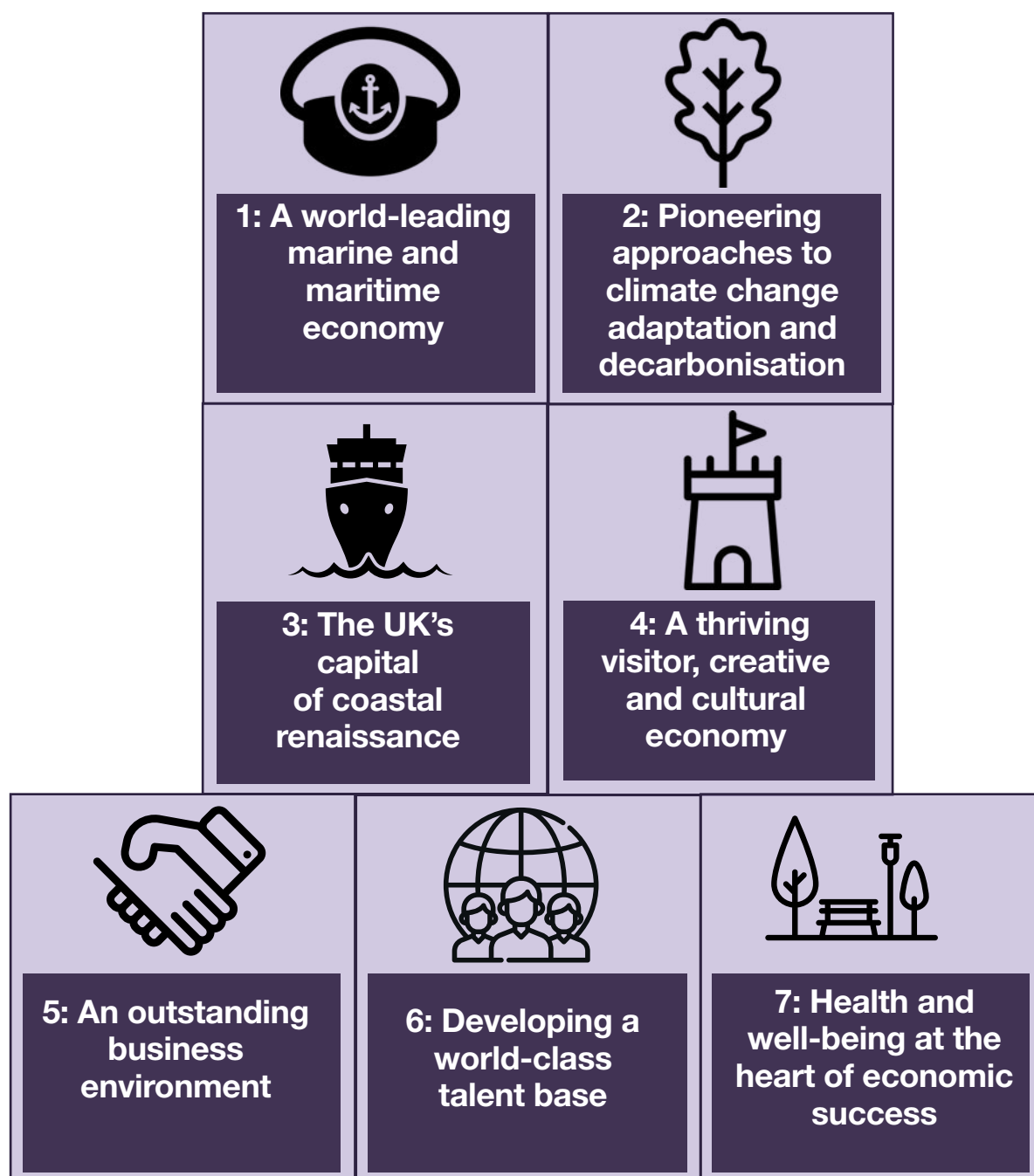
Aligned with the UK Industrial Strategy, the Solent 2050 Strategy is a long-term plan to unleash the Solent's distinctive strengths that can power the local economy to increase productivity and support our communities to prosper in a fast-changing world.

The Solent LEP has been working towards the Strategy's key priorities and has successfully launched, partnered in, and completed related projects, described in more detail in this document.

Solent 2050 unifies the region's rich history as the globally

leading marine and maritime cluster, with its environmental assets and wealth of knowledge capital to increase the economy's prosperity, enhance the thriving visitor economy, and realise its potential for clean growth. This vision is linked intimately to issues central to the Solent economy, coastal communities and how they can adapt to a changing economic landscape; ensuring growth has wide reaching benefits; and that our natural assets are protected from the effects of climate change.

To realise this ambition, we have been focussing on seven priority areas:



OUR SEVEN PRIORITIES

1. A WORLD-LEADING MARINE AND MARITIME ECONOMY

A world-leading marine and maritime economy, building on our existing assets and global competitive advantages to strengthen the UK's international trading relationships.

We have invested more than £20 million in world-class education and training facilities to support our maritime sector, ensuring available skills are matched to the

emerging and future requirements of the industry. We work with leading industry partners such as GKN, BAE Systems, Vestas, QinetiQ and the Royal Navy, alongside our schools, colleges and universities. This contribution to the future of the sector has gained us a prestigious national accolade, the 2021 Maritime UK Future Skills Award.



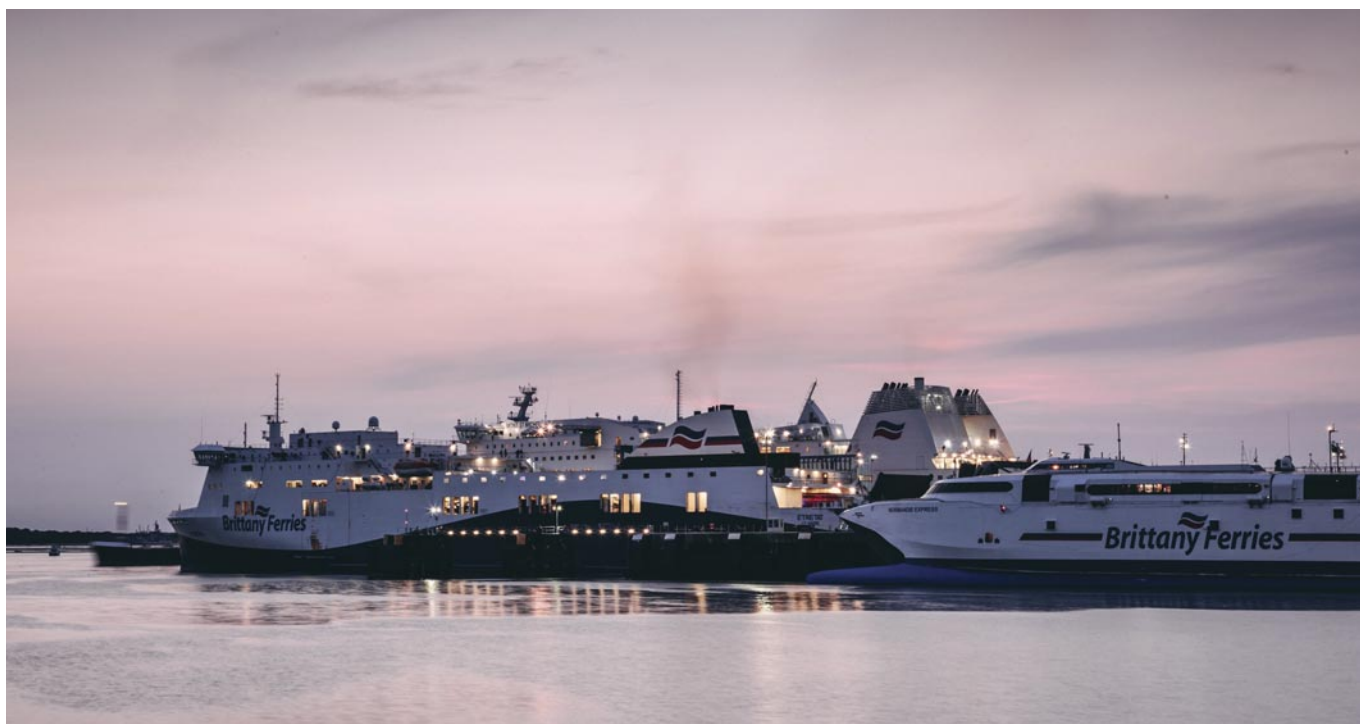
Port of Southampton

Horizon Cruise Terminal: A new £42 million cruise terminal, named 'Horizon', opened in the Port of Southampton in September 2021, with an £8 million grant contribution secured from the Solent LEP. It is the fifth terminal for cruise passengers using Southampton and one which allows suitably equipped ships to plug in to a local shore power supply while in port, enabling ship engines to be turned off and pollution reduced. It also harnesses energy from roof-mounted solar panels.

