ANNEX B:

Background and Method

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Annex B provides an overview of the methodologies and processes used to ensure that the evidence of skills need informing the Solent LSIP is robust, recognisable and meaningful to providers and wider stakeholders across the Solent region.

Process of Engagement

Development of this LSIP required extensive engagement with a wide pool of local and sub-regional stakeholders, in addition to employers operating in the Solent. Figure B.1 presents an overview of the stakeholders supporting preparation of the Solent LSIP.

LSIP Leadership Group

The LSIP Leadership Group was established initially to provide oversight during the designation process, and has been developed and enhanced in terms of extending its membership during the first phase to provide leadership, challenge and support to oversee development of the LSIP, identify opportunities for collaboration and represent wider stakeholders across the skills system. The Group includes:

- Hampshire Chamber of Commerce
- Solent LEP
- Fareham College
- Peta Training Limited
- Hampshire County Council
- Portsmouth City Council
- Southampton City Council
- Isle of Wight Council
- Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce
- Hampshire and Isle of Wight, Department for Works and Pension

Going forward, it is anticipated that the governance structure which is aligned to Hampshire Chamber of Commerce's Board and the terms of reference for the Leadership Group are reviewed and formalised.

Employer Survey

An online survey open to all businesses in the Solent was undertaken. The survey questionnaire was informed by a review of the national, regional and local strategic context, in addition to a desk-based review of employers' skills needs data from the DfE and other sources. The survey of employers sought to gain further insight into the challenges businesses in the Solent face when recruiting, and planning for skills development.

The online survey was completed by 129 businesses across the Solent. The majority (68%) of employers completing the survey identified themselves as either micro (<5 employees) or small enterprises (<50 employees), with the remaining (32%) defining themselves as either medium (<250 employees) or large enterprises (> 250 employees).

Figure B.1
Stakeholder mapping

The survey was open to all businesses, however it sought to be as representative as possible in terms of coverage (i.e. both sector-wise, and local authority area).

Further Education Providers' Engagement

Engagement with FE providers was identified as a key priority in the development of the Solent LSIP, and as such activities were led by the LSIP Programme Director including, but not limited to, joint sessions, individual college visits and presentations at stakeholder events.

The following activities were undertaken:

- 9 December 2022 – Attendance of the Solent Colleges Governors' session to discuss the LSIP, and invite Colleges to engage in the process.
- Between 12 December 2022 and 20 January 2023 – Individual meetings (online/in-person) with Fareham College, IoW College, Itchen College, the City of Portsmouth College, HSDC, Barton Peveril College and St Vincent College undertaken with the Principal and/or members of the senior leadership teams.

The Solent is well served by a range of FE colleges/providers and there is no subject sector area that is not covered by one or more providers; the engagement meetings provided a good opportunity to learn about the current offer and the challenges individual colleges are facing. All colleges have some degree of established relationships with employer partners and recognise the importance of engaging them in terms of curriculum development, business development, Apprenticeship Vacancies, work experience opportunities and T-level delivery.

In addition, under the banner of the Strategic Development Fund (SDF) a group of Solent colleges have been working together collegiately on SDF round 1&2 projects which forms the basis of collaboration going forward, the LSIP and LSIF will provide an opportunity to extend the reach of this work and with the inclusion of a wider range of Post 16 providers; to date the LSIP project team have been regularly attending SDF steering group meetings, and presented on progress of the LSIP to ALPHI the Association of Learning Providers in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, to further cohere the opportunity to engage Hampshire Chamber of Commerce CEO is a member of the Solent LEP Skills Advisory Panel ('SAP').

Employer Engagement Workshops

A total of six employer engagement workshops, open to all business in the Solent, and wider Hampshire catchment were held. Given the overlap between Hampshire and the Enterprise M3 LEP area, a number of these employer engagement workshops were held in c0llaboration with the Surrey CoC and Enterprise M3 LSIP. A list of employer engagement workshops is provided below.

- Monday 20 February, Southampton (Ageas Bowl) (47 delegates);
- Tuesday 21 February, Basingstoke and Andover (Basingstoke College of Technology) (25 delegates);
- Wednesday 22 February, Winchester (Holiday Inn Winchester) (26 delegates); Thursday 23 February, Portsmouth and Fareham (Village Hotel Portsmouth) (47 delegates);
- Thursday 23 February, Isle of Wight (IOW College) (50 delegates); and
- Friday 24 February, Farnborough (Village Hotel, Farnborough) (31 delegates).

