

## **SOLENT GROWTH FORUM**

MINUTES of the meeting of the Solent Growth Forum held on Tuesday, 14 March 2017 at 7:15pm in The Council Chamber, Fareham Borough Council

### **Present**

Councillor Mark Hook (in the Chair) (Gosport Borough Council)

Councillors    Sean Woodward (Fareham Borough Council)  
                     Donna Jones (Portsmouth City Council)  
                     Simon Letts (Southampton City Council)  
                     Guy Shepherd (East Hants District Council)  
                     Martin Hatley (Test Valley Borough Council)  
                     David Stewart (Isle of Wight Council)  
                     Caroline Horill (Winchester City Council)  
                     Tony Briggs (Havant Borough Council substitute member)  
                     Keith Mans (Hampshire County Council substitute member)  
                     Bob Jackson (New Forest District Council substitute member)

**Ex-officio:** Graham Galbraith (Vice Chancellor, of Portsmouth)  
                     Di Roberts (Brockenhurst College)  
                     Tim Houghton (Community First)  
                     Bruce Voss (Homes and Communities Agency)

### **LEP/Accountable Officers:**

Stuart Baker, Marc Griffin, James Fitzgerald (Financial Advisor), Robert Parkin (Legal Advisor)

## **1. Introductions and Apologies for Absence**

As the Chairman, Councillor Cheshire had sent his apologies for absence, a chair for the meeting needed to be elected from the non LEP Board Director members of the SGF. Councillor Mark Hook was duly proposed, seconded and elected as chair for this meeting.

Apologies for absence also included Councillor Perry (Hampshire CC), Councillor Heron (New Forest DC) and ex-officio members Chris Ward, Kevin Bournier, Fiona Dalton and Anne-Marie Mountifield.

## **2. Declarations of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **3. Notes of Previous Meeting of 17 October 2016 and Matters Arising**

The notes of the Solent Growth Forum meeting held on 17 October 2016 were agreed as a correct record.

### **4. Discussion on Building Our Industrial Strategy Green Paper and Fixing Our Broken Housing Market White Paper.**

Stuart Baker, Head of Local Growth at Solent LEP introduced the report and provided a short presentation on the programme of roundtable meeting the LEP is holding to seek input from wider stakeholders to inform its responses to the Building our Industrial Strategy Green Paper and the Fixing our Broken Housing Market White Paper, along with emerging feedback from the roundtable meetings. He advised that the LEP would be to both consultations with the Building our Industrial Strategy Green Paper closing on the 17<sup>th</sup> April 2017 and the Fixing our Broken Housing Market White Paper consultation closing on the 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2017. Stuart summarised some of the initial feedback received from these sessions to date which were captured under the 10 pillars of the strategy.

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

- Important to ensure that existing structures / institutions that are working well are strengthened, not replicated.
- Technology is important when looking at Sector Deals and the development of new technology and provision of broadband and digital connectivity seen as key to developing new sectors.
- It was felt that a strong economy needs to have a broad range of sectors therefore the focus should not solely be on the marine maritime sector.
- There were concerns that there was no real timeline Green Paper and that there should be short, medium and long term actions, along with KPI's and deliverables.
- With regard to skills, it was felt that graduates have appropriate technical skills but lack the soft skills required by employers.
- It was felt that there needs to be more collaboration between FE and HE institutions. The new T- Levels introduced by Government were welcomed. To ensure the routes are well-designed and colleges properly prepared, they will be introduced from 2019-20, increasing funding in line with this roll out, with over £500 million of additional funding invested per year once routes are fully implemented. There may be an opportunity for the LEP to play a part in developing the qualification, which may pick up on the soft skills issue.
- In response to a question regarding international trade following Brexit, Stuart Baker advised that a presentation was received at the last SGF from Oxford Economics which offered a forecast based on assumptions about Brexit. At the moment however further details were uncertain.
- There were differing views on whether 'mapping' of car manufacturing supply chains would be worthwhile to identify if there are opportunities for UK SMEs to be more competitive than EU competitors following

introduction of any new trade regime. Members commented however that a strategy is needed to ensure we can react quickly to market-led change rather than having pre-conceived ideas of what may happen.

Stuart advised that the presentation would be placed on the PCC website for this meeting.

## **5. Inward Investment and International Trade.**

Stuart Baker, Head of Local Growth, Solent LEP presented this report. He explained that in 2015/16 there were 22 projects recorded. Stuart explained that the LEP is focussing on two areas:

- 1) Supporting businesses to grow and encouraging new businesses to set up in the Solent. The Solent Growth fund provides funding to support existing businesses to grow.
- 2) Enhancing the attractiveness of the Solent for Inward Investment. This includes better marketing of the Solent. The marine maritime sector is a strength which should be used to attract further investment.

Stuart said the Solent LEP was keen to have the views on this from the SGF Members.

The update was noted by the Solent Growth Forum.

## **6. Local Growth Deal Capital Programme Update and Launch of Solent Growth Deal Development Fund**

Marc Griffin, Solent LEP presented on behalf of Anne-Marie Mountifield who had sent her apologies.

Marc gave a short presentation on the Solent Growth Deal Development Fund which aims to support organisations to undertake initial development work on capital infrastructure projects of a strategic nature that have the potential to contribute to transforming economic growth in the Solent. A guidance document on the launch of the new Solent Growth Deal Development fund was circulated to members.

Marc gave details on who could apply for this fund and the eligibility criteria. He explained that a total of £500,000 is being made available on a competitive basis within this fund by the LEP to support development costs. The funding opportunity opens today (14<sup>th</sup> March 2017) and the first deadline for applications will be 21 April with applications being considered at the LEP Board meeting in May 2017.

The Local Growth Deal Capital Programme Update and details of the Solent Growth Deal Development Fund was noted by the Solent Growth Forum.

## **7. Forward Plan.**

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

- Presentation on a local growth deal project
- Update on Solent Metro

Marc Griffin added that if councillors wanted a presentation on any of the local growth deal projects to let him know and this could be arranged.

## **8. Any Other Business and Close**

There was no extra business raised.

The meeting concluded at 8.05 pm.

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Chair