

Strategic Economy - Clusters

Prosperity, Growth Hubs and Business Engagement

5 March 2026

Prosperity, Growth Hubs and Business Engagement

The **Strategic Economy** team is dedicated to creating an environment where businesses can thrive in Hampshire.

This involves ensuring the necessary infrastructure and skills are available to deliver targeted business support that facilitates businesses to start up and grow across two teams:

Prosperity

- Business Engagement and Account Management
- Inward Investment and links with Department of Business and Trade
- Prosperity Board Priorities

[Business in Hampshire | Business and economy | Hampshire County Council](#)

Growth Hub

- Business Support
- 1:2:1 and 1:2: Many
- DBT delivery
- Central South Cluster – Changing to the West of England

[Hampshire Growth Hub | Business and economy | Hampshire County Council](#)



South Central Regional Defence & Security Cluster

Our aim is to:

- Grow a community dedicated to developing innovative, long-term advancements to the security and protection of our communities
- Promote regional skills and prosperity, working with other regional bodies

We do this by:

- Building a membership of regional SMEs, universities, primes and associates
- Organising events that inform and promote collaboration, networking and engagement
- Increase understanding of regional dual use technology and innovation for defence and security applications, and future requirements
- Sharing ideas and identifying routes to market through exploitation and commercialisation
- Promoting diversity and inclusion to ensure a welcoming environment for all



Defence as an Engine for Growth

2025 – a renewed focus on National Security, Defence and sovereign capability:

Strategic Defence Review:

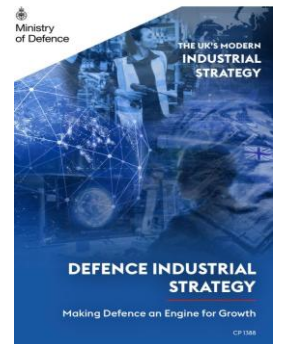
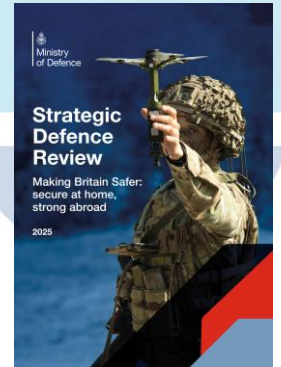
- The world has changed – move to warfighting readiness
- Investment in innovation

The UK's Modern Industrial Strategy:

- Supporting frontier industries
- Supporting regions and clusters
- Defence as one of the 8 highest potential growth sectors

Defence Industrial Strategy:

- Defence as an engine for growth
- Focus on innovation & SMEs: create UKDI and Office for Small Business Growth
- Procurement modernisation
- Seedcorn funding for the Regional Defence and Security Cluster Network (RDSCs)





Industry Steering Group

We are pleased to welcome the following new members to the Steering Group:

- ◆ Matt Odell – MilUX
- ◆ Alan Fisher – Farnborough Aerospace Consortium
- ◆ Kevin Watkins – NOVA Systems Engineering
- ◆ Andrew Barnett – Barnbrook Systems Ltd (Chair)
- ◆ Anna Ralls – Thorn SDS Limited
- ◆ Claire Hemmings – Force Development Services (FDS) Ltd
- ◆ Andrew Burton – University of Southampton
- ◆ Stuart Yalden – G W Martin & Co Ltd
- ◆ Matthew Albans – Roke
- ◆ Andrew Brimson – KHIPU Networks

They join our founding members:

- ◆ Sharon Jones – The Royal Navy
- ◆ Nick Fuller – Airbus Aircraft
- ◆ Tonino Amorelli – QinetiQ
- ◆ Mark Helliker – UKDI Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA)
- ◆ Mark Ward – Dstl
- ◆ Richard Smith – Airbus Aircraft
- ◆ Jane Hardy – Fareham Borough Council

NEW SCRDC STEERING GROUP MEMBER



**INTRODUCING SCRDC'S NEW CHAIR
ANDREW BARNETT**

Managing Director of Barnbrook Systems

With over 45 years in Defence and Aerospace, Andrew brings deep expertise in frontline tech, strategic leadership and SME growth.

A passionate advocate for innovation, Andrew is committed to nurturing future talent and unlocking the South Central region's full potential in UK defence and security.



Life Sciences South Innovation Cluster



Dear Life Sciences Sector Stakeholders,

As a priority for the [Hampshire Prosperity Partnership Board](#), we are beginning work on developing a Life Sciences Cluster for the region, in partnership with Wessex Health Partners and Health Innovation Wessex.

Given your leadership and expertise in the sector, we would like to invite you to participate in an exploratory meeting to discuss the development of the proposed cluster on Thursday 11 September at 2pm.

The meeting is a chance for organisations, academia and research facilities across the Life Sciences sector to have an open conversation, sharing goals, exploring where priorities align, and discussing both the opportunities for growth and challenges of building this cluster to create sustainable economic prosperity within the sector.

Please find below agenda for the meeting:

1. Welcome
2. Introductions and overview of organisations present
 - A quick introduction from all attendees, with a short overview of their business.
3. Economic Strategy for Hampshire & the Hampshire Prosperity Partnership Board
4. The role our stakeholders: Why you are here
5. Which areas need priority focus over the coming 12 months?
6. Current sector opportunities and challenges
7. Agreement on follow-up actions, timelines, and points of contact
8. Any other business
9. Date of next meeting

Following the meeting we will look to set up a steering group who will play an active role in shaping the strategic direction of the cluster.

