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To: The Chair and Members of the Heart of the  
South West (HotSW) Local Enterprise  
Partnership (LEP) Joint Scrutiny Committee

County Hall  
Topsham Road  
Exeter  
Devon  
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Date: 14 October 2020

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**HEART OF THE SOUTH WEST (HOTSW) LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP  
(LEP) JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Thursday, 22nd October, 2020

A meeting of the Heart of the South West (HotSW) Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Joint Scrutiny Committee is to be held on the above date at 2.15 pm at County Hall to consider the following matters.

Phil Norrey  
Chief Executive

**A G E N D A**

- 1 Apologies

**PART I - OPEN COMMITTEE**

- 2 Minutes (Pages 1 - 4)

Minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2019, attached.

- 3 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

Items which in the opinion of the Chair should be considered at the meeting as matters of urgency.

**MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION OR REVIEW**

4 COVID-19 Recovery Plans (Pages 5 - 16)

A Report of the Chief Executive of the Local Enterprise Partnership, attached.

5 Getting Building Fund projects

An update from the Chief Executive of the Local Enterprise Partnership, on the Getting Building Fund projects announced for Heart of the South West.

Further information can be found at:

<https://heartofswlep.co.uk/news/getting-building-fund-projects-announced-for-heart-of-the-south-west/>

6 Government Updates

An update from the Area Lead for the Heart of the South West, Cities and Local Growth Unit.

**MATTERS FOR INFORMATION**

7 Scrutiny Work Programme

In accordance with previous practice, Scrutiny Committees are requested to review the list of forthcoming business and determine which items are to be included in the Work Programme.

The Scrutiny Work Programme can be found at:

<https://new.devon.gov.uk/democracy/committee-meetings/scrutiny-committees/scrutinywork-programme/>

8 Dates of Future Meetings

Please note that dates of future meetings will be included in the Devon County Council meetings calendar:

<https://democracy.devon.gov.uk/mgCalendarMonthView.aspx?GL=1&bcr=1>

All will take place virtually, unless otherwise stated.

11 Feb 2021 2.15 pm

17 Jun 2021 2.15 pm

21 Oct 2021 2.15 pm

10 Feb 2022 2.15 pm

**PART II - ITEMS WHICH MAY BE TAKEN IN THE ABSENCE OF PRESS AND PUBLIC ON THE GROUNDS THAT EXEMPT INFORMATION MAY BE DISCLOSED**

NIL

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## HEART OF THE SOUTH WEST (HOTSW) LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP (LEP) JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

17 October 2019

Present:-

Councillors J Brook (Chair), R Hosking, J Brazil, G Derrick and Spencer

Apologies:-

Councillors R Bloxham, M Lewis and J Morris

Members attending in accordance with Standing Order 25

Councillor J Hodgson

\* **22**      **Election of Chair**

RESOLVED that Councillor J Brook be elected Chair for the ensuing year.

\* **23**      **Election of Vice Chair**

RESOLVED that Councillor R Williams be elected Vice Chair for the ensuing year.

\* **24**      **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2019 be signed as a correct record.

\* **25**      **Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

There was no item raised as a matter of urgency.

\* **26**      **Joint Scrutiny LEP Review**

(Councillor Hodgson attended in accordance with Standing Order 25(2) and spoke to this item).

The Committee considered the Report of the Head of Scrutiny reviewing the effectiveness of the Heart of the South West (HotSW) Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Joint Scrutiny Committee, following a year since the Committee was established. The Report captured the views of Members as well as canvassing National County and Unitary Councils to understand their Scrutiny arrangements for the LEP. Initial views appeared to suggest that the current arrangements were having some impact, however they had further to go, and that HotSW LEP Scrutiny arrangements were more developed than in many other authorities.

The Report proposed some changes to arrangements to help strengthen the transparency and quality of Scrutiny, but suggested that the current set up, membership and frequency of meetings was maintained. Any substantive changes agreed in principle by the HotSW LEP would require approval of the constituent authorities and would potentially require wider consideration across the Heart of the South West Councils.

Key areas that Members thought had gone well included:

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HEART OF THE SOUTH WEST (HOTSW) LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP (LEP) JOINT  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
17/10/19

- Masterclasses and information – with Members having a much better understanding of the work of the LEP and their strategy for investment;
- the technical logistics, support and running of the meetings; and,
- ample opportunity for Members to speak at meetings.

