



SOLENT  
**LOCAL**  
ENTERPRISE  
**PARTNERSHIP**

**Solent Local Enterprise Partnership**

**Solent Growth Forum**

**Terms of Reference**

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## **1. Effect and application**

The Solent LEP Board in partnership with its accountable body, Portsmouth City Council, establishes the Solent Growth Forum (SGF), and with the participant members adopts these Terms of Reference, which will govern the meetings and activities of the SGF.

## **2. Background and purpose**

The Solent Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) is the key interface and lead for economic development in the Solent.

Strengthened Local Enterprise Partnerships sets out four key roles for the LEP as follows:

- **Strategy:** Developing an evidence-based Local Industrial Strategy that identifies local strengths and challenges, future opportunities and the action needed to boost productivity, earning power and competitiveness across their area.
- **Allocation of funds:** Identifying and developing investment opportunities; prioritising the award of local growth funding; and monitoring and evaluating the impacts of its activities to improve productivity across the local economy.
- **Co-ordination:** Using their convening power, for example to co-ordinate responses to economic shocks; and bringing together partners from the private, public and third sectors.
- **Advocacy:** Collaborating with a wide-range of local partners to act as an informed and independent voice for their area.

As autonomous local partnerships, Local Enterprise Partnerships are primarily accountable to the communities within their area. In practice, the full and active role of senior local authority representatives on these boards provides a strong and direct link back to local people and are one part of the Local Enterprise Partnership's democratic accountability.

As not all local authorities are represented directly on the Solent LEP Board, it is important that all Local Authority representatives have been given a mandate through the Solent Growth Forum, which brings all the local authorities together in the area. The Solent Growth Forum provides Solent LEP with an additional means of ensuring effective and appropriate democratic scrutiny of the LEPs investment decisions.

## **3. Solent LEP and the Accountable Body**

The Accountable Local Authority for the Solent LEP (Portsmouth City Council), as the legal recipient of funding, will take responsibility for ensuring that a local assurance framework is in place, that it meets the standards set out in this document, and that all funding decisions are made in accordance with it.

## **4. Purpose of the SGF**

Government want to be confident that there are 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 LEP area. It's important that local authorities across the LEP area support growth priorities and actively play a part in ensuring their delivery – by aligning

strategic plans, through use of their powers and competencies and through pooling and aligning of local resources and efforts.

In addition, the Government also require the LEP to set out how it will ensure external scrutiny and expert oversight, including participating in relevant local authority scrutiny panel enquiries to ensure effective and appropriate democratic scrutiny of investment decisions.

In order to provide for this, the Solent Growth Forum has been established under a Joint Agreement and it provides an arrangement which enables collective engagement of local authority leaders on growth priorities, with the LEP represented, supported by strong collaboration and joint delivery at executive level. The forum also provides an opportunity to Local Enterprise Partnerships to engage local partners and independent experts – when developing economic strategies, whilst reassuring partners that taxpayers money is being put to best use.

The SGF has 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 Strategic Economic Plan, 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 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.

And the Members shall have regard to these purposes when engaged in the business of the SGF, and the Executive of the Solent LEP and the Chair, shall have regard to them when agreeing the agenda.

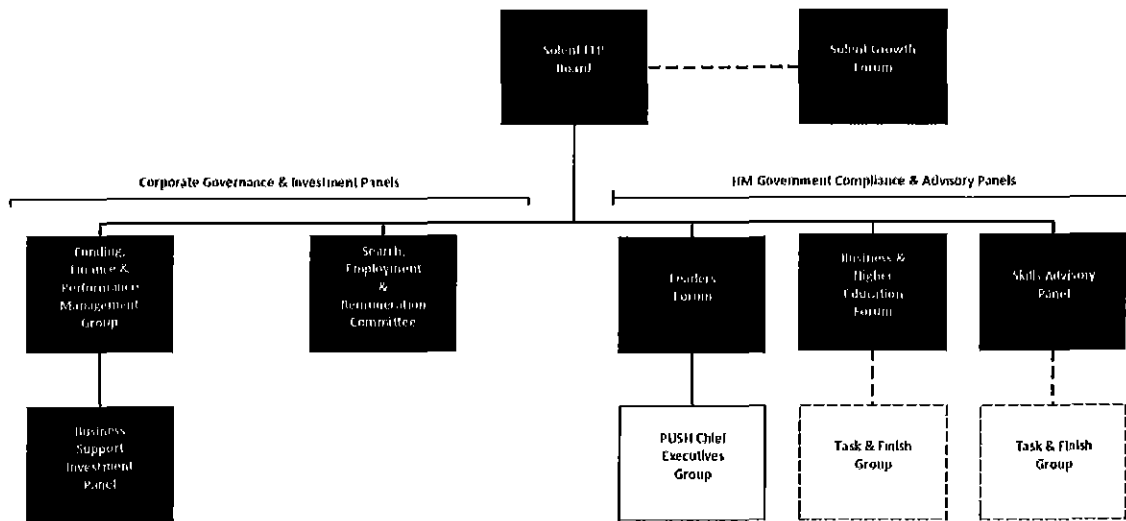
## **5. Openness and transparency**

For the Solent Growth Deal the SGF shall conduct its business in an open and transparent way and will:

