



## Hampshire Prosperity Partnership Board

1 June 2026

### Item 6 – Update on 2025/26 delivery and look ahead to 2026/27

**The Hampshire Prosperity Partnership Board (HPPB) is asked to:**

**NOTE** the update on delivery of the HPPB priority workstreams, set out in Part 2

**NOTE** the update on delivery of other key activities by Hampshire County Council's Economy and Skills team, set out in Part 3

**COMMENT** on the look ahead to 2026/27 in Part 4, and in particular the outline proposals for new workstreams set out in the table in Part 4, and **CONSIDER** whether there is any other new work that HPPB would like to see during 2026/27. Subject to HPPB's views at this meeting, a final version of proposals for new workstreams will be provided to HPPB for its next meeting on 13 July, including requests for HPPB to recommend revenue funding from the LEP legacy reserves, where applicable.

## **1. Background**

- 1.1. A number of priority workstreams for 2025/26 were agreed with HPPB in March 2025. See <https://documents.hants.gov.uk/hampshire-prosperity-partnership/HPPB-240325-priorities-proposed-workstreams.pdf>
- 1.2. These priority workstreams were then incorporated into the Hampshire Economy and Growth Plan, which was completed in July 2025: <https://documents.hants.gov.uk/hampshire-prosperity-partnership/Economy-and-GrowthPlan-Hampshire-2025-2027.pdf>
- 1.3. HPPB was last provided with an update on the implementation of the priority workstreams at its meeting in November 2025: <https://documents.hants.gov.uk/hampshire-prosperity-partnership/HPPB-241125-Implementation-overview.pdf>
- 1.4. This HPPB meeting is the first since the end of the 2025/26 financial year. This update therefore provides an overview of delivery over the course of that year, and will feed into the next annual report to the Hampshire County Council Executive Member on activities relating to economic development and skills.

## **2. Update on delivery of HPPB priority workstreams**

- 2.1. The following table provides an update on delivery for the HPPB priority workstreams agreed in March, as at May 2026.

ECONOMY AND GROWTH PLAN AREAS	HPPB PRIORITY WORKSTREAMS	UPDATE
HIGH POTENTIAL SECTORS AND CLUSTERS	<b>Creative and digital cluster</b>	<p>With the support of the HPPB, the Southern Creative Catalyst was formed in April 2025. Inspired by the RSA/Creative PEC Creative Corridors report, Southern Creative Catalyst aims to be a representative body for commercial creative businesses and individuals, from design and marketing to architecture, production, and creative technology.</p> <p>We have supported the Southern Creative Catalyst to deliver multiple networking events across the county, attracting over 200 individuals in the last six months. We have also established a relationship with the RSA, which is supporting a research project to understand the industry in Hampshire and the Solent and its growth potential.</p> <p>Following initial consultation with stakeholders, work during 2025/26 focused on digital was combined with work on the creative cluster, in recognition of the substantial overlap between the two sectors.</p>
HIGH POTENTIAL SECTORS AND CLUSTERS	<b>Life sciences cluster</b>	<p>The Life Science South Industry Cluster is being established through the joint leadership of Wessex Health Partners, Health Innovation Wessex, the Hampshire Prosperity Partnership, and industry partners, a coalition committed to accelerating innovation, economic growth, and health impact across the region. This work aims to position the South as a destination cluster, rather than a hidden gem, and to promote company growth, inward investment and job creation.</p> <p>A steering group has been established which is currently working on the cluster's manifesto to ensure that it has a clear direction and objectives for the next few years. Multiple roundtables have been held with stakeholders from industry and academia to support this, alongside multiple 'sold-out' themed events with businesses across the region.</p> <p>A full launch of the cluster and website will take place in the Autumn.</p>

