



SOLENT
LOCAL
ENTERPRISE
PARTNERSHIP

Solent Skills Advisory Panel Terms of Reference

December 2022

1. Background

The Solent Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) is the key interface and lead for economic development in the Solent. Local Enterprise Partnerships Integration Guidance (April 2022)¹ sets out four key roles for the LEP as follows:

- a. Embed a strong, independent and diverse local business voice into local democratic institutions.
- b. Carry out strategic economic planning in partnership with local leaders that clearly articulates their area's economic priorities and sectoral strengths. This should 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... [LEPs] should continue to use their convening power to bring together business, education and other local economic stakeholders.
- c. Continue to deliver a number of functions on behalf of government departments, shaped by the local business voice where relevant. Future programme and funding decisions will be taken by each respective department according to their own decision-making and business planning processes, priorities and timescales. However, at the present juncture we would expect departments to continue to engage with LEPs... on the delivery of:
 - I. Growth Hubs, on behalf of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy;
 - II. International trade and investment activity, provision of local business intelligence, grant funding and levelling-up focused projects, on behalf of the Department for International Trade;
 - III. Local Digital Skills Partnerships, on behalf of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport;
 - IV. Careers Hubs, on behalf of the Department for Education;
 - V. Local skills analysis via Skills Advisory Panels, on behalf of the Department for Education; and
 - VI. Monitoring and assurance pertaining to existing local growth programmes and funds for which LEPs are responsible.
- d. Where appropriate, LEP business boards can help broker and support new or deeper devolution deals, where requested by local partners. New or deeper devolution deals will not need to be signed off by LEPs.

Our strategy for transforming skills and developing a world-class talent base in the Solent is framed around four overarching, and overlapping, priorities: awareness and aspirations; skills brokerage; core sectors and competencies; and digital inclusion. These draw together our extensive evidence base on local skills needs, consultation feedback from a wide range of skills providers and stakeholders, emerging implications of Covid-19 upon the area's labour market, and placing this within the context of our ambitious long term strategy for growth and prosperity through Solent 2050. They provide an overarching framework to influence forthcoming skills related interventions and help inform investment decisions to support and stimulate sustainable economic growth in the area.

Solent Skills Advisory Panel (SAP)

The Solent Skills Advisory Panel will:

- Perform the function of the Solent Local Skills Improvement Plan Steering Group.
- Provide a strong leadership role on skills in the local area, engaging with employers and providers and providing skills advice to the LEP Board on where skills and labour market resource should be directed

¹ Full details on Local Enterprise Partnerships: Integration guidance can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-enterprise-partnerships-integration-guidance>

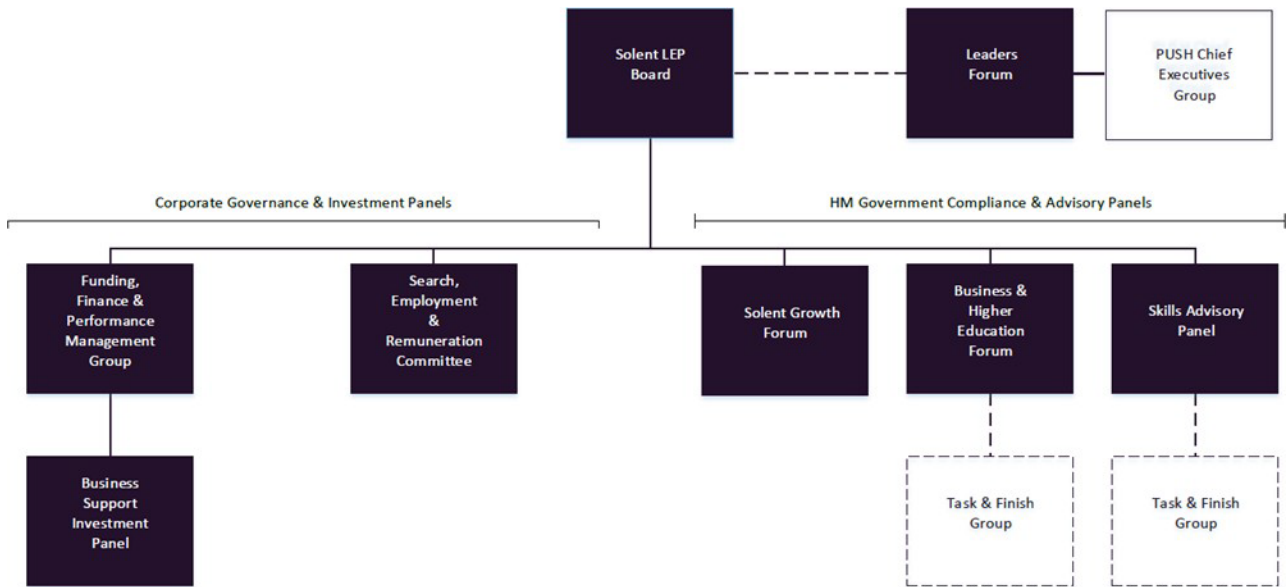
to support employers and residents;