- Adhere to the Local Government Transparency Code
- Conduct meetings by way of procedures which substantially follow the principles contained within Part VA of the Local Government Act 1972
- Give advance notice of meetings and publicise minutes

## **6. Relationship with the Solent LEP Governance Structure**

The SGF shall advise the Solent LEP Board, and resides in the following structure:



The SGF will have regard for and act in accordance with the Solent LEP Assurance Framework, the Joint Agreement, and the rules of procedure as set out by the accountable body in agreement with the Solent LEP and the SGF.

## 7. Membership and Structure

Full Members shall include all of those local authorities that are located within the Solent LEP area who shall have Full Member status. Full members of the SGF must be drawn from either the elected members or senior level employees of a Local Authority within the Solent LEP area.

Associate membership shall be available to all neighbouring local authorities and Local Enterprise Partnership areas that are adjacent to the Solent LEP area.

Ex Officio Members are representatives invited by the Executive of the Solent LEP, in consultation with the Chair of the SGF on the basis of subject and sector knowledge, and the need for a diverse stakeholder view, from sectors including (but not exclusively):

- Education/Academia
- Business
- Trade Unions
- Government Agencies and departments
- National Health Service bodies, and Clinical Commissioning Groups

Full Members will comply with the declaration obligations contained within the Assurance Framework, together with the gifts and hospitality policy of the Solent LEP, as published on the Solent LEP website (see: <https://solentlep.org.uk/media/2551/solent-lep-register-of-interest-template-february-2019.pdf> and [https://solentlep.org.uk/media/1265/register of events attended-hospitality and gifts received form.pdf](https://solentlep.org.uk/media/1265/register_of_events_attended_hospitality_and_gifts_received_form.pdf))

## 8. Membership status and role

Full Members of the SGF may vote on any matter

Associate and Ex Officio Members will have a non-voting role and will provide subject or sector specific expertise, advice, and challenge.

### **9. Appointment of Chair**

The Chair will be drawn from amongst the Full Members of the SGF, but shall not be a "P" Director of the Solent LEP. The Full members of the SGF shall elect the Chair by a majority vote of all Full Members, at the start of each municipal year.

The total term of tenure for any Chair will be for a maximum of three consecutive years, after which time a new Chair shall be appointed. For the avoidance of doubt a Chair cannot be re-elected after a three - year consecutive term.

Where the Chair is absent from a meeting of the SGF, the full members must elect one of the full members (but who shall not be a "P" Director of Solent LEP) present to Chair the meeting.

### **10. Voting Arrangements**

Each Full Member of the SGF will have one vote. Member representatives will be authorised to vote on behalf of their authority.

Voting will be by simple majority.

### **11. Support and Administration Agreements**

The democratic services support for the SGF will be the responsibility of the Solent LEP accountable body, Portsmouth City Council.

The SGF will be supported by the executive team of the Solent LEP, the Solent LEP accountable body and associated company secretariat.

Independent support may be commissioned by the SGF to support it with the discharge of its role, in accordance with the financial limits and budget approved by the Solent LEP Board.

### **12. Meeting Arrangements and Frequency**

Meetings of the SGF shall 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).

SGF meetings will be open to the public, and subject to the notice period set out in the Joint Agreement. The SGF will meet a minimum of two times per year.

### **13. Declarations of Interest**

A Register of Interest 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. Where a matter is under consideration in which a member has declared a specific interest, i.e. where a decision made by the Forum could bring an advantage to that individual, his/her organisation or business, that

member shall not participate in discussion, or voting, and shall not be counted in the quorum for that item. It shall be for the other members present to determine whether the interest is such that the member should withdraw from the meeting.

Others attending meetings of the Forum, whether as a guest or officer of the Solent LEP or Local Authorities in the area, shall declare any direct, or indirect interest in any matter which is to be considered at a meeting. It shall be for the members of the Forum to determine whether the interest is such that the person should withdraw. In a case where the secretary to the meeting declares a direct or indirect interest in any matter to be considered at the meeting and in the event they should withdraw, another shall be appointed to clerk for that item.

The minutes of meetings of the Forum will record any declarations of interest made, and whether the person withdrew from the meeting for that item.

#### **14. Complaints and Whistle-blowing**

The Solent LEP has established a complaints policy, which broadly complies with that of Portsmouth City Council who shall make arrangements for the investigation of alleged breaches of law, standards, or public fund management. A copy of this policy is available at: <https://solentlep.org.uk/contact-us/>