



Solent Freeport Consortium Limited
Chair Recruitment Pack

October 2021

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Foreword

The Solent has always been the Nation's Global Gateway, and is now becoming even more prominent as one of only eight regions in England selected by the Government to be a Freeport. Freeports are an important part of the UK's post-Covid economic recovery; the Solent Freeport will unlock billions of pounds' worth of investment and create tens of thousands of new jobs. It is universally backed and has the potential to transform productivity in the Solent to benefit not only our communities but also the whole of the UK.

Freeports will play a key role in delivering on the Government's levelling up agenda, bringing prosperity to some of our important coastal communities through jobs and investment. The Solent proposition, through links to three world-class universities and as host to national research assets, will also catalyse an innovation revolution in maritime, autonomy and green growth.

We believe the Solent Freeport is a 'once in a lifetime' opportunity to maximize our geographic advantage in a highly competitive global market and forge new trading relationships with the world.

The Solent Freeport Consortium has reached a significant milestone in submitting the Outline Business Case to Government for approval. It is now bringing forward an exciting opportunity to lead the Solent Freeport Board at this critical development stage and looking to recruit to the high profile position of Chair of the Solent Freeport.

The Chair of the Solent Freeport will build on the rapid progress made to date on the development of the Solent Freeport proposition, take up the lead on strategic direction and provide leadership to deliver the aspirations of our region and secure the economic benefits the Freeport will bring for years to come.

Alastair Welch
Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd Director
Remuneration, Employment and Nominations Committee Chair

Introduction

Freeports are a flagship government programme designed to play an important part in the UK's post-Covid economic recovery and contribute to realising the levelling up agenda, bringing jobs, investment and prosperity to some of the most deprived communities across the four nations of the UK with targeted and effective support.

The Solent Freeport is led by the Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd: a company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 15 March 2021. Details on the Governance arrangements for the Company are set out in the Company's Articles of Association, which are available [here](#). The company has been established in response to the Government announcing the Solent as one of just eight Freeports in England at the March 2021 budget.

All Freeports are required to complete a 'set-up' phase for achieving Freeport designation, culminating in the approval of a Full Business Case (FBC). The Board of the Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd have a very strong ambition to ensure the Solent Freeport is operational in the first wave of Freeports and have already developed an Outline Business Case with a view to securing all formal designations as soon as possible.

In line with this commitment to bringing forward the Solent Freeport at pace, the Board are now inviting applications for the role of Chair of the Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd. Further information, including how to apply for this exciting and high-profile role is included in this document. A full Role Description and Person Specification can be found [here](#).

Further information in relation to Freeports can be found at: www.gov.uk

Further information on the Solent Freeport can be found at: www.solentfreeport.com



Section 1:

Applying to become the Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd Chair

1A: The role of the Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd Chair

The leadership that the Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd Chair provides is central to the success of the company. As such, the Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd is seeking to recruit a Chair that is an influential business leader, who can act as a champion for the Freeport's economic success. The Chair requires sufficient standing to be able to convene the local business community and public sector stakeholders, whilst having the insight to oversee the development of a business plan and the relationship skills to work effectively with Government.

Given their role involves overseeing public funds and responsibilities; the Chair is expected to display the highest levels of integrity and honesty.

The Solent Freeport Chair has a defined term limit of three years. In exceptional circumstances, and subject to the agreement of the Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd Board, the tenure may be extended to a second term of a further three years.

The Chair requires a strong and detailed appreciation of, and interest in, the strategic issues relating to, and drivers of, the economy of the Solent Freeport area and the various opportunities and challenges involved in securing sustainable, private sector-led economic growth and job creation. In addition, the Chair will need a strong track record in international trade, innovation and a demonstrable commitment to supporting national and local ambitions for net zero.

In line with best practice set out in the UK Corporate Governance Code, we are also seeking to appoint a truly independent Chair. Candidates are asked to consider this definition carefully in advance of submitting an application, which will include whether the candidate:

- has, or has had within the last three years, a material business relationship with the company either directly, or as a partner, shareholder, director or senior employee of a body that has such a relationship with the company;

- holds cross-directorships or has significant links with other directors through involvement in other companies or bodies;
- has close family ties with any of the company's advisers, directors or senior employees.

In terms of time commitments, it is expected that the Solent Freeport Chair will offer an equivalent of two days per week on average and the Chair should have sufficient time to meet their board responsibilities.

The time commitment to engage with Company Members and other key stakeholders and get to know the business will be considerable. The Chair will also receive high-quality information sufficiently in advance of meetings so that there can be thorough consideration of the issues prior to, and informed debate and challenge at, board meetings.

Executive contact names and numbers will be published on all papers so the Chair can seek clarification or amplification from management where they consider the information provided is not sufficient. They should provide constructive challenge, strategic guidance, specialist advice and hold management to account.

The Chair can access impartial advice and support through the Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd Executive team. This support is currently provided by the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership, however, the Chair will also have a key role in leading the establishment of long-term executive support arrangements for the company.