Identified areas for improvement included:

- a greater focus on the Local Industrial Strategy and the value for money that the LEP afforded;
- analysing practical, active items where Scrutiny could add value including financial outcomes,
- looking at real examples of organisations that had received funding, as well as those who had been rejected; and,
- focussing on producing recommendations that were relevant, timely and useful for LEP decision-making.

Members' discussion points with officers included:

- the endorsement of additional considerations, such as webcasting and public participation, to improve the transparency and openness of the Committee, in line with Devon County Council procedures;
- allowing members of the public the opportunity to express or raise points with the LEP, that can be further investigated by the Committee;
- the benefit of conducting Task Group reviews into specific areas of the LEP, such as the review of current projects and value for money the LEP provides;
- the challenge of actively scrutinising the LEP when funds had already been allocated and projects begun;
- the need for Scrutiny to have sight of policies before they are agreed and implemented by the LEP, to add value and effectiveness to the governance process;
- the requirement of the Committee to scrutinise strategic documents and the cost effectiveness of the LEP;
- the Annual Meeting of the LEP Board would take place on Monday 4 November at the Riviera Centre, Torbay; and
- Committee Members would have sight of the draft LIS for comment to be included as feedback to the next HotSW Joint Committee in November 2019.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Derrick, **SECONDED** by Councillor Brook and

## **RESOLVED**

- (a) that the progress of the Heart of the South West (HotSW) Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Joint Scrutiny Committee be noted and current arrangements be continued;
- (b) that the terms of reference of the Committee be amended as outlined in Part 4 of the Report, to include proactive Scrutiny of the Local Industrial Strategy;
- (c) that future meetings be webcast to continue to increase transparency of the Committee;
- (d) that public participation be adopted at future Committee meetings in line with Devon County Council's public participation scheme;
- (e) that the Committee write to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to express serious concerns over the confidential nature of the Local Industrial Strategy, preventing the Committee from undertaking public scrutiny;
- (f) that work continued to improve the effectiveness of the Joint LEP Scrutiny Committee; and,



- (g) that any changes proposed would be subject to the approval of the Constituent Authorities and may require wider consideration across the Heart of the South West Councils.

\* **27** **Digital Activity**

(Councillor Hodgson attended in accordance with Standing Order 25(2) and spoke to this item).

The Committee received a presentation on the Heart of the South West Digital Strategy, highlighting the area's ambition to be a Digital Leader in both a rural and urban context. This was against a backdrop of national sub-regional and local policies, all of which placed considerable emphasis on digital transformation and the importance of technology.

Considerable investment had already been made to extend the availability of faster and reliable broadband across the HotSW area. It had been recognised that this needed to go further, however the strategy validated the investment as the cornerstone to a flourishing and competitive economy.

The 2018 Tech Nation report estimated that the value of UK's Digital Tech economy was worth £184bn. Technology was also responsible for driving a new wave of innovation – particularly in support of environmental sustainability through smart solutions deployed on a large scale. This could also be seen in the public sector, where digital transformation was driving efficiency and supporting the delivery of new services, increasing productivity, helping businesses to grow, supporting inclusive communities, protecting the environment and attracting investment.

The Strategy informed a set of priorities framed around:

- Digitally skilled people;
- Digitally driven growth;
- Digitally integrated places; and
- Digitally connected communities.

The Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) programme had improved broadband coverage – connecting over 290,000 premises in its first phase and stimulating the private sector to provide greater levels of connectivity in commercial areas. However, coverage of both fixed line broadband and mobile connectivity remained patchy and the Strategy acknowledged the need to tackle the digital divide across the area.

Members discussion points included:

- the need to push for greater broadband connectivity in rural areas, to help support the growth of local businesses;
- there was an increasing number of businesses choosing to locate to more rural areas due to better connectivity in certain areas;
- the take up of superfast broadband was just below the national average in Devon and would require further marketing and resources to increase this;
- the need to analyse figures of take up rates across the county to be able to see where it is working, and which areas require further work and support;
- being able to access and connect hard to reach groups and whether funding had been utilised to achieve this; and,
- mobile coverage had improved but was still patchy in some areas.