ECONOMY AND GROWTH PLAN AREAS	HPPB PRIORITY WORKSTREAMS	UPDATE
HIGH POTENTIAL SECTORS AND CLUSTERS	<b>Super Cluster</b>	<p>The Super Cluster is now well established and meets every other month. It brings together sectoral, cluster and other business organisations across Hampshire and the Solent, to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that Hampshire’s business community can speak with a single voice on issues of common concern, increasing its influence with Government</li> <li>• Ensure that collectively, Hampshire’s clusters and other industry groups can increase their effectiveness through sharing best practice and innovation, networking and collaboration</li> </ul> <p>Areas of focus for the Super Cluster include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unlocking careers pathways across sectors. We are currently planning a series of sector-focused roundtable events to connect employers with educators.</li> <li>• Inward investment. The Super Cluster has emphasised the need for a powerful prospectus to promote the region and is keen to contribute to its development.</li> </ul> <p>Public Health colleagues have also recently used the Super Cluster to review their offer to businesses and how they engage with employers in the region. 2026 will see more opportunities for the clusters to work collectively to support supply chain development and networking for businesses.</p>

ECONOMY AND GROWTH PLAN AREAS	HPPB PRIORITY WORKSTREAMS	UPDATE
BUSINESS SUPPORT	<b>Joining up the business support system</b>	<p>In October 2025, we updated HPPB on the review of the business support system across Hampshire and the Solent, and discussed the findings from the report:</p> <p><a href="https://documents.hants.gov.uk/hampshire-prosperity-partnership/hppb-061025-joining-up-business-support-system.pdf">https://documents.hants.gov.uk/hampshire-prosperity-partnership/hppb-061025-joining-up-business-support-system.pdf</a></p> <p><a href="https://documents.hants.gov.uk/hampshire-prosperity-partnership/hppb-061025-joining-up-business-support-system-annex-a.pdf">https://documents.hants.gov.uk/hampshire-prosperity-partnership/hppb-061025-joining-up-business-support-system-annex-a.pdf</a></p> <p><a href="https://documents.hants.gov.uk/hampshire-prosperity-partnership/hppb-061025-joining-up-business-support-system-annex-b.pdf">https://documents.hants.gov.uk/hampshire-prosperity-partnership/hppb-061025-joining-up-business-support-system-annex-b.pdf</a></p> <p>We have recently identified resource to take forward, and are now initiating, Phase 2 of this work, which is focused on implementation. Phase 2 aims to develop a proposed model for coordinating business support across the region and secure stakeholder buy-in to this, in order to reduce duplication, maximise the impact of existing provision, and improve the experience of businesses.</p>
BUSINESS SUPPORT	<b>Making the system work for rural businesses</b>	<p>An update on this work was provided to HPPB in January 2026:</p> <p><a href="https://documents.hants.gov.uk/hampshire-prosperity-partnership/HPPB-260119-RuralBusinessSupportUpdate.pdf">https://documents.hants.gov.uk/hampshire-prosperity-partnership/HPPB-260119-RuralBusinessSupportUpdate.pdf</a></p> <p>For details about the proposed next phase, see Part 4 of this report below.</p>

ECONOMY AND GROWTH PLAN AREAS	HPPB PRIORITY WORKSTREAMS	UPDATE
ENERGY	<b>Grid capacity review</b>	<p>This project has almost concluded and will deliver two key outputs: (1) a review of grid constraints; and (2) a strategic report setting out opportunities and next steps.</p> <p>A key finding from the work is that the issue is not simply one of network capacity versus demand, but of system coordination. In many cases, the network could carry future demand if generation and connections were delivered in the right place and at the right time. However, constraints in bringing forward generation and securing timely connections are emerging as the primary bottleneck. Addressing this will require closer collaboration with network operators, clearer alignment with national energy reforms, and a proactive approach from local authorities to integrate energy planning with development, transport and economic priorities.</p> <p>We expect to provide HPPB with complete draft outputs for its next meeting in July.</p>
INFRASTRUCTURE	<b>Infrastructure gap and opportunity analysis</b>	<p>Emerging findings from the review of employment space, digital and transport infrastructure needs were discussed with HPPB in January.</p> <p><a href="https://documents.hants.gov.uk/hampshire-prosperity-partnership/HPPB-260119-Infrastructurereview.pdf">https://documents.hants.gov.uk/hampshire-prosperity-partnership/HPPB-260119-Infrastructurereview.pdf</a></p> <p><a href="https://documents.hants.gov.uk/hampshire-prosperity-partnership/HPPB-260119-Infrastructurereview-Annex1.pdf">https://documents.hants.gov.uk/hampshire-prosperity-partnership/HPPB-260119-Infrastructurereview-Annex1.pdf</a></p> <p>The review report considers in detail the infrastructure needs of key industry sectors and strategic development sites. We expect to provide the final version of Jacobs' report to HPPB for the Board's next meeting on 13 July, and then to consider how to build on the analysis, including engagement of regional partners.</p>

