



SOLENT
LOCAL
ENTERPRISE
PARTNERSHIP

Solent LEP Chair

Role Description

January 2023

ROLE DESCRIPTION

Solent LEP Chair

Responsible to:

Solent LEP Board, Solent Local Enterprise Partnership Limited

Accountable to:

Solent Local Enterprise Partnership Limited and HM Government

Time commitment:

A minimum of three to four days per month on average, with a need to commit time on a very flexible basis (to attend meetings with HM Government at short notice, for example)

Remuneration:

The Solent LEP Chair may be remunerated up to £12,000 per annum. The LEP will also consider candidates that wish to undertake the role on a voluntary, rather than a remunerated, basis. The Solent LEP will consider all candidates on an equal basis. The Chair can claim reasonable expenses in line with the Solent LEP expenses policy for Directors

Location:

Regular attendance at meetings within the Solent LEP area and occasional requirement to travel nationally and internationally

Working Relationships:

Cities and Local Growth Unit (Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities)

Values and expected behaviours

As a partnership organisation, we build our approach on the belief that 'together we are stronger' and the LEP has embraced the values as set out in the Nolan Principles¹ and our Corporate Values, where we:

- **Support** businesses to grow, individuals to succeed and communities to flourish;
- are **Open**, transparent and honest and work without bias, ensuring that an evidence-based approach drives our decision making;
- **Lead** by example and value leadership which is ambitious, fair and objective;
- **Embrace** diversity as an essential component in the way we work;
- **Nurture** the talent, innovation and creativity of those we work with;
- believe trust and mutual respect are essential for **Teamwork** and collaboration

These values are extremely important to us and we expect everyone who works in and with the LEP in any capacity, including the Board of Directors, employees of the LEP and Accountable Body, contractors, agency staff, volunteers and people undertaking commissions on our behalf to display these behaviours at all times.

Solent LEP also expects that everyone who works in and with the LEP to act in such a manner as to justify public trust and confidence and to uphold and enhance the good standing and reputation of the Solent LEP. We are committed to equality and valuing diversity within our workforce and we have established an Equality and Diversity Policy which operates in line with the Equality and Diversity Strategy of Portsmouth City Council, our accountable body. Individuals must therefore at all times carry out their duties with due regard to our Equality at Work policy. Our goal is to ensure that these commitments, reinforced by our values, are embedded in our day-to-day working practices with all our stakeholders, colleagues and partners.

¹ You can find a full copy of the Nolan Principles at www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life

Board leadership, company and purpose

Following a national review of LEPs during 2021/22, HM Government have confirmed that the future role of LEPs will be to:

- Embed a strong, independent and diverse local business voice into local democratic institutions
- Carry out strategic economic planning in partnership with local leaders that clearly articulates their area's economic priorities and sectoral strengths. This will involve building and maintaining a robust local evidence base that identifies local strengths and challenges, future opportunities and the actions needed to support priority sectors, aligned to the relevant levelling up missions. This will include continuing to use convening power to bring together business, education and other local economic stakeholders
- Continue to deliver a number of functions on behalf of government departments, shaped by the local business voice where relevant, including the delivery of:
 - Growth Hubs, on behalf of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
 - Careers Hubs, on behalf of the Department for Education
 - Local skills analysis via Skills Advisory Panels, on behalf of the Department for Education;
 - Monitoring and assurance pertaining to existing local growth programmes and funds for which Solent LEP is responsible.

Alongside these immediate roles and responsibilities, the Government has set out an expectation for even closer integration between LEPs and local democratic institutions moving forward. In areas such as the Solent where no devolved institutions exist HM Government will support Solent LEP as we are currently constituted until there is devolution. However, HM Government have a mission to offer a devolution deal to every area that wants one by 2030 and therefore a key role for the LEP Board, led by the LEP Chair, will be to continue to engage with HM Government and local partners to offer advice in relation to devolution and to lead a process of change management at the LEP itself to support any future integration with democratic institutions.

Further details in relation to the role of the future role of the LEP following the LEP Review can be found [here](#).

The Solent LEP fully embraces the UK Corporate Governance Code as the system by which the company is directed and controlled.