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*(The presentation is attached to the minutes)*

\* **28**      **Scrutiny Work Programme**

In considering the work programme, it was **RESOLVED** that the work programme be agreed with the addition of items added at the meeting:

- The Comprehensive Spending Review
- Progress on Inclusive Growth
- Local Industrial Strategy (to include climate change strategy)
- White paper on regional developments

\* **29**      **Dates of Future Meetings**

Dates of Future Meetings were noted as:

Thursday 13 February 2020 @ 2.15pm  
Thursday 18 June 2020 @ 2.15 pm  
Thursday 22 October 2020 @ 2.15 pm  
Thursday 11 February 2021 @ 2.15 pm

**\*DENOTES DELEGATED MATTER WITH POWER TO ACT**

The Meeting started at 2.15 pm and finished at 4.05 pm

## **HOTSW SCRUTINY Committee LEP Chief Executive's Report**

### **1. Introduction**

The purpose of this report is to:

- Set out the LEPs Route Map to Recovery in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic including an invitation for A Government official to attend
- Share the key proposals of the LEPs Local Industrial Strategy - to deliver clean and inclusive growth
- Set out the LEPS response to the Chancellor's consultation on CSR

### **2. Covid-19 Route Map to Recovery**

It is important to recognise that whilst the incidence of the pandemic has been comparatively low across our region the economic impact has been stark.

The impact is also variable across the area affecting places and sectors differently.

The LEP published its Route Map to Recovery - <https://heartofswlep.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Heart-of-the-SW-C-19-Route-Map-to-Recovery-June-2020.pdf> on June 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020 which set out our challenges, our priorities and next steps: As well as working with our Local Recovery Plans, the LEP has identified 2 specific pieces of work to progress.

- a. To develop our pipeline into a series of prioritised interventions (to feed into the CSR)
- b. To bring together the actions from the Productivity Plan, LIS and Recovery Plans into a single work programme.

The coordination of the response to economic implications across HOTsw are overseen by the HEROG group, chaired by the CEO at Devon CC and attended by representatives (public and private) from across the area as well as Government officials. This group is also the response group for Brexit and provides briefings to the HOTSW joint-committee. This includes oversight of the ongoing evidence base – through Oxford analytics.

In addition, the LRFs (Devon and Cornwall and Avon) have specific responsibilities and most local areas have developed local recovery plans.

Obviously many of the responses have been nationally applied eg lockdowns, job retentions scheme, CBILS, CLBILS. BBiLS and Future Fund through British Business Bank, Emergency grant schemes for business administered through Local Authorities.

LEPs have been integral to the (economic) response to Covid-19 phase providing:

- a) Government accredited advice and guidance to businesses through the Growth Hub;
- b) delivering local grants eg Kickstart and local response initiatives such as Bounceback Digital, Jobs and Skills launchpad, Better Business for All guidelines
- c) Securing £35.4m Getting Building Fund (shovel-ready projects to be delivered by Jan 2022) targeted at Green Recovery, Work Hubs and individual projects – summary projects can be viewed at <https://heartofswlep.co.uk/news/getting-building-fund-projects->

# Agenda Item 4

[announced-for-heart-of-the-south-west/#:~:text=HotSW%20LEP%20received%20%C2%A335.4,be%20complete%20by%20March%202022.](#)

- d) Working with local partners, stakeholders and key officials on particular issues affecting the HotSw area

Following the publication of the Route Map to Recovery, many local areas have published their own recovery plans. In bringing forward a HOtSw wide plan the LEP has agreed in addition to the actions above to:

Develop sector plans to set out the issues and possible solutions for hardest hit sectors;

A building back better document, using the LIS as the underpinning evidence base to identify the key transformational activities to be delivered as part of recovery.

### **3. Local Industrial Strategy**

The HOtSW Local Industrial Strategy was submitted to Government in October 2020 following approval from the LEP Board and joint committee. Although it was discussed at length with officials from a range of Government departments and a final text was confirmed in the early Autumn but the election meant that that there was delay in signing off.

The LEP Board reviewed the position and agreed that the LIS could be shared but would not be published until it has been fully signed-off with Government. Following the election, it has done a further round of discussion with Government but we are unsure of their current status.

Subsequently, and in line with the continued uncertainty the LEP Board has agreed to publish the LIS as part of its recovery plan to build back better.

In October 2018, the Government in its guidance, Local Industrial Strategies – Policy Prospectus <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-industrial-strategies-policy-prospectus/local-industrial-strategies-policy-prospectus> identified the following key requirements of Local Industrial Strategies.