ECONOMY AND GROWTH PLAN AREAS	HPPB PRIORITY WORKSTREAMS	UPDATE
SKILLS, EMPLOYMENT AND CAREERS	<b>Engaging employers with Connect to Work</b>	<p>Employer engagement is a vital element to ensure that the Connect to Work supported employment programme achieves outcomes and impact. We are always looking for more employers to engage on this new programme.</p> <p>The Skills Commissioning Team are supporting contracted providers with their responsibilities for employer engagement. We have put them in touch with several employers, including the M Group, as part of the Botley Bypass developments. We have also built a new relationship with Apple, who are supporting our providers with a dedicated Connect to Work portal for recruitment for their retail sites, particularly the Basingstoke Festival Place store, as Apple are keen to diversify their workforce and support inclusivity.</p>
SKILLS, EMPLOYMENT AND CAREERS	<b>Get Britain Working Plan</b>	<p>The Get Hampshire Working Plan (GHWP) was discussed with HPPB at its June and September meetings last year, and adopted and published by Hampshire County Council in September:</p> <p><a href="#">Get Hampshire Working Plan   About the Council   Hampshire County Council</a></p> <p>Delivery of the GHWP action plan is on track. All of the workstreams set out in the plan are now up-and-running, led by representatives from different partner organisations, and with working groups meeting monthly. Evidence and case studies are being collected to help demonstrate impact.</p> <p>We are also working with the Solent Growth Partnership to align and coordinate delivery across the GHWP and the Get Solent Working Plan, looking ahead to their future merger into a single plan for Hampshire and the Solent.</p> <p>A more comprehensive update will be provided for the HPPB meeting on 13 July.</p>

### 3. Update on delivery of other key activities by Hampshire County Council’s Economy and Skills team

3.1. The following table provides an update on delivery for other key activities (i.e. in addition to the HPPB priority workstreams) delivered by the Economy and Skills team, as at May 2026.

ECONOMY AND GROWTH PLAN AREAS	OTHER KEY ACTIVITIES	UPDATE
HIGH POTENTIAL SECTORS AND CLUSTERS	<b>South Central Regional Defence and Security Cluster</b>	<p>Hampshire’s Economy and Skills team continues to provide coordination for the South Central Regional Defence and Security Cluster. The cluster was formed in November 2024 and is a collaboration led by industry, academia and the public sector, with the support of the Ministry of Defence and UK Defence Innovation’s Defence and Security Accelerator. It seeks to aggregate and raise the profile of regional defence and security capability, strengthen supply chains, and encourage innovation, growth and productivity.</p> <p>Membership of the cluster has grown to over 400 businesses (over 500 individuals), and has delivered multiple ‘sold out’ events supporting business growth and innovation. A regional capabilities database is being developed, to support supply chain recognition and growth. Also, the cluster has recently been awarded £103,000 of funding from the Ministry of Defence to support its ongoing activities.</p>

