

6th November 2020

Open Letter from Brian Johnson, Solent LEP Chair, and Anne-Marie Mountifield, Solent LEP Chief Executive to Solent businesses

Dear colleagues,

Since March, Solent businesses have faced the most challenging of years as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. Tragically, not all have survived and our latest post Covid-19 forecasts underline the scale of economic shock and recovery challenge the Solent faces, equivalent to a short term impact worth £4.5 billion and nearly 27,000 jobs.

As we enter the Winter months, we enter a further period of national restrictions and it is clear that once again the ability of our businesses to survive will be tested. Whilst the scale of the challenges ahead of us are vast, the Solent LEP are committed to backing our local businesses and are putting in place a range of support to help where we can. This includes a restructured business support hub, available now at www.solentlep.org.uk. The new site provides a range of support hubs for business to help simplify access to relevant information and support available from the LEP and our local, regional and national partners. In addition, and recognising that alongside dealing with the impact of the pandemic, many businesses are also making preparations for UK transition, the new portal also includes a dedicated UK Transition and Overseas Trade Hub.

We are also prioritising additional financial support for our small businesses and will launch a number of new funds in the coming days. These seek to support businesses to address immediate needs and where possible, transition to online trading in response to the new national lockdown, and to help people continue to buy-local, support their local businesses and assist those companies that matter most to our local communities.

We are not alone in supporting businesses in these difficult times and are very fortunate to work with a range of organisations in the Solent that share this commitment. Our Business Support Taskforce is meeting next week to help coordinate our efforts to support businesses survive this difficult period and ensure that we emerge with the best possible foundations in place to drive future growth and prosperity for the Solent.

If you are seeking support to help your business survive the Winter, we want to hear from you and would encourage you to contact our team via our dedicated helpline on 023 9268 8055 or email at enquiries@solentlep.org.uk

We wish all of our businesses well at this very difficult time. The strength of our local economy and entrepreneurial spirit of our communities in facing challenges to date gives us great hope for the future and, whilst there are some very dark days ahead, there remains reason to be optimistic that the Solent has a bright future on the horizon.

Yours sincerely,



Brian Johnson
Solent LEP Chair



Anne-Marie Mountifield
Solent LEP Chief Executive