

SOLENT GROWTH FORUM

RECORD OF DECISIONS of the meeting of the Solent Growth Forum held on Monday, 17 October 2016 at 7.00 pm at the Guildhall, Portsmouth

Present

Councillor Mark Hook (in the Chair) (Gosport BC)

Councillor Sean Woodward (Fareham Borough Council)

Councillor Donna Jones (Portsmouth City Council)

Councillor Guy Shepherd (East Hants District Council)

Councillor Martin Hatley (Test Valley BC)

Councillor Rob Humby (Hampshire CC substitute member)

Councillor Tony Briggs (Havant BC substitute member)

Councillor Victoria Weston (Winchester CC)

Ex officio: Bruce Voss (HCA)
Sarah Duckering (University of Portsmouth for Prof.Gabraith)

LEP/Accountable Body Officers:
Anne-Marie Mountfield, Stuart Baker, Marc Griffin, James Fitzgerald (Financial Adviser), Robert Parkin (Legal Adviser)

32. Introductions and Apologies for Absence

Robert Parkin, Legal Adviser, reported that as the chairman Councillor Cheshire had sent his apologies for absence, a chair for the meeting needed to be elected from the current members. Councillor Mark Hook was duly proposed, seconded and elected as chair for this meeting. All present then introduced themselves.

Other apologies for absence included Councillor Perry (Hampshire CC), Councillor Heron (New Forest DC), Councillor Letts (Southampton CC) and Councillor Bacon (Isle of Wight) and ex-officio members Graham Galbraith, Ken Moon, Kevin Bourner, Chris Ward, Di Roberts, Tim Houghton and Fiona Dalton.

33. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

34. Notes of Previous Meeting of 7 June 2016 and Matters Arising

The notes of the Solent Growth Forum meeting held on 7 June 2016 were agreed as a correct record.

35. Local Growth Deal Capital Programme Update

Marc Griffin, Solent LEP, presented this update report, on the LEP Local Growth Deal capital programme in 2016/17. The Capital Programme and forecast underspend would be discussed at the Solent LEP Board meeting on 21st October 2016.

The Local Growth Deal Capital Programme update was noted by the Solent Growth Forum.

36. Solent LEP Strategy Update

Anne-Marie Mountifield, Chief Executive of the Solent LEP, presented this update on 2016 activity, emerging policies relating economic growth and the future role of LEPs (as set out on page 2 of the presentation that was circulated to members and would be placed on the PCC website for this meeting).

A policy update was provided, which focussed on the emergence of a new Industrial Strategy, which was being led by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). Under the BEIS Department Local Growth Champions were being appointed for each LEP area and the Minister Jo Johnston had been confirmed as the Local Growth Champion for the Solent LEP area.

Members of the Solent Growth Forum were invited to give their comments prior to the Solent LEP Board meeting later that week on economic strategy for the Solent and on the future direction of LEPs.

The Chair thanked Anne-Marie for her presentation.

37. Updated Economic Baseline and Forecasting

Neil McCullough from Oxford Economics gave a detailed presentation on recent performance and the outlook for the Solent LEP area, which was circulated and would be made available to members on email on the meeting's webpage. Some of the key findings were:

- Job growth was significantly weaker than expected (page 6)
- Residential employment rate had increased (p.7)
- Outturn growth for the Solent is half of the forecast rate but the productivity gap with the wider South East is less than expected (p8)
- Solent area to experience slower population growth, driven by a reduction in net inward migration. There will be a shrinking working age population (p10)
- p11 showed 47,000 additional jobs are expected to be created in the Solent LEP area to 2036
- Growth in productivity in the Solent is expected to be similar to that of the wider South East and UK (1.7%) to 2036.

The Chair thanked Neil for his presentation and invited comments and questions which included:

- In response to the findings on GVA performance the forum asked whether the LEP would be setting a GVA target in their new economic strategy when it is developed. Anne-Marie reported that the current economic plan was based on 3% GVA growth per annum and there was the need to look at the issue of 'place' (i.e. how we want this area to look in a way that reflects local specialisms and economic strengths as well as the need to reflect the drive to improve productivity and business growth).
- There was a query on the impact of changes in population on spatial planning, particularly in relation to housing supply. Neil from Oxford Economics advised that whilst population figures were down there was still the need to look at affordability of housing as well as supply. Anne-Marie reiterated that affordability still remained a big problem for businesses in recruiting skilled staff in the Solent area.
- It was suggested that the figures from the presentation would be fed back by PUSH officers to the consultants GL Hearne who had undertaken work on the PUSH Spatial Strategy.
- Clarification was sought on the geographical basis of the figures, namely whether the data represented the true Solent area. Neil confirmed that the data was based on the Solent LEP geography.

The presentation contained interesting information which members wished to share wider with their colleagues, so electronic copies would be made available.

38. Forward Plan

Stuart Baker had brought forward this information report to reflect requests from members for future agenda items, which were proposed to be taken to the **next meeting on 7th February 2017**. The views of members were also invited on the timings of meetings, and whether these should continue to be held immediately following the PUSH meetings or whether a daytime meeting may be more convenient (which may encourage more ex-officio members to participate).

Action: Members were asked to forward any requests for future items as well as their views on timings of future meetings to Stuart Baker at the LEP.

39. Any Other Business and Close

There was no extra business raised.

The meeting concluded at 8.00 pm.

Chair