

## Portfolio holder decision – Leader – 12 March 2025

### Solent Freeport Outside Body and Leader Delegations

Purpose	For Decision
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	This report deals with the Leader’s proposed appointment of the Deputy Leader to the Solent Freeport Board, and the subsequent changes to the Leader’s Scheme of Delegation arising from this appointment.
Recommendation(s)	<b>1. That the Deputy Leader (Cllr Steve Davies) be appointed to the Solent Freeport Consortium Board, in place of the Leader of the Council.</b> <b>2. That the revised Leader’s Scheme of Delegation at Appendix 1, be approved.</b>
Reasons for recommendations	<p>To enable the implementation of the Leader’s proposed changes to her scheme of delegation, principally enabling the Deputy Leader of the Council to take responsibility for the Solent Freeport role.</p> <p>This will ensure that the Leader of the Council has capacity to dedicate the necessary time to other corporate priorities and the increasing amount of work required by the Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation agenda.</p>
Wards	All / Waterside Wards
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Jill Cleary – Leader
Strategic Directors	Alan Bethune, Corporate Resources and Transformation (S151)
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## **Introduction and background**

1. This report sets out the proposal by the Leader to appoint the Deputy Leader to the Solent Freeport Board, the reasons for the decision and the subsequent changes to the Leader's Scheme of Delegation arising from this appointment.
2. In addition to the amendment giving effect to the appointment of the Deputy Leader to the Solent Freeport Board, further minor amendments to the Leader's Scheme of Delegation are proposed to ensure alignment with the Council's current staffing structures.
3. The decision takes into account the increasing workload generated by the Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation agenda and the need to increase capacity to support this and ensure sufficient capacity to support the Solent Freeport Board.

## **Solent Freeport**

4. The Solent Freeport governance arrangements provide for a seat on the Solent Freeport Board, to which the proposed appointment of the Deputy Leader is made via this report. The Leader also currently takes up a position on the Finance, Resources and Audit Committee, and the Deputy Leader will occupy this position as a result of occupying the board position. The Freeport governance arrangements also include a seat on the Solent Freeport Retained Rates Investment Committee, which is held by the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate.

## **Corporate plan priorities**

5. The recommendations ensure that appropriate portfolio holder capacity is in place to promote the delivery of all corporate plan priorities, particularly maintaining those in the Place and Prosperity, with the emergence of the new Devolution and Reorganisation agenda which will require significant input and focus of the Leader.

## **Options appraisal**

6. The reasons for the preferred option are set out above.
7. One alternative would be for the Leader to continue in her role as the Board member. This option has been rejected due to the need for the Leader to focus on other pressing and time consuming issues. Another alternative would be for the Leader to nominate another member of the Cabinet but the Deputy Leader appointment ensures that the Board representative has sufficient standing and authority to continue the New Forest presence on the Board of the Freeport and will clearly be seen as the representative of the Leader.

### **Consultation undertaken**

8. There is no requirement for the Leader to consult on the appointments she wishes to make to the Cabinet or to external bodies. She has consulted with the relevant officers to ensure the decision can be effectively made and is lawful and constitutional.

### **Financial and resource implications**

9. There are no financial implications arising from the report. The recommendations support the alignment of appropriate resources across the responsibilities of cabinet portfolio holders.

### **Legal implications**

10. The Leader is entitled to appoint the Deputy Leader to the Freeport Board, both in law and constitutionally. By signing this decision record the Leader will be making the formal decision which can then be implemented.

### **Risk assessment**

11. Whilst a formal risk assessment is not required in respect of the appointment of Members to outside bodies, the options appraisal above sets out why no change might present the risk of the Leader's capacity being stretched too thinly across key council priorities.

### **Environmental / Climate and nature implications**

12. None arising directly from this report.

### **Equalities implications**

13. None arising directly from this report.

### **Crime and disorder implications**

14. None arising directly from this report.

### **Data protection/ Information governance/ ICT implications**

15. None arising directly from this report.

### **Portfolio holder endorsement**

16. I have agreed to the recommendations of this report.

Signed: CLLR JILL CLEARY

Dated: 12 March 2025

**Appendices:**

Appendix 1 – Leader’s Scheme of Delegation

**Background Papers:**

None.

Date on which notice given of this Decision – 12 March 2025  
Last date for call in – 19 March 2025