The Board of Directors of Solent LEP Limited is responsible for the governance of the company. The following key principles set the framework for the Board leadership and Company purpose:

- A successful LEP is led by an effective and entrepreneurial Board, whose role is to promote the long-term sustainable success of the company, generating value for members and contributing to wider society
- The Board should establish the LEP company's purpose, values and strategy, and satisfy itself that these and its culture are aligned. All directors must act with integrity, lead by example and promote the desired culture
- The Board should ensure that the necessary resources are in place for the LEP Company to meet its objectives and measure performance against them. The Board should also establish a framework of prudent and effective controls, through FFPMG, which enables risk to be assessed and managed
- In order for the company to meet its responsibilities to members and stakeholders, the Board should ensure effective engagement with, and encourage participation from, these parties
- The Board should ensure that workforce policies and practices are consistent with the LEP Company's values and support its long-term sustainable success. The workforce should be able to raise any matters of concern.

Solent LEP has established governance arrangements that are most appropriate to the LEP Company and that reflect HM Government requirements.

The arrangements apply the principles of the UK Corporate Governance Code ('the Code') and the Guidance on Board effectiveness.

The Role

The Solent LEP is seeking to recruit a Chair who is an influential local leader and who can bring energy and passion to act as a champion for the area's economic success. The Chair requires sufficient standing to be able to convene the local business community and public sector stakeholders, while having the insight to oversee the development of an economic strategy and the relationship skills to work effectively with government. This will be particularly important in relation to spearheading future devolution discussions with local partners and Government on behalf of the LEP. We want you to have a voice, make a difference and give something back to the region.

In addition, the Chair will require strong change management experience in order to lead the ongoing evolution of the LEP and the management of any future integration with democratic institutions.

The Chair must come from the private sector². Given their role involves overseeing public funds and responsibilities, the Chair is expected to display the highest levels of integrity and honesty.

The Solent LEP Chair has a defined term limit of three years. Subject to the agreement of the Chair and the Solent LEP Board, the Chair may be extended to a second term of a further three years³.

All Solent LEP Board Members require a strong and detailed appreciation of, and interest in, the strategic issues relating to, and drivers of, the Solent economy and the various opportunities and challenges involved in securing sustainable, private sector-led economic growth. The Solent LEP Board has a key role in developing local solutions to enhance the economic prospects within the area and to help plan, support and direct the economic growth of the Solent area.

In terms of time commitments, it is expected that the Solent LEP Chair will offer an equivalent of a minimum of one day per week on average and the Chair should have sufficient time to meet their Board responsibilities.

The time commitment to engage with Company Members and other key stakeholders and get to know the business will be considerable.

The Chair will also receive high-quality information sufficiently in advance of meetings so that there can be thorough consideration of the issues prior to, and informed debate and challenge at, Board meetings.

Executive contact names and numbers will be published on all papers so the Chair can seek clarification or amplification from management where they consider the information provided is not sufficient. They should provide constructive challenge, strategic guidance, specialist advice and hold management to account.

The Chair can access impartial advice and support through the LEP Executive team, which the Solent LEP has established as an independent secretariat. The Solent LEP Chief Executive reports to the LEP Chair and, in addition to this executive support, the Solent LEP has also appointed a Deputy Chair in order to provide non-executive support to the Chair.

On appointment to the Board, the LEP Chair will be provided with a comprehensive, formal and tailored induction that will extend beyond the boardroom and they will be expected to undertake some external formal training to ensure they are fully briefed on the role of the Chair and the best practice requirements under the FRS UK Corporate Governance Code.

In their first year and on an ongoing basis, they should expect to visit operations and talk with managers and non-managerial members of the workforce. The LEP Chair should use these conversations to better understand the culture of the organisation and the way things are done in practice, and to gain insight into the experience of the executive of the LEP.

Directors' duties are set out in sections 171-177 of the Companies Act 2006 and the Articles of Association of Solent Local Enterprise Partnership Limited (**available here**)

² Individuals can only be classed as private sector if their organisations do not appear on the Public Sector Classifications guide which can be viewed on the Office for National Statistics website and is **available here**. Those from Higher Education or Further Education Institutions are not classified as public sector organisations. Those from Royal Bank of Scotland (NatWest Group Plc) are also classed as private.