Shore power: With the aid of a £4.4m investment from the Solent LEP, Associated British Ports is developing a

£7.6million project to enable shore power for cruise ships berthing at the Mayflower and Horizon terminals at the Port of Southampton. It will be the first major commercial berth and cruise port to use this technology in the UK, resulting in a reduction of CO2 emissions, and improving air quality in and around the Port of Southampton.

In 2021, the Port of Southampton was awarded 'Best Port' in the 2021 Wave Awards, which celebrate excellence and innovation in the cruise industry, confirming its status as the UK's capital of cruising and Europe's leading cruise turnaround port.



Portsmouth International Port

We have invested £550,000 of Getting Building Funds which has helped to unlock £21,750,000 of match funds to build a Border Control Post. This allows the port to process goods of animal origin entering the country, in

order to comply with new trade rules following UK Transition. Construction of the new building is well advanced with the facility due to be open in Q4.

Maritime UK Solent

The regional sector-based cluster and employer representative body celebrated its official launch as a limited company in September 2021 during London International Shipping Week and Maritime UK's Coastal Powerhouse Day.

Backed by the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership, Maritime UK Solent works with Maritime UK nationally to bring together the Solent region's maritime strengths and assets to champion, promote and represent this world-class maritime cluster on an international stage. Maritime UK Solent aims to encourage investment, drive innovation, pioneer clean and green technology in the industry, and develop a talent base for future generations to thrive.

Maritime UK Solent has been operating throughout the pandemic to ensure the Solent's array of maritime assets are harnessed and promoted, and that the area continues to be at the forefront of pioneering developments. Regular network meetings encourage

collaboration and sharing of best practice, and, within just over a year, network membership has grown to 675. Around 170 pupils at seven Solent schools have also benefitted from an hour-long lesson on the many and varied maritime career options.

In May 2021, Maritime UK Solent set out an economic recovery plan to champion the Solent's globally significant maritime cluster: **Charting the course to a brighter future.**

Watch the video



Watch our film that introduces Maritime UK Solent and includes words from some of our key stakeholders [here](#)

2. PIONEERING APPROACHES TO CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND DECARBONISATION

Pioneering approaches to climate change adaptation and decarbonisation and establishing real expertise which other regions – nationally and globally – can learn from.

The Solent area's natural geography and industrial strengths provide a major opportunity to pioneer clean growth and create a hub of environmentally friendly innovation. We are committed to helping the Solent economy make the shift to a net zero carbon economy and adapt to the impacts of climate change through investment in sustainable infrastructure, and research and development opportunities.

Our £1m investment in the Industrial Engagement Hub at **the University of Portsmouth Centre for Enzyme Innovation** will accelerate the development of bio-recycling technologies. This pioneering research aims to find a solution to the global plastic pollution crisis by discovering and engineering new enzymes that break down plastics, and then work with industry partners to transform the research into real-world solutions. Construction work is complete on the expanded facilities, with new equipment on its way and the centre due to open in Spring 2022.

We continue to invest in our coastal and rural infrastructure - including:

- £5m in Phase 1 of the Southsea Coastal Flood Defence Scheme. Due for completion this autumn, huge progress has already been made and, once all phases are complete, the scheme will help reduce the risk of coastal flooding for more than 10,000 homes and 2,300 businesses, as well as creating significant employment and housing;
- Investment of up to £2.225m into Isle of Wight Council's phased development of a mixed-use scheme at Branstone Farm - construction of Phase 1 is due for



Watch the video

Watch this film produced to highlight the Solent's green credentials; first shown at the Green Halo event 2021. Click [here](#)

completion by March 2022, ensuring delivery of rural employment units, and unlocking the delivery of housing and a biodiversity park.

As the UK prepared to host COP26 in November 2021, the Solent LEP responded by:

- Publishing the Solent LEP Ten Point Green Plan for Building Back Greener in the Solent, setting out priority areas of opportunity to take our region to Net Zero by 2050. The Plan highlights the innovation capabilities, track record and enterprise in the region that will drive a Green Industrial Revolution in the Solent
- Launching a new investment fund to fuel a green recovery of the Solent economy, the Building Back Greener Loan Fund is for capital projects will help accelerate the commercialisation of low-carbon technology, innovations and systems
- Working with partners to publish a vitally important environmental reference point for the region: The Natural Capital Assessment of the New Forest. This crucial document will enable greater understanding of the area's natural capital and its critical role in creating benefits to our communities, such as flood risk reduction, provision of clean water, clean air, physical and mental wellbeing, all alongside thriving wildlife and natural habitats.
- Hosting the Navigating Net Zero Summit at Venturefest South. The Summit provided an opportunity to focus on clean maritime innovation in the Solent by bringing together key partners to launch the Ten Point Plan for Building Back Greener in the Solent and to engage with the industry in the development of the Solent Maritime Innovation Gateway. **Click this link for more.**



Investing in our environment

We are working with the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust to support them with a project to mitigate nitrate pollution entering watercourses across the Solent. A £2m loan has been agreed to help purchase land on the Isle of Wight to be rewilded, offsetting the nitrate pollution which can be caused by building development in the Solent area. This ensures our natural environment is maintained and can continue to be enjoyed for generations to come.

We are investing over £960,000 from our Local Growth Fund in green infrastructure. Working with PfSH, the Partnership for South Hampshire, and the Solent Recreation Mitigation Partnership (SRMP), we are accelerating the delivery of more than 9,000 planned new homes to meet housing needs and support the economy

with around 3,000 construction jobs. Alver Valley in Gosport, Manor Farm in Hamble, Shoreburs Greenway in Southampton, and Warblington Farm in Havant have all benefitted from significant investment.

Our infrastructure plan for the Borough of Havant includes an innovative mitigation scheme involving the coastal Warblington Farm. By changing its use from dairy farm to nature reserve, the amount of nitrates leaking into the sea through fertiliser and cow waste is dramatically reduced. The rewilding solution creates a means for Solent housing developers to offset their own nitrate pollution, a hurdle that has traditionally left proposals for new coastal homes blocked in the planning system. The scheme has received national acclaim, winning the natural environment category in the prestigious 2021 Planning Awards.

3. THE UK'S CAPITAL OF COASTAL RENAISSANCE

The UK's capital of coastal renaissance, harnessing new technologies and approaches to revitalise coastal communities and ensure growth is inclusive.

Levelling up our coastal communities has never been more important – the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated and highlighted the challenges they already face in responding to de-industrialisation, changes in tourism and globalisation. We know that, while our coastal communities define much of the heritage, culture and future potential of the Solent, the social and economic impact of the pandemic has been felt acutely and these communities require specific targeted support in both the short and medium-term. We will accelerate local infrastructure investment at the same time as pioneering the next generation of coastal-urban living by adopting innovative practices and smart technologies in terms of improved transport and digital connectivity.

