

Working towards a 2050 Strategy for the Solent

Progress Update
December 2019



Setting the Scene

The Solent 2050 Strategy will be developed in support of the Government's UK Industrial Strategy, which aims to boost productivity across the country.

Introduction

This progress statement summarises the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership's (LEP) progress to date and direction of future plans, highlighting emerging ambitions and priorities backed by a robust and open evidence base and consultation engagements with local and wider stakeholders.

The UK Industrial Strategy

The UK Industrial Strategy was announced in 2017, as a long-term plan for boosting the productivity and earning power of people throughout the UK. This nationwide strategy will be supported by Local Industrial Strategies, developed through government partnerships with local places across the UK.

Local Industrial Strategies

Local Industrial Strategies will be long-term, based on clear evidence and aligned to the UK Industrial Strategy. They should set out clearly defined priorities for how cities, towns and rural areas will maximise their contribution to UK productivity. Local Industrial Strategies will allow places to make the most of their distinctive strengths. They will better coordinate economic policy at the local level and ensure greater collaboration across boundaries and will help to inform local choices, prioritise local action and, where appropriate, help to inform decisions at the national level. They will also provide strategic overview which will inform Local Enterprise Partnerships' approach to any future local growth funding deployed through them.

The ambition is that all places:

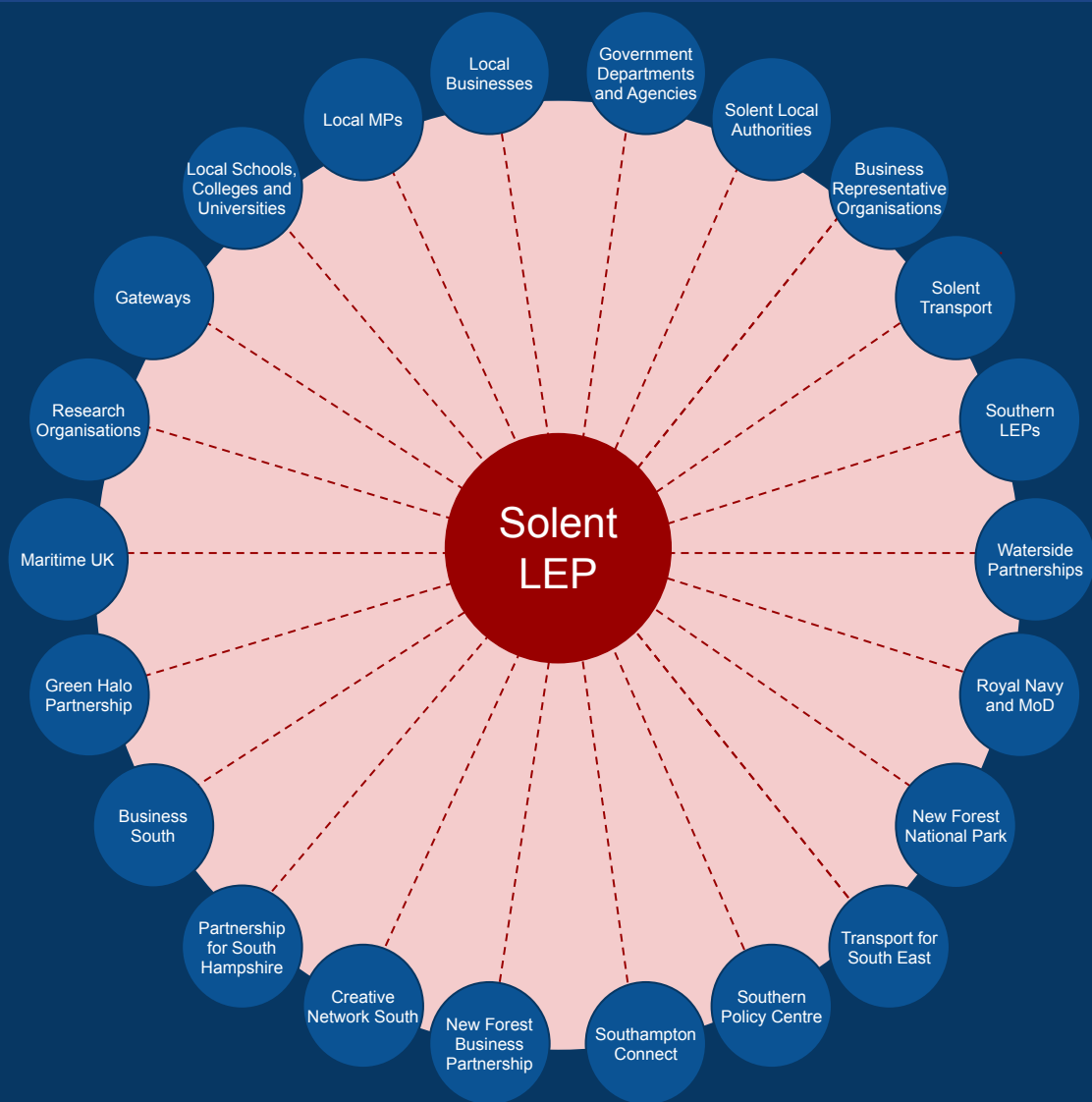
- are able to increase productivity and realise their potential: building on well-evidenced and distinctive strengths aligned with the UK Industrial Strategy; and
- set out the spatial impacts of national and local policy across our cities, towns and rural areas: informing priorities and choices and demonstrating how they will allow all communities to contribute to, and benefit from, economic prosperity

The Solent LEP recognises that since the publication of the UK Industrial Strategy, a General Election has been called, and whilst the ambitions around raising productivity levels and place-based strengths remain, the work is being developed in a dynamic policy landscape, and as such is being progressed in such a way that it can pivot to align with any policy changes. The following page shows the relationships of the Solent LEP and our 2050 Strategy, with stakeholders and the wider policy context.

Please visit the following links for further information on the:

- [The UK Industrial Strategy](#)
- [The Local Industrial Strategy Policy Prospectus](#)

Relationship between Solent LEP, its partners, and its stakeholders



Relationship of Solent 2050 Strategy with the wider policy context



Our Vision for the Solent 2050 Strategy

The Solent's 2050 Strategy will set out ambitious plans for the region by highlighting its distinctive strengths and building on a shared vision to align the region with the goals of the UK Industrial Strategy.

The Solent 2050 Strategy

The Solent 2050 Strategy will set out a long-term roadmap, aligned to the UK Industrial Strategy, which will aim to unleash 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 2050 Strategy will aim to tackle acknowledged weaknesses, setting future facing solutions to maximise the economic returns across the five foundations of productivity (Ideas, People, Infrastructure, Business Environment and Places) and addressing the opportunities presented by the Grand Challenges.

