

## HoftSW Joint Committee

Meeting date – 25<sup>th</sup> May 2018

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### HotSW JOINT COMMITTEE COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

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#### 1. Summary

- 1.1. This report introduces the Communications Strategy for the Leaders and the HotSW Joint Committee as agreed by the Chief Executives' Delivery Board. The reference to 'Leaders' in the title is quite deliberate as the work of the Council Leaders and lead members goes beyond just the work of the Joint Committee. The report is for information.

#### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1. **The Joint Committee is recommended to note the report.**

#### 3. Reasons for recommendations

- 3.1 This report is to raise awareness of the approach agreed to communicate the work of the partnership to a wide audience.

#### 4. Background

- 4.1 The Communications Strategy is attached as the Appendix to this report. Please note that the appendices to the Strategy will be live documents that are regularly updated and therefore haven't been attached. Overall responsibility for the Strategy rests with the Administering Authority. The Strategy has been drafted to meet the current and future needs of the Leaders and the Joint Committee. It acknowledges that since the start of the work on the devolution agenda in 2015, the focus of the Partnership's discussion has moved from achieving a devolution 'deal' to a more flexible way of working across policy agendas and boundaries in tune with and seeking to take advantage of Government policy. The Strategy is concerned predominantly with communications with key stakeholders, including the elected members, residents and the media, and ensuring that there is a degree of coordination across the 23 organisations and clarity of message. It acknowledges that engagement with the MPs and Westminster will be very important to the success of the Leaders Group and the Joint Committee, and that communications will have a role in supporting that.

The Strategy will give the Leaders a strong, coherent voice to speak to government and partners across a wide range of activity.

**4.2** It is early days in terms of the work of the Joint Committee and the action plan is being populated with the work that has been undertaken so far. This includes our early engagement with the Government on aspects of the Productivity Strategy and the Delivery Plan and our initial approaches to Ministers have been fruitful in terms of being welcomed. We have received undertakings about further engagement and this work can only help the partnership achieve its ambitions. Some examples:

- (a) A joint approach on behalf of the Joint Committee and the HotSW Local Enterprise Partnership to Rt. Hon. Greg Clark stating our wish for HotSW to be an early developer of a Local Industrial Strategy
- (b) An approach on behalf of the Joint Committee to the Rt.Hon. Sir Oliver Letwin MP (Chair of the Government's Commission on barriers to house building) about the housing delivery study proposed by the Joint Committee and the links between these pieces of work
- (c) An approach on behalf of the Joint Committee to Sir John Armitt, Chair of the National Infrastructure Commission, asking for the Commission to undertake a study on the potential of the Plymouth – Torbay – Exeter growth corridor extending into Somerset.

Our engagement with Ministers and local MPs will be critical to the success of our work programmes to deliver our plans and officers are currently assessing how best to ensure that this engagement can be taken forward in Westminster as well as locally. We need to determine whether we have the capacity and expertise within the partnership to undertake this activity or whether we need to procure some external support.

**4.3** In addition to Ministers and MPs, a key piece of work being undertaken is to identify key influencers across the area who may be able to help us with our ambitions.

**4.4** The Strategy and the appendices will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis to assess progress and ensure that our future plans are detailed.

**4.5** An essential part of the Strategy to raise awareness of the Joint Committee is the develop of a microsite for the Committee. It is hoped to go live with the microsite during June.

## **5. Equalities Implications**

**5.1** There are no equalities implications.

## **6. Other Implications**

### **6.1** Legal:

There are no specific legal implications associated with this report.

### **9.2** Financial:

There is no specific communications budget for the Joint Committee. Lead officer support for the Strategy is provided by Somerset County Council as the Administering Authority and these costs are covered within the budget

allocation to the Administering Authority. The costs of developing the microsite will also be met within this budget allocation. Any external support procured to support the Communications Strategy will come at an additional cost and will have to be met within the overall Joint Committee budget.

**9.3** HR  
No implications.

**9.4** Risk  
The key risks to the Joint Committee and the wider partnership working agenda of an ineffective Communications Strategy would be the failure to achieve the levels of influence and engagement that we seek. This would impact on our ability to deliver our ambitions and would have the potential for reputational damage to the Joint Committee, the Leaders and the constituent authorities and partners.

**9.5** Health and Well-being  
No implications.

**9.6** Health and Safety  
No implications.

**9.7** Sustainability  
No implications.

**9.8** Community Safety  
No implications.

**9.9** Privacy  
No implications.

## **10. Background papers**

**10.1.** None

**Note:** For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author.