We are committed to improving infrastructure which will support these communities, including:

- Continued investment of nearly £34m into the construction of a new bypass for Stubbington, which is near completion, to ease congestion and improve access to the Gosport peninsula;
- The Isle of Wight Island Line reopened in November

2021 following a £26m transformation of the railway's trains, stations and infrastructure which included a grant of £700,000 from the Solent LEP, making rail a more attractive and sustainable travel option on the Isle of Wight. This will result in more punctual, reliable trains and better connections to ferry services, supporting local residents, businesses and tourism;

- Continued investment in improvements to both digital and transport infrastructure in for access to the proposed Intelligent Merchant City, including £6.4m investment into the A326 and digital improvements which will provide excellent fibre broadband for residents and businesses on site.

The pandemic has demonstrated, without doubt, that digital connectivity is vital to our economic future and we will be working with partners explore how to better connect our coastal communities, including the development of a Digital Infrastructure Action Plan for the New Forest.

Work continues on the major North Whiteley development where over 300 houses have already been created, over two kilometres of new road is in place to service the new homes, and the first of two new primary schools opened in September 2021. Solent LEP is contributing £14m towards the public highways infrastructure to enable these much-needed new dwellings to be created.



4. A THRIVING VISITOR, CREATIVE AND CULTURAL ECONOMY

A thriving visitor, creative and cultural economy, capitalising on the Solent's superb natural beauty and rich maritime history

Our first major capital investment after the Covid outbreak was a £3.6 million contribution towards the development of a purpose-built, £5.1 million Centre for Creative and Immersive eXtended Reality (CCIXR) at the University of Portsmouth. Part of the Faculty of Creative and Cultural Industries, CCIXR will be the UK's first fully integrated facility for driving innovation in virtual, augmented and extended realities. It will house 12 laboratories with specialist equipment for business engagement, technical support, applied research and skills training. CCIXR will support 800 businesses with research and development and collaboration, and support 500 new learners through 17 new courses and workshops. The work is already underway with the new equipment in place and the final new laboratories will be formally opened in Spring 2022. March 2021 saw the first showcase of the new facilities through a joint project with the Royal Shakespeare Company and Manchester International Festival, 'Dream:Online'.

The hospitality, leisure and tourism sectors were among those hardest hit by the economic impact of the pandemic. Through the Solent LEP, businesses in the visitor economy were able to continue to access grants and loans available via the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), totalling nearly £160,000 in ERDF grants for the visitor economy and £250,000 for SMEs in the wider economy.

We also made available a bridging facility under the Restart, Restore and Recover Loan Fund, making £2.75million available to successful applicants throughout the pandemic. This fund provided bridging loans for businesses providing essential or 'economic lifeline' services for businesses unable to access other government support such as the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS).

Among the businesses supported through this loan facility were Vectis Ventures, parent company of the Isle of Wight tourist attractions Blackgang Chine near Ventnor and Robin Hill Country Park in Newport, and Greenclose Holdings, who run a number of hotels including Careys

Manor Hotel in Brockenhurst and The Montagu Arms Hotel in Beaulieu. The loan ensured these businesses were able to safeguard jobs during the pandemic, and continued to operate with COVID-secure measures in place, enabling the businesses to thrive in spite of the challenges of the past two years.

Throughout the pandemic, our Crowdfund Solent programme helped a number of businesses working in the Solent's visitor sector, safeguarding jobs and ensuring the businesses were in well placed to recover, including:

- New Forest Activities who engaged with their customers and reached out to potential new clients by offering the outdoor activities for purchase as reward vouchers which could be redeemed once the centre re-opened.
- The Black Box Theatre group was left under a cloud of uncertainty as the pandemic wreaked havoc on the UK's cultural sector; but with invaluable support from the Solent LEP's Crowdfund Solent, one of the South's leading small professional touring theatre companies managed to put the show back on the road in 2021 with an outdoor production of Noel Coward's Blithe Spirit.

We are supporting the Southampton City of Culture 2025 bid by convening an event for all those working in the creative industries - showcasing the region's strengths and its diversity; highlighting the potential for growth of the creative industries in the region; providing opportunities for those within the industries for networking, business support and access to a creative industry business ecosystem; and to help foster an environment in which the creative industries can thrive. The Southampton bid has made the final shortlist of four, and we will continue to work with the team on the final phase of the bid, supporting the Solent's creative industries.

In the Solent we have a raft of small, medium and larger businesses strengthening and shaping the creative DNA of the region.

From designing games, or inspiring the next GB athlete, to training film producers, its all happening here.

We want to bring our creative industries together, to celebrate their enormous achievements and contributions, we want to increase young people's awareness of opportunities all around them and most of all we want to support A strong creative eco-system in the region, now and in the future.

Anne-Marie Mountifield
SOLENT LEP, CHIEF EXECUTIVE

5. DEVELOPING A WORLD-CLASS TALENT BASE



Developing a world-class talent base, helping people at all stages of their career build the skills they need to respond to new technology and drive an innovative knowledge-based economy

As the economy recovers, attracting talent at the same time as ensuring people are supported to find employment opportunities and build the skills at all stages of their career is critical to the Solent's productivity.

We continue to work with local partners to provide opportunities for people to up-skill and re-skill, and support and accelerate the delivery of skills and training infrastructure projects, both traditional and digital. This includes partnership working led by Solent University for a bid for the £13m Maritime Engineering and Digital Institute of Technology to meet the Solent region's future workforce needs across maritime, engineering and digital technologies. This follows our highly successful 2018 investment of over £7m in the Warsash School of Maritime Science and Engineering which continues to provide state-of-the-art training for 235 cadets and maritime employees to date - with that number due to double over the next year - at the UK's largest ship and port simulation centre. We are also delivering, in partnership, the **Solent Skills Action Plan** monitored by our Skills Advisory Panel to monitor and promote its delivery.

The LEP worked with Maritime UK Solent, Hampshire Chamber of Commerce and the Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce to be part of a Local Skills Improvement Plan Trailblazer and Strategic Development Fund Pilot for the region.

Throughout the pandemic, the Solent LEP's Skills team, working with the Careers and Enterprise Company, have continued to find ways for young people to access careers events. Working with Speakers for Schools and employers across the region, the Solent LEP encouraged businesses to engage with young people through virtual work experience.

[Click here to find out more.](#)

We have established Construction Solent to support the construction sector as the regional sector-based cluster and employer representative body, where employers, trainers and local authorities collaborate to solve some of the main challenges facing the industry. It has been set up to help shape the future success of the industry in the region; and, despite being in its early stages, already has 30 members representing employers and education providers who regularly discuss new developments in the sector, share challenges and collaborate to find solutions. This work builds on our success supporting the construction sector including a contribution to CTEC (Civil engineering Training Centre) which was awarded £2.8m Local Growth Deal funds in 2018.

Through the Skills Advisory Panel, the Solent's skills community has come together to develop a skills strategy and action plan to implement a more integrated business and skills offer. Much progress has been made by building on existing, successful partnerships such as the Solent Careers Hub and Solent Growth Hub, mobilising through the LEP's £1bn economic recovery road map to prioritise key investments to stimulate skills development, business growth and innovation.

This has driven and underpinned the direction of travel to a more integrated business and skills offer for the area over the course of the last 12 months, as a direct result of responding to the ongoing economic and labour market impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Solent has recently been successful in securing an Institute of Technology (IOT) through the Wave 2 opportunity. The £13m Maritime Engineering and Digital

Watch the video



Watch a short film produced in support of this successful bid **[here](#)**

Institute of Technology will ensure the Solent region transitions to a higher technically skilled economy. It will fuel the growth of the UK's globally leading Solent maritime cluster as it makes a paradigm shift towards autonomy and green fuels, delivering the Government's ambitions in the Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution, Freeports, MoD investment, Maritime 2050, and the levelling-up agenda.

