

Business South Annual Conference – *Shaping Tomorrow Together*

Thursday 5th November 2026

Hilton Southampton – Utilita Bowl, West End, Southampton, SO30 3XH

- 08:30 Mayoral Candidates Meet and Greet
Badge pick-up, refreshments and connections
- 09:30 Welcome – **Emily Hudson**, BBC Journalist
- 09:40 **Leigh-Sara Timberlake**, Group CEO, Business South –
Celebrating 20 Years and what is to come.
- 09:50 Keynote – **Trevor Williams**, Author, Academic, and former Chief
Economist for Lloyds Bank
- 10:20 Defence & Aviation: Driving Growth, Innovation and Opportunity
hosted by Womble Bond Dickinson

Jeremy Greaves – Head of Strategic Engagement, Airbus

Hugh Griffiths – Former CEO & Founder, Inzpire Ltd; Chair,
Maiar Ltd; Former Cabinet Office SME Panel Member

Chrissie Miller – Head of Defence & External Business, NATS

Sir Julian Young – Retired RAF Air Marshal; Former Chief
Engineer; Former President, Institution of Engineering

James Knowles – Vice Chancellor, Southampton Solent
University

Discussion themes will include

- *The economic importance of the sector to the region*
- *Skills, talent and future workforce*
- *Supply chain and opportunities for business & collaboration*
- *Innovation and technology*

- 10:50 **Joe Gowers**, Action Group Co-ordinator, Business South –
Action Group round up and what's next.

AGENDA

20 YEARS
of our history

11:00 Skills round table workshop at each table, led by the University of Portsmouth.

Discussion topics for each table to work together include

- *What skills will businesses need over the next 3–5 years?*
- *Where are the biggest skills gaps right now?*
- *How can businesses shape the local talent pipeline?*
- *How do we make skills investment work better for employers?*
- *What should we collectively do next?*

11:30 Break and connections

12:00 **Emily Hudson** – welcome back

12:05 Parliamentary speaker or A UK Mayor – to be announced

12:20 **Ruth Adams**, CEO, Hampshire & The Solent Combined County Authority – An overview of the Combined Authority's roles and responsibilities and how this will benefit the businesses and the region.

12:35 **Nicola Millard**, Principal Innovation Partner, BT - Humans Still Required: Reimagining the future world of work

13:00 Round up and close Emily Hudson

13:00 Lunch and connections

14:00 Ends