It will deliver this through:

- Collaboration with **stakeholders** at a local level, to develop a shared ambition for the Solent. This includes private, public, academia & research, and voluntary sectors.
- The **robust and open evidence base**, which will provide the foundation for discussion of the region's uniqueness and resultant priorities.
- Understanding of how the Solent can capitalise on its industrial, academic and research, training, cultural and heritage, and natural assets and its strategic position as an **international gateway**.
- Well-defined, evidence-backed, achievable and **long-term ambitions**, to help inform local choices, prioritise local action and, where appropriate, help to inform decisions at the national level.

- Clear plans to implement modern solutions and **track progress**.
- Develop a strategy that is **agile**, and able to pivot to changes in national economic policy and macro-economics.

Building on Strong Investment Foundations

In recent years, the Solent LEP has funded a significant capital programme under the Solent Growth Deal. Through this deal, £182.92m has been secured to help create jobs, build new homes and employment space, improve transport infrastructure, improve training and skills development, back world-leading research and innovation, support businesses, enhance green infrastructure and encourage growth.

Ideas

- £4.5m towards pioneering research at the **world's leading Centre for Cancer Immunology**, the UK's first dedicated centre of its kind.
- £2m investment at the **Fareham Innovation Centre** to expand the existing space for innovative SMEs, bringing high-value jobs to the Solent Enterprise Zone.
- £1.05m for the University of Portsmouth's **Future Technology Centre**, training the innovative engineers of the future in the use of specialist technology to develop creative answers to global challenges, and providing space for SME's and academia to share knowledge.

People

- £7.46m funding to the world-leading **Warsash School of Maritime Science and Engineering** for state-of-the-art training facilities.
- £10.9m funding to an employer-led **Centre of Excellence for Composites, Advanced Manufacturing & Marine**, an industry-led skills centre, providing the skills local employers need.
- £2.9m investment to establish a new employer-led the **Civil Engineering Training Centre (CETC)**, which will see collaboration with 11 local industry employers to help overcome an identified regional skills gap for key roles in the construction industry.
- £9m investment to bring forward a new **Advanced Technology Centre** at Eastleigh College, providing high quality STEM learning.

Infrastructure

- Working with Highways England to deliver M27 and M3 smart motorway investment.
- Investment at the **Hard Interchange**, providing investment in a new passenger interchange.

- Over £25m investment in the development of an **Enterprise Zone at Daedalus** - including the establishment of a new business park and investment in surrounding roads, power supply and drainage - bringing high quality employment and training to a coastal community.
- £4.2m in the redevelopment of the public realm to the north of Southampton Station. **The Station Quarter** project is expected to act as a catalyst to bring forward potential development sites adjacent to this key transport gateway.
- £14m investment in highway infrastructure in North Whitley to unlock 3,500 **new homes and improve connectivity**.

Business Environment

- £11m **investment funding for 299 SMEs** (including 85 start-ups) to unlock their growth, creating 986 new jobs, safeguarding 641 jobs, and leveraging a further £40.3m of private sector investment.

Places

- £1.35m investment in an innovative multi-year programme to **deliver strategic green infrastructure** across the Solent area, enabling the delivery of 10,000 new homes.
- The LEP is working with Natural Enterprise and investing £1.3m to deliver an **Isle of Wight Rural SME Fund**, providing grants to rural small and medium sized businesses (SMEs) with potential for economic growth, leveraging in private sector investment, creating or protecting jobs and assisting the rural sector on the Isle of Wight.

Developing a Robust Evidence Base

A robust evidence base is providing a platform on which the Solent 2050 Strategy will build a unique proposition. It will unveil the opportunities available for the region that will strengthen its position as the UK's premier international gateway.

Approach

PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) have carried out a stocktake of the region's economic performance to date. This has helped shed light on the foundations of productivity in the Solent economy. This analysis has covered six key areas:

1. Economic output
2. Demographics and the labour market
3. Productivity and wages
4. Connectivity and commuting patterns
5. Innovation activity
6. Trade in good and services

In addition to the detailed data analysis, we have also reviewed the wider policy landscape, which has included a particular focus on marine and maritime, clean growth and climate change and decarbonisation, a renaissance of coastal communities, natural capital, advanced manufacturing, the visitor economy, as well as emerging sectors.

Resulting from initial findings, we are also undertaking a more detailed review of the Solent's creative sector and visitor economy. This work has also required engagement with businesses in the sector.

Our work to date has been captured in the Solent 2050 Strategy Emerging Evidence Base document. A Computable General Equilibrium (CGE) model is in development, to measure the

impact of future policy interventions across the Solent.

Reviewing the Evidence Base

The Solent 2050 Strategy team have convened an Independent Prosperity Review Panel, to give an external view on the evidence base developed. The first meeting took place in June 2019 with the second meeting in September 2019. The Panel's membership can be found on the [Solent LEP website](#), and includes:

- **Anne-Marie Mountifield** - Chief Executive and Board Director of the Solent LEP and member of the Maritime UK National Council
- **Dr Martin Hurst** - Senior Lecturer in Major Infrastructure at University College London
- **Harriet Ramsey** - Director in the Rural, Energy and Projects Division at Savills
- **Professor Peter White** - Emeritus Professor in public transport research and Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport
- **Hannah Clipston** - Head of Business Legal Services at Irwin Mitchell
- **Professor Seamus Higson** - Emeritus Professor at Chichester University
- **Dr Nasser Siabi OBE** - CEO at Microlink PC Ltd
- **Amarjit Singh** - CEO at India Business Group
- **Brian Johnson** - UK Business Development Director at BAE Systems Maritime, and Solent LEP Deputy Chair and Strategy Lead
- **Stuart Hill** - Solent LEP Business Board member, and former Operations Executive for the IBM UK Ireland Global Technology Services Business unit

Understanding the Economy - Local Strengths and Challenges

Strategically located at the centre of the south coast of the UK, with sheltered estuaries and harbours, a double high water, and an outstanding environment, the Solent has a natural coastal geography that has drawn people, international commerce, and innovation for millennia, laying down the strata that have helped shape the Solent as the UK's Coastal Powerhouse.