We have seen the Covid-19 pandemic accelerate longer term economic drivers of skills demand (for instance around increased autonomy and greater digitisation) so looking ahead this underlines the important shift towards an increasingly highly skilled technical workforce that our skills community in the Solent must respond to. Our IOT will be a key enabler in this respect, and we look forward to working in partnership with Solent University, Fareham College and key local employers such as ABP, Teemil and The Royal Navy to deliver this transformational opportunity for the Solent.

The Solent Apprenticeship & Skills Hub is an essential resource for employers wishing to find out how apprenticeships and skills training can benefit their organisation and where to find advice and guidance. Over the past 12 months, the service has evolved from the successful Solent Apprenticeship Hub to provide a broader, more holistic and simplified point of access for employers, parents/guardians, training providers and individuals interested in starting an exciting new career, with Hub advisers providing impartial advice around all things apprenticeships and skills. It has helped to establish a 'no wrong door' approach to business engagement and skills development across the Solent that can support lifelong learning and address issues of aspiration and awareness.

Much like the Careers Hub, the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Community of Practice (CoP) aims to:

- Build a community of practice that encourages collaboration
- Evaluate the effectiveness of careers programmes and related activities
- Provide a platform to signpost to information, sources of support and opportunities for professional development
- Develop projects to support employer engagement opportunities.

The Solent LEP SEND CoP is a Skills Builder Impact Organisation. In collaboration with Skills Builder the SEND CoP aims to ensure that current provision can be aligned with the Expanded Skills Framework.

A number of initiatives have been implemented to support



this, including:

- The development of skills related resources with Great Oaks College, the Compass School and Wyvern School
- Piloting the Talentino Careers at Every Level Programme with St George's School, Isle of Wight.
- Successful Inclusions bids with the Careers & Enterprise Company: Supported Work Experience with the Minstead Trust and Post 16 SEND Provision Brochure with Portsmouth City Council.
- Co-delivery of two SEND specific conferences in collaboration with South Central LEP colleagues (EnterpriseM3, GFirst and Swindon & Wiltshire) 'Improving careers outcomes for young people with SEND' and 'Using labour market information (LMI) to support career decision-making'. The third, Engaging with Employers is scheduled for 15 March 2022.
- Solent SEND CoP also contributed content for the Year 13 'Your Future, Your Choice' and Year 11 'Your Future, Your Options' transition booklets developed by the Hampshire Careers Partnership. (Both are available in web and printable versions <https://www.skillsandparticipation.co.uk/course/view.php?id=570§ion=2>)

6. HEALTH AND WELLBEING AT THE HEART OF ECONOMIC SUCCESS

Our new economic strategy for the Solent, Solent 2050, articulates that we want the Solent to be the best place to live, work and trade in the UK. Our vision is that the Solent in 2050 will be:

The global leader in maritime and climate change adaptation, with towns and cities that are fantastic places to live and trade, along with opportunities for all our communities to flourish.

To realise this ambition, one of our strategic priorities is to put Health and wellbeing at the heart of economic success, through a focus on building strong, healthy and resilient communities that can prosper in a fast-changing world.

The Covid-19 pandemic has exposed the impact that health and wellbeing inequalities have on the economy more sharply than ever before. We continue to promote positive health and wellbeing for employers and employees, including through our partnership with partnering the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) delivering the Business Wellbeing Scheme which includes access to one-to-one support and advice, and referrals for when additional support is needed and free webinars: <https://solentlep.org.uk/growth-hub-business-support/solent-business-wellbeing-support/>

We also raise awareness of the many existing resources available to promote positive mental health among businesses and employees across the Solent through our Solent Growth Hub, including resources developed by Public Health England to help employers take positive actions to build a culture that champions good mental health and to better understand how to help those who need more support. We continue to support local Public Health reach businesses in the Solent with important Covid information through our direct communications which regularly reach 7,500 business in the region.

The importance of the natural environment on positive health and wellbeing has also been brought into sharp relief by the pandemic.

The Solent LEP continues to support strategic investment in our environment, as demonstrated by both the Ten Point Plan for Building Back Greener in the Solent and the Building Back Greener Loan Fund.

This builds on our strong track record of investing in green infrastructure including the Solent Recreation Mitigation Programme which set out to explore opportunities to open up green spaces to communities.

Through this, we are alleviating pressure on the Solent's



unique protected shoreline habitats by making alternative green spaces more accessible across the region:

- **Alver Valley Country Park** - The project partly funded by the LEP created well-designed gateway signs, associated signage and interpretation, and both new and refurbished car parks. Most importantly the project has facilitated increased use of the park for dog walkers, thereby deflecting recreational pressure from internationally important habitats.
- **Manor Farm** - The LEP funded project saw the purchase of land to increase the overall area of Manor Farm Country Park and to offer opportunities for the public to access the Manor Farm Country Park itself. These improvements have resulted in increased visitor numbers to the area as well as generating enhancements in ecological biodiversity.
- **Shoreburs Greenway** - The LEP investment in improving signage and pathways has proved to be popular with local residents as they are now able to walk dogs and access the new play area on Mayfield Park in all weather conditions; previously it was unusable in wet weather. The accessibility of the greenway attracted a large number of families during the lockdown, providing much needed recreational relief from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

7. AN OUTSTANDING BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

The Solent LEP is committed to supporting a business environment that encourages innovation, fosters collaboration and enables businesses of all sizes and sectors to thrive. Our message is clear – the Solent area is open for business.

Watch the video



Watch this short film summarising some of the Solent LEP's Growth Hub's key achievements for 2021. Click [here](#)

Our Growth Hub team has helped thousands of businesses as they navigated through the pandemic and new trading arrangements with the EU with intensive and focussed support programmes, providing advice, connecting businesses to the right help, and providing information on funding opportunities.

Figures for 2020/21 showed that the number of new businesses receiving support during this time more than doubled to 2,309, with a further 307 receiving intensive support.

The LEP's Peer Network programme reached 133 business leaders this year. This national programme of peer-to-peer networking is delivered locally through the LEP using expert facilitators and is aimed at SME leaders, managers and decision makers who want to grow and develop their organisation for future success. It offers businesses in the Solent the opportunity to learn from other's experience and build trusted connections.

We also established our Green and Sustainable Business Hub - offering information and advice to help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) make changes to move towards Net Zero as part of a global effort to reduce greenhouse gases - saving local businesses money while



reducing and mitigating against the impacts of climate change.

During 2021, we reached key milestones resulting from Natural Enterprise administered grants on behalf of the Solent LEP to support Rural SME businesses, initially on the Isle of Wight, and since mid 2020 in the New Forest: almost 100 projects on the Isle of Wight have benefitted from £1.3m in grants leveraging over £2m in private sector match. For New Forest Rural small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) over £130,000 in grants have been allocated to 24 projects leveraging an additional £147,000 in private sector matched funds. More than 450 jobs have been created or safeguarded by these projects.

Our investment through the Local Growth Deal to an extension in Fareham Innovation Centre at the Solent Enterprise Zone has created 233 jobs and safeguarded a further 176 jobs to date.