The Solent Freeport Chief Executive will report to the Solent Freeport Chair and, in addition to this executive support, the Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd will also appoint a Deputy Chair in order to

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provide non-executive support to the Chair.

On appointment to the board the Solent Freeport Chair will be provided with a comprehensive, formal and tailored induction that will extend beyond the boardroom and they will be expected to undertake some external formal training to ensure they are fully briefed on the role of the Chair and the best practice requirements under the UK Corporate Governance Code. In their first year and on an ongoing basis they should expect to visit operations and talk with managers and non-managerial members of the workforce.

The Solent Freeport Chair should use these conversations to better understand the culture of the organisation and the way things are done in practice, and to gain insight into the experience of the executive of the Freeport Consortium Limited. Directors duties are set out in sections 171-177 of the Companies Act 2006 and the Articles of Association of the Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd.

The primary role of the Chair is to secure good corporate governance by ensuring the Board is in

full control of the company's affairs and is alert to its obligations to the members of Freeport Consortium, bringing independent and sound judgement to Board discussions, contributing to the Board to ensure a balance between high-level coordination and driving the commissioning of the agreed programme of strategic activity to achieve the aims and objectives of the Solent Freeport.

All Solent Freeport Board Members are committed to securing and maintaining exceptional governance for Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd. The Chair plays a key role in supporting the Board to meet this commitment through leading the Freeport Consortium's continued monitoring, review and development of governance structures, policies and procedures.

The Chair will be expected to represent the Solent Freeport Consortium at the highest levels of Government, nationally and internationally, encouraging networking, joint working and inward investment.

1 B: Who we are looking for

Due to the extremely high profile nature of the role, the SFCL is seeking very prominent business leaders as candidates for the role of SFCL Chair that meet the person specification set out in the Role Description [here](#).

SFCL is committed to having a Board which embraces diversity and promotes equality of opportunity within the Solent economy. In line with this commitment, the opportunity to apply for the role of Chair is open to business leaders from all backgrounds and businesses of all sizes and sectors

Applications are encouraged from credible people who can see the bigger strategic picture, offer challenge and insight and genuinely input into the process of advancing the SFCL's agenda of fostering real and positive change in the Solent region for the ultimate benefit of all. Strong partnership skills are essential and candidates will need to be collegiate and collaborative in their style and approach.

A full role description and person specification can be found [here](#).

The Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd has embraced the values as set out in the Nolan Principles and we expect everyone who works in and with the Solent Freeport in any capacity, including the Board of Directors, employees of the company and Accountable Body, contractors, agency staff, volunteers and people undertaking commissions on our behalf to display these behaviours at all times.

The Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd also expects that everyone who works in and with the Freeport to act in such a manner as to justify public trust and confidence and to uphold and enhance the good standing and reputation of the Solent Freeport. We are also committed to equality and valuing diversity within our workforce and we operate in-line with the Equality and Diversity Strategy of Portsmouth City Council, our accountable body. Individuals must therefore at all times carry out their duties with due regard to our Equality at Work policy. Our goal is to ensure that these commitments, reinforced by our values, are embedded in our day-to-day working practices with all our stakeholders, colleagues and partners.

1C: Other Information

Remuneration

Annual fee of £12,000 subject to tax and national insurance contributions as applicable. No pension entitlement. Alternatively, the candidate may elect to take on the role as a voluntary position.

In either case, reasonable expenses will be paid (in line with Freeport Consortium Limited Policies).

Conflict of interest

The Chair will be expected to adhere to normal conflict of interest arrangements, and their companies may be excluded from any contracts where Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd has a direct financial or commissioning interest.

Conduct

The Chair role is high profile and responsible for decision making in relation to significant sums of public money. Therefore, in addition to usual requirements under Company Law, all Directors are expected to follow conduct themselves in accordance with "The 7 principles of public life".

Development and Training

The Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd is committed to ensuring that the Chair is able to make a real and significant difference to the Solent Freeport and to our economy. As part of this, we will ensure the Chair is provided with access to an induction and ongoing development and training which will ensure the Chair has an in-depth view of the key duties, roles and legal responsibilities of the role, as well as an understanding of their role in corporate governance, legal status of a company and implications of the Company Act 2006, and know how to maximise board effectiveness.



Section 2:

Information for individuals interested in applying to become the Solent Freeport Chair

2A: How to apply

If you would like to apply to become the Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd Chair, please send us:

- A covering letter highlighting why you are interested in the post, the skills and experience you possess which you feel would be most relevant to the role and how you meet each of the person specification requirements listed in the person specification.

Please note that applicants who would not be considered independent under the UK Corporate Governance Code are asked to provide an explanation within the covering letter to their application, setting out the rationale as to why the Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd should consider such an appointment.

- Your curriculum vitae (CV)

The preferred method of application is online at www.berwickpartners.co.uk/opportunities/assignment/84130/

If you are unable to apply online please email your application to response.manager@berwickpartners.co.uk

All applications will receive an automated response.

All candidates are also requested to complete an online Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form which will be found at the end of the application process.