ECONOMY AND GROWTH PLAN AREAS	OTHER KEY ACTIVITIES	UPDATE
BUSINESS SUPPORT	<b>Hampshire Growth Hub</b>	<p>The Hampshire Growth Hub has continued to deliver targeted, high-quality business support across the county, adapting to a changing funding and policy landscape while maintaining a strong focus on practical outcomes for SMEs. The year also marked a transition, with Growth Hubs positioned as key local delivery partners for the Government’s Business Growth Service and wider SME strategy. During 2025/26:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1,585 businesses were supported through initial triage and signposting</li> <li>• 201 businesses received medium-intensity support</li> <li>• 37 businesses received intensive, high-growth support</li> <li>• 92 individuals were supported to start a business</li> <li>• there were 2,906 website users, demonstrating continued digital engagement</li> </ul> <p>Specific initiatives have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery of a fully subscribed Leading with Impact leadership programme, strengthening business capability across Hampshire.</li> <li>• Delivery of a Creative Advice Hub, supporting over 100 creative businesses and addressing a sectoral gap.</li> <li>• Piloting a high street support programme in Winchester, demonstrating strong engagement and potential for future expansion.</li> </ul> <p>The Growth Hub continues to act as a central coordinator within Hampshire’s business support ecosystem, working with the Department for Business and Trade, local partners and delivery organisations to simplify access to support and align activity with economic priorities.</p>
BUSINESS SUPPORT	<b>Hampshire Business Awards</b>	<p>Hampshire County Council continues to support the awards, which have averaged over 200 entries each year and attracted over 400 unique companies to engage and celebrate success.</p> <p>The 2026 campaign will launch in June, and with the team’s support, has already attracted multiple sponsors for the event. The campaign this year also includes a roundtable on “Shaping Hampshire’s Future: Investment, Infrastructure and Innovation” with 20 of the County’s business leaders in July, and a business breakfast in the autumn for over 100 delegates (details to be confirmed).</p>

ECONOMY AND GROWTH PLAN AREAS	OTHER KEY ACTIVITIES	UPDATE
SKILLS, EMPLOYMENT AND CAREERS	<b>Hampshire Skills Strategy</b>	<p>The Hampshire Skills Strategy was discussed with HPPB in October and November of last year, and approved by Hampshire County Council Cabinet in December:</p> <p><a href="#">Hampshire Skills Strategy 2025</a></p> <p>Delivery of the Hampshire Skills Strategy is well under way, with the action plan on track, and evidence being collected to demonstrate impact. The Hampshire Skills Strategy has also been used as a reference for the Local Skills Improvement Plan for Hampshire and the Solent, due to be published by Hampshire Chamber of Commerce in the Summer.</p> <p>The Hampshire Skills Partnership are kept updated with progress and are due to meet again on 11 June to consider the latest progress report. A more comprehensive update will then be provided to HPPB for the meeting on 13 July.</p>
SKILLS, EMPLOYMENT AND CAREERS	<b>Supporting Local Skills Improvement Plans</b>	<p>Hampshire Chamber of Commerce have been leading on developing the first Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) for the Hampshire and Solent area, since the new geography was confirmed by the government. The Strategic Skills Lead from Hampshire County Council has played a significant role in liaising with the LSIP team to support with economic and labour market information, stakeholder engagement and governance arrangements, and to ensure alignment with the Hampshire Skills Strategy and the Get Hampshire Working Plan.</p> <p>The final draft of the LSIP has been submitted to Skills England for approval by the Secretary of State and is due to be published in the Summer.</p>
SKILLS, EMPLOYMENT AND CAREERS	<b>Skills Bootcamps</b>	<p>The Council's Skills Bootcamps programme has grown from an initial funding allocation from the Department for Education (DfE) of £1.8 million in 2023/24 supporting 380 learners, growing to £3.8 million in 2024/25 supporting 985 learners, to then reaching its peak of £7.1 million in 2025/26 supporting 1,750 learners. Performance for 2025/26 has been strong with 1,900 learners undertaking Skills Bootcamps, 109% of the target.</p> <p>For 2026/27, DfE has imposed significant funding reductions across England and Wales for Skills Bootcamps, which has led to most local authorities across the country receiving the base allocation of £1.5 million. However, Hampshire County Council received £2.6 million for the current financial year due to our strong track record.</p>

