

UKSPF

PROJECT #10

DEVELOPING A SKILLS ACTION PLAN



AT A GLANCE

- Creation of a skills action plan for the New Forest
- Delivered by New Forest District Council.
BusinessSupport@nfdc.gov.uk
- £50,000 budget

AIM

The Solent Freeport is expected to bring about significant investment in skills training across the region. The New Forest skills plan will look to ensure that funds are utilised in ways which benefit our residents.

APPROACH

A Steering group has been established to progress our skills work. Members of the group include Hampshire County Council, New Forest District Council, Brockenhurst College, Totton College, Community First, Solent University (Solent IOT), University of Southampton, Solent Business and Skills Solutions, and the New Forest National Park Authority.

In September 2024, the Steering Group appointed EKOS to support our work. Phase 1 of this commission will put together the strongest possible evidence base to make the case for local solutions to be supported – where it is clear that the New Forest has challenges which will not be picked up by policies set at a regional level. Phase 2 of the work will support the development of a skills action plan.

PROPOSED OUTCOME

The skills plan will identify those areas where residents in the New Forest face unique challenges in terms of accessing skills and employment.

Issues under consideration will include:

- The fact that we have isolated communities where those most excluded have additional challenges because of that isolation.
- A very high proportion of our businesses are small and medium enterprises (SMEs). This has an impact on apprenticeship and T Level take up as SMEs are less likely to employ staff through this route.
- SMEs tend to be less nimble in terms of recruitment, so we lose skilled New Forest residents to employers elsewhere.