



Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd  
Chief Executive Role Description and  
Person Specification

# Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd

## Chief Executive Role Description

<b>Responsible to:</b>	Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd (SFCL) Board
<b>Accountable to:</b>	Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd Chair and Board of Directors
<b>Hours per week:</b>	Full -time
<b>Contract:</b>	Permanent. The post-holder will be employed by Portsmouth City Council as Accountable Body for the Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd
<b>Salary Band:</b>	£130,000 - £134,000 (includes basic salary of £110,126 - £119,333 and market supplement payment of £14,545 to provide a maximum salary of £133,878)
<b>Location:</b>	This post will be home-based in the first instance and will require regional travel and a requirement to represent the Solent Freeport at national meetings and on occasions internationally.
<b>Budget responsibility:</b>	In line with the delegations with authority to enter into commitments up to an unlimited amount (but within the overall budget allocation for the Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd – currently circa £940,000 for 22/23) in a single transaction.

## Overview

The Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd is a company limited by guarantee and was 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 overarching structure for the company is set out in Annexe A.

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.

An Outline Business Case ('OBC') and a Full Business Case ('FBC') for the Solent Freeport were developed to demonstrate how the Freeport will achieve the policy objectives set by HM Government ('HMG').

Following submission and appraisal of its OBC, HM Treasury ('HMT') tax site assessment and HM Revenue & Customs ('HMRC') authorisation of a custom site, the Solent Freeport became operational in March 2022. An operational Freeport is defined as a Freeport with designation of at least one tax site and one customs site, and an approved OBC. Further information on this can be viewed via the following links: [here](#) and [here](#).

On 8 April 2022, FBC for Solent Freeport was received by DLUHC. Following consultation with DLUHC and other government departments, HMT will consider approval of the FBC unlocking Seed

Capital from FY2022/23 to FY2024/25. This is expected in September 2022.

HM Government will approve the FBC for a freeport on the understanding that the Accountable Body and Governing Body will oversee the development of individual business cases for Seed Capital projects in accordance with best practice principles. Approval will allow for the formal designation of the Solent Freeport, conferring of all associated legal powers, and a Section 31 grant to be issued for the capital funding.

SFCL has needed to demonstrate an appropriate proposal for the governance and capacity required to oversee the 'set-up' and 'delivery' phase. Appropriate Governance arrangements are critical for delivering to the ambitious timescale for formal designation and ensuring that appropriate measures of accountability and transparency are in place for the effective management of public funds as it moves to delivery.

Post FBC approval SFCL will be required to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with HM Government and the billing authorities in the Solent freeport tax sites.

The MoU sets out the terms, principles and practices that will apply to the working relationship

Continued overleaf 

# Overview continued

## ► From overleaf

between: the Secretary of State for the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities ('DLUHC'); Portsmouth City Council ('the Accountable Body'); and the SFCL Governing Body ('the Governing Body') (collectively 'the Parties'), regarding the delivery and administration of the Solent Freeport including the use of Seed Capital grants; the use of Capacity Funding grants; and New Forest District Council, Havant Borough Council, Eastleigh Borough Council and Southampton City Council (collectively 'the Billing Authorities') for collecting business rates in the Freeport Tax Sites.

The MoU also formalises the key commitments made by the Freeport throughout the FBC and outlines what support it can expect from DLUHC and other HMG departments, including the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy ('BEIS'), Department for Education ('DfE'), the Department for Work and Pensions ('DWP'), Department for International Trade ('DIT'), HMT, and HMRC.

Portsmouth City Council is the accountable body for The Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd and in this role is accountable for the proper use and administration of funding, all of which will fall under the annual audit of the local authorities accounts, and for ensuring that decisions are made in accordance with HM Government requirements.

The Chief Executive will therefore work in partnership with Board Members to provide leadership, vision and strategy direction to the Solent Freeport Consortium Limited. The post holder will act as an ambassador for the Solent Freeport and wider Solent area to ensure it is fully engaged with its stakeholders and communities and fulfilling its role.

The Chief Executive is pivotal for the sustained and ongoing development of Solent Freeport's performance, its leadership and its culture.