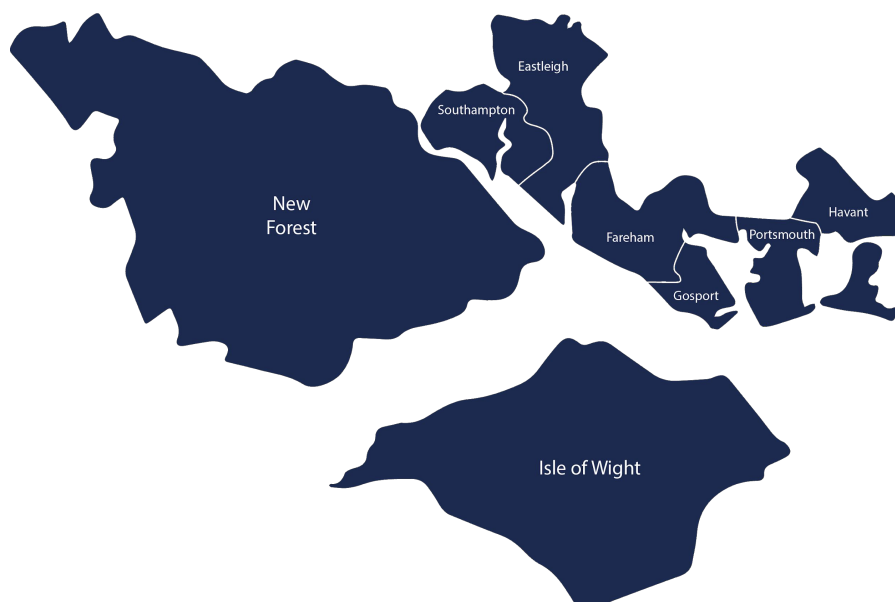
Introducing the Solent

The Solent LEP area (as shown in the map below) is comprised of the two urban hubs of Portsmouth and Southampton, the Isle of Wight, the New Forest National Park and the Solent waterway. It is very much this coastal interface and the co-existence of intensely urbanised and industrial land-use alongside world-class natural landscape (including the New Forest National Park and the recently UNESCO designated Isle of Wight Biosphere), that shape so much of the character of the Solent economy, its heritage and its people, and sets the Solent apart from other areas.

Coastal Assets

The Solent's status as Coastal Powerhouse of the UK continues to evolve and strengthen today in a world of increasing globalisation and technological disruption, fuelled by the unparalleled aggregation of marine and maritime assets that have clustered in the Solent, anchored by the flourishing port cities of Southampton and Portsmouth.

The area boasts a range of coastal assets, many of which have UK-wide and international reach. For example, the ExxonMobil Refinery at Fawley is the largest in the UK, processing around 270,000 barrels of crude oil a day and providing 20% of UK refinery capacity.



Further to this, the Solent is home to the two major ports of Southampton and Portsmouth. The Port of Southampton is the UK's number one vehicle handling port, and is also home to the nation's second largest container terminal, which handles approximately 14 million tonnes of cargo a year. As the number one cruise port in Europe, the port welcomes 1.7 million cruise passengers annually, and supports 15,000 jobs. Portsmouth International Port is the country's best-connected port with more routes to Europe than any other in the UK. The port sees 4.6 million passengers and 250,000 freight movements a year, contributing to an annual turnover of over £33 million. Southampton International Airport is also a key regional asset, which supports the growing commercial, leisure and cultural success of the region. Whilst the airport currently welcomes around 2 million passengers a year, its masterplan forecasts 6 million passengers by 2030, alongside a total of over 4,000 jobs generated and an economic contribution of £260 million.

Marine and Maritime

Linked to the Solent's coastal assets, is the region's world-renowned marine and maritime cluster. The economic footprint of the maritime sector has been reported as a GVA contribution to GDP of £5.8 billion, which equates to a 19.3% share of the Solent LEP economy. The Solent region is pioneering research in marine and maritime autonomy and robotics. Cutting-edge projects include the application of emerging autonomous vehicle technologies, the development of hydrogen-powered water transport, and pioneering state-of-the-art shore-to-ship power solutions.

Academic and Research Excellence

The marine and maritime cluster is supported by numerous related educational establishments, which have strong expertise in the area. These include the Southampton Marine and Maritime Institute, the Wolfson Institute, the Institute of Maritime Law, and the Warsash School of Maritime Science and Engineering. These institutions are at the forefront of innovation and provide a vital anchor for knowledge intensive activity and employment in the region.

The UK has a long tradition as an ocean science pioneer with world leading capabilities, and the National Oceanography Centre (NOC) in Southampton is one of the world's top oceanographic institutions, providing the UK with the national capability needed to be a top global player and to lead and participate in international collaborations. The NOC undertakes world leading research in large scale oceanography and ocean measurement technology innovation. It works with Government and business to turn great science and technology into advice and applications. The NOC supports the UK science community based in universities and smaller research institutes with scientific facilities, research infrastructure and irreplaceable data assets - enabling the UK to harness the full power and diversity of its scientific talent in ocean science.

Beyond marine and maritime specific expertise, the Solent's universities as a whole generate an estimated £4.2 billion GVA to the UK, whilst supporting around 52,300 jobs across the nation. The university community not only contributes to

the region economically, it also attracts a stream of students and graduates which further drives workforce productivity, as well as being an important source of innovation and support for emerging businesses and sectors.

Sector Landscape

The region's educational institutions, along with the marine and maritime cluster, contribute to the Solent's dynamic and interactive sector ecosystem. These industries are accompanied by a strong presence across the visitor economy, the defence and aerospace cluster, transport and logistics, advanced manufacturing, photonics, the creative sector and cultural sector.

Figure 1: Solent as an internationally significant gateway

Three International Gateways

Port of Southampton, Portsmouth International Port and Southampton Airport

£77.5bn

worth of goods for import and export
pass through Solent Ports

820,000

ro-ro vehicles are handled by the Port of
Southampton each year

8.9 million

ferry passengers passed through
Portsmouth International Port in 2018

1.96 million

plane passengers pass through
Southampton Airport each year

20%

of UK refinery capacity is supplied by
ExxonMobil's Fawley refinery



1.5 million

teu shipping containers are handled by
the Port of Southampton each year

503

loaded ships were received by
Portsmouth International Port in 2018,
230 for imports and 272 for exports

2 million

cruise passengers move through the
Solent per year

42,750

air transport movements from
Southampton Airport annually, to
around 40 destinations

2,000

ship movements are handled by Fawley
refinery every year



Findings from the economics evidence base

Headline figures from the economics analysis can be seen below. The Solent has evolved into an export-intensive region, with an economically active workforce and a growing innovation sector. These unique strengths make it well-placed to tackle the nationwide productivity challenge set out in the UK Industrial Strategy.



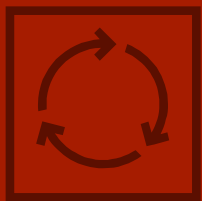
Gross value added

£30.6bn

The Solent is a major contributor, providing £30.6bn GVA to the UK economy.

1.0%

The Solent averaged an annual GVA growth rate of 1% between 2009 and 2017.



Productivity

£504k/yr

Manufacturing firms in the Solent spend £504k/year on innovation, more than the national average of £270k/year.

£43/hr

Solent's productivity (£43 per hour) is below the South East average (£49 per hour).



Innovation & Competition

10th in UK

The Solent ranks 10th out of all LEPs for the percentage of its workforce in R&D related professions.

£5.6bn

£77.5bn of imports and exports flow through the Solent every year - of which £5.6bn are directly exported from the region.



People

20.4%

20.4% of the Solent's population fall in the older age bracket of 65+, which is higher compared to 18.2% in the rest of the UK.

84.6%

In 2018, the Solent had economic activity of 84.6%, meaning a large proportion of its workforce are in or seeking employment.