- **Two Industry Roundtables:** Held in September and January with SMEs to major companies in the region.
- **Next Steps:** Positive outcome has led to key meetings with Health Innovation Wessex and Wessex Health Partners to develop the cluster.
- **Networking Event:** First event held on 3 December – a chance to build connections and discuss cluster development – partnerships were formed.
- **Future Plans:** Website to increase the visibility of the South's innovative Life Sciences ecosystem, foster collaboration and attract investment.

The Creative Sector

National Perspective (UK Industrial Strategy & Sector Plan)

- Creative industries contribute £124bn GVA and employ 2.4m people (DCMS, 2023).
- Government vision: UK as global leader by 2035, backed by £380m investment.
- Priorities: R&D, high-growth sub-sectors, regional clusters, and skills pipeline.
- Growth drivers: Createch (AI, immersive tech) and improved finance access for SMEs.

Regional Perspective (South-East, South-Central & South-West)

- South-East & South-Central form a major creative supercluster with London, generating £71bn GVA.
- South-West creative economy worth £2.7bn GVA, fastest job growth in UK (4.1% since 2019).
- Arts Council investing £111m (2023–26) into cultural infrastructure and innovation.
- Regional strategies focus on Creative Corridors to connect clusters and scale innovation.

Note: *Hampshire sits across these regional definitions – South-Central for economic strategy and South-West for cultural funding – reinforcing the need for alignment under the Prosperity Partnership.*

Hampshire & Solent Creative Economy (2024–2025)

- The creative economy across Hampshire and Solent is valued at ~£5bn GVA, supporting around 80,000 jobs and thousands of enterprises.
- Includes major clusters in North Hampshire (gaming, design, digital) and South Hampshire (screen, maritime-linked creative, cultural hubs).
- Represents one of the largest creative presences outside London, with strong links to tech, tourism, and cultural sectors.
- Multiple strategies (Hampshire Prosperity Partnership, Solent Cultural Plan, Arts Council priorities) are converging to align fragmented initiatives into a single regional vision, requiring cross-sector collaboration.



Creative Advice Hub (Pilot) and Strengthening Southern Creative Catalyst

Origins of the Pilot

- Direct response to the Creative Cluster Roundtable
- Sector asked for clearer pathways and better signposting
- Designed as a rapid, time-limited opportunity (Jan–Mar 2026)
- Evidence-gathering to shape potential long-term support
- Delivered by IncuHive to mobilise quickly



Strengthening Southern Creative Catalyst (SCC)

- Supporting and amplifying SCC's existing cluster work
- Avoiding duplication & focusing on alignment
- Improved connectivity across the creative ecosystem
- Shared intelligence to inform future strategy
- Building a more joined-up, collaborative community

South Central Creative Cluster Exploratory Roundtable – 20 November

Role of the Creative Advice Hub (Pilot)

- 3-month pilot for creative business support 1-to-1 advice, workshops, and practical guidance
- Clear entry point into Hampshire's support ecosystem
- Connections to networks, partners and opportunities
- Focused on freelancers, microbusinesses and SMEs

SOUTHERN CREATIVE CATALYST

February 2026

Hampshire and Solent SuperCluster

The aims of the Hampshire and Solent SuperCluster are to:

- Ensure that Hampshire's business community can speak with a single voice on issues of common concern, increasing its influence with Government
- That collectively, Hampshire's clusters and other industry groups can increase their effectiveness through sharing best practice and innovation, networking and collaboration

Four actions have been agreed to be delivered in the first year of the SuperCluster:

- Cross Sector Collaboration
- Skills Intersection Across Sectors. Unlocking Career Pathways in Green, Creative, Engineering, Digital, Technical, Aerospace & Maritime
- Investment for Hampshire Businesses
- Inward Investment – The Southern Forge



Hampshire & The Solent
SuperCluster



Membership and Policy

New and Emerging Clusters

South Central Regional Defence and Security Cluster
Aerospace and Defence - Farnborough
Life Sciences South
Creative and Digital
Hampshire Sustainable Action Network
AI Growth Alliance
Hands C3 (Cyber Security)
Local Visitor Economy Partnership

Established Regional Clusters

Maritime Solent
Solent Cluster
Space South Central
Farnborough Aerospace Consortium
Central South
ADS
Hampshire Fare
Tech Solent

Hampshire and The Solent SuperCluster

Business Representative Organisations

Hampshire Chamber of Commerce
Business South
Federation of Small Businesses
South-East BIDs

Central Government, Policy and Funding

Department of Business and Trade
Office of National Statistics
Modern Industrial Strategy and Sector Plans
Local Growth Fund
Local Innovation Partnerships Fund
Devolution and LGR

Stay Connected

Hampshire Prosperity Partnership - [Hampshire Prosperity Partnership: Overview | LinkedIn](#)

Hampshire Growth Hub - [Hampshire Growth Hub: Overview | LinkedIn](#)

SCRDSC - [South Central Regional Defence & Security Cluster \(SCRDSC\): Overview | LinkedIn](#)

Thank You