8. SOLENT LEP BOARD

BOARD MEMBERS



9/9*

ANNE-MARIE MOUNTIFIELD
CEO and Executive Director



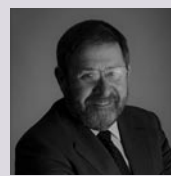
9/9*

BRIAN JOHNSON
Chair and Business Director



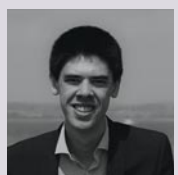
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GRAHAM BARNETSON
Business Director**



4/5*

CLLR GRAHAM BURGESS
Local Authority Director



4/5*

CLLR BEN DOWLING
Local Authority Director



4/5*

CLLR DANIEL FITZHENRY
Local Authority Director



7/9*

GRAHAM GALBRAITH
Higher Education Director



4/5*

CLLR EDWARD HERON
Local Authority Director



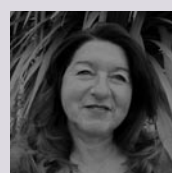
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SJ HUNT
Deputy Chair and Business Director**
FFPMG Chair



8/9*

NICK LOADER
Business Director**



5/5*

CLLR LORA PEACEY-WILCOX
Local Authority Director



9/9*

RACHAEL RANDALL
Business Director** SAP
& SERCOM Chair
Diversity Champion



7/9*

JO SAWFORD
Business Director**



7/9*

PAULA SWAIN
Business Director** and
SME Champion



6/6*

ALISON WILSON
Business Director**



8/9*

DAVID YOUNGS
Business Director**

* Solent LEP Board Meetings attended throughout 2021

** Independent Non-Executive Directors, as outlined in the Corporate Governance Code 2018

9. SOLENT LEP GOVERNANCE

The role of the Board

The LEP Board keeps us focused on our objectives, ensuring that we fund the right projects and that our internal controls are effective. Our executive and non-executive directors provide strategic leadership, challenge and support, and contribute to the development of one of the most successful LEPs in the country. The Chair is responsible for the Board's overall effectiveness in directing the LEP. Under risk management, the Board carries out a robust assessment of emerging and principal risks and an update is reported and acted on at each Board meeting. In 2021 there were nine Board meetings. The Solent LEP Chair is elected to the Board by businesses in the Solent area that have joined the LEP as business members.

SME representation

The Solent LEP Board had four SME business representatives appointed during 2021 from the business membership. They are SJ Hunt, Rachael Randall, David Youngs and Alison Wilson. While appointments are made at the discretion of our membership in line with our Articles of Association, the Board has agreed to establish by-laws in relation to Business Director appointments to ensure there is always at least one direct SME representative. In addition to direct representation, the Board has identified Board Director Paula Swain to represent and engage with the SME business community.

Oversight and accountability

We have extremely robust and transparent governance arrangements to ensure our investments deliver value for money and tangible economic outputs. That means monitoring new jobs, housing, employment space, improved skills and infrastructure, and increased levels of private sector investment.

Portsmouth City Council (PCC) is our accountable body, responsible for ensuring the proper use and administration of funding, all of which fall under the annual audit of the local authority's accounts. PCC also ensures that decisions are made in accordance with the National Local Growth Assurance Framework.

The formal annual accounts for each financial year are typically signed off by the Board each autumn. We have agreed timescales and operating practices to support the effective implementation of decisions, which are described in the protocol and service support agreement between us and PCC.

Equality and Diversity

We listen, engage and champion our local people, from all parts of our area and without bias.

The Solent LEP is committed to having a Board which embraces diversity and promotes equality of opportunity within the Solent economy. In particular, the Solent LEP is committed to improving the gender balance and representation of those with protected characteristics on its board. The LEP has achieved its aim that women make up at least one third of the board by 2020 and is now seeking to achieve equal representation by 2023, ensuring the Local Enterprise Partnership board is representative of the businesses and communities they serve. The Solent LEP's Board is currently made up of 16 members, with the percentage of women on the Board at 41% during 2021.

Our Diversity champion, Rachel Randall, says "The LEP itself was founded in the belief that our local community and area is Together Stronger."

In accordance with the processes and procedures of our accountable body, Portsmouth City Council, the LEP have adopted the Integrated Impact Assessment (formerly Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)) Toolkit. In addition to this, the LEP's own Equality and Diversity Policy is **available here**.

Our values

In order to ensure continued best practice, Solent LEP Directors are provided with independent non-executive development on a regular basis. This has been strengthened during 2021 with the introduction of mandatory, externally delivered, training for Board Members at induction and on an annual basis. All Board Members and LEP Officers must undertake a full induction and training within the first quarter that they are in post. The Board have also established new corporate values which shape the LEPs activity. These are:

- We support businesses to grow, individuals to succeed and communities to flourish
- We are open, transparent and honest and work without bias, ensuring that an evidence-based approach drives our decision making
- We lead by example and value leadership which is ambitious, fair and objective
- We embrace diversity as an essential component in the way we work
- We nurture the talent, innovation and creativity of those we work with
- We believe trust and mutual respect are essential for teamwork and collaboration.

Monitoring our values

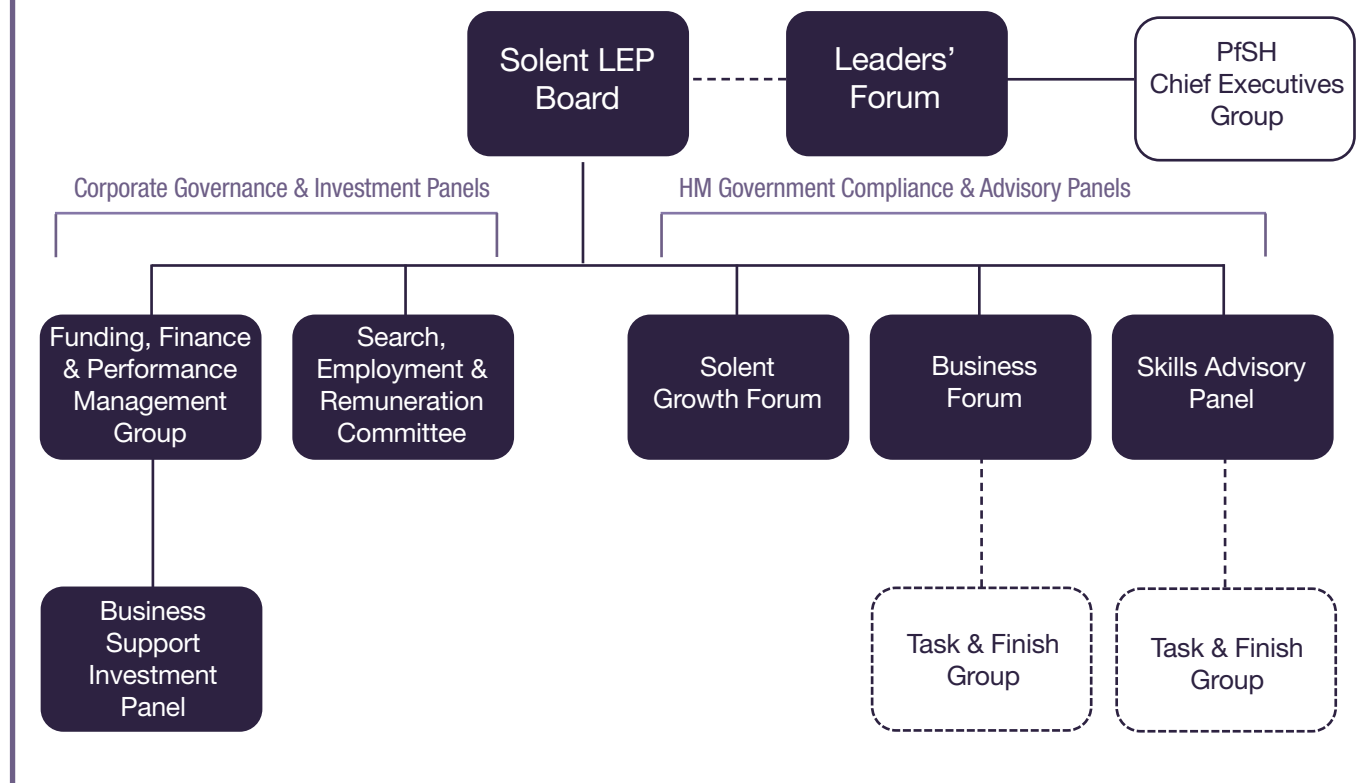
Our Board continually assesses and monitors our culture, policies, practices and behaviour to ensure they are aligned with our purpose, values and strategy.