Key Messages

From the analysis completed to date, the following key messages have been identified.

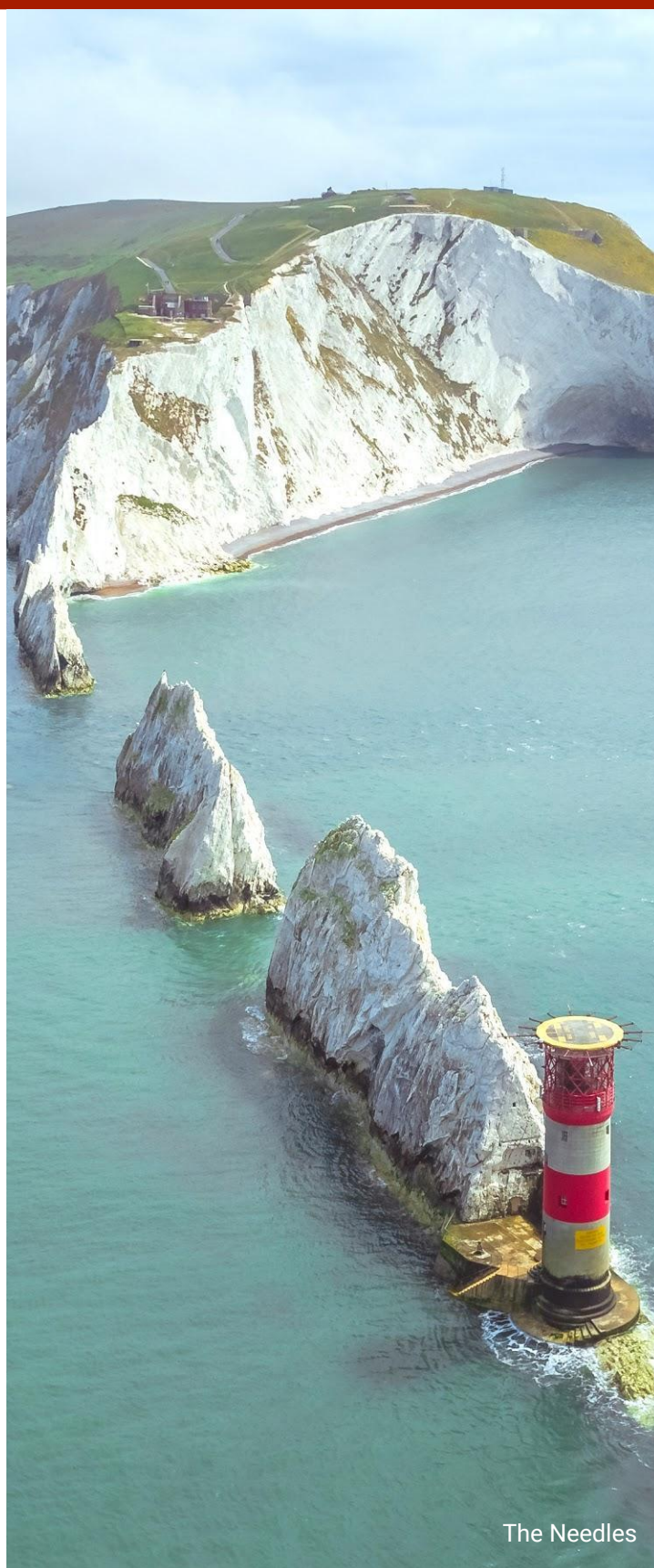
- Strategic Assets** - Annually, the Solent contributes £30.6bn GVA to the UK economy, and averaged an annual GVA growth rate of 1% between 2009 and 2017. The region also brings value in its key assets that play an important strategic role for the national economy, linked to its **coastal location, outstanding natural environment and knowledge capital**. Key attributes include the region's ports, petrochemical assets, which serve Heathrow airport with a direct aviation fuel pipeline, to its role as a UK automotive hub and the cruise capital of Europe.
- Marine and Maritime** - The region is a gateway for both the export and import of goods - the Solent itself exports £5.6 billion of goods each year. Annually, however, the goods that are moved through the ports of Southampton and Portsmouth amount to a value of over £77.5 billion, with exports accounting for £42.8 billion worth of this trade. 85% of these are moved through Southampton to the UK's non-EU trading partners. In this sense, the Solent's geography makes it a strategically important site for global trade, the region destined to play an **important role in strengthening the UK's trading relationship globally**.
- High Containmentment** - The Solent exhibits high containmentment, with a large proportion of Solent's residents both living and working within the region. According to Census 2011 data, people living in the Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton are more likely to work within their local area and the Solent rather than commute elsewhere for work purposes.
- Innovation** - The Solent punches above its weight in terms of innovation activity, with the region ranking 10th out of all LEPs for the percentage of its workforce in R&D related professions. Furthermore, investment in R&D is comparatively high, with businesses in Solent spending £713m on R&D activities in 2013, almost double the UK average. This reflects the **strong appetite from the private sector to innovate**, and has huge potential to be a test bed for new technologies in automation, water taxis and wider maritime innovation.
- Ageing Society** - The Solent's population is ageing rapidly, with a higher proportion of older people (20.4%) versus the rest of the UK (18.2%). Whilst this brings challenges to the region, it presents great opportunities - it becomes a prime location to test innovative solutions, in fields such as healthcare.
- Dual City Region** - With cities being recognised as major drivers of growth, Solent's status as a dual-city region is an undoubtable strength. Whilst connectivity *within* the Solent is often assumed to be poor, PwC's analysis reveals that the region has **above average levels of connectivity** with the wider UK and internationally. This is largely due to the important assets located in the region, such as ports and airports. With their position as waterfront cities, both Portsmouth and Southampton act as major gateway hubs on an international scale, attracting economic activity to the region and promoting strong agglomeration effects.

- **Not a typical South East economy** - With the exception of Southampton, the Solent is not a typical South East economy. One example of this is the fact that around 40% of Solent's GVA comes from the manufacturing, retail and health sectors, even though this number varies among the local authorities.

The manufacturing sector is particularly distinctive, ranking as the second largest contributor to regional GVA, at 11%. The region has seen healthy growth in the number of manufacturing enterprises, at three times the UK average. In addition the **Solent's manufacturing firms are investing more in R&D per year** (£500,000) versus the average for the rest of the UK (£270,000).

- **Natural Capital** - The Solent has an **exceptionally strong natural capital offering**, equipped with a coastal location and a world-class environment. The region's mainland coastline stretches for almost 250 miles, from Hayling Island to Hurst Spit. The region is also home to the Isle of Wight, which has recently been designated as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, due to it being one of the best areas in the world for managed landscapes, where human impact doesn't detract from the natural beauty or wildlife. The New Forest National Park is also situated in the Solent region, with an unspoilt coastline running alongside 220 square miles of ancient woodland and open forest.

Alongside this wealth of natural capital, the Solent has an enviable array of heritage and visitor assets.