Local Industrial Strategies will be long-term, based on clear evidence and aligned to the National Industrial Strategy.

They should set out clearly defined priorities for how cities, towns and rural areas will maximise their contribution to UK productivity. Local Industrial Strategies will allow places to make the most of their distinctive strengths. They will better coordinate economic policy at the local level and ensure greater collaboration across boundaries.

Subject to Local Industrial Strategies being agreed in places by government, they will help to inform local choices, prioritise local action and, where appropriate, help to inform decisions at the national level.

They will also provide strategic overview which will inform Local Enterprise Partnerships' approach to any future local growth funding deployed through them. In conjunction with the key reforms set out in the Strengthened Local Enterprise Partnerships, Local Industrial Strategies will help local areas in England decide on their approach to maximising the long-term impact of the new UK Shared Prosperity

Fund once details of its operation and priorities are announced following the Spending Review.

Government is committed to Local Industrial Strategies so that all places:

- are able to increase productivity and realise their potential: building on well-evidenced and distinctive strengths aligned with the national Industrial Strategy
- set out the spatial impacts of national and local policy across our cities, towns and rural areas: informing priorities and choices and demonstrating how they will allow all communities to contribute to, and benefit from, economic prosperity

Despite the hiatus, LIS' still constitute an important policy tool as they represent a robust and assessed independent analysis of the key strengths of a region notwithstanding that they need to be reviewed in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The HOtSW Local Industrial Strategy delivers a step change in ambition balancing the economy alongside inclusive growth and environmental impact across the whole of the HOtSW area. Once adopted, it will require significant action both locally and nationally if its objectives are to be realised.

#### **4. Working with Government**

LEPs, although delivered and managed locally, are instruments of Government with joint departmental responsibility delivered through the Cities and Local Growth Unit shared between BEIS and MHCLG.

Locally this is overseen through our Relationship Manager Suzanne Bond and Regional Director, Becky Miles.

Oversight of LEPs is through an Annual Performance Review, normally in May/June attended by the Chair of Scrutiny (and reported previously) and more recently a lighter touch mid year review which has just been completed.

One of the specific actions of the mid-year review, followed on from the Scrutiny review recognising the need to clarify the use of scrutiny alongside other review and the joint committee itself.

A Government official has been invited to attend the meeting to discuss with Scrutiny Members including if relevant how LEPs fit into emerging thoughts on a White Paper on Devolution.

#### **5. Response to Chancellor's consultation on CSR (Comprehensive Spending Review)**

The Chancellor announced his intention to deliver a CSR this Autumn and ahead of its publication invited responses through consultation. HOTSWS Leaders submitted a response which is attached for information. The LEP Network also submitted a response on behalf of all LEPs across the England and I would imagine many Local Authorities did likewise.



## Response to CSR 2020 from Heart of the South West LEP

Thank you for the opportunity to respond directly to the CSR. HotSW LEP wanted to highlight some particular concerns and opportunities directly relevant to our local area and economy.

Whilst the overall number of cases of Covid-19 in Heart of the South West is one of the lowest in the country, the economic impact is amongst the most severe of all places. Evidence indicates that the impact is focused disproportionately on coastal and rural areas where there is a greater reliance on the hardest hit sectors. For example, Heart of the SW area has:

- 7 of the 25 local authority areas in England and Wales with the most jobs at risk (source: RSA)
- 8 local authority areas expected to experience a loss in output greater than the national average of 35% (source: Centre for Progressive Policy).

In addition, the mix of businesses in our area mean that the impact is expected to be deeper and longer here, with potentially catastrophic consequences for jobs and livelihood; amongst tourism businesses, turnover is down 56% and a substantial proportion of businesses are operating below capacity and this is before the latest measures announced on 22<sup>nd</sup> September (source: SW DMOs' business survey). Many of our places already have some of the poorest social mobility in the UK partly as a result of rural dispersal but also areas of high social deprivation in our cities and market towns which are therefore directly relevant to the Government's levelling up priorities.

Against this our area has some truly transformational opportunities; unlocking these is a key part of mitigating the impact of the pandemic and laying foundations for future growth.

