

Torbay Council representative on the Heart of the South West Joint Committee

Update to the Council held on 18 October 2018

The third meeting of the Heart of the South West Joint Committee was held on 5 October 2018 at Taunton. The following points provide an outline of the issues discussed at the meeting.

Local Industrial Strategy

- Heart of the South West has been selected to be in Wave 2 of developing Local Industrial Strategies (LIS). The LIS would naturally evolve from the Partnership's existing Productivity Strategy and there is a need to the close collaboration between the Joint Committee and the LEP as it is developed.
- The LIS will need to demonstrate that we are making difference and define our Unique Selling Point.
- We will be working with Government for approval of the LIS by June 2019. The Joint Committee has a key role as a stakeholder in that journey, with the next challenge being prioritising our transformational opportunities.

Productivity Strategy Delivery Plan

- Given that inclusive growth and improved productivity will not happen naturally, there needs to be intervention to help business create improvements in productivity and wealth. The first version of the Delivery Plan was presented to the Joint Committee covering a wide scope of opportunities. The Delivery Plan will be an internal document which enables the Partnership to co-ordinate delivery across key priorities. It outlines existing work and that required in the future.
- The Delivery Plan is broadly divided into two sections – a “core offer” concentrating on business support and skills available to all people and businesses in the region; and a section focussing on the opportunities available in Devon and Somerset.
- Currently the Delivery Plan covers half of the opportunities previously agreed by the Joint Committee: Digital (Photonics); Advanced Engineering (Marine; Nuclear); High-value Tourism; and Farming, Food and Fishing.
- Content around core infrastructure and housing as well as on the other opportunities is progressing with a view to updating the Plan in early 2019.

Communications Document

- A communications document has been developed which is an extract from the Delivery Plan. It is more succinct than the Delivery Plan and is targeted at MPs, Ministers and Officials as part of continuing to raise the profile of the Heart of the

South West ahead of the 2018 Budget, the 2019 Spending Review and the anticipated launch of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

- The document will be shared with a covering letter setting out the Partnership's current "asks":
 - Recognition of the Great South West (GSW) Partnership in the Autumn Budget Statement together with a commitment to co-design a Rural Deal - a 'Rural Productivity Partnership' with GSW following publication of Rural Productivity Commission Report earlier in the year
 - Strategic Connectivity
 - Confirmation of Sub National Transport Body/ (ies)
 - Peninsular Rail priorities – e.g. commitment for funding Dawlish
 - Funding commitment for A303 improvements
 - Superfast Broadband and 5G trials
 - A38/M5 Growth Corridor study by National Infrastructure Commission
 - Transforming Cities and Strength in Places bids agreed
 - EU Fisheries underspend proposal: an offer to work with Government to develop a proposal to utilise the projected underspend in the current EU Fisheries budget.
 - Nuclear Sector Deal (and others specifically Maritime and Defence) to have clear place-based elements/funding, recognising the HotSW opportunity in these
 - LIS specific: encourage joint working with West of England Combined Authority on Wave 2 Local Industrial Strategies particularly around connectivity and smart specialisations e.g. Nuclear and Aerospace

Housing Summit

- A brief resume of the Housing Summit held on 28 September 2018 at Exeter was provided. Homes England had attended the Summit and two primary offers for the South West around investment and land acquisition/disposal. Taking the learning from the Summit, the Partnership will now be developing a bespoke package of asks and offers to Government.

Governance

- In the light of the Government's announcements from the LEP Review, it is the intention to revisit the role, function and support for the Joint Committee. There has been a natural evolution of the strong and flexible relationship between the Joint

Committee and the LEP over the last two years. The Joint Committee will continue to have a key role overseeing and delivering elements of the Productivity Strategy that don't fall under the Local Industrial Strategy. There will be a recommendation to the constituent authorities to delegate authority to the Joint Committee to agree the Councils' input into the development and approval of the LIS. This is urgent given the timetable for the development of the LIS.

Brexit Risks and Opportunities Group

- BROG have been looking at deal and no deal scenarios. The impact on local government is in three areas – services, local economies, and society. The Group is keen for the Government to share their risk assessments so we can plan properly as there is concern is that there may be a shift in focus to local government (for example, in a no deal scenario the Government expects Trading Standards and Environmental Health to 'step up' but capacity in these areas is down to the bone).
- HotSW BROG are working with Cornwall on issues of common interest including a joint response to the Agriculture Bill.

Transport for the SW Peninsula

- Good progress has been made to establishing our Sub-national Transport Body (STB) with the first formal meeting on 8 November 2018. There are five councils involved (Cornwall, Devon, Plymouth, Torbay and Somerset) and we are looking to establish close links with the neighbouring Western Gateway STB. Key functions will be to develop a sub-regional Transport Strategy for the area and to influence Government thinking and policy on strategic transport issues. The STB's initial status will be an informal, non-statutory partnership with a view to accessing Government money this year to develop a business case to establish a statutory body as soon as is practicable.