The Needles

The region also hosts major events throughout the course of the year, such as the Southampton International Boat Show, the Isle of Wight Festival, and Cowes Week, one of the longest-running and most respected regattas in the world.

The Solent's wealth of natural capital, when combined with its legacy assets, cruise terminals, and easy transport links to London, has made the region a popular destination for visitors. Between 2006 and 2015, the Solent share of international passengers at UK Ports saw a marked increase, from 11% to 15%.

- **Creative and Cultural Hub** - The Solent's creative sector exhibits a range of specialisms, ranging from computer consultancy activities right through to the performing arts. Technology is used extensively in the creative economy. **Over 70% of current jobs and 75% of projects roles are paired with technology**, and almost 90% of roles have some digital aspect.

Although the Solent's creative economy is modest in size, it can play an important place-shaping role for the Solent. For example, developing and enhancing creative workspaces can contribute to the vibrancy, distinctiveness and attractiveness of our places.

Such spaces provide an opportunity for micro-SMEs and freelancers to connect, collaborate and share with those that have the same interests. Being part of a strong community can increase opportunities for experimentation, innovation and growth.

Consultation

The Solent LEP have planned, completed and participated in a number of consultation events since the journey to developing our Solent 2050 Strategy began. This engagement with local stakeholders has enabled the Partnership to draw upon local intelligence to develop a distinctive vision.

Consultation Events

The Solent 2050 Strategy team have attended a number of events to date, as seen below:

- Solent Leaders Forum Meetings where all Solent Local Authorities have been represented
- Solent LEP AGM
- Solent LEP Annual Conference
- 4 area workshops (Isle of Wight, Southampton, New Forest, and Portsmouth)
- Disruption workshop
- Coastal Renaissance workshop
- Meetings with 12 Solent MPs
- Transport and Future Mobility Workshop
- Visitor Economy workshop
- FE and Sixth Form Workshop
- University Students Session
- HE Vice Chancellor Briefing
- PfSH Chief Executives Meetings
- PfSH Joint Committee
- Solent Regenerations Leads meetings
- Disruption workshops with schools
- Community and Voluntary Sectors Workshop
- Hampshire Rural Forum
- Southampton Connect and Business Strategy Group
- Southern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee
- Transport for South East

In addition, we have held a number of dedicated dialogues including: Creative Network South, Hampshire Chamber of Commerce, Carnival UK, New Forest Business Partnership, Green Halo

Partnership, Southampton Connect, Business South Infrastructure and Transport, Business South Regenerate South, and Southern Policy Centre.

These engagements opened the floor for collaborative exploration of the views and visions of local stakeholders. What are the trends and technologies that may disrupt the Solent in the future? What do they see as the key opportunities moving forward? What are their long-term ambitions for the region? Through pairing these consultation findings with our existing economic evidence base, the team are now well-equipped to develop a distinctive and long-term vision for the region. Through the above engagement with a wide range of stakeholders, the following emergent themes have been identified. A summary of the consultation sessions can be found on the [Solent LEP website](#).

World Leaders in Marine and Maritime

"Promote the rich and illustrious marine and maritime heritage of the region"

The Solent has traditionally been home to a high concentration of marine and maritime sectors, which has naturally developed into specialisation within corresponding areas of work and research. The regional economy has positioned itself at the **forefront of innovative research that pairs the application of emerging technologies with marine and maritime contexts.**

Stakeholders acknowledge the strength of the sector and consider that further enabling research and collaboration would help drive the industry to the forefront of the global market.

From Creative Industries to Creative Places

"A flourishing creative and arts sector"

The Solent has a vibrant cultural scene, stemming from its historical heritage and local leisure activities.

The variety of creative industries across the region, such as photography, graphic design, print design and illustration, is important for the creation of dynamic and diverse places, alongside the preservation and harnessing of cultural heritage. Most creative businesses are small, and collaborating and sharing ideas with other businesses is a vital part of growth and innovation. The promotion of flexible creative workspaces / hubs could offer space for people to exchange ideas and immerse themselves in innovation, engendering a creative environment that can contribute to the vibrancy and attractiveness of places.

Coastline, Countryside and Cityscapes

"Outstanding abundance of natural capital"

Arguably the most attractive feature of the Solent is its outstanding abundance and variety of natural capital. The close proximity of coastline, countryside and cityscapes is unique to the region.

Stakeholders identified that environmental challenges regarding coastal protection will need to be tackled, such as coastal erosion and flooding due to rising sea levels. However this could place the region in a prime position to

spearhead coastal protection innovations and technologies.

The Solent undoubtedly has a strong offering for the visitor economy thanks to the abundance of natural capital and cultural heritage embedded within the region. Some stakeholders identified that unifying the Solent under a single visitor economy or heritage body could allow the region to market itself more effectively.

The Solent could become a model for coastal-urban living rich in innovative practices to living and working within a special environment. Sites such as Fawley Waterside represent a fresh look for coastal communities with smart technology integrated from the outset.

Frontier of Clean Growth

"Opportunity to cement the Solent's position as a market leader specialising in environmental technology"

The Solent has the opportunity to become a leading hub for environmental technology. Local stakeholders emphasised the desire to embrace green technology and growth opportunities, such as ports adopting clean fuel alternatives and increased efficiencies. Business within the Solent are already flourishing in this area, such as Cheetah Marine, who are developing a hydrogen-powered catamaran.

With the combination of natural environment and desire for clean, green growth, the Solent is well-placed for growing a renewable energy offering. This goes hand-in-hand with Southampton's commitment of becoming carbon free by 2030, which could be rolled out further.

Investment into researching clean technology is increasingly relevant given the government's recent commitment to cutting greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, the Solent is well positioned to lead the charge given the existing research conducted by businesses.

Innovative Transport and Infrastructure

"An area that pioneers the use of water based modes to move people and goods around"

Transport was a consistently recurring theme throughout the various consultation sessions. Stakeholders consider that inter-regional connectivity was challenging, particularly between Southampton and Portsmouth. Stakeholders considered that the rapid advancement of technology could provide an opportunity to look at new and innovative solutions to transport challenges in the Solent, such as drone corridors or autonomous pods.

There was also strong interest in utilising local waterways, a key strategic asset of the region that has latent potential to improve connectivity, in turn boosting economic performance and supporting a renaissance of coastal communities.

With the rapid advancement of technology, investing in increasingly ambitious goals becomes possible. Gigabit fibre and 5G were suggestions for the Solent to embrace.

Skills and Talent

"Closing the skills gap through closer collaboration between academia and industry need"

While the Solent is rooted in naval history and sea trade, the region looks to the future. It boasts a wealth of exceptionally creative and innovative individuals, who work across a range of businesses and organisations. For example, many software development companies are making the Solent their home, accelerating growth and attracting a skilled, expert workforce of 'digital nomads'. The region is a place with great assets, including its three universities and a first class further education system, and great talent, continually bolstered by newcomers from all horizons.