The post holder will build and maintain a programme management team and office of the Chief Executive of the Solent Freeport with expert skills and agile business acumen to relentlessly pursue brilliance and to also discharge its delivery obligations as set out in the FBC and MoU with HM Government. As a coalition it is also vital that the Chief Executive builds and maintains highly collaborative relationships with other delivery partners in the coalition to ensure the success of the freeport and delivery of the outcomes in the FBC and MoU. They will also be a role-model for individuals personally aligned to the betterment of

the Solent economy and stakeholder and partner satisfaction through driving transformational change across the organisation, local communities and the wider Solent Freeport area.

The Chief Executive will develop, alongside the Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd Chair and the Board, the strategic direction of the Solent Freeport, utilising board members, Freeport company members and key local partners including local government, business and academia. They will therefore be a key leader working with other senior leaders in business, local councils, academia, funding beneficiaries, central government and regulators to ensure seamless partnership pathways and working.

At the core of the role, as the Accountable Officer and Head of Paid Service, the Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring the Freeport delivers on its commitments as set out in the FBC and as formalised in the MoU signed between the Secretary of State for DLUHC; the Accountable Body, Portsmouth City Council; the billing authorities, New Forest District Council, Havant Borough Council, Eastleigh Borough Council and Southampton City Council and SFCL. These commitments must be delivered whilst at the same time ensuring the Freeport meets its statutory obligations, corporate duties and local accountability and transparency requirements.

The post holder will serve as the Chief Executive of Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd and sit on the Board of the Company as the sole Executive Director and will be the nominated Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for the Freeport.

In partnership with the Board, the Chief Executive is ultimately responsible for the success of the Solent Freeport, and will:

- Provide vision, direction and ambition through inspirational leadership and strategic management for Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd
- Deliver high-quality value for money investment in local growth programmes that meet or exceed the expectations of the Board of Solent Freeport Consortium Limited and Central Government
- As the Freeport's Head of Paid Service, foster and develop a culture of performance and service that enables the delivery of the aspirations and ambitions of the Board and local business, political and academic leaders and key stakeholders such as the New Forest National Park and Solent LEP
- Provide effective stewardship of Solent Freeport and associated public investment for the residents and businesses of the Solent Freeport area

# Values and Expected Behaviours

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.



# The Role

The Chief Executive will be responsible for providing leadership, developing and implementing Solent Freeport strategic and business plans, leading on partnership and business development, and being an effective advocate for the Solent Freeport area.

The post holder will:

- Work with the Board to provide strategic direction and leadership to Solent Freeport work programmes and the staff in order to deliver our vision and purpose
- Personally embody our values and create a culture within our organisation, and in our relationships with external stakeholders, which allows these values to flourish
- Lead the development of strong and effective relationships with key stakeholder and our partner organisations
- Ensure delivery of our organisational commitments, including the Solent Freeport business case
- Act as the 'accounting officer' for our organisation – i.e. accounting to Parliament for the efficient and effective use of public resources.

In performing this role, the Chief Executive for the Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd (also being the sole Executive Director on the Board) will need specific attention to:

- Developing strategic and operating plans that reflect the longer term objectives and priorities for the Solent Freeport area as established and agreed by the board
- Maintaining an ongoing dialogue with the Chair of the Board and other Board members
- Securing sound financial and governance systems to ensure the effective stewardship of resources

and to allow monitoring by the Board of financial and service performance

- Delivery of Local Area and Government priorities and organisational commitments, as specified in the Solent Freeport business case and MoU agreed with HM Government, the Accountable Body and billing authorities in freeport tax sites
- Fostering and leading transformational change in the Solent Freeport area, within an extremely challenging economic, social and fiscal environment
- Science, research and innovation, and the key role these can play in making the Solent Freeport fit for the future
- Maintaining the programme portfolio in line with the Board's decisions
- Taking remedial action where necessary in accordance with the scheme of delegation and informing the board of significant changes where they occur
- Providing lead executive support to the Operations and Delivery committee, delivering operational performance for Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd in accordance with the board requirement and having due regard for the requirements as set out under the National Local Growth Assurance framework
- Working with the accountable body, Portsmouth City Council, to ensure that robust operational planning and financial control systems are in place
- Closely monitoring the operating and financial results against plans and budgets
- Establishing and providing leadership to the Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd Executive Team
- Managing the Solent Freeport Consortium Limited from day to day.



