

# Heart of the South West

## Stakeholder briefing – May 2016

The Heart of the South West Partnership, consisting of 19 local authorities, two national parks, three Clinical Commissioning Groups and the Local Enterprise Partnership, submitted their detailed [Prospectus for Productivity](#) to Government, signalling that it is ready to enter negotiations towards an ambitious deal across Devon and Somerset.



At their recent meeting, partners confirmed their commitment to turn the Prospectus into a draft devolution deal as soon as practicable, whilst ensuring that there is sufficient time for it to be debated by individual Councils or Boards.

The partnership is pressing for a meeting with Greg Clark, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to push forward with this next phase.

Three pieces of work were agreed at the last meeting:

- **Draft deal document** – press Government to enter into a detailed negotiation process and produce a draft deal based on the Prospectus. Partners are keen that this is developed as soon as possible whilst ensuring there is a period of debate within individual Councils, Boards and with key stakeholders.
- **A governance review** - considering **all** options for decision-making structures under devolution. At this stage partners are not ruling out the option of a directly-elected Mayor, and this has been shared with Government officials. The review has commenced and will run along the same timeline as the draft deal document.
- **Productivity Plan** – a longer term strategic document which will bring academic rigour to the evidence base for change. It will allow time to consult on a single vision for improving productivity levels across the area, and produce a delivery plan that will enable us to not only deliver on any initial deal but put us in a strong position to negotiate subsequent deals, following the model in Greater Manchester.

Heart of the South West partners are committed to the HotSW geography which matches that of the LEP, and in moving forward with a single voice to try and secure new powers and control of funding from Government that will allow us to drive up productivity levels across our area.

We are aware this is a long term ambition. The fundamental reforms we are looking for will take many years to implement and to deliver results, however by working together; we have already made significant progress. The strength of the Prospectus is the ability to positively impact on the population of 1.7m people who could benefit from improvements to infrastructure, housing, employment, skills, business support and health systems, if powers and funding are drawn down to a local level.

More devolution of power and money from Westminster is seen as crucial to closing the region's productivity gap and allowing local people to benefit from a thriving economy. Productivity levels in

the South West are currently running at less than 80 per cent of the national average and we know that the UK already lags behind the rest of the developed world.

The Prospectus promises that if local partners have greater freedom to act, by 2030 they will:

- Create more jobs and raise productivity levels
- Address the housing supply issue across the area
- Achieve higher wage levels
- Improve opportunities for young people through apprenticeships and career opportunities in existing and emerging high tech industries
- Improve the skills and qualifications of the workforce and become a centre of excellence for skills development
- Address under capacity and make improvements to strategic road and rail links
- Secure 100% superfast broadband coverage
- Support the changes to our health and care system by galvanising and aligning resources across the whole system

The partnership awaits a response from Government to enter negotiations which will be the start of this once-in-a-generation opportunity for the area.

If you have any further queries or questions please do not hesitate to contact the Heart of the South West Programme Management Office on [devolutionpmo@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:devolutionpmo@somerset.gov.uk)