For detailed information on how Berwick Partners process your personal data, please review their privacy policy on their website www.berwickpartners.co.uk/privacy-policy/

In line with GDPR, we ask that you do NOT send us any information that can identify children or any of your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, data concerning health or sex life and sexual orientation, genetic and/or

biometric data) in your CV and application documentation. Following this notice, any inclusion of your Sensitive Personal Data in your CV/application documentation will be understood by us as your express consent to process this information going forward.

Please also remember to not mention anyone's information or details (e.g. referees) who have not previously agreed to their inclusion.

If you have any queries or would like more information in regard to this document, please contact: Marek Dobrowolski, Partner, on 0121 654 5975 (direct dial); 07793 529 576 (mobile) or email marek.dobrowolski@berwickpartners.co.uk

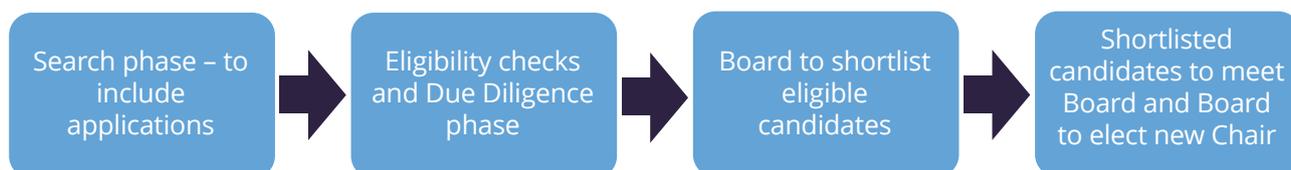
Please note that documents submitted as part of your Chair application will be shared with Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd Remuneration, Employment and Nominations Committee (RENCOM) members; the Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd Company Secretary, and Portsmouth City Council (as accountable body to the Solent Freeport) in order to assess your application against the eligibility criteria in the person specification. If your application is considered to be eligible for consideration, these documents will be shared with all Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd Directors in order to inform the shortlisting and appointment process.

Your covering letter and CV will only be used to ensure eligibility against the criteria published in this document and inform the shortlisting for the role.

PLEASE NOTE THE CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS IS 23:59 ON MONDAY 15 NOVEMBER 2021

2B: Process

The following diagram provides a summary of the process the Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd intends to follow in securing the appointment of a new Chair. Further details in relation to each stage are provided below.



Stage 1: Search phase to include applications

Applications are invited from 7 October to 15 November 2021. Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd has enlisted the support of Executive Search agency Berwick Partners to supplement the advertising and promotion of the role.

In addition to the information provided in this document, the Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd would also welcome informal discussions with any individual interested in applying for the role. If you would like to speak with the Senior Responsible Officer for the Solent Freeport to discuss the role further ahead of applying, please contact us using the details provided in section 3. Please note that any potential applicants are asked to contact us well in advance of the deadline in order to ensure a call can be arranged.

Stage 2: Eligibility Checks and Due Diligence Phase

All applications received before the deadline will be screened by our Remuneration, Employment and Nominations Committee (RENCOM), the Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd Company Secretary and S151 officer representative of Portsmouth City Council (as accountable body to the Solent Freeport) to ensure eligibility against the criteria outlined in the person specification. All applicants will be notified of the outcome of these eligibility checks.

Stage 3: Board to consider and Shortlist Candidate(s)

All applications from eligible candidates will be shared with the Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd Board of Directors. The Board will agree a shortlist of candidates to meet with. Depending on the strength of applications received, the Board may shortlist one or more candidates for the role. The Board reserves the right to determine the number of individuals to be shortlisted for the role. All applicants will be notified of the outcome of this shortlisting process. In the event that no applicants are shortlisted, the Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd will review the application process ahead of re-advertising the role.

Stage 4: Board to meet with Shortlisted Candidate(s)

All shortlisted candidates will be invited to meet with the Board of Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd and provide a short presentation and Q and A session. Further details will be provided in advance of the meeting.

The Board will then agree, by majority vote, the appointment of a chair from amongst the Shortlisted candidates. The Board reserve the right not to appoint a candidate and, in the event that no applicants are appointed, the Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd will review the application process ahead of re-advertising the role.

All shortlisted candidates will be notified of the outcome via email following the meeting and the successful candidate will be appointed with immediate effect.

2C: Timetable

The following outlines the target timetable:

Date	Action
7 October 2021	Opening date for applications
15 November 2021	Closing date
w/c 29 November 2021	RENCOM to meet to consider eligibility checks / due diligence
w/c 6 December 2021	Applicants notified of outcome of eligibility checks
w/c 6 December 2021	Board to consider shortlist of eligible applications
December 2021/January 2022	Shortlisted applicants to meet Freeport Board
January 2022	All candidates notified and appointment announced

Please note that Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd fully intends to adhere to the above timetable. However, Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd reserves the right to depart from this timetable and will notify all candidates of any change to the timetable during the process.

Section 3: Contact Information

Should you have any enquiries in relation to any of the information included in this document, please contact us using the below contact information:

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Partner

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M: 07793 529 576

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