

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

12 October 2023

Present:-

Councillors J Brook (Chair), R Chesterton, I Roome, Tuffin, Yardy and Read

\* **44**      **Minutes**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 8 June 2023 be signed as a correct record.

\* **45**      **Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

There was no item raised as a matter of urgency.

\* **46**      **LEP Transition**

Members received a report and update from the Chief Executive of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) on LEP Transition.

The update was given in the context of devolution which would see the development of a combined authority consisting of Devon, Plymouth and Torbay.

Initially, it was intended that this combined authority would undertake LEP functions, amongst others. Members heard that it was now proposed that LEPs would transition into upper tier authorities. They were advised in August 2023 to begin developing transition plans for the local area, with decisions on asset transfer aimed to be made by March 2024 and Government ceasing to sponsor LEPs from April 2024.

The report outlined the belief of the LEP Network that many LEPs would not cease to exist after April 2024, as they could transition later or undertake alternative work on behalf of Local Authorities. Further guidance from Government was expected in October 2023.

Points of discussion between members and officers included:

- the implications on LEP staff; and
- the complications of making arrangements for the management of some LEP projects, in particular those whose funds have only recently

been committed, with the programme continuing until April 2025 (after the point at which LEPs are intended to be ceased).

\* **47**      **Impact of LEP across the Heart of the South West area**

Members received a report and update from the Chief Executive of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) on the impact of the LEP across its area. The report highlighted the LEP's progress against its five key priorities which had been set in its 2023-24 workplan.

It was highlighted to members that overall, the LEP had secured over £1 billion of public and private funding into the area, with the Chief Executive of the belief that the net impact of the funding and of the programmes commissioned and undertaken by the LEP were positive. Members heard that the LEP's impact report was yet to be finalised, and its capital programme was not due to finish for another financial year (April 2025), so further work would be needed to analyse the full impact of the LEP's undertakings in the area.

Member discussion centred on the LEP's loan book, the value of which was just over £15 million. As the loan book was due to go to 2029, legal advice would need to be sought by the LEP as to who would represent an appropriate body to undertake responsibility for it.

\* **48**      **Dates of Future Meetings**

The committee had a date for its next meeting scheduled for 8 February 2024, however given the uncertainties around the timescales of devolution and LEP transition, the Chair commented on the future of the scrutiny committee, querying the necessity of future meetings. In response, the committee heard that on current understanding the LEP was likely to still exist in February.

It was therefore agreed to have a meeting in February 2024 (to be rescheduled if required) dependent on progress with devolution and LEP transition.

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

The Meeting started at 2.15 pm and finished at 2.59 pm