

Hampshire Skills Strategy – Scope

Introduction

This document provides a proposed scope for the Hampshire Skills Strategy. It is divided into five sections. **Section 1** considers the background and context to this piece of work; **Section 2** presents some initial suggestions for what the Strategy will explore and include such as themes, priorities and key sectors; **Section 3** outlines a timeline for the development of the Strategy, including the deliverables. **Section 4** presents a list of stakeholders and **Section 5** shows an outline of the approval process.

1. Background and context

The importance of skills is recognised across the main political parties in the UK. Evidence suggests that greater skill levels benefit the economy as a whole, but also provide significant economic and social benefits for the individuals who possess them (e.g. <https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/work-local-benefits-improving-employment-and-skills-outcomes>).

Hampshire County Council last published a Skills Strategy and Action Plan in 2022. Since then, with the integration of Local Enterprise Partnership functions and of the Enterprise M3 LEP team, there has been a shift in how the Council is organised to deliver economic development and skills in Hampshire. Part of this is the creation of the **Hampshire Prosperity Partnership** (<https://www.hants.gov.uk/business/hampshire-prosperity-partnership>) and the **Economy and Skills** team in the **Hampshire 2050 Directorate**.

At the meeting of the **Hampshire Prosperity Partnership Board** on 3 September 2024, a paper (<https://documents.hants.gov.uk/hampshire-prosperity-partnership/HPPB030924-SkillsStrategyUpdate-item8.pdf>) was presented to update the Board on skills strategy. In this paper, it was advised that:

- Hampshire County Council is required to develop an economic strategy as part of the guidance underpinning the transfer of Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) responsibilities.
- The ambition is to align an updated skills strategy with this work, which will position skills as a critically important factor in delivering economic prosperity and growth.

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Two recommendations were made to the Board:

1. To prepare for a more aligned and better co-ordinated local skills system through new governance structures, including the Hampshire Prosperity Partnership Board and the Hampshire Skills Partnership – building stronger relationships between key stakeholders across the area.
2. To develop an updated skills strategy and action plan that builds on work to date; is developed in partnership with employers, providers and local stakeholders; and supports our aspirations for economic prosperity through greater local accountability and control.

These were agreed. The Hampshire Skills Partnership met for the first time on 5 December 2024 and a draft outline of the development of the updated skills strategy and action plan was shared.

Although there is no formal timeline, there is a desire for a Hampshire Skills Strategy to be published sometime in 2025.

These developments take place at a time when there are also a number of recent and forthcoming national policy developments and changes, which need to be considered as part of the Skills Strategy process. These include:

- [Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth Jobs](#) (2021) which includes reference to Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs), and outlined plans for FE institutions to demonstrate and review how well their education / training meets local needs.
- [Skills and Post-16 Education Act](#) (2022) with formalization of LSIPs, Lifelong Learning Entitlement (delayed until September 2026), Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) and [College and local authority annual accountability agreements and Local Needs Duty](#).
- [Government missions](#) (2024) outlining ‘five missions to rebuild Britain’ – skills and employment thread through all of these.
- [Invest 2035: the UK’s modern Industrial Strategy](#) (2024-25) where the Government states people and skills are central to the Industrial Strategy’s task to grow the economy. Identifies eight ‘growth-driving’ sectors and the full Industrial Strategy is due in Spring 2025 (although now [expected in June](#) to coincide with Spending Review).
- [Skills England](#), currently in shadow form, will identify skills gaps and priorities; convene local government and other partners to ensure the workforce is equipped with the right

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skills; shape technical education to respond to gaps and priorities; and identify training accessible via the Growth and Skills Levy. Phil Smith CBE appointed as Chair of Skills England and Sir David Bell as Vice Chair.

- [Get Britain Working](#) (2024) white paper sets out reforms to tackle six key issues that are preventing people from working. These reforms will help people get back into work and access training, and help employers recruit, retain and develop staff. Refers to Get Britain Working Plans and the Connect to Work supported employment programme.
- [English Devolution](#) (2024) white paper where devolved areas of England would benefit from a more responsive and locally-driven approach to skills and employment support. Joint ownership of the LSIP model with Employer Representative Bodies.

The Skills Strategy will also consider relevant, local strategies and plans including those from Hampshire County Council, the Solent Growth Partnership, the two LSIPs, colleges and universities. These are listed below.

Hampshire County Council

- [Accountability Statement 2024/25](#)
- [Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2020 - 2025](#)
- [Economic Strategy for Hampshire 2025 - 2027](#) + Economy and Growth Plan
- [Hampshire 2050 Vision](#)
- [Hampshire Children and Young People's Plan \(CYPP\) 2022 - 2025](#)
- [Hampshire County Council Strategic Plan 2021 - 2025](#)
- [Hampshire Public Health Strategy 2023 - 2026](#)
- Hampshire Skills Strategy and Action Plan (Update Spring 2022)
- [Local Transport Plan \(LPT4\)](#)

Solent Growth Partnership

- [Solent Growth & Prosperity Strategy \(2025\)](#)

Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs)

- [Enterprise M3 \(including all of Surrey\) LSIP](#) – Original and progress reports (next one due in June 2025)
- [Solent LSIP](#) – Original and progress reports (next one due in June 2025)

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Colleges and universities

- [Access and participation plans](#)
- [Accountability Agreements](#)
- Strategic plans

In terms of context, the Skills Strategy will include insights into the economy, the labour market and skills landscape and key institutions – not just education and training providers but also [anchor institutions](#) such as the Councils and major hospitals.