However, the region continues to seek further opportunities for growth, and the accompanying potential to attract and retain more people. Consultation identified connecting people and



businesses in new ways, to develop a dynamic and agile skills ecosystem, as critical for securing the Solent's future. The Solent LEP are already linking their maritime business to schools, through bespoke careers programmes, and investing in world-class training centres such as the Centre of Excellence for Composites, Advanced Manufacturing and Marine (CECMM), to ensure the sector continues to have a pool of exceptional talent to drive industrial innovation and growth.

The need to strengthen the link between education and local business was also raised as a common focus during consultation, especially given the changing requirements of employers, such as the need for more digital skills and reacting to the impacts of automation. There is innovation in Careers education, with the area having two Careers Hubs, providing full coverage

of the Solent area, better connecting schools with businesses and students with the careers available to them in the local economy.

Several skill-based interventions were suggested throughout consultation, such as investment in apprenticeships and degree sponsorships for courses that are relevant to local key growth industries. Mentoring programmes between experienced retirees and young professionals were also considered to be a key opportunity to leverage the knowledge base of the existing population in the upskilling of others.

A Strategic Vision for Solent 2050

Through combining the findings of our economic evidence base with those of our consultation session, we have formulated a strategic vision for the Solent. This vision is supported by four strategic goals, illustrated below.

Strategic Vision			
The 2050 strategy sees the Solent as the global leader in maritime and climate change adaptation, with towns and cities that are fantastic places to live, trade and for individuals to flourish.			
Strategic Goals			
Economic	Social	Environmental	Technological
Become a global powerhouse in marine and maritime industries and innovation, by increasing investment within regional specialisations.	Cultivate a dynamic and agile skills ecosystem to create better opportunities for all, allowing them to bring their full potential to both the local and national economy.	Position the Solent as a hub for clean growth, protecting its natural environment whilst simultaneously sharing its beauty with the world.	Develop a resilient and future-proofed transport system that improves regional and national connectivity, through the integration of innovative transport technologies.

An Emerging Strategy to 2050

"We see the future Solent economy as being built upon four component parts: the Marine and Maritime Cluster; the Clean Growth Agenda; the Visitor Economy; and Renaissance of Coastal Communities."

The Solent's Future: A strategy for 2050

Looking across our Strategic Vision and Goals, we will develop our economic strategy to 2050 around four distinctive strengths: the Marine and Maritime Sector; Clean Growth; the Visitor Economy; and Renaissance of Coastal Communities. These are areas where the Solent has evidenced strengths that benchmark strongly when compared to other economies, and that each have significant potential to support increases in productivity levels, provide new employment opportunities, bring forward a renaissance of our coastal communities, and strengthen our environmental assets. It is the vision of the Solent 2050 Strategy, to fully realise the potential of the region as an international trading gateway and secure the status of the area as a world class natural environment. Southampton has recently been announced as the first Port Economic Partnership, already taking steps towards achieving this vision.

These four pillars of distinction are underpinned by the following enabling factors: embracing and innovating new technology; a celebration of our cultural, heritage and creative assets; strengthened natural capital; improved connectivity (digital and transport); skills and talent; and housing. Each of these areas has a distinct part to play in the future of the region, with the above combination promising a range of exciting and forward-looking opportunities for a truly dynamic and prosperous Solent.

Marine and Maritime

The Solent's coastal geography has helped the region to develop a unique marine and maritime sector proposition and, over the years, strengthen its status as the **UK's centre for marine and maritime excellence**. The region is the first port of call on the key Shanghai to Rotterdam sea superhighway and contains the major ports of Southampton and Portsmouth. In addition, Portsmouth Naval Base is the home port to 60% of the Royal Navy's surface ships and around 9,400 local jobs. Coupled with favourable infrastructure and investment in people and technology, the coastal heritage and natural geography makes the Solent well-placed to address key challenges as set out in the UK Industrial Strategy and lead the way in delivering on the ambitions of the Maritime 2050 strategy.

Southampton's National Oceanography Centre (NOC) is one of the world's top oceanographic institutions. Linked to the expertise of the NOC, the Solent is undoubtedly at the forefront of pioneering marine and maritime autonomy and robotics, with companies such as L3 Technologies and Saab SeaEye establishing their names as world-leaders in respective fields. With assets such as the Southampton Web Science Institute (WSI) and the National Maritime Systems Centre, the Solent has existing and growing expertise in the area of digital and disruptive technologies.

Solent University has established a strong reputation for producing impactful research on

Figure 2: Emerging Strategic Framework

Our Vision

To be the global leader in maritime and climate change adaptation, and for our towns and cities to be fantastic places to live, trade and for individuals to flourish.

Core Elements



Marine and Maritime cluster

Enhance the marine and maritime cluster, attracting innovative engineering and advanced manufacturing industries to the area.



Clean Growth

Promote the Solent as a leading hub for environmentally friendly innovation and development.



Visitor Economy

Preserve and enhance the natural and cultural assets for residents and visitors to enjoy, for generations to come.



Renaissance of Coastal Communities

Reinvigorate and develop key coastal sites, that provide hubs for development and innovation that characterise the region, in line with its cultural and maritime heritage.

Enabling Factors

Embracing and Innovating New Technology

Emerging technologies offer various new platforms to view and address opportunities through an innovative lens.

Strengthened Natural Capital

Natural capital is central to the Solent's offerings - the Marine and Maritime cluster, and the visitor economy, are largely dependent on the region's natural environment.

Skills and Talent

The Solent's people are its greatest asset - this strategy will be underpinned by a skills system that nurtures and develops the right talent to meet market demand.

A Celebration of our Cultural, Heritage and Creative Assets

The Solent has an enviable array of cultural, heritage and creative assets, which in themselves make the Solent an attractive place to visit, live and invest.

Improved Connectivity (Digital and Transport)

The Solent's varying landscape must be connected, both physically and virtually, in order to enable the success of future interventions.

Housing

The Solent is a desirable place to live and work - investment in new homes is needed to enable the local economy to grow and thrive.

crewing practices and safety. In addition, the world-leading Warsash Institute of Maritime Science and Engineering is a part of Solent University and boasts state-of-the-art facilities, as well as offering first class education, training, and commercial services to all maritime sectors worldwide. The Institute have recently launched the UK's largest and most sophisticated maritime simulation centre, furnished with the latest cutting-edge hardware and software in the field. The University of Portsmouth has recently opened a Future Technology Centre that works as a hub for delivering the University's unique higher level qualifications in innovation engineering, offering hands-on experience with specialist technologies in an industrial-standard training environment.

The Solent is home to a number of regulatory bodies in this space. For example, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency provide maritime search and rescue services, both in the UK and nationally, as well as producing legislation, guidance and certifications on maritime matters, The Institute of Maritime Law is also housed in the Solent, a world-leading centre for research, consulting and training in this area.

