

**Meeting:** Solent Growth Forum  
**Date:** 16<sup>th</sup> October 2017  
**Item 4:** Workforce Futures (Developing a new workforce strategy for the Solent area)  
**Purpose:** For information

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### **Purpose of report**

This report provides an introduction to the Workforce Futures commission, which has commenced recently. The Forum will receive a presentation from the consultants leading this work, Steer Davies Gleave Economic Development, on behalf of the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership, which aims to stimulate discussion to support the development of Workforce Futures - a new workforce strategy for the Solent area.

### **Introduction**

Forum members will recall that at the last Solent Growth Forum on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2017, skills challenges and needs in the Solent featured prominently in the discussion on the [Building our Industrial Strategy Green Paper](#), which supported the LEPs response to that consultation. Forum members may wish to note that the Solent LEP response to the Green Paper is available [here](#).

The [Solent Skills Strategy](#) was published in March 2014 to inform the [Solent Strategic Economic Plan](#) (published at the same time). Subsequent to this, a [Skills Strategy Interim Evaluation](#) was published in September 2015. However, this work needs updating to:

- reflect the emerging national policy direction in relation to technical and digital skills, talent, apprenticeships, and devolved funding;
- re-focus efforts to enhance the Solent Labour market to support the ambition to bring forward an economy that is more productive, more competitive, and better equipped to face the increasingly technical and digital requirements of industry within a modern industrial economy and the implications of this on staff re-training;
- reflect the recommendations of the [Solent Area Review](#), published in November 2016;
- reflect the forecast impact on skills demand and supply and the labour market following the decision of the UK to leave the EU;
- Engage pre-16 students in technical career opportunities and pathways;
- take account of new evidence we have produced locally;
- support the refresh of the Solent Strategic Economic Plan / Local Industrial Strategy; and
- ensure funding is targeted in an optimum way.

Steer Davies Gleave Economic Development were commissioned following an open and competitive tendering process to develop a new workforce strategy for the Solent. The outputs from this Workforce Strategy for the Solent commission will be:

1. a skills strategy for the period to 2030 drawing on an existing evidence base<sup>1</sup> with appropriate targets; and
2. a delivery plan for a four year period (2017/18 - 2020/21), including a prioritisation framework setting out the key priorities, recognising that affordability will be a consideration; and
3. a Workforce Futures external-facing and accessible document that summarises the main technical Workforce Strategy document.

Steer Davies Gleave Economic Development were commissioned in August 2017 to take forward this work, and a steering group has been established and already met once to provide advice to the consultant. Work is to be progressed at pace, and a stakeholder event is scheduled to take place at the Hilton Ageas on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2017. A draft strategy will be presented to the LEP Board at its 8<sup>th</sup> December 2017 meeting.

Steer Davies Gleave will provide a presentation to the Forum, and it is hoped that this will prompt a discussion to support the development of the strategy. In particular the views of the Forum are invited in relation to:

- From a skills perspective, what region(s) do you either compare yourselves to or aspire to follow?
- What is your assessment of how effectively the supply and demand components of the skills system are working together in Solent?
- From a skills perspective, what are the most significant external drivers of market and technology change e.g. digitalisation, automation or globalisation?
- From a skills perspective, what are the most significant internal drivers of change on the workforce and its skill base e.g. ageing population?

The Forum is asked to:

- **Note** this update and provide **Advice** to the LEP Executive in relation to the four questions posed above.

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<sup>1</sup> ONS data, the output of the [UKCES Employer Skills Survey 2015](#) [UKCES' Employer Perspectives Survey 2016](#) (when it reports), the [Working Futures](#), and the [Solent LEP Baseline Forecasts and Implications of Brexit](#), as well as sector specific reports amongst others.