2. Content

Geography

Throughout the Skills Strategy, *Hampshire* will be referred to as the whole of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight geographical area, rather than the various and overlapping administrative boundaries. The flow of people, supply chains, education and opportunities cross boundaries which businesses and communities do not see, and it is therefore important that Hampshire is seen as an inclusive economy.

Themes and priorities

A Hampshire Skills Partnership Working Group will be formed to help shape the Skills Strategy. There are a number of themes and priorities that will be shared with the Working Group to help identify which ones the final Skills Strategy will focus on. (There may also be a need to identify what has been *excluded* and why). Below is a long list.

- Meeting employers' recruitment and skills needs, including emerging skills
- Barriers to learning (including travel and digital poverty)
- Barriers to work (including economic inactivity)
- Careers information, advice and guidance & employment support (including the potential mismatch between young peoples' expectations and the reality of the labour market)
- Cross-cutting skills (e.g. Digital, Employability, Green, Professional)
- Education of employers
- Green Economy (need to define this)

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- Health and wellbeing of the workforce (and the role of education in reducing health inequalities)
- Inclusivity, equality, diversity and belonging (including SEND provision and employability support)
- Post-16 education and training
- Skills funding (e.g. Growth & Skills Levy, Free Courses for Jobs, Higher Technical Qualifications, Skills Bootcamps, T Levels)

Key sectors

The Skills Strategy will present a matrix of priority / key sectors taken from different sources.

Below is a list of these sources.

- [Hampshire County Council: Economic Strategy](#)
- [Solent Growth & Prosperity Strategy](#)
- [Enterprise M3 \(including all of Surrey\) Local Skills Improvement Plan](#)
- [Solent Local Skills Improvement Plan](#)
- [Invest 2035: the UK's modern industrial strategy](#)
- [Skills England: Driving growth and widening opportunities](#)
- [Meeting skills needs: Guidance on annual accountability agreements 2025 to 2026 and the Local Needs Duty](#)

3. Timeline and deliverables

Timeline

The proposed timeline is as follows, but subject to change:

- November 2024 – January 2025: Meetings with Unitary Authority (Isle of Wight, Portsmouth, Southampton) skills representatives
- November 2024 – May 2025:
 - Quantitative data and research - economy and labour market
 - Collating existing skills strategies and plans from across the geography
 - Collating Accountability Agreements
- 5 December 2024: First meeting of Hampshire Skills Partnership
- January – March 2025: Meetings with internal stakeholders
- March: Skills Strategy scope agreed + Creation of HSP Working Group

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- March – September: HSP Working Group meetings
- July: First draft presented to Hampshire Skills Partnership (meeting date TBC)
- 25 September: Final draft presented to Hampshire Skills Partnership.
- 8 October: Final draft presented to Hampshire Prosperity Partnership Board.
- 9 December: Final version approved by Cabinet.

Deliverables

The Skills Strategy will have a lifespan of five years and be accompanied by an initial, 12-month Action Plan that will be updated each year for the life of the Strategy. The Strategy and Action Plan will both be published on the Hampshire County Council website and supported by a library of resources such as slide decks and infographics to help promote and gain buy-in. Deliverables should try to consider engagement with different audiences (e.g. communication of key messages to different organisations and individuals).

4. Stakeholders

During the development of the Skills Strategy, it is intended to engage with a wide range of stakeholders – both internal and external. These are listed below.

Internal stakeholder groups

- Operational Skills – Christine Hansford
- Hampshire Careers Hub – Megan Low
- Hampshire Growth Hub – Chris Burchell
- Children's Services – Karen Northover
- Climate Change – Chitra Nadarajah
- Spatial Planning – Laura McCulloch
- Transport – Frank Baxter
- Public Health – Fiona Maxwell

External stakeholder groups

- Clusters
 - Creative Network South

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- Farnborough Aerospace Consortium (FAC)
- Maritime UK Solent
- Portsmouth Advanced Manufacturing, Engineering and Aerospace Cluster (PAMEAC)
- Portsmouth Creates
- Space South Central
- Solent Cluster
- South Central Defence and Security Regional Cluster
- Surrey+ Creative Corridor
- Economic Development
 - Business Improvement Districts
 - Economic Development Officers Group
 - H&IOW Employment & Skills group
 - Solent Freeport
 - Solent Growth Partnership
- Education & Training
 - ALPS / ALPHI
 - Hampshire Construction Training Association
 - Hampshire and Isle of Wight Sixth Form & Further Education College Principals
 - Hampshire secondary schools
 - Hampshire universities
 - Isle of Wight Construction Training Group
 - Solent Careers Hub
- LSIPs
 - Enterprise M3 (including all of Surrey) LSIP
 - Solent LSIP
- Professional bodies and networks
 - Business South
 - CITB
 - FSB
 - Hampshire Chamber of Commerce
 - New Forest Business Partnership
 - Shaping Portsmouth CIC

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5. Approval process

The approval process for the Hampshire Skills Strategy will be as follows:

1. Hampshire Skills Partnership (September 2025)
2. Hampshire Prosperity Partnership Board (October 2025)
3. Hampshire County Council Cabinet (December 2025)

Date: 14 March 2025

DRAFT