Additionally, Lloyd's Register is a leading international provider of classification, compliance and consultancy services to the maritime industry. The Register is keen to shape the industry's future through the consideration, development and incorporation of innovative technologies into their client's assets and solutions - one example of this is their extensive research and analysis into Zero Emission Vessels (ZEVs).

Clean Growth

The Solent has the opportunity to strengthen its position as a leading hub for environmentally friendly innovation and to pioneer the clean growth agenda by incorporating emerging technologies with an appetite to deliver ground-breaking solutions.

The region's marine and maritime prowess provides fertile ground for innovations in the clean growth arena, such as the development of the Wightlink hybrid ferry service, the MHI Vestas Offshore Wind facility, and Cheetah Marine's sea-trials of a hydrogen-powered catamaran.

Through new mobility solutions, including utilising existing waterways, exploring autonomous transportation and implementing electric means of vehicle power, the Solent can develop an integrated network of 'green' water transport, connecting assets, people and places across the region that will contribute to improving air quality and the wider environment.

With customers demanding cheap, green and fast supply chains, distributors and logistics providers are constantly looking to shorten delivery times and reduce costs. The Solent can become an exemplar in this sector by supporting more sustainable distribution methods e.g. automated logistics systems that utilise drones and automated vehicles.

Coastal erosion and flooding are real risks that the Solent faces, especially paired with the global challenge of climate change and rising sea levels. The Solent has the opportunity to become a driving hub of leading coastal protection not only for itself but for the ever-increasing market.

Visitor Economy

With its unique combination of green space, coastal communities, associated cultural heritage, and an array of world class visitor attractions, the Solent presents the opportunity to develop a distinct tourism offering for the region.

The visitor economy is inherently strong due to the key location of the Solent on cruise routes compounded by beautiful environments that appeal to a wider community of tourists.

Leveraging the wealth of environmental and coastal assets the Solent offer provides the opportunity to embrace eco-tourism, where visitors can support conservation efforts and observe wildlife, or extending the trips of cruise passengers through tailored offerings.

The Solent has a rich, vibrant history knitted within the marine and maritime sector. The link to the sea is embedded within the history of the area and on display at venues, such as the Historic Dockyard, the SS Shieldhall, which is the largest working steamship in the UK, and the Spinnaker Tower, a 170-metre landmark observation tower. There is the opportunity to highlight the character of the area to visitors and encourage them to become involved with the local coastal theme.

Coastal Communities

The Solent coastline plays a crucial role in the heritage, culture, history and future of the region. The Solent has a constellation of coastal communities from the major cities of Portsmouth and Southampton, to large towns such as Gosport and Cowes, to smaller settlements such as Sandown, Hamble and Lymington. All have seen major change as they respond to de-industrialisation, changes in tourism, and globalisation. But these communities, like their coastline, are steadfastly resilient to the tide of economic change and are at the helm of a coastal renaissance, renewing themselves to confront the challenges of tomorrow.

In tandem with this renaissance, is the emergence of new coastal settlements, such as Centenary Quay in Southampton and the proposed Intelligent Merchant City on the site of the former Fawley Power Station - both of which have the coast at their heart. It is the ambition of this strategy, to continue supporting existing coastal communities, alongside these emerging settlements, allowing them to flourish and build further appeal as places to live, work and visit.



Portsmouth Future Technology Centre



Fawley Waterside Site

Enabling Factors

As laid out above, the four core elements of the Solent 2050 Strategy will be supported by a number of enabling factors.

Embracing and Innovating New Technology - The regional economy has positioned itself at the forefront of innovative research that pairs the application of emerging technologies with marine and maritime contexts. For example, introducing emerging, digitally-enabled approaches will allow ports to act with increased intelligence thus streamlining operations for more efficient outcomes.

A Celebration of our Cultural, Heritage and Creative Assets - The Solent has an enviable array of cultural, heritage and creative assets, which in themselves make the Solent an attractive place to visit, live and invest. The varying environment and landscapes provide activities that cater to all interests.

Strengthened Natural Capital - Through further leveraging its wealth of environmental and coastal assets, the Solent offers a unique opportunity to test things differently at a time where there is a global and UK debate about natural resources and the environment. The Solent's natural capital foundations have recently been strengthened, with the Isle of Wight having just been designated a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, which recognises the island's unique combination of natural beauty, wildlife, locally produced food, a breadth of leisure activities, and the iconic chalk stacks known as the Needles.

Improved Connectivity (Digital and Transport) -

The Solent's varying landscape must be connected, in order to enable the success of future interventions. Innovative methods of transportation, must be integrated to ensure the region is linked both internally and externally. For example, improving the utilisation of the waterways through the testing and application of water taxis, electrified ferries and electric-only zones in the ports to develop a network of 'green' water transport.

Skills and Talent - The Solent has a talented labour market, spanning from young to older generations. With room for innovation and expansion in several areas of local expertise, such as those within the maritime sector, the Solent needs to ensure an appropriate and consistent labour supply, both in regard to the existing local workforce and the future pipeline. Through investing in skills and talent development, the Solent can cultivate a dynamic and agile skills ecosystem that is able to support locally significant industries and respond to innovation opportunities.

Housing - The Solent is a desirable place to live and work, with many moving to the region for an improved quality of life. As the region aspires to attract new talent to grow its flagship industries, investment in new homes will be needed to enable these local industries to grow and thrive. The region will need to fund and accelerate housing delivery, to ensure an afford mix of housing supply to meet future demand.

Emerging Ambitions: Grand Challenges

The Solent 2050 Strategy will consider the Grand Challenges with a particular focus on the Clean Growth agenda.

Clean Growth Agenda

The clean growth agenda aligns well with the Solent's unique strengths. The Solent has the potential to be at the vanguard for this national push towards clean growth by pioneering innovative solutions in maritime, logistics, transport mobility and coastal protection.

We identify five strands that combine to form Solent's clean growth agenda. These are: research and academic assets; marine and maritime; world class environment & visitor economy; coastal communities; and disruptive, digital and creative.

Research and Academic Assets - The Solent region is home to world leading research at its three universities, and institutions such as the National Oceanographic Centre, which are large contributors to R&D in the region and provide support for entrepreneurial spin-off opportunities. These assets make the Solent well-equipped for a position at the forefront of clean growth research.

Marine and Maritime - The Solent is the UK's leading marine and maritime cluster, home to two major port cities and the UK's closest deep water access to the major international shipping lanes.

This marine and maritime legacy has provided fertile ground for innovations in the clean growth arena, such as the development of the

Wightlink hybrid ferry service, an environmentally-friendly vessel that heralds a new, greener era of travel between the Isle of Wight and the mainland.

Additionally, marine and maritime innovation for clean growth offers clear potential for the Solent region as the MHI Vestas Offshore Wind facility on the Isle of Wight is a key player in the manufacture of wind turbines.