ECONOMY AND GROWTH PLAN AREAS	OTHER KEY ACTIVITIES	UPDATE
SKILLS, EMPLOYMENT AND CAREERS	<b>Connect to Work commissioning</b>	<p>Connect to Work is live across Hampshire.</p> <p>The Skills Commissioning Team, using the Council's Open Skills Framework, have commissioned three delivery providers across four lots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 'Health Pathway' Lot, delivered by Shaw Trust, provides support for participants who are under the care of health services, via primary care, secondary care, and community health services.</li> <li>• The 'Domestic Abuse' Lot, delivered by Palladium, provides for participants who are being supported by, known to, or eligible for the support from 'Stop Domestic Abuse' or any other domestic abuse support service.</li> <li>• The 'Community Access' Lot, delivered by Seetec, provides support for participants who will make self-referrals or be referred by a variety of other means of support, such as via their support worker, local Jobcentre Plus, local community centre, carer, relative, friend, advocate etc.</li> <li>• The 'Social Care' Lot, delivered by Shaw Trust, provides support for participants who have social care needs, such as learning, physical and mental health needs, who access support via local authority adult services or via voluntary community service organisations.</li> </ul> <p>During the 10 weeks between the programme going live in January and the end of 2025-26, the programme received 270 referrals and achieved 108 confirmed starts.</p>

ECONOMY AND GROWTH PLAN AREAS	OTHER KEY ACTIVITIES	UPDATE
SKILLS, EMPLOYMENT AND CAREERS	<b>Hampshire Careers Hub</b>	<p>Hampshire Careers Hub supports over 118 schools, colleges and SEND settings to support high-quality careers education aligned to local economic priorities. This last year saw a strong focus on modern, meaningful work experience connecting young people with employers across key growth sectors.</p> <p>The Hub convenes hundreds of local employers to work directly with schools and colleges, helping to bridge the gap between education and employment. It provides targeted support to schools and cohorts furthest from the labour market, helping to reduce barriers and improve outcomes.</p> <p>We play a key role in translating national skills and careers priorities into locally relevant action for Hampshire's economy. Together, this work strengthens the local talent pipeline and supports inclusive economic growth across Hampshire.</p>
CROSS-CUTTING	<b>Economy intelligence – evidence bases for strategies and plans</b>	<p>The Economy Intelligence Team has produced a series of major evidence base reports to support the development of key regional strategies and plans, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Understanding Economic Inactivity</i> (for the Get Hampshire Working Plan)</li> <li>• the <i>Hampshire Skills Strategy Evidence Base</i> (for the Hampshire Skills Strategy)</li> <li>• the <i>Quantitative Evidence Base</i> (as part of the work being undertaken to build the evidence base for the Local Growth Plan that will be developed by the Hampshire and the Solent Combined County Authority).</li> </ul>
CROSS-CUTTING	<b>Economy intelligence – services for internal customers</b>	<p>The team provided a range of analytical and intelligence services to support HPPB and Hampshire County Council priorities, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• regular monthly labour market reports and economic dashboards</li> <li>• research and analytical support to HPPB and other teams in Hampshire County Council e.g. cost-benefit analysis for the LEP legacy reserves call for projects, and support for transport funding bids</li> <li>• analytical support relating to devolution and local government reorganisation</li> </ul>