In addition, an LSIP Stakeholder Summit was also held in the beginning of March 2023 in central Hampshire. Welcoming 100 guests and hosted at Marwell Zoological Park, this session drew on all parts of the Solent skills ecosystem with representatives from civic bodies

(Local, City, Borough, and County Authorities) Education providers (HE and FE Providers, ITPs), Charities, Chamber Members, local business, and an invited selection of those drawn from the EEW the previous week drawing on all of the above.

Presentations were provided by the Hampshire Chamber of Commerce by way of an LSIP progress update and the emergent trends of the ongoing data analysis, Hampshire County Council on the skills policy landscape, Local employer Carswell Gould offering the business perspective and Havant and South Downs College on the experience of current providers. These speakers were then joined by three other employers from retail, logistics, and training firms for a Q&A with delegates.

Stakeholder Workshops / Roundtable Discussions

Two further sector roundtables were hosted by Hampshire CoC in the north of the county, in partnership with Surrey CoC. These focused on the priority sectors; 'Creative Industries' (Aldershot - 20/03/23) and 'Space and Aerospace' (Farnborough - 13/04/23). Welcoming 15 and 17 delegates respectively, these sessions were delivered in partnership with relevant industry bodies, including Creative Network South, University of the Creative Arts, Farnborough Aerospace Consortium ('FAC'), UK Space, and Space South Central.

In addition, the CoC has also undertaken several one-to-one discussions (conducted virtually via MS Teams) with individual businesses and stakeholders to help understand their contexts and inform our proposed workstream for stage 2 of the LSIP.

Articulating Employers' Skills Needs

The process of articulating employers' skills needs drew on the insight gathered through the LSIP's extensive stakeholder engagement, in addition to a review of supply and demand, and the wider economic context across the Solent. The following section outlines the process for articulating employers' skills needs which led to the development of the LSIP's priorities.

Desk-top Review

A desk-top review was undertaken to explore the quantitative and qualitative literature about employer skills' needs in the Solent. This covered documents/strategies prepared over the past 3-5 years, in addition to bespoke research commissioned by the Hampshire CoC and other stakeholders (e.g. the Solent LEP and Maritime UK Solent) as part of the LSIP process (e.g. Solent Local Enterprise Partnership Low Carbon Skills Report, Creative Sector Deep Dive, Maritime Sector Deep Dive and Freeport Target Sectors Deep Dive).

Analysis of Economic, Skills and Education Landscape for the Solent

The analysis of the economic, skills and education landscape in the Solent region has been informed primarily by a detailed desk-based review of both the local and regional contexts, in addition to online searches of the courses available. As outlined above, the LSIP undertook extensive engagement with FE providers and the broader skills ecosystem more widely to ensure that it not only reflects their ambition for the LSIP process, but also to secure buy-in and support of the LSIP's priorities and action plan for phases 2 and 3.

Determining the LSIP Priorities

Drawing on the extensive engagement and insight gathered through our review of the strategic context, we issued a Priorities Paper which set out our overall vision for the LSIP and identified the six areas for the Solent LSIP report to focus on. This paper was shared extensively amongst the LSIP Leadership Group (and other stakeholders). Overall, feedback for the priorities paper was positive, and included the following comments:

"We are supportive of the approach you have taken as it relates to a process rather than yet another list of sectors."

"I think the breadth of ambition is a real strength."

"I think the approach taken, aims to address some of the embedded, systemic issues which contribute to the skills gaps we have, and where previous initiatives have failed to improve."

The LSIP Leadership Group had overview and provided support and challenge through the process. Ultimately, the Solent LSIP report presented incorporates the views and comments provided, and seeks to take a balanced and proportionate approach.

Translating Employer Skills Needs

Engagement with employers in the Solent formed the backbone of our approach to the LSIP, and we continue to engage with employers (i.e. either directly on a one-to-one basis, or more widely through ERBs). This ensures that the LSIP is reflective of employers' needs, whilst also setting out the right course of action for the next phases of the LSIP process.

When engaging with employers, we also sought insight on the need for technical and broader skills, both now and in the future. The LSIP report's focus on both is based on this insight and reflects employers' comments that whilst technical skills are essential, there is a much greater need for basic, foundational skills which employers can build on.

Green Skills

Whilst being mostly sector-agnostic, the LSIP recognises the need for it to reflect wider priorities and ambitions, such as Levelling Up and the Net Zero Agenda. As part of the wider LSIP work, a separate green skills deep dive was commissioned, and its findings were used to inform the priorities and subsequent action plan for this LSIP. This is especially pertinent as it is the Solent LEP's ambition to be net zero by 2050.

The Solent LSIP acknowledges the importance of green skills, and under Priority 6 these are considered as part of the wider skills transition towards Industry 4.0. The need for green skills and in addition to greater digitisation of the economy, are therefore an integral part of the LSIP, and considered to be a cross-cutting theme throughout.