³ The Solent LEP Board are permitted to agree a further extension (resulting in a maximum term of nine years). However, this option is intended to be utilised in exceptional circumstances only.

Key working relationships

INTERNAL	EXTERNAL
Solent LEP Chief Executive	Commissioners and Regulators in HM Government (civil servants and Ministers)
Solent LEP Deputy Chair	Cities and Local Growth Unit (BEIS and DLUHC)
All Solent LEP Non-Executive Directors	Local MPs
Solent LEP Deputy Chief Executive and Corporate Management Team Members	Local Government leaders, elected members and senior officials
Accountable Body s151 Officer and Monitoring Officer	Private sector, including senior business leaders and business representative groups
Chairs and Deputy Chairs of Panels and Forum established by the Solent LEP	Academia, including senior academic and education leaders
Company Secretary of Solent Local Enterprise Partnership Ltd	Social Enterprise and Civil Society representatives
	Chairs of other LEPs and other regional/national representative organisations (including the LEP Network)

Corporate governance, leadership and improvement

- The Solent LEP Chair is responsible for the leadership of the Board, ensuring its effectiveness on all aspects of its role⁴. The primary role of the Chair is to secure good corporate governance by ensuring the Board is in full control of the company's affairs and is alert to its obligations to the members of Solent LEP.
- The Solent LEP Chair will chair all the meetings of the Board and will decide the order in which Members will be called to speak, ensuring that all Members present, who wish to, are given an opportunity to speak and also seeking to ensure that all views are fairly represented.
- The Chair may suspend the meeting if in his or her view this is necessary, for whatever period of time he or she thinks appropriate.
- The Solent LEP Chair will be responsible for agreeing the agenda for each LEP Board meeting for publication, five working days in advance of the Board Meeting and deciding the order of matters to be discussed. Following consultation with the LEP Board, the Chair will be responsible for agreeing the draft meeting notes for publication within five working days of all Board meetings.
- The Chair will bring independent and sound judgement to Board discussions, contributing to the board to ensure a balance between high level co-ordination and driving the commissioning of the agreed programme of strategic projects to bring about the economic and physical transformation of the Solent area.
- Provide strategic leadership, challenge and support to the Board and contribute to the development of one of the most successful LEPs in the country; establishing and developing the LEP's credibility and confidence within the wider market.
- Contribute to and have influence over challenging goals and objectives, and ensure that the strategic aims are delivered through appropriate mechanisms.
- Lead the ongoing evolution of the LEP including the management of any future integration with democratic institutions.
- Contribute to the development of the Board, providing expert advice and guidance and business expertise.
- Help ensure effective planning, management and financial control procedures are in place to ensure that all relevant legal and statutory requirements are met.
- The Chair will also support activity to scrutinise the work of the LEP, including occasional attendance at public meetings of the Solent Growth Forum⁵.
- Non-executive directors should scrutinise and hold to account the performance of management and individual executive director(s) against agreed performance objectives. The Chair should hold meetings with the non-executive directors without the executive director(s) present.
- The Chair will, at all times, act in accordance with the Solent LEP Articles of Association, LEP Assurance Framework and LEP Board Terms of Reference.

4 Further details on the role of the Board are available in the LEP Board Terms of Reference, [available here](#).

5 Further details on the Solent Growth Forum are [available here](#).

Governance and HM Government compliance

- The Solent LEP has a clearly defined culture of proactive, continuous improvement and, in line with this culture, remains committed to ensuring future ratings provided as part of our Annual Performance Review with HM Government are 'Exceptional' wherever possible. In order to ensure this continuous improvement, the Board has agreed to appoint Board leads in relation to each of the key areas of governance, delivery and strategy. The Chair of the Solent LEP is the Board lead for strategy.
- The Solent LEP is committed to securing and maintaining exceptional governance for the Solent LEP and aspires to perform above and beyond the guidance set by the government, demonstrating a strong culture of accountable governance, where it is evident that the Nolan Principles are embedded throughout. The Solent LEP is committed to ensuring that there are always robust and transparent structures and processes in place to guarantee decisions are based on strong evidence and subject to rigorous challenge. Decisions made at the Solent LEP Board and sub-boards will always reflect the business voice. The Solent LEP will always endeavour to secure active, consistent collaboration and engagement with external stakeholders; demonstrating leadership within the local area and beyond. The Solent LEP has a clearly defined
- All Solent LEP Board Members are committed to securing and maintaining exceptional governance for the Solent LEP. The LEP Chair plays a key role in supporting the Board to meet this commitment through leading the LEP's continued monitoring, review and development of our governance structures, policies and procedures. Specifically, this will include:
 - Providing regular updates to the Solent LEP Board in relation to Governance, contributing to the Board's consideration of in-year performance
 - Leading the Solent LEP's Annual Performance Review with Government including attendance at the Annual Performance Review meeting to lead the discussions with Government
 - Leading the Solent LEP's implementation of identified enhancements to policies and procedures, including any actions identified through the Solent LEP's self-assessment process and Annual Performance Review with Government.