ECONOMY AND GROWTH PLAN AREAS	OTHER KEY ACTIVITIES	UPDATE
CROSS-CUTTING	<b>Economy intelligence – services for external customers</b>	<p>The team has produced a suite of regular monitoring reports, including monthly labour market reports and economic intelligence dashboards for Portsmouth, Southampton, Winchester and New Forest, alongside quarterly dashboards and KPI reports for Surrey, delivered through existing and new Service Level Agreements (SLAs).</p> <p>The team has also delivered a range of bespoke analytical outputs for external partners, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the New Forest Economic Profile, to support the development of the New Forest’s local economic development strategy</li> <li>• sector propositions for the Solent Freeport</li> <li>• economy and labour market analysis for the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)</li> </ul>
CROSS-CUTTING	<b>AI Growth Alliance (AIGA)</b>	<p>The AI Growth Alliance (AIGA) has come together to help more people — from all backgrounds — gain the skills, knowledge, and confidence to thrive in an AI-driven world. The partnership is supported by Hampshire County Council’s Economy and Skills team, and brings together large and small businesses, local authorities, universities and colleges, and other partners.</p> <p>AIGA now has a steering group, and also several cross-sector working groups addressing a wide range of issues: leadership, skills, place, infrastructure, investment, ethics and responsible AI delivery.</p> <p>We will brief HPPB about this work at the next meeting of the Board on 13 July.</p>
CROSS-CUTTING	<b>Website improvements</b>	<p>Our external-facing website has been live since January 2026. Content relating to our programmes is being built up in phases; the Connect to Work page was the first to go live, and further content for the Growth Hub, Skills Bootcamps and Industry Sectors is due to launch in May.</p> <p><a href="#">Prosperity Hampshire   Home</a></p>

<b>ECONOMY AND GROWTH PLAN AREAS</b>	<b>OTHER KEY ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>UPDATE</b>
CROSS-CUTTING	<b>Devolution programme</b>	The Economy and Skills team made a significant commitment of resource during 2025/26 to the joint programme across Hampshire, Portsmouth, Southampton and the Isle of Wight to prepare for the establishment of the Hampshire and the Solent Combined County Authority. This included: leading the Economic Development and Regeneration workstream; undertaking analytical work to contribute to the evidence base for the forthcoming Local Growth Plan; and work to prepare for devolved Adult Skills Fund commissioning. So far, this commitment has continued into early 2026/27.

#### 4. Looking ahead to 2026/27

4.1. Many of the activities referred to in the previous parts of this report have continued into 2026/27. These include:

- Support for cluster initiatives in the defence, creative/digital and life sciences sectors, and for the AI Growth Alliance
- Delivery of the Hampshire Growth Hub
- Work on improving the effectiveness of Hampshire's business support system, and of support to rural businesses
- Completion of the infrastructure gap and opportunity analysis, and of the grid capacity review
- Implementation of the actions in the Get Hampshire Working Plan and Hampshire Skills Strategy
- Commissioning of Skills Bootcamps and Connect to Work
- Delivery of the Hampshire Careers Hub
- Delivery of a range of economic intelligence and analysis for internal and external customers

#### Proposed new workstreams for 2026/27

4.2. Building on our work during 2025/26, we have been considering how to develop further our programme. We have developed outline proposals for several potential new workstreams, which are summarised in the table below.

**4.3. At the HPPB meeting on 1 June, we would welcome:**

- **the Board's comments on the proposals summarised in the table**
- **the Board's views on whether there are other areas in which you like to see work undertaken during 2026/27**

4.4. Please note that the deliverability of the proposals in the table is still subject to further resource planning. In some cases, approval of some additional funding from the revenue LEP legacy reserves may be required, in order for the workstream to go forward. Subject to HPPB's views at this meeting, a final version of proposals for new workstreams will be provided to HPPB for its next meeting on 13 July, including requests for HPPB to recommend revenue funding from the LEP legacy reserves, where applicable.

<b>PROPOSED WORKSTREAM</b>	<b>Inward Investment</b>
<b>ECONOMY AND GROWTH PLAN AREA</b>	HIGH POTENTIAL SECTORS AND CLUSTERS
<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	To begin work to raise the profile of the Hampshire and the Solent region, develop a powerful narrative around its sector and cluster strengths, and create a platform to leverage inward investment.
<b>PROPOSED APPROACH</b>	<p>As a first step, the Super Cluster would coordinate work to develop sector/cluster propositions. The work would also aim to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• celebrate successes, by promoting small and large wins across the region</li> <li>• develop proposals for investable projects which could feed into a regional investment approach</li> <li>• develop proposals for an overarching regional narrative.</li> </ul> <p>This workstream would engage with a range of regional partners, including the Hampshire and the Solent Combined County Authority.</p>
<b>INDICATIVE TIMING</b>	June 2026 – September 2026
<b>PROPOSED WORKSTREAM</b>	<b>Construction Partnership</b>
<b>ECONOMY AND GROWTH PLAN AREA</b>	HIGH POTENTIAL SECTORS AND CLUSTERS

