

Hampshire Skills Partnership
Thursday 5th March 2026 – 14:00 – 16:00
at University of Winchester

Attendees: Sarah Greer (Chair, University of Winchester), Andrew Kaye (South Hampshire College Group), Andy Sherman (DWP), James Knowles (Southampton Solent University), Julie Milburn (Vice Chair, Sparsholt College Group), Paul German (Yateley School), Sara Russell (Peter Symonds College), Sarah Mills (Guest, Hampshire Chamber of Commerce), Sue Taylor (ALPS-ALPHI), Virginia Barrett (Farnborough College of Technology).

Hampshire County Council: Andy Tickner (Observer), Jamie Mackay (Observer), Michelle Wells (Note Taker) Teresa Hogsbjerg (Guest).

Apologies: Graham Galbraith (University of Portsmouth), Matt Johnson (South Coast IOT), Ross McNally (Hampshire Chamber of Commerce).

		Action
1.	Welcome and Introductions and apologies	
1.1	Sarah Greer (SG) welcomed all to the Hampshire Skills Partnership (HSP) meeting, introductions were made and apologies, above, noted.	
1.2	It was noted that since the last meeting, Anthony Bravo had retired from his role as Principal and CEO at Basingstoke College of Technology. He was also a member of HSP and the group passed on their best wishes and thanked him for his contribution. The Hampshire FE Principals' group (via Julie Milburn, JM) will put forward their nomination for Anthony's replacement in time for the next meeting.	JM
2.	Driving Innovation Through Industry Clusters	
2.1	Teresa Hogsbjerg (TH) delivered a detailed presentation outlining the Prosperity agenda, the work of the Growth Hubs and the priority business sectors. She confirmed that planning is underway for a showcase event, and further work is required to organise visits to key business sites. She also noted that the Life Sciences cluster must be supported with dedicated resources to enable its contribution to this work.	
2.2	A discussion formed on the development of the Creative Sector, agreeing that the current model should be extended and that consideration should be given to how it may be applied across additional sectors, they felt this would add clear value.	
2.3	TH then presented an update on the Hampshire and Solent SuperCluster. She outlined the four central actions: increasing investment for Hampshire businesses; driving inward investment through The Southern Forge; integrating skills across sectors including green, creative, engineering, digital, technical, aerospace, and maritime; and strengthening collaboration across sectors.	

<p>2.4</p> <p>2.6</p> <p>2.7</p> <p>2.8</p>	<p>The discussion highlighted the need to better align activity with the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) and the two Careers Hubs, alongside proposals to convene industry–education roundtables to improve coordination and focus on addressing skills challenges. TH will also be presenting to college leaders on 13 March. It was noted businesses are enthusiastic about engaging with the skills system but there is also some hesitancy linked to unclear funding. Ongoing direct engagement with employers to identify skills needs was confirmed, with support from the Careers Hubs, and the importance of deeper collaboration with colleges and schools to address potential disconnects with employer opportunities.</p> <p>A question was raised on engagement with the Solent Freeport and their funding streams. TH confirmed that the Solent Freeport falls within the SuperCluster structure and there is ongoing work to explore this and other funding streams to support local economic growth. The Council is also represented on both the Solent Freeport Trade and Investment Board and the Skills Advisory Group.</p> <p>Concerns were raised about the number of clusters focusing on skills work and the risk of duplication. TH explained that a key objective of the SuperCluster is to provide coordination and reduce duplication.</p> <p>The group discussed the importance of innovation and emerging technologies. Members noted the need to identify what businesses feel is missing in the current approach. It was observed that some emerging technologies (e.g. within land-based, maritime and space sectors) struggled to gain traction due to low visibility. It was agreed that the priority should be to identify the essential skills first and then map the corresponding technologies or products.</p>	
<p>3.</p> <p>3.1</p> <p>3.2</p> <p>3.3</p> <p>3.4</p> <p>3.5</p>	<p>Minutes and Actions from the last meeting</p> <p>Action No.1 - SG advised that it had not been possible to take this action forward after discussion with colleagues. After discussion, JaM suggested that the same aim of understanding the mismatch between the expectations of learners and employers could be achieved through sector roundtables. This was agreed as a suitable next step which JaM would lead on. The action will therefore be amended and kept open.</p> <p>Action No.3 Devolution – Update not written yet; Carry forward to the next meeting.</p> <p>Action No.7 V-Levels – To also carry forward to the next meeting.</p> <p>Action No.9 HSP Working Group – This Group will be meeting at Sparsholt on 26 March, focusing on employer engagement and best practice.</p> <p>JaM mentioned opportunities to strengthen links with the Youth Parliament. TH and JaM agreed to meet to progress this work.</p>	<p>JaM</p> <p>JaM</p> <p>JaM</p> <p>JaM/TH</p>

