

June 2016

What does Devolution mean for the Heart of the South West - and for my own organisation and local authority area?

Since the submission of the Statement of Intent in September 2015, the Heart of the South West Partnership have been working together to try and draw down greater powers, funding and freedoms from Government by securing a Devolution Deal for the area.

There are a number of underlying reasons to pursue a Devolution Deal and Combined Authority as a Heart of the South West Partnership

The partnership has agreed the rationale and benefits for being involved in this process as follows:

- This is a unique opportunity to release powers and funding from Whitehall and enable us to have greater influence to deliver on the priorities we know are important to our sub-region
- It places our Partnership into an exclusive club with the 10 other deal areas and the advantages this can bring in terms of incremental shifts of power from the centre to local areas
- It is the start of an ongoing process that will allow us to build on our track record and credibility for delivery that makes a tangible difference to our communities

By working together as a Partnership we have a stronger voice with Government and greater clarity about our shared priorities. It puts decision-making closer to our communities so that we can plan, sequence and deliver what our areas need over the longer term. It will create a firm foundation for working together and for having conversations at a strategic level with neighbouring areas across the South West.

The benefits across the whole partnership of working together towards a Devolution Deal include access to new powers, for example around:

- **Transport** – for example greater power to influence major infrastructure schemes for road and rail
- **Learning and Skills** – for example, control of the Adult Education Budget to redesign further education
- **Business Support** – having the freedom to join up a range of Government agencies locally to provide a better, more coordinated offer to businesses
- **Employment Support** – the ability to influence commissioning of the new DWP Health and Work Programme
- **Land and Housing** – greater influence over the use or disposal of central Government land and assets, and working with Government on planning reforms

Benefits within my own organisation and for my local area

The main benefit to Devon County Council and the area is the opportunity to have a greater say and influence on local matters which are currently controlled by Whitehall. It provides an opportunity for Devon County Council to deliver or accelerate delivery on many of its strategic objectives. The list of potential benefits has been linked to the Council's Strategic Objectives set out in its Strategic Plan:

Resilient – the County could draw down greater powers, control over funding and influence national agency programmes with regards to preparedness and prevention of flooding. The transfer of more powers from Whitehall gives local people greater control and influence over decisions and therefore strengthens local democracy. The principle of the Partnership is for powers to be delivered at the appropriate geographic level bringing communities closer to the decision making and fits with our aspirations around locality working.

Healthy – a key theme within the Devolution proposals is health, care and wellbeing. The County faces significant financial pressures due to its demographic profile. Working with partners across the Heart of the South West and making the connections between jobs, connectivity, skills and wellbeing will help our population to age well and become healthier. The focus on prosperity within the proposals has a direct relationship with the wellbeing of our communities.

Prosperous – the Partnership is committed to developing a Productivity Plan. This has a direct connection to our aspirations for greater prosperity. Through improved skills and employment prospects for all and in particular our younger population and those furthest from the work force. The Business Support proposals will provide more appropriate assistance to our local business community.

Connected – Through the Devolution Deal the Partnership hopes to pursue a commitment to 100% Broadband coverage across the County. This is a direct link to the ambitions of the County Council. Also having a greater say in infrastructure investment such as road and rail improvement will help improve access to work, training and essential services for our residents.