The Clean Maritime Plan is the environment route map of Maritime 2050, setting out in more detail how the Government sees the UK's transition to a future of zero emissions shipping. Portsmouth international Port has a clear ambition to become the first zero emission port under the Clean Maritime 2050 Plan.

World Class Environment & Visitor Economy - There is opportunity for the Solent to develop its tourism offering, through further leveraging its wealth of environmental, coastal and attraction assets.

There is also room for the region to explore the role the natural environment can play in supporting health and wellbeing, particularly important given the local ageing population.

Coastal Communities - The Solent is already pioneering groundbreaking approaches to developing quality of place, making its new communities future-facing with examples such as the emerging Intelligent Merchant City at Fawley Waterside.

Fawley Waterside has embarked on building an intelligent town, innovatively using technology as the foundations of a globally-recognised successful and healthy community.

Further to this, Southampton City Council announced their Green City Charter earlier in 2019. This Charter will see the Council collaborate with a range of partners so that the city flourishes as best practice for a clean, green city with a thriving economy, demonstrating its commitment to significantly improving air quality within the city.

Disruptive, Digital and Creative - With a range of leading technology companies, the Solent has existing and growing expertise in the area of digital and disruptive technologies. This positions the region well to draw together world-leading expertise across multiple disciplines, and become a world leader in digital knowledge and innovation.



MHI Vestas Offshore Wind

Future of Mobility

The Solent is also simultaneously working towards the Future of Mobility Grand Challenge, through piloting innovative solutions to green mobility. This includes the increased utilisation of our existing waterways, which are at present an untapped resource.

This offers an opportunity to test solutions such as on-demand water-taxi services and water-based goods transport. This would enable the Solent to develop an integrated network of 'green' water transport.

Through harnessing these waterways, the region will be able to enhance local schemes that are currently in planning, such as the Intelligent Merchant City at the site of the former Fawley Power Station.

Further supporting this facet of the clean growth agenda, are the Solent's thought leaders in maritime autonomy. These include L3 Technologies and the National Oceanography Centre. With such strong foundations, the Solent is a natural site for new discoveries in this domain, a test bed for the world in doing things differently.

Ageing Society

As outlined in the UK Industrial Strategy, an ageing society is a prominent trend, sweeping across all industrialised economies. This phenomenon presents not just challenges to overcome, but also provides an opportunity to do things differently and build more sustainable strategies.

There is an increasing elderly and retired population in the Solent region with forecasting predicting a significant increase in coming years. While this may put pressure on local housing and healthcare resources, the older generation still have critically valuable skills. It is therefore vital to engage and encourage them to contribute to the local economy.

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and mentor-mentee relationships between experienced retirees and young professionals are prime opportunities to upskill, help the wider economy.

Figure 3: Alignment of Current Initiatives to Enabling Factors

Embracing and Innovating New Technology

Innovation Centre (Isle of Wight)

Project proposals are underway for the establishment of incubator, innovation, business support and flexible employment space.

Drone Testing (Southampton)

The city is positioning itself to be a hub of the UK drone industry, and is one of five city projects under the Nesta Flying High project.

A Celebration of our Cultural, Heritage and Creative Assets

City of Culture 2025 (Southampton)

Southampton are submitting a bid for the City of Culture 2025, to recognise and celebrate the city's great cultural, community, arts and heritage achievements, whilst underpinning opportunities for current and future generations.

Heritage Action Zone (Gosport)

The Gosport Heritage Action Zone delivery plan is a 5-year project that will harness the area's military heritage to unlock business potential on the waterfront and support the town's wider regeneration.

Strengthened Natural Capital

Green Halo Partnership (New Forest)

The New Forest's Green Halo Partnership brings together local organisations from the public, private and third sectors, to make the Solent a global exemplar of how our most precious landscapes can work in harmony with a thriving, economically successful community.

Green City Charter (Southampton)

Southampton City Council have committed to being carbon neutral by 2030, working with local partners to reach this target alongside other sustainability goals.

Improved Connectivity

Autonomous Pod Route (Havant)

There are ambitions to establish an autonomous pod route that connects Havant Town Centre with Hayling Island seafront, as is being investigated in a new Infrastructure Investment Plan for the Borough.

Island Line (Isle of Wight)

Improvements to the Island Line train service are being sought, to create a new passing loop at Brading Station.

Transforming Cities Fund (Portsmouth & Southampton)

Both the Portsmouth and Southampton City Regions has secured a share of £1.38bn funding over the next 5 years, to invest in critical infrastructure that will allow the Solent to progress transport plans.

Housing

Sustainable Community (Eastleigh)

One Horton Heath is a new development that will tackle priority areas such as congestion, green infrastructure, the and healthy living - it has secured a £20.8m grant from Homes England.

Waterside Partnership (New Forest)

The Waterside Economic Prospectus sets out a shared vision to transform the peninsula, harnessing the portfolio of internationally significant assets and infrastructure to stimulate responsible economic growth in the area.

Welborne Garden Village (Fareham)

Inspired by the Government's new Garden Village framework, Welborne will be an purpose-built community that utilises cutting edge technologies to create and support a healthy and green community.

Car Free Community (Portsmouth)

There are ambitious plans to develop a £1.3 billion scheme at Tipner West Peninsula, with 4,000 homes and one million sq ft of marine employment space. This development is being positioned as the UK's first car-free community, linking well with the Solent's clean growth agenda.

Skills and Talent

Solent Careers Hub

The Solent LEP has been leading on the delivery of an Enterprise Adviser Network (EAN) across the Solent since late 2015, in partnership with the Careers and Enterprise Company. More recently the Solent LEP has been successful in securing Careers Hub status for the whole of the Solent, which sees local schools and colleges working together with universities, training providers, employers and career professionals to improve careers education and help prepare young people for the world of work. A key feature of this activity is pairing schools and colleges with industry leaders who provide support to develop innovative careers strategies.

Evaluation

Approach to Evaluation

The Solent 2050 Strategy will build in a proportionate and transparent monitoring and evaluation plan from the start, specifying what success looks like and plans for tracking progress and learning for the future. This approach will be designed proportionately to the scope and scale of the policies proposed.

The Government wishes for all Local Industrial Strategies to follow a consistent and standardised evaluation process, which the Solent LEP will conform to. In keeping with this, a number of actions will be taken forward:

- Develop a plan to benchmark the overall performance of the Solent LEP against a suitable comparator, whether this be another UK LEP or an international equivalent;
- Make use of WWCLEG evaluation guidance and advice;
- Observe consistency with other monitoring arrangements and specific metrics, such as the evaluation plans of both the UK Industrial Strategy and current agreements with HMG; and
- Share results of evaluation widely.

Once design of the monitoring and evaluation process has been completed, the Solent 2050 Strategy document will set out its approach to the evaluation of its interventions against the two key objectives:

1. The Solent is able to increase its overall productivity and realise its unique potential
2. The Solent will set out the spatial impacts of its policies across cities, towns and rural areas, demonstrating how all communities

will contribute to and benefit from economic prosperity