

Hampshire Skills Partnership
Thursday 11th June 2026 – 14:00 – 16:00
Via Teams

Attendees: Sarah Greer (Chair, University of Winchester), Andrew Kaye (South Hampshire College Group), Andy Sherman (DWP), David Patterson (KnowNow Information Ltd), Graham Galbraith (University of Portsmouth), James Knowles (Southampton Solent University), Julie Milburn (Vice-Chair, Sparsholt College Group), Matt Johnson (South Coast IoT), Paul German (Yateley School), Ross McNally (Hampshire Chamber of Commerce), Sara Russell (Peter Symonds College), Sue Taylor (ALPS-ALPHI), Virginia Barrett (Farnborough College of Technology)

Hampshire County Council: Andy Tickner (Observer), Carolyn Davies (Note Taker), Jamie Mackay (Observer), Sally Thompson (Observer)

Apologies: Helen Odhams (Brockenhurst College)

		Action
1.	Welcome, introductions and apologies	
1.1	The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and introduced the new attendees: David Patterson, who would be leading on item 2, and Carolyn Davies, taking notes for the meeting. Helen Odhams has also joined the group but was unable to attend this meeting.	
2.	Regional AI Leadership & Skills Strategy	
2.1	Jamie Mackay (JaM) outlined the challenges to businesses and leaders presented by the growth in AI. JaM explained that as part of the Hampshire Skills Strategy, the Hampshire Skills Partnership is working with the Artificial Intelligence Growth Alliance (AIGA) to develop a regional AI skills and leadership strategy, focusing on helping residents, businesses and providers build the confidence and capability to use AI well. JaM handed over to David Patterson (DP), as Chair of the Artificial Intelligence Growth Alliance, to give an update on the strategy. (JaM to circulate slides)	JaM
2.2	DP explained that the government is allocating significant funds to increase energy production, focusing on AI Growth Zones, with '500+-megawatt' power stations, which would allow the country to achieve its net zero goals, despite the higher energy levels required by AI. Due to infrastructure difficulties, no site has been identified in the region for such a power station, and the AIGA has chosen to focus on <i>skills</i> , to help demonstrate strengths of the region.	
2.3	DP's presentation outlined the work and findings of the AIGA's Skills and Leadership working group. Key points included:	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMEs risk being locked out of the significant benefits of AI, if they cannot adapt to its increased use. • 'Free' AI training can still be too costly, due to time constraints faced by SMEs. • There is a strong demand for training but the provision should not be tailored purely towards large employers and graduates. • There is a preference for peer-learning, as well as a need for a clear entry-level starting point. • Some industries and locations may be impacted by AI more than others. • The evidence base developed is robust and credible, particularly in relation to SMEs and micro-businesses. • The next phase is targeted engagement with large employers, for example a planned FSB / Chamber of Commerce 'peer Learning Event'. • This is the beginning of a coordinated whole system approach to AI adoption across Hampshire and the Solent. • The majority of regions have been focussing on Growth Zones, so Hampshire and the Solent have an opportunity to develop a model which can be scalable and replicable across the country. <p>A key milestone for the Strategy will be a high-profile launch at the Farnborough International Air Show (20-24 July 2026).</p> <p>In response to queries / points raised, DP confirmed that the development of adult skills in the most significantly disadvantaged locations would be a key factor in ensuring that no area in the region is left behind. Engaging with colleges and universities at an early stage will give a more coordinated approach.</p> <p>Sally Thompson (ST) advised that the AI Leadership and Skills Strategy is now available to review and feedback on (JaM to circulate). The work of the Ethics and Inclusion working group will include how to overcome the barriers faced by young people.</p> <p>The group thanked DP for his work. The Chair advised him that he is welcome to call on any members of the group for support, with a reminder that all FE and HE providers in Hampshire are represented.</p>	JaM
3. 3.1 3.2	Minutes and actions from the last meeting The minutes were agreed by all. Action No 1: learner expectations – Sector-based round tables have been agreed, with the first to be held on 2 nd July. Update / feedback to be provided at a future meeting. Action No 2: devolution - JaM confirmed that the delay to the Mayoral election for Hampshire and the Solent Combined County Authority would not delay the date of the consolidated Adult Skills Fund devolution in 2027.	JaM