- Develop a clear understanding of current and future local skills and local labour market needs in conjunction with the present skills and employment support provision in the local area. Addressing skills gaps more effectively by understanding likely future skills needs.
- Develop an understanding the wider dependencies in the local area to link them to the skills and employment analysis as well as strategic plans;
- Bring together local employers and skills providers and other key stakeholders to provide strong leadership, pool knowledge on the Solent skills and labour market requirements and to work together to understand and address key local challenges. This includes both immediate needs and challenges and what is required to help local areas adapt to future labour market changes and to grasp future opportunities;
- Support colleges, universities and other training providers deliver the skills required by employers, now and in the future;
- Ensure the local area has the skills and capability to capitalise on the Solent Freeport opportunity through provision of advice to the SFCL Board and its nominated skills representative Board member on:
 - The skills gaps within the Freeport and understanding future skills needs.
 - Where resources and investment in skills should be best targeted across the Freeport.
 - Collaborating with local employers and skills providers to provide strong leadership on Solent skills and labour market requirements and identifying the immediate and future needs and challenges
- Ensure strong local governance, meaningful analytical capability and access to the right data to develop analysis of the local skills and labour market to understand the local position, and in doing so support strong Local Economic Strategies and Plans;
- Discuss and agree advice to the LEP Board on local skills and labour market needs priorities in the short-term and more longer-term & consider how these will be met through local provision over time;
- Discuss and agree advice to the LEP Board on where skills and labour market resources should be directed to support employers and residents;
- Act as ambassadors for the Solent LEP;
- Work closely with Careers Advisory Services;
- Raise the profile of apprenticeships and other government policy initiatives including technical levels with local employers and providers;
- Share analysis and best practise, with all stakeholders including government, other Skills Advisory Panels, Solent Freeport and emerging Solent Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP);

2. Relationship with Solent LEP Governance Structure

The Skills Advisory Panel sits within the Solent LEP Governance Structure as seen below. The Panel will have

regard for, and act in accordance with, the Solent LEP Assurance Framework.



3. Membership

- The Solent Skills Advisory Panel will be chaired by the LEP Private Sector Board Lead for Skills.
- The Solent Skills Advisory Panel will consist of up to 25 members, including the chair and will include:
 - The Chair, who will be the LEP Private Sector Board Lead for Skills
 - The Deputy Chair and five other private sector members, with a range of large and small employers and representative of the Solent's key sectors of Marine and Maritime, Visitor Economy, High Technology Manufacturing, including Aerospace, Construction, Digital and Creative, Life Science & Healthcare, Transport and Logistics and/or Clean/Green Technology sectors, with at least one of which being from a business based on the Isle of Wight.
 - Three private sector representatives from the Solent Freeport Tax Site Skills Forum representatives (one for each of Southampton Water, Navigator Quarter and Dunsbury Park)
 - One representative of the LSIP Employer Representative Body
 - One representative from the Institute of Technology
 - One Royal Navy representative
 - Two Local Authorities representatives
 - One Further Education representative
 - One Higher Education representative
 - One Private Training Provider representative
 - One Careers and Enterprise Company representative
 - One Community and Voluntary sector representative
 - One Employment Specialist - Department for Work and Pensions / Job Centre Plus
 - One Pre-16 education sector representative
 - One Trade Union representative