In support of this, we operate a number of decision-making and advisory panels, which make sure that we spend funding in the areas that need them most. These panels bring business leaders together to take forward priority

areas of work. We work hard to promote a culture of openness, fairness and debate. The LEP and PCC have agreed a risk management framework for funded schemes, to inform monitoring in line with central government standards. This framework is available in section 5 of the Solent LEP's 'Advice to Scheme Promoters on the Development of Business Cases' and is monitored at each Board Meeting.



The chart below shows the overarching governance structure established by the Solent LEP



Workplace

Our Search, Employment and Remuneration Committee plays a vital role in supporting our executive team by ensuring formal and transparent procedures are in place for developing employment policy. It is in charge of all in-house employment issues, including organisational structure, appointments, performance targets, pay, bonuses, service contracts and succession. Information about salaries is published on our website. The committee makes recommendations to the Board in relation to the recruitment process for Board members and ensures there are robust succession planning processes in place.

Championing and Scrutinising the Growth Deal

Through the game-changing Solent Growth Deal we have, so far, invested £120 million in a wide range of projects in our economy, supporting businesses, creating and maintaining jobs, and attracting additional private sector investment. To champion and scrutinise our work under the Solent Growth Deal, we have established an external panel, the Solent Growth Forum, which offers expert advice, recommendations and guidance, ensuring Government can be confident that there are strong underpinning local authority partnership arrangements in place to facilitate joint decision-making and collaboration on growth and economic

development. The Solent Growth Forum (SGF) provides an external scrutiny panel for the Solent LEP, with involvement of all Local Authorities within the Solent area. SGF meetings are open to the public and deputations can be made. The Solent Growth Forum ensures that the operation of Solent LEP continues to be subject to external scrutiny and expert oversight. Associate membership of the forum is available to all neighbouring local authorities recognising the contribution that these areas make to the Solent economy.

Investment guidance

Our Business Support Investment Panel provides expert advice and guidance to inform our approach to SME funding support, and makes decisions relating to our range of small business investment programmes. The panel met six times in 2021.

Finance focus

Our Funding, Finance and Performance Management Group reports and provides advice to our full Board of directors. Appointed by the Board, the group focus on the detail behind the finances and helps to interrogate our approach to performance management, including oversight of our annual internal audit plan. The group met four times in 2021.

Democratic mandate

To strengthen our local authority engagement and enhance democratic accountability in our growth agenda, we operate a Leaders Forum made up of the leaders and senior officers of all the local authorities in our region.

Skills advice

Launched last year, and building on the success of our Employment and Skills Board, our Skills Advisory Panel pools the leadership and knowledge of employers and education providers to help shape our approach to skills and response to labour market needs. Members work together to understand and address local challenges, both immediate and longer term, across our key industries. The panel met three times in 2021 and published a Refresh of the **Solent Skills Action Plan and Local Skills report** in January 2022.

Maritime UK Solent

Building on our partnership with Maritime UK¹ at a national level, the Solent LEP incorporated Maritime UK Solent Limited as a Company Limited by guarantee in September 2021. The company is a wholly owned subsidiary of Solent Local Enterprise Partnership Limited and forms part of a network of regional maritime clusters that foster collaboration among business, academia and local government in the UK's maritime regions and provide leadership to ensure the continued growth and prosperity of Solent's maritime sector.

The Solent LEP have worked with Maritime UK to establish a dedicated arrangement in relation to Marine and Maritime to reflect the role of Solent as a key regional cluster as set out in HM Government's **Maritime 2050** strategy and in

accordance with the Solent LEP's prominent role in Maritime UK at a national level.

The Maritime UK Solent Economic Recovery Plan has been published and highlights its focus on continued economic recovery and growth in key areas where we can add significant value. This document can be viewed **here**.

Anne-Marie Mountifield is the Chair of Maritime UK Solent and the LEP's Board Representative on the National Maritime UK Council, and Graham Barnettson is the Nominated Vice Chair of Maritime UK Solent Board, and maritime lead from the Solent LEP Board, thereby cementing the link with the Solent LEP and Solent 2050 strategy.

Solent Freeport Consortium Limited

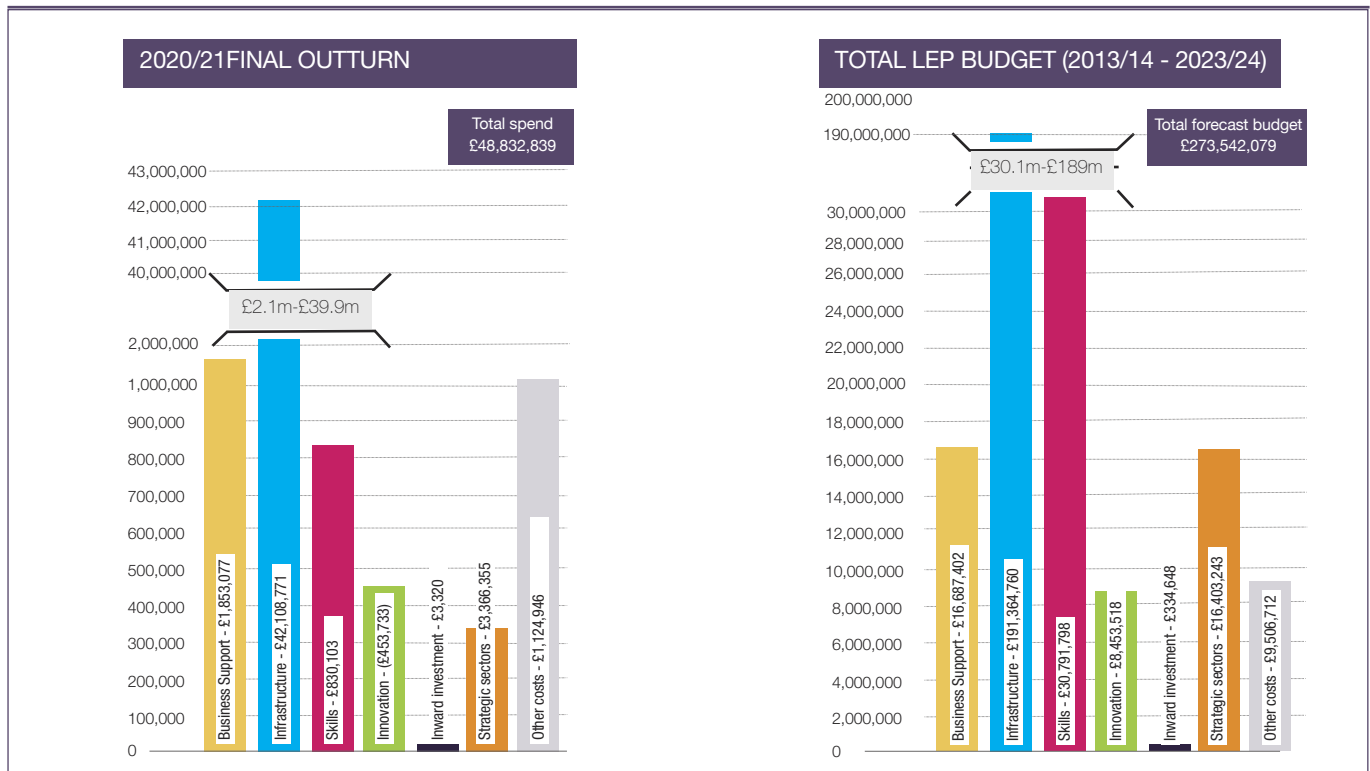
The Solent Freeport Consortium Limited is a company limited by guarantee and was incorporated on 15 March 2021. Details on the Governance arrangements for the Company are set out in the Company's Articles of Association, which are available [here](#).

