



# Delegated decision report

## DECISION UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

**DECISION CANNOT BE TAKEN BEFORE 10  
DECEMBER 2019**

Title **APPOINTMENT TO SOLENT GROWTH FORUM**

Report to **LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR  
STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS**

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The government wants strong underpinning local authority partnership arrangements in place to facilitate joint decision making and collaboration on growth and economic development between all local authorities in each Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).
2. The Solent Leaders' Forum acts as the primary mechanism for the Solent LEP to collectively engage with the council (through the Leader) on future economic strategy across the area.
3. The LEP is seeking to reconfigure the forum, under revised terms of reference, to provide a complementary role to the Solent Leaders' Forum.
4. The Solent Growth Forum will have the following purposes:
  - To provide an external scrutiny panel for the LEP, with involvement of all local authorities within the Solent area.
  - To review projects funded under the Solent Growth Deal.
  - To provide recommendations, expert advice and guidance on any matter relating to the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), Local Industrial Strategy, the work of the board and supporting panels, forums or committees.
  - To advise on the policies and programmes outlined in the SEP and the Local Industrial Strategy.
  - To review the delivery of the SEP and Local Industrial Strategy.
  - To receive updates on the delivery of the European Structural Investment Funds.
  - To encourage optimal delivery of the strategic priorities across programmes, and the optimal delivery of strategic priorities.
  - To provide a strategic review of the development and delivery of the multi-year strategic economic plan and Local Industrial Strategy.

5. Local authorities within the Solent area have therefore been asked to appoint representatives to join the forum.
6. This report seeks to determine who is appointed as the Isle of Wight Council representative to the forum.

## BACKGROUND

7. In February 2019 the Solent LEP published a new assurance framework, which is an important document in establishing the policies, processes and systems the Solent LEP works to in order to guarantee the public money they are entrusted with is properly managed in a transparent and accountable manner, ensuring resources are spent with regularity, propriety and securing value for money.
8. The assurance framework establishes the organisational structure for the Solent LEP and its development has included feedback from all local authorities to ensure there is a structure in place that ensures strong and collective engagement between local authorities and the LEP.
9. The role of representative on the Solent Growth Forum is deemed as extremely important to the Solent LEP, to ensure that it can benefit from external scrutiny and expert oversight through its local authority partners.

## STRATEGIC CONTEXT

10. The work of the Solent LEP and therefore that of the forum supports a number of priorities and outcomes within the council's Corporate Plan 2019-22. It acts as the key interface and lead for economic development in the Solent. Priorities that includes, the provision of sound financial management, delivery of economic growth and prosperity, planning for future needs and the creation of opportunities for all.
11. The Corporate Plan also includes 12 outcomes for the plan period, and those supported by this decision include:
  - businesses have the confidence to invest;
  - a financially balanced and sustainable council;
  - a well-educated and skilled community; and
  - all young people will have the best start in life so that they can fill their potential.

## CONSULTATION

12. Representative local authority members who sit on the Solent LEP have been consulted and involved in the development of the new structure, with the opportunity to feedback on any proposals. It is from this engagement that it has been determined that a Solent Growth Forum should be created to compliment the work of the Solent Leaders' Forum, which has already been established and met on a number of occasions.

## FINANCIAL / BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

13. There are no direct financial implications in the determination of the Isle of Wight Council's representative on the Solent Growth Forum, other than associated travel expenses, which will be processed in line with council policies and procedures.

## LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

14. The appointment to this forum is within the gift of the leader.
15. There are no legal implications in not appointing a representative, although the council may be disadvantaged insofar that it does not possess the ability to be involved in the scrutiny of the work of the Solent LEP.

## EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

16. The council, as a public body is required to meet its statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equal opportunities between people from different groups and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it. The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
17. There are no equality implications as a result of this decision.

## OPTIONS

18. Option 1 – To appoint the chairman of the Policy and Scrutiny Committee for Regeneration, Housing and the Environment to the Solent Growth Forum.
19. Option 2 – To appoint an alternative elected member to the Solent Growth Forum.
20. Option 3 – To decide not to appoint a council representative to the Solent Growth Forum.

## RISK MANAGEMENT

21. There is no risk associated with appointing a representative to the Solent Growth Forum, other than ensuring the nominee has sufficient calendar availability, in order to undertake any preparation or attendance to the meetings of the forum. If the agreed nominee in time indicates the associated works to provide due regard to the work of the forum is over onerous, there is a risk they could indicate they wish to step down from the position.
22. Meetings of the forum will be conducted in accordance with the assurance framework for the Solent Growth Deal and as agreed by the accountable body for the Solent LEP (Portsmouth City Council). Forum meetings will be open to the public, and subject to the notice period set out in the joint agreement. The forum will meet a minimum of two times a year.
23. A register of interests will be established, and all members will be expected to declare both pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests. In addition, members of the forum will be required to declare any direct or indirect interest in any matter to be considered at a meeting of the forum under a standing item.
24. The risks in not appointing a representative will include the lack of ability to be engaged in the scrutiny of the work of the Solent LEP, to be able to influence or represent the interests of Island residents. Scrutiny is an important function that is tasked with acting as a 'critical friend' to any organisation or body and offer the opportunity to examine and investigate policies, actions or spending.

## EVALUATION

25. Option one would lead to the most appropriate scrutiny chair being appointed owing to the close association of the objectives of the Solent LEP, including economic development and the creation of local jobs in the Solent. These dovetail well with the main focus of regeneration, housing and the environment and would lend themselves well to the scrutiny work undertaken by the council through its own regeneration agenda and objectives.
26. Option two is equally feasible, although it may not provide the same level of background knowledge as the suggested representative in option one or align with the objectives and work of the Solent LEP.
27. Option three would, as already explained exclude the council from being able to 'sit at the table' and engage and have influence over the work of the Solent LEP, as prescribed in the assurance framework. The council would therefore have no input or be able to advance any views on accountability, ensuring resources are spent with regularity, propriety or that they were securing value for money.

RECOMMENDATION

28. Option 1 – To appoint the chairman of the Policy and Scrutiny Committee for Regeneration, Housing and the Environment to the Solent Growth Forum.

APPENDICES ATTACHED

29. [Appendix 1 - Solent LEP – assurance framework](#)  
30. [Appendix 2 – Solent Growth Forum – terms of reference](#)

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CHRIS ASHMAN  
*Director of Regeneration*

CLLR DAVE STEWART  
*Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Partnerships*

Decision

Signed

Date

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**The checklist at the beginning of this template MUST be completed before the report is sent to Democratic Services.**