<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<p>Creating a strategic-level construction group which supports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth &amp; regeneration</li> <li>• Housing &amp; infrastructure delivery</li> <li>• Skills &amp; employment support</li> <li>• Net zero &amp; modern methods of construction</li> </ul>
<b>PROPOSED APPROACH</b>	<p>This work would build on existing groups within the region and not invent something new. It would draw on our established experience of and expertise in supporting the development of clusters, but the approach would be tailored to the construction sector.</p> <p>The aims of the project are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better understand the needs of the regional construction Industry to enable better and more tailored support for the industry</li> <li>• Support connections to other industries</li> <li>• Understand the barriers and constraints impacting on construction</li> <li>• Understand the make-up of the industry locally with regards to large companies and their interactions with local government, contractors and smaller businesses</li> <li>• Understand the local supply chain and the impacts of geopolitical changes on delivery of local projects</li> </ul>
<b>INDICATIVE TIMING</b>	June 2026 – March 2027
<b>PROPOSED WORKSTREAM</b>	<b>Technology Cluster (Tech Solent)</b>
<b>ECONOMY AND GROWTH PLAN AREA</b>	HIGH POTENTIAL SECTORS AND CLUSTERS
<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<p>To support the growth of the regional technology cluster to broaden its vision across Hampshire and the Solent.</p> <p>The aims of TechSolent are to connect, develop and promote the technology communities within the region for the public benefit. We aim to do this through building a network of technology participants to address societal problems, educate the community on technology initiatives and combine these things to deliver economic development of the Region.</p>
<b>PROPOSED APPROACH</b>	Work with Tech Solent to support the development of the cluster across the rest of Hampshire and identify where its cross-cutting themes can support other clusters in the region.
<b>INDICATIVE TIMING</b>	July 2026 – March 2027

<b>PROPOSED WORKSTREAM</b>	<b>Investment for Business</b>
<b>ECONOMY AND GROWTH PLAN AREA</b>	BUSINESS SUPPORT
<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<p>Provide businesses in Hampshire with information to support and strengthen their journeys to growth and economic sustainability through understanding finance. This would be delivered through various routes and tutorials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business finance basics</li> <li>• How to access finance and funding</li> <li>• What investment and when</li> <li>• Investment events and pitch opportunities</li> </ul>
<b>PROPOSED APPROACH</b>	Work with partners including Venturefest South, the Solent Freeport, Barclays Eagle Labs and Natwest Accelerator to deliver a range of events and opportunities to support businesses getting access to finance and investment tutorials and investment platforms.
<b>INDICATIVE TIMING</b>	July 2026 – March 2027
<b>PROPOSED WORKSTREAM</b>	<b>Creative Advice Hub</b>
<b>ECONOMY AND GROWTH PLAN AREA</b>	BUSINESS SUPPORT
<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<p>Following a successful three-month pilot from January 2026, a further nine month programme of support is proposed, specifically directed at creative businesses in Hampshire. The programme will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen the creative economy across Hampshire by building on existing activity and improving coordination between support, networks and businesses</li> <li>• Improve commercial capability within creative businesses, particularly in areas such as pricing, financial management and growth decision making</li> <li>• Ensure a clear and complementary relationship between general business support (Growth Hub), ecosystem development (Southern Creative Catalyst) and targeted intervention</li> <li>• Support a defined group of creative and digital businesses with potential for growth</li> </ul>