HotSW is broadly supportive of the priorities identified in the CSR which closely align with our objective **to deliver increased prosperity and productivity through the delivery of clean and inclusive growth.**

You will be aware that the South West Rural Productivity Commission and Evidence Base <https://heartofswlep.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/HotSW-14332-A4-Overview-report-digital-doc-FINAL.pdf> was published in October 2017; the HotSW Productivity Plan – Stepping Up to the Challenge <https://heartofswlep.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/HeartoftheSouthWestProductivityStrategy.pdf> in October 2019; our Local Industrial Strategy was forwarded to Government last Autumn. We published our Covid-19 Route Map to Recovery in June this year <https://heartofswlep.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Heart-of-the-SW-C-19-Route-Map-to-Recovery-June-2020.pdf>.

We will use these to underpin our full recovery plan later in the year working closely with local partners and stakeholders within our area and pan-LEP area, particularly with Cornwall and Dorset as part of the Great South West.

Our response essentially looks to the CSR 2020 to reassert the delivery of sustainable growth through place-led leadership, clarifying the role of LEPs to develop and implement economic recovery plans through partnerships of local public and private sector stakeholders. Recovery plans should set out how they will contribute to a green recovery, deliver progress towards carbon net zero and how they will contribute to levelling-up the economy through inclusive growth and locally led delivery.

Specifically, CSR2020 should assist this by:

- **Local decision-making on innovation and growth:** putting local areas at the centre of setting out how places will reach the UK 2.4% R&D target including extending Enterprise Zone benefits to 2030 and if appropriate support a freeports programme
- **Support business growth:** specifically targeting SMEs, scale-up, start-up and Covid-19 support for business by extending and increasing Growth Hub Funding for the duration of Parliament - to £30m nationally
- **Enable areas to develop local talent:** a further commitment to Skills Advisory Panels, retraining and further devolution of skills funding. This should also include further support for careers hubs, Digital Skills Partnerships and



specifically ensuring funds for adult training and re-training can be deployed flexibly as needed by the local area

- **Support levelling-up:** powering locally led delivery through meeting the manifesto commitment to develop a UKSPF programme to support local and regional recovery, re-committing to a devolved locally led single pot of both capital and revenue funding which as a minimum comprises the following:
  - replacement for EU Structural Funds
  - replacement for historic Local Growth Fund and Regional Growth Fund programmes
  - devolving ESFA funding to the local level to provide skills programmes tailored to local needs and opportunities
- **Recognising some of the particular local dimensions to EU exit:** including supporting food and farming, our ports infrastructure and our ability to trade internationally.
- **Support the hardest hit sectors:** specifically for tourism and hospitality businesses. This would include extending the business rates holiday and bounce back loan repayment terms; maintaining the 5% VAT reduction rate to at least Easter 2021; build on the success of Eat Out to Help Out by ensuring outdoor dining can be maintained through the winter perhaps through a form of 'stay out, seat out' support for businesses for heaters, shelters etc; extend the furlough scheme or similar throughout the winter to retain key staff; review the structure and funding of all DMO's nationally for the long term and in conjunction with Tourism Sector Deal ambitions.

We are also particularly concerned that the issue of potential bad debt from CBILs, CLBils and other Covid-19 loan support programmes likely to accrue in early 2021 is directly addressed in CSR 2020. The support at the moment protects bank balance sheets through Government guarantees but fails to protect businesses whose revenues may still be weak in the context of the economic impact of the pandemic. We believe this issue needs to be addressed head-on with support targeted at the businesses drawing down the loans and not just the banks making them. Some of this could potentially be delivered through a regional bank model.

## **Background**

Self-evidently the Covid-19 crisis has delivered an enormous shock to the economy but this has to be seen in the context of significant changes that were already happening, many of which are now accelerating or becoming more acute;

- The way we transact business and the Future of Work
- The need to develop the skills of the future and retain our best talent
- The productivity challenge and lack of resilience and diversity of the UK economy not least through poor transport and digital infrastructure
- The Climate Emergency
- EU exit and the need to increase trade with other parts of the world
- The need to develop more knowledge economy jobs including commercialising key R&D assets more successfully by creating opportunities

### **Route Map to Recovery**

Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) have had an important role in limiting the economic damage of the pandemic. Growth Hubs have been at the front line of supporting businesses and increasingly issuing grants as well as advice and guidance.