- The LEP Chief Executive or their nominated deputy
- The S151 Officer of the LEPs accountable body or their nominated representative

A Central Government representative (for example from Education Skills Funding Agency / Cities and Local Growth Unit) shall have a standing invitation to attend any / all Skills Advisory Panel Meetings on an ex-officio basis.

4. Directions on Appointments

Skills Advisory Panel membership and the appointment process to be applied is at the discretion of the Board of Solent Local Enterprise Partnership Limited, taking into consideration HM Government requirements in relation to the formation of Skills Advisory Panels. In agreeing the appointment process to be applied, the Solent LEP will have due regard to its equality and diversity policy and will consider how to reflect different sectors of the local community through the Panel.

Members of the Panel shall ordinarily be appointed for a period of three years, with an optional extension of three years. There is an option to extend for a further three years in exceptional circumstances if approved by the LEP Board. The Solent LEP Chief Executive and s151 Officer from the Accountable Body constitute standing members and will not be subject to prescribed term lengths.

Members of the Panel may resign their position at any time by giving notice in writing to the Chair.

Removal from Office

A member of the Panel may be removed from office by the Panel by notice in writing if he or she has been absent from meetings of the Panel for a period longer than three consecutive meetings without the Chair's permission or is unable or unfit to carry out the functions of a member.

5. Meeting Protocols and Procedures

The Solent Skills Advisory Panel meetings will be held in accordance with the following Meeting Protocols and Procedures:

- **Frequency** - The Skills Advisory Panel shall meet three times a year, or as agreed by the Chair person in partnership with the Solent LEP.
- **Location** - Meetings shall be held at various locations across the Solent LEP area.
- **Appointment of Chair** - The Chair will be the Solent LEP Board lead for Skills. Should the LEP Board lead for Solent Skills Advisory Panel not be available to chair a meeting, the SAP members will appoint a chair for the meeting from its private sector membership.
- **Decision Making** - The Solent Skills Advisory Panel is a forum for engagement and provides advice to the Solent LEP Board.
- **Dissemination of Information** - Solent Skills Advisory Panel will publish meeting packs and meeting notes on the Solent LEP website within five working days of meetings taking place. Solent Skills Advisory Panel may lead on work commissioned by the Solent LEP.
- **Support Arrangements** - The LEP Executive and LEP Accountable Body will provide secretariat and Ex- Officio support. Provision may be made to provide for wider Ex-Officio as agreed with the Board.

- The Skills Advisory Panel may invite relevant representatives of Government Agencies such as the Cities and Local Growth Unit to attend meetings periodically.

6. Attendance by others

In the event that the Chair is unable to attend a meeting, they may nominate a substitute from amongst the other Business Directors of Solent Local Enterprise Partnership Ltd to attend in their absence. The Solent LEP Chief Executive and S151 Officer of the Solent LEPs Accountable Body may also nominate a substitute to attend in their absence. Nominees will have full voting rights. No other Panel Members may nominate substitutes.

The work of the Skills Advisory Panel will be supported by the attendance of the Solent LEP Executive Team and LEP Accountable Body as required. These attendees will not have any voting rights. External attendees may be invited by the Chair to attend meetings in support of the business of the SAP. These attendees will not have any voting rights.

Whilst the role of the Panel is advisory only and has no decision making role in relation to any public funds, the S151 Officer of the Solent LEPs Accountable Body (or their nominated deputy) will receive a standing invitation to attend all meetings of the Panel.