<b>PROPOSED APPROACH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement the pilot model for the remainder of this financial year, in order to reach a greater number of businesses</li> <li>• Extend the contract with IncuHive who delivered the pilot</li> <li>• Create a steering group including the Growth Hub, Signal Biz (delivery partner for the Growth Hub), Southern Creative Catalyst (the creative cluster) and IncuHive, to ensure a 'no wrong door' approach for businesses to access support</li> </ul>
<b>INDICATIVE TIMING</b>	July 2026 – March 2027
<b>PROPOSED WORKSTREAM</b>	<b>Nature Parks and Nature Based Investment Scoping</b>
<b>ECONOMY AND GROWTH PLAN AREA</b>	INFRASTRUCTURE
<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess whether a Nature Parks approach could strengthen nature-based investment and economic growth</li> <li>• Align investment with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, Biodiversity Net Gain and wider nature recovery priorities</li> <li>• Ensure any approach complements existing delivery and avoids duplication</li> </ul>
<b>PROPOSED APPROACH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake a focused internal scoping exercise</li> <li>• Review Hampshire's competitive position in nature-based markets</li> <li>• Explore place-based, landscape-scale coordination models</li> <li>• Engage relevant Hampshire County Council services</li> <li>• Consult with partners (e.g. National Parks) to ensure that the approach enables positive impact</li> <li>• Produce a concise evidence-based report and recommendations on next steps</li> </ul>
<b>INDICATIVE TIMING</b>	June 26 – September 26
<b>PROPOSED WORKSTREAM</b>	<b>Rural Business Support</b>
<b>ECONOMY AND GROWTH PLAN AREA</b>	BUSINESS SUPPORT

<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<p>To help strengthen productivity and resilience across Hampshire’s agricultural and land-based sectors by supporting diversification, innovation, and adoption of emerging practices such as regenerative farming and agritech.</p> <p>To improve access to business support for enterprises in market towns and smaller rural settlements, ensuring they are better connected, informed, and able to grow.</p>
<b>PROPOSED APPROACH</b>	<p>Phase 1: Project scoping with partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussions with Sparsholt College and the NFU, to understand demand and opportunities in Hampshire</li> <li>• Explore the development of a locally tailored programme to support the growth and scaling of social enterprises, building on previous models (e.g. School of Social Entrepreneurs programme) in collaboration with Action Hampshire.</li> </ul> <p>Phase 2: Delivery</p> <p><i>Diversification</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build on existing Growth Hub experience supporting landowners with diversification and business development strategies, expanding this offer more widely across Hampshire.</li> <li>• Explore innovation-led opportunities, including regenerative farming and wider agritech applications, to drive rural productivity.</li> </ul> <p><i>Market Towns and Rural Enterprise</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target businesses in less connected areas through an enhanced Growth Hub offer, working closely with local authority partners</li> <li>• Deliver locally accessible support mechanisms, such as in-person drop-in clinics, complementing rather than duplicating existing provision</li> </ul>
<b>INDICATIVE TIMING</b>	June 2026 onwards
<b>PROPOSED WORKSTREAM</b>	<b>Sector Based Roundtable Series</b>
<b>ECONOMY AND GROWTH PLAN AREA</b>	SKILLS, EMPLOYMENT AND CAREERS
<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	To raise the profile of key industry clusters within education and training providers, and enable them to work together to address a common challenge: skills and talent.

<b>PROPOSED APPROACH</b>	To create a series of events that enables education and training providers and businesses to have sector-based discussions about the persistent skills challenges that are faced, barriers to engagement, the potential for collaboration, and practical steps that they can take together. Each event will lead to an agreed set of recommendations that can be presented back to industry clusters for their consideration.
<b>INDICATIVE TIMING</b>	June 26 – December 26

Impact of devolution

4.5. As shown in the table in Part 3, the Economy and Skills team has made a significant commitment to work to prepare for the establishment of the Hampshire and the Solent Combined County Authority (HSCCA) during 2025/26, and this has continued into early 2026/27.

4.6. At this point, the precise impact of devolution on the work of the team, and the timing of that impact, is not known. We expect that HSCCA will in due course become accountable for funding streams that currently support the work of the team, including Growth Hub, Skills Bootcamps and Careers Hub funding. Once it is established, we will work closely with the HSCCA to understand the impact of these changes, and we will provide HPPB with regular updates.

Stephen Martin  
Head of Economy and Skills