



**SOLENT
LOCAL
ENTERPRISE
PARTNERSHIP**

Solent Local Growth Deal Consultation: Centre for Creative and Immersive Extended Reality (CCIXR)

Summary of Responses

21 May 2020



TOGETHER.STRONGER

Background

In October 2014, the Solent LEP signed the Solent Local Growth Deal with central Government. As part of this deal, the Solent LEP secured £124.8m from the Government's Local Growth Fund to support the delivery of the [Solent Strategic Economic Plan](#) through investment in projects focused on:

- Enabling flagship sites for housing and employment
- Enhancing transport connectivity across the area
- Growing the skills base and supporting business growth

A copy of the Solent Local Growth Deal is available at the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398873/29_Solent_growth_deal.pdf

[Two further Solent Growth Deals were agreed in January 2015 and February 2017, providing further investments of £27.1m and £31.02m respectively.](#)

The LEP launched the Solent Prosperity Fund (SPF) for large capital projects in August 2018. Applicants could apply for funding of between £500,000 and £14m. Projects needed to demonstrate that they could deliver outputs to support the Solent economy, but the focus driving project assessment was deliverability, given the need to spend Local growth funding by 31st March 2021.

The fund remained open for seven rounds, with round seven closing on 29th November 2019. Over the seven rounds the fund was tailored to broaden the outputs that the LEP was looking for from projects, informed by the work the LEP was doing to develop its Solent 2050 strategy, was broadened to provide an opportunity for programme applications, and the maximum funding request was reduced to £5m. The SPF, therefore, aims to secure the following outputs:

- Enabling / unlocking housing delivery;
- SME Growth;
- Improved productivity in priority sectors;
- Connecting communities and businesses (digital and transport)
- Employment growth
- Developing skills and talent needed by employers;
- Pioneering innovation and research;
- Strengthened natural capital infrastructure;
- Waterfront employment sites
- Respond to key environmental challenges

Introduction to Project

The University of Portsmouth is applying for £3,617,561 of grant capital funding (70% of total costs) towards the development of a Centre for Creative and Immersive Extended Reality (CCIXR) within its Faculty of Creative and Cultural Industries. The CCIXR will deliver state-of-the-art immersive and creative extended reality (XR) facilities to enable, support and grow the significant Digital Creative Industries sector within the Solent LEP region. The proposal will be the UK's first fully integrated facility to support innovation in the creative and digital technologies of virtual, augmented and extended realities and aligns with future growth markets.

The scheme will deliver 12 XR labs fitted with specialist equipment along with 1,792 m2 of refurbished business engagement and training floorspace to support learners, businesses and academics. These facilities are estimated to support 500 new learners over 5 years and 200 wider jobs in the Solent LEP region within 10 years. The scheme aims to secure the University's position as a leader in research, development and innovation of XR technology – an ever-growing industry. Evidence provided shows Immersive technologies are estimated to add £62.5 billion and 400,000 jobs to the UK economy (Skills for Immersive Experience Creation, 2020) however; 97% of companies surveyed in UK's Immersive Economy report (Storyfutures Academy 2020) highlighted skills were missing in this area. CCIXR is considered a direct response to this need.

The LEP funding will be complemented by a contribution of £1,556,631 match (capital and revenue) funding from the University. This arrangement has previously been confirmed with the LEP. The University has also confirmed additional revenue support of £437,000 over the first two years.

Project Objectives

The Centre for Creative and Immersive XR (CCIXR) in the Solent Region aims to:

- Establish the CCIXR in the Solent region with world-class facilities and expertise in Virtual, Augmented and Mixed Realities, Volumetric, Capture, Motion Capture and Photogrammetry – known collectively as eXtended Reality (XR) technologies.
- Contribute to establishing the Solent region as a prime location for innovative XR-enabled companies, so increasing inward investment and facilitating large scale industrially focused projects currently hosted outside the region.
- Deliver a step-change in R&D, innovation and uptake of XR technologies, through bringing universities and business together in easy access development facilities.
- Create a robust talent pipeline through undergraduate, graduate and business-facing training programmes to produce a skilled workforce able to capitalise on the increasing demand for cross-sector capabilities in XR technologies.
- Deliver adoption of XR technologies into multiple LEP priority industry sectors, leading to jobs and GVA creation (esp. Defence, Life Sciences & Healthcare, Digital Technologies, Digital Creative Industries, Construction, Clean/Green Technology).

Consultation Period

The consultation was published on the Solent LEP website here: <https://solentlep.org.uk/get-involved/consultations-have-your-say/>.

The consultation period was open for 12 weeks from Friday 21st February until Friday 15th May 2020.

Analysis of the Consultation

The Consultation asked the following questions:

Question 1

Do the projects respond to the following key priority areas outlined in the Solent Strategic Economic Plan?

- Enabling flagship sites for housing and employment;
- Enhancing transport connectivity across the area; and
- Growing the skills base and supporting business growth

Question 2

Do you think the project provide sufficient geographic / sector coverage?

Question 3

Are there any additional comments you would like to make?

There were no responses received for this consultation.