# Key working relationships

<b>INTERNAL</b>	<b>EXTERNAL</b>
The Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd Chair	Commissioners and Regulators in HM Government (civil servants and Ministers)
The Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd Board	Senior representatives from HMT and DLUHC and other Government Departments including HMRC, DfT, DfE, DIT, BEIS and Treasury
The Chair of FRAC and FRAC members	Local MPs and Ministers of State
The Chair of RENCOM and RENCOM members	Local government leaders and public sector senior representatives, elected members and Chief Executives, the New Forest National Park Chair and Chief Executive, the Solent LEP Chair and Chief Executive and authorities responsible for security including Hampshire Constabulary
The Chair of ODC and ODC members	
The Chair of the Retained Rates Investment committee and members	
Members and Associate Members of the Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd	Chief Executives/ Leaders in academia, including Universities, Further Education and Schools
CFO of the Accountable Body and s151 officer	Private sector landowners in the designated tax sites, custom site operators, wider private sector organisations, including senior business leaders, business representative groups and Maritime UK Solent
Accountable Body Monitoring officer and Head of Legal	Leads for key commissions (including consultancy support for Business Case development)
Company Secretary	Chief Executives in other Freeports and the Freeport SRO forum
	Social Enterprise and Civil Society Leaders

The Chief Executive will need to build effective and exceptional internal working relationships, in particular, with the Chair, the Non-Executive Directors, and the Board as a whole, in order to provide leadership and direction to the Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd.

Other key relationships will be with the Office of the Chief Executive and programme team when established, the Accountable Body, the billing authorities, the tax sites and custom site operators, regulatory and security bodies and nationally with HM Government. The post holder will play a key and pivotal role in the motivation and leadership of any future staff.

The most important external relationships are with the private sector, central government, local government, academia, the New Forest National Park, Solent LEP and the public sector and their representatives. The Chief Executive will also foster strong relationships and be highly credible with the wider business community, its staff, leadership and professional bodies. This is a high profile role and effective media relationships will also be critical.

# Leadership

- Provide exemplary leadership, acting as a role model for our values and behaviours
- Inspire senior leadership across the Solent Freeport coalition by being a role-model for the Freeport's ethics, values, behaviours and drive to succeed
- Establish the Office of the Chief Executive and programme management team with a shared sense of purpose and a united direction
- Spot Executive talent and nurture development of leadership potential.

# Strategy

- As a member of the Board and lead Executive, review and evaluate present and future opportunities, threats and risks in the external environment; and current and future strengths, weaknesses and risks relating to the company and the Solent Freeport area
- Determining strategic options and, working with the Board, selecting those to be pursued, and deciding the means to implement and support them
- Determining the business strategies and plans that underpin the Solent Freeport Business Case and General Corporate Strategy
- Ensuring that the company's organisational structure and capability are appropriate for implementing the chosen strategies
- Determining the company's appetite for risk and to engage in the process of backing a robust risk management programme focused on the company's business and the area(s) of its activities.

# Operations

- Ensure that the organisation has in place (directly or through partnerships) appropriate mechanisms for the effective delivery of Government policy on Freeports to ensure that the organisation is competitive and successful
- Develop and implement robust, appropriate and effective organisational structures and procedures to ensure the efficient delivery of the Solent Freeport and the management process
- Ensure that there are strong and effective systems for performance management in place focused on continuous improvement in the delivery of the Solent Freeport
- Understand the legal position in relation to all key aspects of the business including financial, IT, people, data, intellectual property, governance, health and safety and ensure the policies and procedures are followed effectively.