	<p>DWP have confirmed that Skills Bootcamps and Free Courses for Jobs funding will remain ringfenced in 2027/28.</p> <p>Action No 3: Slidedecks – complete</p> <p>Action No 4: V-Levels – to be carried forward to a future meeting</p> <p>Action 5: Youth Parliament – Meeting scheduled for w/c 15 June. Update / feedback to be provided at a future meeting.</p> <p>Action 6: LSIP report – complete.</p> <p>Action 7: Call for evidence response – complete</p> <p>Action 8: Change of Chair for Hampshire Skills Partnership – complete</p>	<p>JaM</p> <p>JaM</p>
4.	<p>Conflicts of interest – any verbal declarations from members</p> <p>Members were asked to verbally declare any declarations of interest, related to any items on the agenda. None were declared.</p>	
5.	<p>Terms of Reference and discussion on new Chair / Vice-Chair</p> <p>5.1 With reference to the proposed changes to the Terms of Reference, circulated in advance of the meeting, JaM explained that the majority of the changes were minor. At the request of the Chair, the group approved these amendments before moving on to discuss the new Chair / Vice-Chair arrangements.</p> <p>5.2 The group approved the new arrangements, outlined in the Terms of Reference, with an observation that colleagues have a good working relationship that will help with a smooth handover. JaM advised that he arranges pre- and post-HSP meetings with the Chair and Vice-Chair. These will continue.</p> <p>5.3 It was confirmed that Julie Milburn (JM) will become the new Chair and that James Knowles (JK) will become the Interim Vice-Chair. JK's role will be reviewed by the University Vice-Chancellors' group when the two Vice-Chancellor vacancies (at University of Southampton and University of Winchester) have been filled.</p>	
6.	<p>Hampshire Prosperity Partnership Board update</p> <p>6.1 JM advised that HPPB held a meeting on 1st June, at which Ruth Adams (Chief Executive, Hampshire and the Solent Combined County Authority) gave an update in anticipation of the Strategic Authority being formally established (NOTE: This happened on 4 June).</p> <p>6.2 Stephen Martin also gave some updates on the work of the Economy and Skills team, including the work of the SuperCluster and an energy grid</p>	

6.3	<p>capacity review. Stephen also mentioned how 1,900 individuals had participated in Skills Bootcamps: 109% of target.</p> <p>Stephen also confirmed shortlisted LEP legacy reserve applications are due to be discussed by Hampshire County Council Cabinet on 7th July.</p>	
7.	<p>HSP Working Group report: Employer engagement</p> <p>7.1 JaM presented some background to this report, following a collaborative workshop on 26th March. JaM then working through a summary of the report recommendations and invited feedback.</p> <p>7.2 Some members of the group felt that the recommendations were too broad to be actioned and a discussion took place around whether they could / should be replaced by specific actions, or whether the Skills Partnership should focus on a small number of actions, such as upskilling in AI to support employer engagement.</p> <p>7.3 As a result of the discussions, JaM agreed to reflect on the feedback and bring an update to the next meeting on next steps.</p>	JaM
8.	<p>Hampshire and the Solent LSIP</p> <p>8.1 Ross McNally (RM) gave a detailed verbal update on the LSIP report.</p> <p>8.2 After several months of collaborative working, , the LSIP report has now been drafted and is due to be published in late June / early July, following sign-off from the Secretary of State.</p> <p>8.3 The report focusses on four key themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving awareness and signposting, to make the skills ecosystem easier to navigate for employers and learners • Strengthening and widening employer participation • Building a responsive and inclusive ecosystem • Supporting people throughout their careers. <p>8.4 A point was raised that colleges have a statutory requirement to reference the LSIP report in their accountability statement, which needs to be published by 31st July. In view of this tight deadline, the LSIP report will be shared with JM to circulate to Hampshire college principals with the understanding that it is not to be shared further, before it is published.</p>	RM