Stakeholder engagement and ambassadorial

The Chair will:

- Actively engage with business members of the LEP to capture and engage their interest and facilitate their activity in the Solent economic area. There is a requirement for all business directors to act as a link to business members to facilitate pre and post-Board meeting engagement.
- Chair the Solent LEP Annual General Meeting, open to all business, public and higher education members of the LEP.
- Lead the LEP's engagement with all local authority leaders in the Solent area, including regular attendance at the Solent Leaders Forum, which meets quarterly⁶, and in relation to local devolution discussions.
- Engage regularly with key local stakeholders, including major employers in the area, representative organisations and Members of Parliament.
- Represent the Solent LEP locally, encouraging networking and joint working with other businesses within the LEP area and, where appropriate, working with neighbouring businesses outside the LEP area.
- Represent and promote the Solent on a local basis to deliver on the priorities of the LEP, bringing about the economic and physical transformation of the area.
- Represent the Solent LEP on a broader basis, including nationally and internationally, encouraging networking and joint working with other LEPs, the LEP Network, government and public sector organisations based outside the area.
- Represent the Solent LEP and wider Solent area at the highest levels of government, including engagement with senior civil servants and Ministers of State.

⁶ Further details on the Solent Leaders Forum are [available here](#).

Person specification

The successful candidate must be able to demonstrate that they:

- Are an owner or part owner (whether by way of shareholding, partnership or direct proprietorship), or board level or similar officer, of a B Member in Solent Local Enterprise Partnership Limited or a 'Recommended Person'⁷;
- Have a minimum of three years' experience as a non-executive director on the board of a successful company;
- Maintain strong links with the Solent business community and the ability to build coalitions to leverage private sector involvement;
- Have substantial experience and understanding of structuring effective working relationships with the private sector in local, regional, national and international forums;
- Have knowledge, understanding and a demonstrable commitment and passion to leading and delivering economic change in the Solent area;
- Are experts in co-operation, collaboration, co-ordination, convening and communication to make things happen;
- Have previous experience operating as a chair at senior board or committee level in a complex, challenging and high-profile environment;
- Have first-hand knowledge and current experience of the local Solent business environment, through a strong and proven track record of business leadership at a senior level;
- Have the ability to make informed, balanced and independent judgements on key economic issues for the Solent;
- Have the ability to consider the long-term implications and broad view of issues, identifying opportunities and key risks;
- Have demonstrable experience leading change management;
- Have the ability to act as an ambassador for the Solent economic area, with extensive experience of working within the private sector and engaging the confidence of local and central government (including Ministers of State), other public agencies as appropriate and key businesses and business organisations;
- Have substantial experience and understanding of structuring effective working relationships with the private sector in local, regional, national and international forums;
- Have an understanding of what 'good governance' looks like in a regulated public sector environment gained through working with HM Government or the wider public sector;
- Are not disqualified under the Articles of Association of the Solent LEP.

⁷ For the purposes of this Article 27.1, a 'Recommended Person' shall mean a person who has, within the five-year period prior to their appointment as a B Director, been an owner or part owner (whether by way of shareholding, partnership or direct proprietorship), or board level or similar officer, of a B Member and who the Board resolve to approve as a candidate for directorship as a B Director. Such approval shall be time limited and shall be for such period of time as the Board may, in its discretion, determine, and may be extended from its original duration by Board resolution, provided that the period of approval as a 'Recommended Person' may not exceed four years in total.