7. Quorum

For the Board to be quorate at least six members will need to be present at meetings. This must include the Solent LEP Board lead for skills or their nominated deputy from the Solent LEP, and at least two other private sector members.

8. Decisions and Voting

The role of the Skills Advisory Panel is advisory only. However, the Panel may provide advice in relation to financial decisions such as the commissioning of strategy work or the Solent LEPs funding programmes. In the event advice is provided in relation to matters of finance this will be considered by the Solent LEP and its accountable body in line with the Solent LEP Assurance Framework and appropriate schemes of delegation in place.

It is expected that the advice and recommendations of the Panel will normally be reached by consensus, but if a vote is required, decisions shall be made on the basis of a majority of those members attending and voting at a meeting.

9. The Role of the Chair and Deputy Chair

The Chair will be responsible for agreeing the agenda for each meeting and deciding the order of matters to be discussed.

The Chair will be responsible for agreeing at the start of the new financial year the programme for the forthcoming year.

In agreeing the agenda for each meeting and programme for the forthcoming year, the Chair will consult with the Deputy Chair. This consultation will ensure that there is an opportunity for the LEP to seek advice on priority areas identified by the Board, whilst also ensuring that the Panel can introduce new matters for discussion.

The Chair will be responsible for agreeing the meeting locations for the Panel in partnership with the LEP Chief Executive (or their nominated representative).

The Chair will chair all the meetings of the Panel. If the Chair is unable to attend a meeting, the Deputy Chair in their absence for that meeting. In the unlikely event that neither the Chair nor Deputy Chair is in attendance, the Panel may nominate a Chair for the duration of the meeting from amongst the membership present.

The Chair 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 Chair will act as an important link between the LEP Board and the Panel, providing feedback to the Board on Panel meetings and feedback to the Panel from the LEP Board.

Both the Chair and Deputy Chair will act as ambassadors for the Solent LEP and the work of the LEP in relation to the Skills Advisory Panel.

10. Conduct of Skills Advisory Panel Members

All Panel Members are expected to follow "The 7 principles of public life" code of conduct and an LEP Code of Conduct has been established which all Members are required to sign. A copy of the LEPs Code of Conduct is [available here](#) In addition, the Board have also established corporate core values which will inform all that we do and Panel Members are expected to act in accordance with these values. A copy of our core values is [available here](#).

11. Deputations at meetings

The Skills Advisory Panel may receive deputations on a matter from any organisation or individual, where notice has been given, which is deemed relevant to the role of the Panel. The following rules will apply:

- Notice of the intended deputation stating its purpose must be received in writing by the Head of Policy, Communications and Partner Engagement by 12 noon on the working day preceding the meeting.
- Decisions on whether to receive deputations on a matter will be made by the Chair and the Chair may waive the giving of notice in any case they consider appropriate.
- When the deputation is given it must relate to the agreed purpose in respect of which it is made.
- No person may speak for more than 6 minutes per deputation.
- The total time for those in favour and against a proposal will be 12 minutes respectively. If more than 2 people wish to speak for or against a proposition, the time allocated to each will be reduced proportionately, unless they agree otherwise amongst themselves how to apportion the 12 minutes.
- Those attending may make a written or verbal presentation which may be supplemented by a modest visual aid such as a single plan, photograph or video recording. This will be retained by the Solent LEP. Video recording presentations are included within the time allowed to deputations.
- Questions to deputations will be permitted, but only to clarify a statement.

12. Declarations of Interest

In accordance with Article 46 of the Solent LEP Articles of Association and the Local Enterprise Partnership Governance and Transparency Best Practice Guidance a register of interest has been established by the Solent LEP and all Directors have a statutory duty to declare their interests (direct or indirect) in transactions or arrangements involving the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership. This requirement has been extended to all Chairs and Members of dedicated advisory sub-panels of the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership, Section 151

Officers and Chief Executive Officers of any accountable body organisation operating on behalf of the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership and Any other persons with significant influence over the activities of the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership (for example, Solent LEP employees and senior points of contact at accountable body organisations such as legal and financial contacts).