The company has been established in response to the Government announcing the Solent as one of just eight supported Freeport bids in England, as announced at the March 2021 budget. Freeports are a flagship government programme designed to play an important part in the UK's post-COVID economic recovery and contribute to realising the levelling up agenda, bringing jobs, investment and prosperity to some of the most deprived communities across the four nations of the UK with targeted and effective support.

Paula Swain is the LEP's representative on the Solent Freeport Consortium Limited.

1. Further information on Maritime UK can be found at: <https://www.maritimeuk.org/>

Financial Forecasts to 2023/24



Sources of funding

Source of Funding – £	2020/21 Actual Expenditure	2013/14 - 2020/21 Actual Expenditure	Total LEP Budget (2013/14 - 2023/24)
Other Government Funding Programmes	£864,536	£30,661,822	£31,974,525
Solent Growth Deal	£38,201,086	£144,922,106	£181,007,257
Solent Growing Places Fund	£539,033	£14,643,792	£31,228,891
Central Government Funding	£753,480	£5,675,658	£6,682,080
Other	£555,949	£1,721,175	£3,696,870
Local Government Funding	£0	£343,900	£343,900
Getting Building Fund	£7,368,044	£7,368,044	£17,955,000
European Funding	£550,713	£642,303	£653,556
Outturn and Forecast Totals	£48,832,839	£205,978,799	£273,542,079

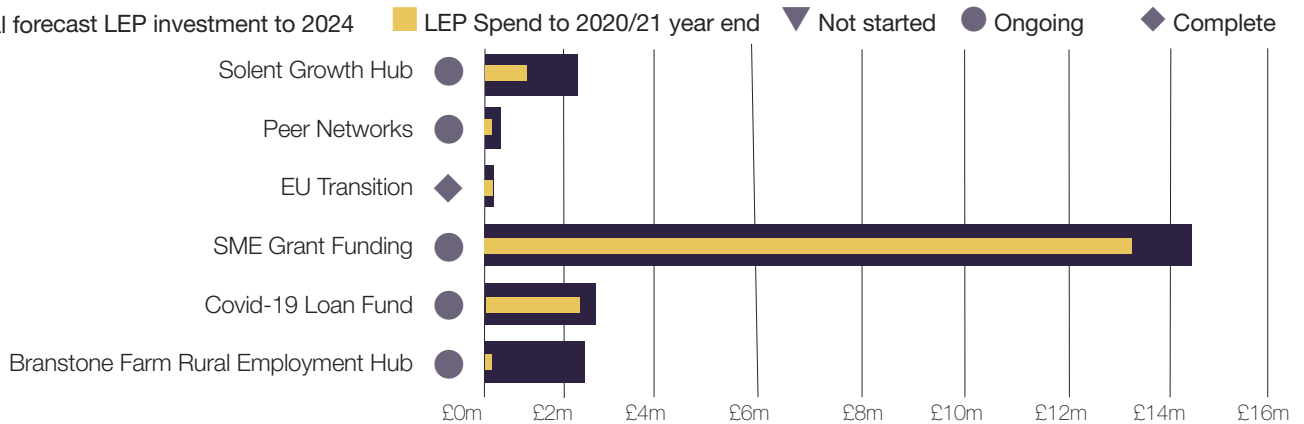
Financial Summary	2020/21	2013/14 - 2023/24
Original Budgeted Expenditure:	£88,070,322	£273,542,079
Total committed to external organisations through grants and loans	£85,135,850	£253,706,021
Total committed to suppliers to purchase goods, works or services	£1,498,920	£7,800,653
Total running costs	£1,435,552	£12,035,405

Figures from: 2020/21 Final Outturn – Solent LEP Finance Report, Appendix B, May 2021 Meeting
 Future Years Forecasts to 2023/24 – Solent LEP Finance Report, Appendix A Jan 2022 Meeting

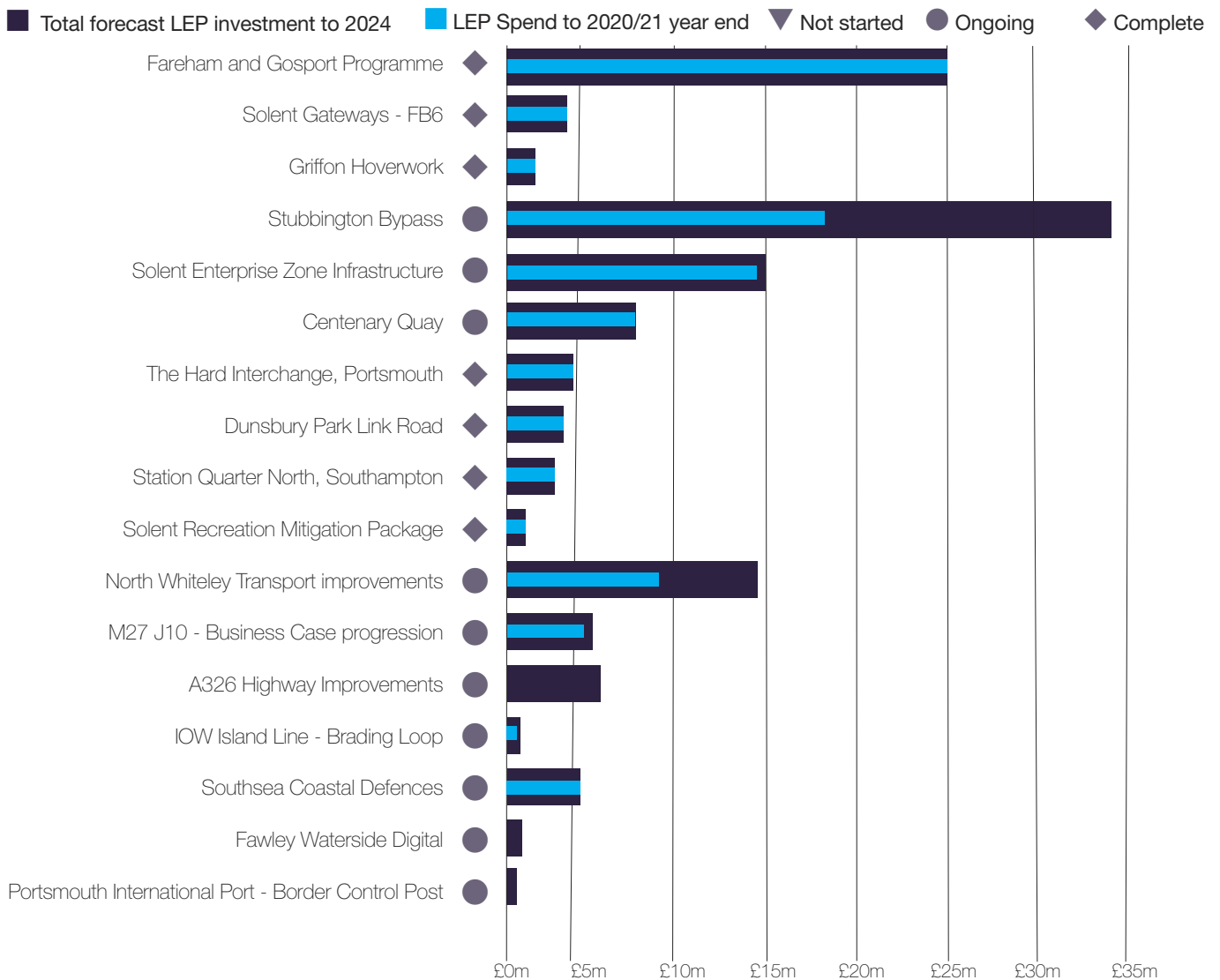
Full financial forecasts are available at solentlep.org.uk