9.	Other circulated papers	
9.1	a) Get Hampshire Working Plan progress report – JaM advised that work had now started on the one red item shown on the report. He is working with the workstream leads to provide clarity on how each action can be delivered during the next 12 months.	
9.2	The Combined Authority has indicated that they have an ambition to merge the Get Hampshire Working and Get Solent Working Plans into a single local plan for the area. JaM continues to work closely with Solent colleagues, as they have many linked activities.	
9.3	b) Hampshire Skills Strategy progress report – JaM advised that progress had not been as significant as he would have liked, but he has no additional support for this work. The Chair asked if there was anything that members of the group could do to help – JaM explained that he <i>has</i> already been in touch with other contacts at group members’ organisations.	
9.4	Andy Tickner (AT) raised a question about a process for amending the Get Hampshire Working Plan and Hampshire Skills Strategy if there were changes in Government priorities following the Milburn Report and further details about the Youth Guarantee. JaM explained that if Get Hampshire Working and Get Solent Working were merged, it would give an opportunity to amend. The Hampshire Skills Strategy does not have a fixed date and is designed to be a working document, so can be amended as necessary.	
9.5	c) Skills Policy Update – this document had been drafted as a trial by JaM for the group and they confirmed that they found it very useful. It will therefore be a standing item.	JaM
10	Any other business	
10.1	a) Defence Technical Excellence College (DTEC) update – Virginia Barrett (VB) gave an update and explained at the next Hampshire FE Principals’ meeting there will be an agenda item about how DTECs can work together, and also how areas without DTECs can work collaboratively. The group expressed dissatisfaction that none of the funding for TECs had been awarded in the South East region. There was a suggestion that Hampshire may be incorrectly perceived as ‘too wealthy’ to receive funding – this has been the experience of several members of the group.	
10.2	b) Funding awarded – JaM shared a news article with the group, confirming that 24 universities and colleges (including Winchester and Southampton) have been awarded a share of £80m to boost student places and strengthen UK defence industry:	

	<p>https://www.gov.uk/government/news/24-universities-and-colleges-awarded-investment-to-boost-student-places-and-strengthen-uk-defence-industry</p> <p>The Chair thanked AT, who would be retiring shortly, for his work with the group and all members wished him well for the future.</p> <p>Thanks were also extended to SG for Chairing the group, along with good wishes for her retirement. SG thanked JM for her support as Vice-Chair, as well as JaM for his energy in coordinating the group.</p>	
11	<p>Next Meeting</p> <p>The next meeting will take place Thursday 17th September, 10:00-12:00, at Lifelab.</p> <p>Dates for meetings in 2027 will be agreed with the new Chair and Vice-Chair, then circulated to the group.</p>	JaM

Action Log:

No.	Previous Action carried over:	Who
1	Mismatch between learner expectations and employers' skills demands Provide update at a future HSP meeting, following planned round tables.	JaM
2	V-Levels Agenda item to be carried forward to a future meeting	JaM
3	Hampshire Youth Parliament Provide update at a future HSP meeting, following meeting scheduled for w/c 15 June	JaM

No.	New Actions	Who
4	Regional AI Leadership and Skills Strategy To be circulated, for review and response, together with slides	JaM
5	HSP Working Group Report Review feedback and make recommendations for a way forward	JaM
6	Hampshire and the Solent LSIP Share embargoed report with JM, for circulation to Hampshire colleges	RM
7	Skills Policy Update Continue to produce, for the group, as and when necessary	JaM
8	Future Meetings Agree and circulate dates for 2027 meetings	JaM