13. Management of Interests

The overriding principle adhered to by the LEP is that every Solent Skills Advisory Panel Member should be, and be seen to be, impartial at the time of participation in any discussion or advice to a matter considered by the Panel.

This is recognised to be particularly important in relation to any funding advice, which are to be considered by the LEP through the competitive, transparent processes set out under the agreed Assurance Framework and it is a fundamental principle that all parties in such processes are treated equally and fairly and that the parties perceive this to be the case.

The Solent LEP takes a proactive approach to the management of all interests. This includes both direct interests in matters to be considered, which would realistically be affected by its outcome, as well as presumed, unconscious or apparent bias arising from an involvement (found where a fair-minded and informed observer, having considered the facts, would conclude that there was a real possibility that the Member could have been biased).

A Solent Skills Advisory Panel Member must declare the nature and extent of any interest, direct or indirect, which she/he has in a proposed transaction or arrangement with the company or in any transaction or arrangement entered into by the company which has not previously been declared and absent himself or herself from any discussions of the directors in which it is possible that a conflict will arise between his or her duty to act solely in the interests of the company and any personal interest (including but not limited to any personal financial interest).

If a conflict of interests arises for a Solent Skills Advisory Panel Member because of a duty of loyalty owed to another, the un-conflicted Members may authorise such a conflict of interests where the following conditions apply:

- the conflicted Member is absent from the part of the meeting at which there is discussion of any arrangement or transaction affecting that other person;
- the conflicted Member does not vote on any such matter and is not to be counted when considering whether a quorum of Members is present at the meeting; and
- the un-conflicted Members consider it is in the interests of the Management Group to authorise the conflict of interests in the circumstances applying.

The notes of meetings of Solent Skills Advisory Panel will record any declarations of interest made, and whether the Member withdrew from the meeting for that item.

In line with the Local Enterprise Partnership Governance and Transparency Best Practice Guidance, each Member shall review their individual register of interests before each Solent Skills Advisory Panel meeting and submit any necessary revisions to the LEP and S151 Officer at the start of the meeting.

Even if a meeting has not taken place a Member must, within 28 days of becoming aware of any change to the interests specified, provide written notification to the LEP and S151 Officer, of that change.

14. Gifts and Hospitality

The Solent LEP also maintains a register of events attended and gifts or hospitality received or given by all persons in their capacity as representatives of the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership or whilst carrying out Solent Local Enterprise Partnership duties. Gifts and hospitality of a significant value arising received by Solent Skills Advisory Panel Members in their capacity of representatives of the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership should not be accepted. The giving of gifts or hospitality of significant value should also be avoided. Full information on the Solent LEP Register of events attended and gifts or hospitality received is [available here](#).

15. Equality and Diversity

The Solent LEP have established a set of core values which underpin all the work that we do. Embracing diversity as an essential component in the way we work is a core value of our approach. A copy of our Equality and Diversity Policy is available at: <https://solentlep.org.uk/media/4615/solent-lep-equality-diversity-and-inclusion-policy-2022-23.pdf>

16. Complaints and Whistle-blowing

The Solent LEP and Portsmouth City Council as accountable body to the Solent LEP are committed to achieving the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability in all of our practices and have established a complaints and Whistleblowing policy, which complies with that of both Portsmouth City Council and the Local Enterprise Partnership Governance and Transparency Best Practice Guidance. A copy of this policy is available at: <https://solentlep.org.uk/contact-us/>

This procedure outlines the process to follow for a Member when reporting a perceived wrongdoing within the LEP, including something they believe goes against the core values of Standards in Public Life (the Nolan Principles) and the Code of Conduct for LEP Board Members, Panel Members and staff. The Standards in Public Life include the principles of; integrity, honesty, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, leadership and impartiality.

All Solent Skills Advisory Panel Members, act as key advisors to the LEP, have a right and a responsibility to speak up and report behaviour that contravenes these values.