SOLENT LEP - PROJECT DASHBOARD

BUSINESS SUPPORT

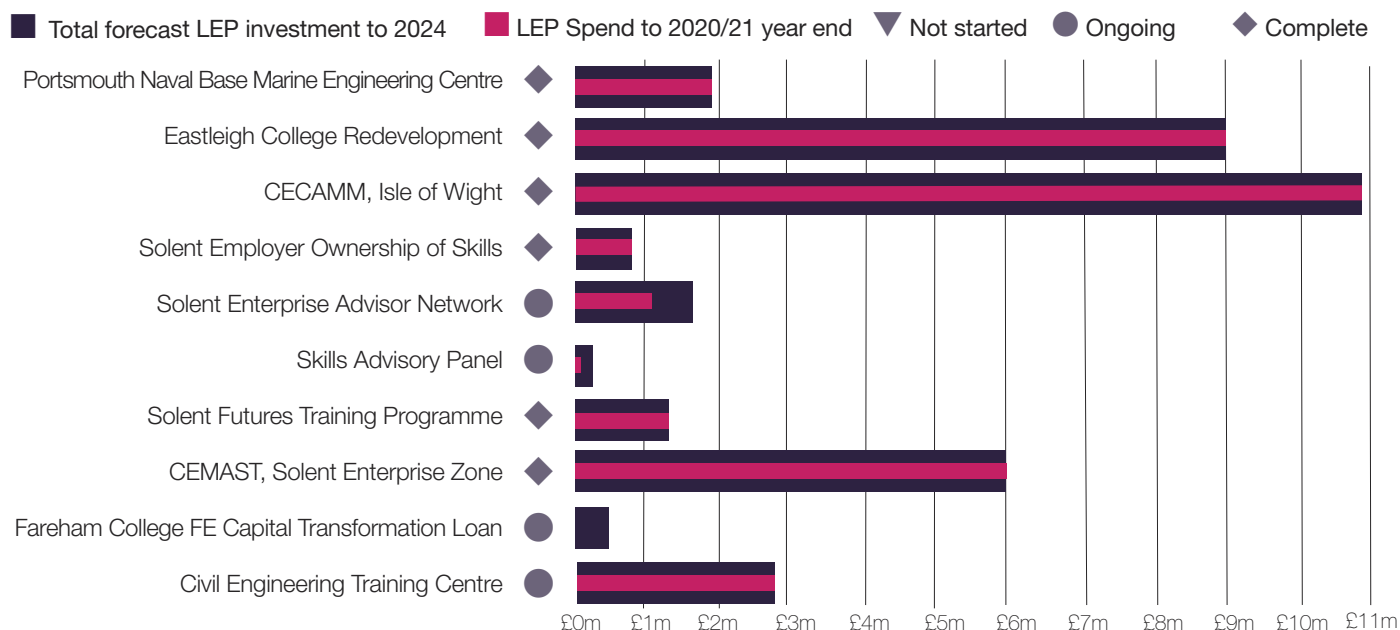


INFRASTRUCTURE

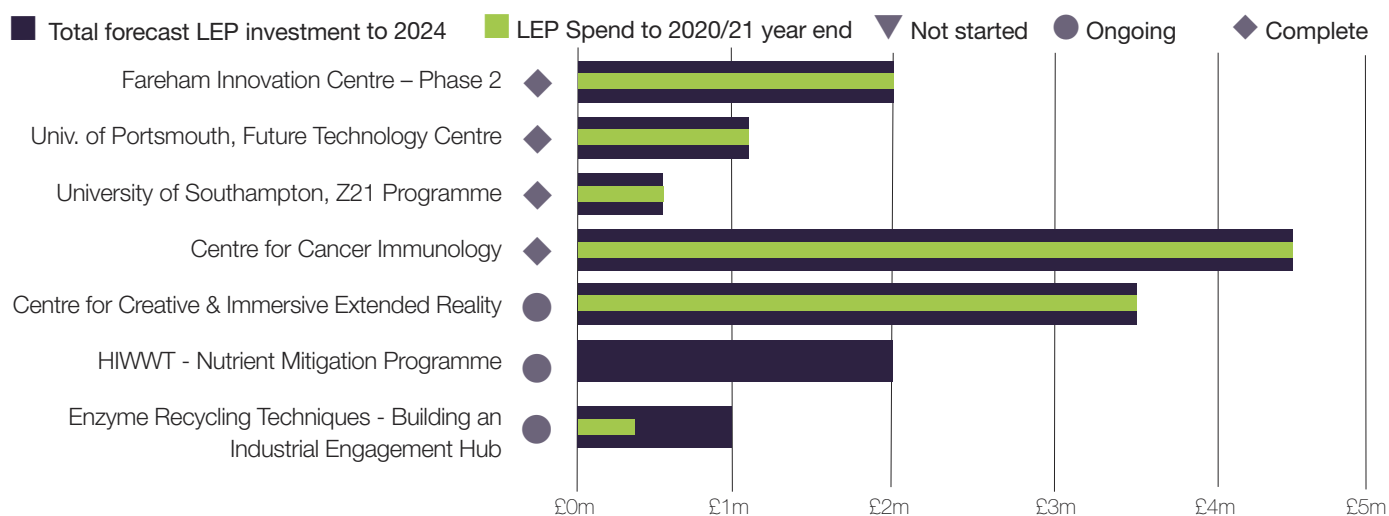


SOLENT LEP - PROJECT DASHBOARD

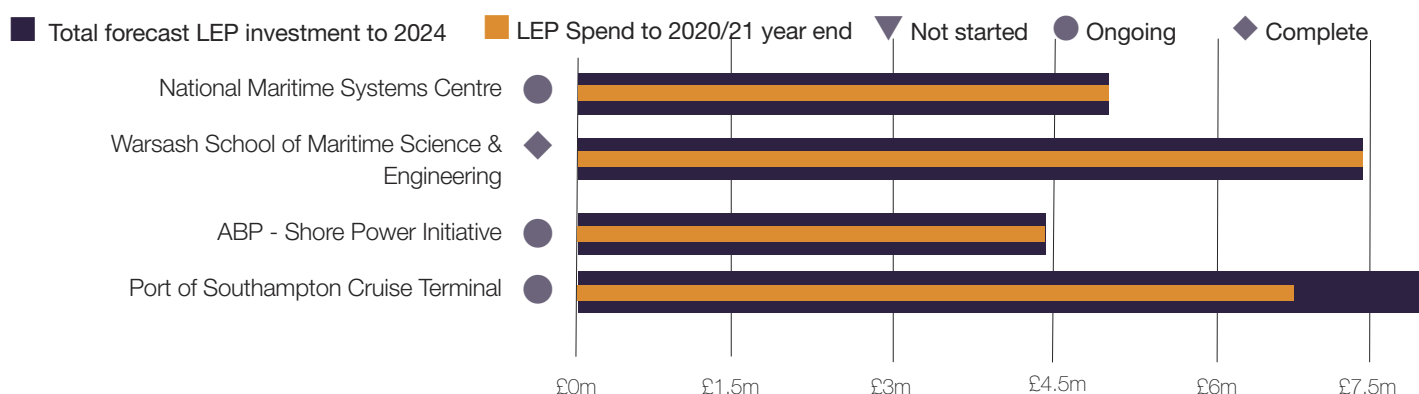
SKILLS



INNOVATION



STRATEGIC SECTORS



Data taken from Solent LEP FFPMG Report, Appendix B, January 2022



SOLENT
LOCAL
ENTERPRISE
PARTNERSHIP
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