

SOLENT GROWTH FORUM

MINUTES of the meeting of the Solent Growth Forum held on Tuesday, 15 March 2016 at 7.00 pm at the Council Chamber, Fareham Borough Council

Present

Councillor Michael Cheshire MBE (in the Chair) Havant Borough Council

Councillors Sean Woodward - Fareham Borough Council
Donna Jones - Portsmouth City Council
Simon Letts - Southampton City Council
Keith House - Eastleigh Borough Council
Robert Humby - Winchester City Council (Deputising for Stephen Godfrey)
Guy Shepherd - East Hampshire District Council
Roy Perry - Hampshire County Council
Edward Heron - New Forest District Council
Martin Hatley - Test Valley Borough Council
Mark Hook - Gosport Borough Council

Ex-officio

Stuart Baker – Head of Local Growth Solent LEP
Fiona Dalton - University Hospital
Marc Griffin – Head of Capital and Infrastructure Solent LEP
James Fitzgerald - Corporate Finance Specialist, Portsmouth City Council (deputising for Chris Ward)
Tim Houghton - Voluntary and Community Sector
Robert Parkin, Deputy City Solicitor and Deputy Monitoring Officer Portsmouth City Council
Bernie Topham (deputising for Graham Galbraith)
Bruce Voss, Homes and Communities Agency

In attendance

Anne-Marie Mountfield - Chief Executive Solent LEP
Martin Lavers, Assistant Head of Service (Infrastructure), Portsmouth City Council
Dawn Baxendale - Southampton City Council
Stuart Jarvis - Hampshire County Council
Bob Jackson - New Forest District Council
Roger Testall - Test Valley Borough Council
Tom Horwood - East Hants District Council & Havant Borough Council
Nick Tustian - Eastleigh Borough Council
Bob Jackson - New Forest District Council
David Williams - Portsmouth City Council

16. Introductions and Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from:

Councillors

Jonathan Bacon - Isle of Wight Council

Ex-officio Members

Pal Ahluwalia - University of Portsmouth

Nick Drew - East Hampshire District Council

Graham Galbraith - University of Portsmouth

John Henderson - Highways England

Debbie Lloyd - Skills Funding Agency

Deryn Martin - Skills Funding Agency

Di Roberts - Brockenhurst College

Chris Ward - Portsmouth City Council - (Accountable Body)

17. Meeting Notes and Matters Arising

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 9 December 2015 be agreed.

18. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

19. Update on Transport Investment Plan

Stuart Baker, Head of Local Growth, Solent LEP gave a presentation updating the Forum on the Transport Investment Plan. Due to technical difficulties the presentation was not able to be shown on the screen so he advised that the slides would be circulated to the members after the meeting.

The Transport Investment Plan was developed as an independent and objective study and there has been extensive consultation with stakeholders. AECOM have been commissioned to take on the work. The Plan sets out a bold ambition that in the period until 2040 we support and prioritise strategic and transformational transport investment in the Solent area.

The outputs from the Plan are showing that there is an infrastructure deficit in the Solent and that there are significant economic benefits to be derived from investment in transport - and in particular, rail. Due to the increasing population, city regions will need better public transport. Currently the train journey between Portsmouth and Southampton takes an hour, yet the cities are only 20 miles apart. The journey time from Portsmouth to London by rail is also poor.

The Transport Investment Plan will be going to the Solent LEP Board meeting on Friday for approval. Following this the LEP will work with partners to take forward the proposals.

Members of the Forum thanked Stuart for his presentation and had no questions.

20. Update on Local Growth Fund Programme

Marc Griffin, Head of Capital and Infrastructure, Solent LEP, introduced his report which updated the Forum on progress of the delivery of the Solent Growth Deal. He advised that 2015/16 had been a very positive year with 98.5% of the 2015/16 funding defrayed in year.

In response to a question, Marc advised that a letter from Government confirming the grant funding of £42m had now been received by the LEP. Concern was raised by Stuart Jarvis of HCC about implications of annual grant awards on the delivery of multi-years projects, although Stuart accepted that this resulted in the approach taken by Government to the Local Growth Fund.

Members thanked the Solent LEP team for all their hard work on this.

RESOLVED that:

- 1. The update on the Solent Growth Deal be noted.**
- 2. Any further advice from members on the management of the programme and the development of a new business support grant fund programme are emailed to Marc Griffin.**
- 3. That an item be included at a future meeting updating the Forum on the business support activity of the Solent LEP.**

21. Presentation on the Dunsbury Hill Farm Local Growth Deal Project

Martin Lavers Assistant Head of Service (Infrastructure), Portsmouth City Council gave a presentation updating the Forum on progress with the Dunsbury Hill Farm Local Growth Deal Project. Due to the technical issues, his presentation slides were unable to be shown and would be circulated after the meeting.

Martin explained the location of the site and the vision for the site. The link road would be complete in 2016 and £4.54 million from the Solent LEP had been used towards the total cost of £8.54 million. The project will unlock a new and strategic employment site, adjacent to an area of deprivation.

Councillor Jones said she was pleased that Fat Face had signed last Friday to locate their largest UK distribution warehouse on plot 2 on the site. She had also met with an hotelier with regard to the possibility of a 2-3 star hotel being located on the site.

22. Update on Solent LEP Work Plan

Stuart Baker, Head of Local Growth, Solent LEP informed members that the current work of the Solent LEP included:

- Preparing funding agreements for 2016/17 local growth deal schemes;
- Reviewing and taking forward projects put forward through the recent autumn 2015 expression of interest call;
- The area has been awarded £400k of One Public Estate funding, and the LEP is working with partners to take projects forward and will need the support of the Local Authorities to identify transformational land / property opportunities for future OPE funding.
- In relation to business support activity, it is a busy time with Regional Growth Fund projects closing down and new funds being developed. Key metrics delivered through the business support activity of the LEP included:
 - £7m grant allocated to more than 130 businesses
 - 70 new businesses started
 - 1,200 jobs / safeguarding
- Within Solent Growth Deal we secured £2m p.a. to continue business support provision and the LEP has worked with X-Forces and Natural Enterprise on two specific funds. The LEP is also working with British Marine on a specific Marine and Maritime SME Growth Fund
- To reflect the areas challenges around productivity, the LEP is developing a new High Growth and Productivity SME Growth Fund, which will target improving productivity in existing businesses and providing funding for start-ups with high growth potential
- In relation to innovation, Stuart reported that the LEP has taken the lead on a Broader Solent consortia submission to take forward a Science and Innovation Audit. This involved working with Dorset LEP, the three local Uni's, NOC, and key businesses in the marine, maritime, defence, and photonics sectors. This work will underpin the development of an Innovation Strategy for the Solent.

In response to a question, Stuart advised that the Solent LEP is working with the armed forces to assist ex-service personnel with business start-ups and that applications have been received to this fund.

23. Future Work Programme

Stuart Baker, Head of Local Growth, Solent LEP informed members that the next meeting would include updates on the following issues:

- Business support update
- Local Growth Fund update
- Employer Ownership Programme
- Update on another Local Growth Deal Project

24. Any Other Business and Close

There was no other business. The Chair thanked officers for their reports and presentations slides and confirmed these would be emailed to the Solent Growth Forum members.

The meeting concluded at 7.40 pm.

Chair