# Governance and stakeholder relations

- Embed a culture of good governance and transparency
- Ensure the roles and responsibilities of each Board, sub group and committee are both understood and are transparent
- Develop a code of conduct which requires the Nolan Principles to be adopted and which is embedded within the Freeport business, staff and Board
- Working with the Board, ensure that the company has strong business leadership through an independent, private sector Chair
- Display and deliver a strong commitment to diversity
- Lead on the development and publication of the Freeport Assurance Framework to ensure it sets out decision-making processes of the Solent Freeport with clarity, so that local people and stakeholders can check that decisions have been made in line with the appropriate processes and by the correct person or group
- Ensure that internal controls are effective
- Ensure that communications both to and from members and relevant stakeholders are effective
- Understand and take into account the interests of members and relevant stakeholders
- Monitor relations with members and relevant stakeholders by the gathering and evaluation of appropriate information
- Promote the goodwill and support of members and relevant stakeholders.

## Line Management

- The post-holder will be responsible for establishing appropriate executive support capacity for the company. This will require ensuring any future staff are led, developed and supported to deliver the functions which underpin the effectiveness of the Solent Freeport Consortium Limited in a co-ordinated manner.

## Improvement

- Lead a continuous improvement culture, continually identifying and encouraging others to identify improvements to the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of the work of Solent Freeport Consortium Ltd
- Lead a culture in which learning and development is encouraged at all levels and in all employee groups
- Lead a culture of ideas and innovation for all levels and in all staff groups
- Actively identify, explore and promote external sources of innovation and best practice in a way that engages the Solent Freeport board. -

# Person Specification

The successful candidate must be able to demonstrate that they:

- Have a degree or equivalent and a qualification in a management-related discipline
- Have detailed knowledge and understanding of regional economic development and local growth government policy and implementation
- Have a good understanding of the Solent economy and an exceptional understanding of local government politics and structure.
- Have a strong knowledge of Freeport Policy and, ideally, experience working within the Freeport Policy Framework
- Have significant senior leadership experience, including experience at Board Director level
- Have significant experience working on capital programmes and delivery of new development opportunities
- Display a total commitment to serving the public and private sector and, in particular, the local growth ambitions of the Solent Freeport
- Are an inspirational and transformational leader, who has a versatility of style, and who can operate in a complex system
- Are an incredibly skilled communicator, who can operate across a wide and complex set of stakeholders and draw others into the vision for the Solent Freeport
- Have the ability to simplify complexity
- Display exceptional levels of Intelligence, decisiveness and courage
- Have high levels of personal and professional resilience
- Have a strong and unrivalled track record in senior management leading the development of strategy and delivery within the public or private sector
- Have led complex organisations and teams in a partnership or collaborative framework
- Experience of corporate governance frameworks
- Senior level experience in leading the allocation of public funds and managing complex finance and funding mechanisms including revolving funds, joint ventures, pooled investment funds or tax incremental finance
- An ability to identify and deliver complex change and improvement
- High quality decision-making in complex environments
- Conflict management and resolution skills, displaying high levels of emotional intelligence, remaining calm and resilient under pressure
- High quality influencing and negotiating skills tailored to diverse internal and external audiences
- An exceptional ability to hold others to account
- An exceptional commitment to achieving consistently high standards of performance
- A very high level of financial and commercial acumen
- Personal and professional development as a result of feedback, reflection and experiential learning.

# Annexe A - Corporate Structure for SFCL

The Board of The Solent Freeport Consortium Limited is the ultimate decision making body within the Solent Freeport structure. The Board have established a number of committees to support their work throughout the delivery phase as shown in the below structure diagram.

The Solent Freeport Consortium Board will have overall responsibility for all committees highlighted in blue. In line with the Government's requirement for the Solent Freeport to build on existing architecture in the area other partners in the coalition will take the lead responsibility for delivery of forums underneath the Operations and Delivery Committee. This includes the customs site operations groups which the port support and Solent LEP for the Skills, Innovation, Net Zero and Trade and Investment programmes.

It is anticipated that the governance structure will continue to develop throughout the evolution of the Solent Freeport and the Board will consider any future enhancements to the organisational structure within the context of their commitment to complying with best practice in terms of governance (as set out in the UK Corporate Governance Code).