3.6	Minutes agreed by all.	
4.	<p>Conflicts of interest – Any verbal declarations from members</p> <p>Colleagues were asked to verbally declare any declarations of interest, related to any items on the Agenda. None were declared.</p>	
5.	<p>Hampshire Prosperity Partnership Board (HPPB) update</p> <p>5.1 Julie (JM) gave a verbal update on the most recent Board meeting, including an update on devolution / Local Government Reorganisation, and a request for mayoral elections be deferred until 2027 instead of 2028.</p> <p>5.2 JM also reported that Jacobs, who are undertaking an infrastructure review, gave an update on their work and an overview of emerging findings. This work included regional infrastructure gap analysis, employment land shortages, including risk of businesses relocating, full fibre resilience and digital infrastructure along with transport improvements, especially around the waterside, freight corridors, and support for economic growth. A report with actions will follow.</p> <p>Jacobs are also undertaking a review on energy infrastructure. The review will identify critical gaps and potential opportunities to support renewable energy. A report will follow.</p>	
6.	<p>Defence Technical Excellence College (DTEC): Update</p> <p>6.1 Virginia Barrett provided an update on the joint DTEC submission. She thanked local MPs for their support for the DTEC, and noted additional letters of support from ADS, local colleges and universities, the FAC and Hampshire Chamber of Commerce. The slides will be circulated via JaM.</p>	JaM
7.	<p>Hampshire and the Solent LSIP: Update</p> <p>7.1 As an invited guest to the HSP, Sarah Mills (SM) provided an update on the LSIP. Two new Business Engagement Managers have been appointed: Orla Wilson for the South of Hampshire and Jenny Manners for North Hampshire. Both are focusing on employer engagement activity.</p> <p>7.2 SM also confirmed that the draft LSIP report is due to be submitted to Skills England (now part of the DWP) by the 31 March. The final reports would then be published in the Summer.</p> <p>7.3 Work continues to broaden inclusion and align skills activity across Hampshire and the Solent, including engagement with trade unions. Fifteen organisations have been commissioned to do some deep dive reports. It was also confirmed that</p>	

	existing deep-dive work from both the Solent and EM3 LSIPs remain relevant and will be incorporated.	
7.4	SM outlined a refreshed LSIP structure with three 'Pillars' focusing on system and ecosystem (A), learner and workforce participation needs (B) and sector-specific needs (C). There is also a list of ten priority sectors. She explained that a Steering Group is being convened to help guide delivery of the LSIP.	
7.5	SM was asked if there would be an opportunity for the Hampshire Skills Partnership to review the draft before it is submitted to Skills England. SM explained that there was an FE and HE Leadership Focus Group event on Friday 6 March where further details about the report would be shared and attendees would further help inform the shape and content of the draft report.	
7.6	Due to the tight timescales, SG expressed concern that the Partnership may not see a draft version of the report before being sent to Skills England and/or directly afterwards to provide feedback. SG made the suggestion that Hampshire Chamber of Commerce provide HSP members with a draft copy in advance of submission. This was endorsed by the membership. SM agreed to take this back to Hampshire Chamber.	SM / JaM
7.7	There was also a discussion about the focus on NEET young people, related insights and activity. JaM made reference to the call for evidence for the Alan Milburn Young People and Work report and agreed to share the response from Hampshire County Council.	JaM
8.	Any other business	
8.1	<u>LEP Legacy Reserves</u> JaM confirmed that sixteen shortlisted projects will be going to HPPB on Monday 9 March. Related papers are available on the HPPB webpage - Hampshire Prosperity Partnership reports and documents Business and economy Hampshire County Council .	
8.2	SG mentioned that she will be leaving her role at the end of July and subsequently stepping down from both the HSP and HPPB. A new Chair will be needed for HSP – this role will also have a place on HPPB. JaM will update before the next HSP meeting.	JaM
8.3	Mark Smith (University of Southampton) will also be leaving in May, which creates a vacancy on HPPB.	
9.	Next meeting	
9.1	The next meeting will be taking place via Teams on Thursday 11 June, 2-4pm.	

Action Log:

No.	Previous Action carried over:	Who
1	<p>Discussion: Exploring the match / mismatch between learners' expectations vs employers' skills demands.</p> <p>SG to discuss next steps with other universities on ethical consent, lead institution/s, and potential funding bid. REVISED: JaM to work with partners to arrange a number of sector roundtables (using clusters) to explore the mismatch between learner and employer expectations.</p>	SG / JaM
2	<p>Devolution</p> <p>JaM to circulate an update to the Hampshire Skills Partnership with an update on the changes as a result of the delay in mayoral elections. This update will include considerations for the Partnership with respect to the local skills system between 2026 - 2028.</p>	JaM

No.	New Actions	Who
3	<p>Slidedecks</p> <p>JaM to circulate the slide decks (including for Clusters and DTEC), together with the Minutes and Actions from this meeting.</p>	JaM
4	<p>V-Levels</p> <p>Agenda item to be carried forward to next meeting.</p>	JaM
5	<p>Youth Parliament</p> <p>JaM/TH to meet to discuss how to engage with the Youth Parliament.</p>	JaM/TH
6	<p>LSIP Report</p> <p>SM to ask Hampshire Chamber of Commerce if they can provide HSP members with a draft copy of the LSIP report, in advance of submission at the end of March.</p> <p>SM to circulate to all the ten priority sectors within the report, via JaM.</p>	<p>SM</p> <p>SM / JaM</p>
7	<p>Call for evidence response</p> <p>JaM to share the Hampshire County Council response to the call for evidence for the Alan Milburn Young People and Work report.</p>	JaM
8	<p>Change of Chair for Hampshire Skills Partnership</p> <p>JaM to update the Partnership, before the next meeting, on the process for electing a new Chair.</p>	JaM