Business led local economic development is an important principle and means that our wealth creators are at the forefront of strategic decision making in terms of restarting, revitalising and growing our economy and that Government priorities are fine-tuned to effectively reflect the diversity of different places. A solution that supports an urban conurbation is unlikely to be wholly similar in a rurally dispersed area. Place-led approaches, for example supporting our beleaguered visitor economy, will give rise to better targeted support at the appropriate size and scale.

Through its Getting Building Fund, Government helped kickstart the recovery with locally generated 'shovel ready' projects and many LEPs have been at the forefront of working with local partners and Local Resilience Forums and planning for economic recovery throughout the disruption.

Whilst far from perfect, LEPs have delivered with minimal overhead compared to their predecessors. Where local leadership has been dispersed, LEPs have often provided coordination across both economic geographies and sectors. While there

remain some LEPs whose boundaries seem to create conflict between political variables and economic functionality, some improvements have been made but should be concluded with, in our view, no overlaps. Partnership working between LEPs – of which many have a good record – should be increased in the context of pan-regional powerhouses throughout the nation where they can deliver clear added value.

However, the powerhouses' proposition and those of LEPs need to be aligned but differentiated. For example strategic transport planning e.g. Midlands Connect, delivering net zero carbon regions, strong Science Powerhouses, Trade and Investment Hubs may be best delivered pan-regionally whilst skills improvements including retraining, local growth programmes, business support, inclusive growth plans and locally led development are better delivered and targeted locally

Through MHCLG annual performance reviews, pretty much all LEPs are confirmed on Governance, Strategy and Delivery as Good or Excellent. There is broad cross-party support confirming their future (alongside MCAs) but LEPs need a clear framework on their future role where the benefits they bring to the table, namely the powerful combination of private sector influence with public sector partnership, are maximised.

Research shows that LEPs are broadly popular, with 60% of local government stakeholders across the UK rating their local LEP to be either good or very good. Many people indicated that some LEPs, mostly those in areas of historical collaboration between public and private sector, had been very successful in establishing an entrepreneurial vision; be it through offering strategic guidance on industrial policy or directing infrastructure funding where it is most needed by the local economy.

The 38 LEPs have developed into substantial operators – some £18.5bn of public money has already been allocated for their input (not always control) – but many think LEPs are only halfway to a success story, as they have yet to fully reflect the localist and devolved rhetoric upon which they were formed.

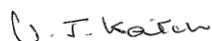
Research indicates that LEPs have been constrained as:

- Much of the funding allocated to LEPs so far has been determined by central priority and is overly ringfenced, is almost entirely capital but has been delivered, with significantly lower transaction costs than previously
- LEPs are often perceived to be sub-optimal and under resourced (although it must be noted that there is little appetite to revert back to previous structures)
- Although some improvements have been made, LEP boards still do not reflect their local business community – women, BME communities, small business representation needs to be increased
- Some LEPs are more equal than others – in terms of funding and performance, LEPs covering areas where there is a precedent of collaboration and political alignment tend to be more advanced than those which arguably do not represent a functional economic geography. LEPs vary significantly in size and scale yet are often resourced the same.
- Where LEPs work alongside Elected Mayors, they have proved useful allies and sometimes a useful foil.
- LEPs need to play a strategic role while maintaining local government's democratic importance. LEPs have evolved at different speeds and devolution has not proceeded at a uniform pace across the country. Emerging further local Government re-organisation may prove distracting in some areas at a time when effective local leadership and delivery is crucial.

These are neither meagre changes, nor are they overly imposing. The recommendations which we have outlined will give LEPs the stability and funding that they need to influence (and grow) local economies sustainably, form pan-regional working to deliver clear added value and bring the private sector wealth creators in what it does best – innovation and entrepreneurialism – to the decision making table.

24 September 2020

As Chair of the Heart of the South West Joint Committee I welcome the LEP's CSR representation. The HotSW Joint Committee and LEP have worked extremely closely together to develop the area's Local Industrial Strategy which uses a robust evidence base to set out how we, together, can deliver clean and inclusive growth for our businesses and our residents, based on the world class opportunities in our area. In doing so Heart of the SW will make a major contribution to the UK's recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. It is essential therefore that this ambition is underpinned by the right resources and local structures to turn opportunity into reality and the LEP's submission is an important part in achieving this.



Val Keitch  
Chair, Heart of the South West Joint Committee

