

## **The future of the Heart of the South West Joint Committee**

### Report of the Head of Economy, Enterprise and Skills

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Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Council before taking effect.

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#### **1) Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Council, in accordance with the Heart of the South West Joint Committee (HotSW JC) inter-authority agreement, gives notice of its intention to withdraw from the HotSW JC and proposes to the HotSW JC that the Joint Committee be dissolved.

#### **2) Background**

In December 2017 the Council approved proposals relating to the formation of a Joint Committee for the Heart of the South West (minute 55 refers). Since its establishment in March 2018 the HotSW JC has worked on issues such as a Local Industrial Strategy, Coastal Productivity Plan, Housing Task Force and regional imbalances. The JC has provided a forum for local authority engagement with the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership (HotSW LEP) and Government.

The HotSW JC has a meeting cycle of two formal meetings a year and it is directly supported and administered by Somerset Council. The HotSW JC's constituent authorities are:

- Dartmoor National Park Authority
- Devon County Council
- East Devon District Council
- Exeter City Council
- Exmoor National Park Authority
- Mid Devon District Council
- North Devon Council
- Plymouth City Council
- Somerset Council
- South Hams District Council
- Torbay Council
- Teignbridge District Council
- Torridge District Council
- West Devon Borough Council

The HotSW LEP and the NHS are co-opted members of the HotSW JC.

#### **3) Proposal**

The proposed devolution deal, the forthcoming integration of the HotSW LEP into local authorities, together with other changes in Government policy mean that the purposes of

the HotSW JC have largely been superseded and other partnership arrangements between the Constituent Authorities are, or will, deliver the same aims.

In relation to withdrawal from/dissolution of the HotSW Joint Committee, the inter-authority agreement states that:

- *A Constituent Authority wishing to withdraw from the Joint Committee shall give a minimum of 6 months' notice in writing to the other Constituent Authority via the Administering Authority. The Constituent Authorities shall co-operate with any such request.*
- *If two or more Constituent Authorities give notice of withdrawal from membership of the Joint Committee in the same Financial Year, the Joint Committee shall consider and make recommendations to the remaining Constituent Authorities as to the future operation of the*
- *Joint Committee and, if appropriate, recommend any necessary amendments required to the Joint Committee's functions and operating arrangements.*
- *Where a majority of the Constituent Authorities at any time agree (via formal resolutions) that the Joint Committee should be dissolved or terminated on a specified date then the Joint Committee shall cease to exist from that date.*

It is expected that under the terms of the inter-authority agreement the proposal to withdraw will be recommended to the other Constituent Authorities, that they will also give notice and propose that the HotSW JC be dissolved.

#### **4) Financial Considerations**

The HotSW JC is reliant on the Constituent Authorities for its budget and there are no obvious sources of additional funding to support running costs or delivery of its work programme. Joint Committee members' costs and expenses are funded and administered by each respective Constituent Authority. The Administering Authority (Somerset Council) holds the balance of contributions from the Constituent Authorities. The current unallocated balance is £ 43,009. If the JC is dissolved, then any outstanding balance would be returned proportionally to each of the Constituent Authorities on the same percentage basis that they made contributions.

#### **5) Legal Considerations**

The HotSW JC is established under Sections 101 to 103 of the Local Government Act 1972. The review of the role and functions of the JC has taken account of the legal framework within which it operates. The recommendation is in accordance with the Inter-Authority Agreement.

#### **6) Risks**

The key risk is continuing with the HotSW JC and duplicating the work of existing partnership arrangements without adding any value. The recommendation mitigates that risk.

#### **7) Environmental Impact Considerations (Including Climate Change, Sustainability and Socio-economic)**

There are no environmental impacts associated with the recommendation.

## **8) Equality Considerations**

There are no equality implications associated with the recommendation.

## **9) Other Options Considered**

The alternative option is that the Council does not agree to serve notice and continues to be a member of the HotSW JC. However, if the majority of Constituent Authorities serve notice, then the HotSW JC will be automatically dissolved.

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**Electoral Divisions:** All

Cabinet Member for Economic Recovery and Skills: Councillor Rufus Gilbert

## **Local Government Act 1972: List of background papers**

Background Paper: Cabinet report

Date: 8/11/17 and 7/12/17

File Reference: CX/17/26

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