

Building Back Better Document: Consultation Response

The Heart of the South West LEP has invited feedback on its emerging Building Back Better (BBB) document. The draft was discussed by the Heart of the SW Joint Committee, the Scrutiny Committee that scrutinises LEP activity, local MPs and written responses were received from seven organisations. The process confirmed clear support for the concept with stakeholders pleased to see that it reflected the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS). However, the feedback also suggested that refinements could be made to improve both the structure and content of the document. A summarised log of points to consider has been compiled (see Annex A). The Annex also sets out our response to each item.

In moving the document forward we have addressed three sets of strategic issues which cut across the majority of the feedback:

1. Status and Purpose

Feedback indicated that the purpose of the document - and therefore what it will deliver – was not sufficiently clear. Calls were made for it to bridge the gap between Covid-19 response and recovery more clearly and to be more distinctive.

RESPONSE

This has been made clearer within the revised document. The document is primarily designed to outline (at a high level) how the structural, LEP-wide transformational projects articulated within the LIS can drive our goals to Build Back Better. These are distinctive opportunities that derive from the assets and opportunities available to us within the Heart of the South West and are built on a robust evidence base. However, transformational change has to be built on the right skills and business support, along with the creation of new ideas, products and services, all of which must be grounded in the places where we live and work. The document therefore also contains a series of ‘enabling’ programmes which will underpin our delivery. These will be developed through the LEP’s leadership groups, working closely with Local Authorities as part of the recovery planning process.

2. Focus of the Programmes

There was a suggestion that 15 programmes may be too many. Further, colleagues felt that it was not always clear which were investable propositions, how they would deliver clean and inclusive growth or what success would look like.

RESPONSE

The 15 programmes have been reviewed and reshaped in response to the consultation feedback. Links to our clean and inclusive growth objectives have been made clearer throughout.

3. Missing Elements

It was felt that some important aspects were either missing or under-played. There were calls, in particular, for the document to have more of an emphasis on social prosperity

and levelling up, a more explicit focus on rural communities/market towns/coastal communities and more on the rejuvenation of high streets. It was also felt that some sectors were missing.

RESPONSE

The document has been further developed to make our ambitions to drive social prosperity and levelling up much clearer. A new 'Place and Infrastructure' Programme has also been added which will provide us with an opportunity to focus more substantially on rural communities/market towns/coastal communities and our high streets as well as on the area's bedrock sectors.

4. Equalities Impact Summary

Concern was expressed through Scrutiny review on the lack of reference to an equalities impact summary.

RESPONSE

Impact Summary

Build Back Better serves to remind Government of the importance of improving productivity; delivering clean growth and ensuring inclusive growth through recovery and specifically the need to highlight genuinely transformational regional or nationally relevant opportunities at scale that could deliver a step change in these outcomes and which the LEP will take a lead role in developing.

Build Back Better reminds Government and our local stakeholders that to achieve this triple bottom line - people, planet and prosperity - we will need to deliver a step change in what we achieve and how we deliver it. Post pandemic recovery provides an opportunity to do this. It does not point to business as usual but to transformation. However, supporting these specific transformational opportunities, the LEP will continue to support the implementation of local recovery plans particularly as many focus on early response for which the LEP has few resources.

People Affected

For many years the benefits of growth have not been evenly shared and the pandemic itself impacted communities differently. Moreover, this was directly identified in the Local Industrial Strategy and an Inclusive Growth expert panel is now meeting to guide action in the delivery of future investment opportunities.

Build Back Better serves to re-emphasise our strategic commitment to clean and inclusive growth and therefore future project development and investment will need to set out specifically how they will support these most dis-advantaged groups or communities.

For example through the emerging skills plans we would expect to see targeted support on those most impacted by the pandemic such as helping our young people into employment, training or education to improve their life chances and raise aspirations.

The HOTSW area contains significant pockets or areas with low levels of social mobility and local place based projects delivered through the Levelling-Up Fund or similar are likely to prioritise such areas.

In addition to our hardest hit communities, the LEPs Route Map to Recovery identifies the specific need to support some of the hardest hit sectors such as tourism and hospitality and retail where we know there is a significant number of part time female workforce and contributes directly to our gender pay-gap.

Our hardest hit communities are in the main the same communities that had underlying fragilities and levels of deprivation. Working with local authorities and the inclusive growth panel to develop effective recovery will help develop the investment case to regenerate these communities, creating new job opportunities and wider social benefits.

Finally, LEPs financial procedures are identical to Local Authority Financial standing orders – Somerset County Council act as Accountable Body. Therefore all investment commissioned or agreed by the LEP requires any appointed contractor to ensure a fair, equal and legally compliant approach is adopted, and funding and is monitored to measure the impacts and benefits of the investment .

General Comment

Overall, we have provided 'hooks' where possible for the activities that people have expressed a desire to see featured within the revised document. However, given that it is intended to be a high level summary, rather than a strategy document, this has had to be balanced against its primary focus.

ANNEX A: SUMMARISED FEEDBACK LOG

Who	Comment	Response
HEADLINE COMMENTS		
Devon partners	Status and purpose of the document needs clarity with a clearer vision	Addressed; designed as a high level document for government
Devon partners	15 areas of focus need detail and understanding of what success look like	They have been restructured in response to feedback
Devon partners	Distinctiveness is lacking	Builds on the evidence-base & distinctive LIS – made more explicit
Devon partners	Needs to distinguish between commitments and aspirations	Made clearer within the restructure
Devon partners	Needs to bridge the gap between response and recovery better	Addressed
Devon partners	Needs to reflect social prosperity/levelling up agenda better	New Inclusive Growth section has been added
Business LG	15 is a lot of priorities	Agreed – they have been reduced and restructured
BLG	Needs to emphasise business support to underpin digital growth	Referenced more significantly in business support Programme
BLG	Would like to see short and longer term metrics as measures of success	Measures of success shown in relation to Programmes
BLG	Needs a portfolio of investable propositions to support the document	To follow separately
BLG	Message to government is funding needs to be a minimum of 3 years	Noted
BLG	Strategic approach needed for both capital and revenue projects	Noted
Torrige & North Devon	Elements which deliver clean and inclusive growth are limited in scope	This has been made more explicit
T&ND	Inclusivity must address geographic as well as community interests	Explicitly referenced in new Programme 11
T&ND	Needs more on town centres under the places element – what are the proposals?	Explicitly referenced in new Programme 11
T&ND	Include local impacts of growth on communities/environment/wellbeing in metrics	Measures of success shown in relation to Programmes
T&ND	Focus is on the macro scale rather than local – hard to know what	Focus is intentionally on LEP area-wide structural

Who	Comment	Response
	will happen	transformation
Plymouth City Council	Inclusive growth element does not reflect issues of deprived city wards	Broadened to reference cities
PCC	Some important sectors are missing (e.g. digital health, defence)	To be referenced through Programme 11/local recovery response
PCC	Relationship between housing growth and economic prosperity is missing	Too detailed for this document
PCC	Is 15 too many priorities? Some could be supporting actions	Agreed – they have been reduced and restructured
PCC	What will the interventions bring in terms of jobs etc – needs an investment pipeline	To follow separately
PCC	Digital delivery/growth needs bigger focus	Referenced more significantly in business support Programme
PCC	Would like to see short and longer term metrics as measures of success	Measures of success shown in relation to Programmes
PCC	What is the Tourism Action Zone/ what is the natural capital proposal?	Made clearer within the restructure
PCC	Reference to the A38 is missing	Now included
PCC	Fishing shouldn't be bundled into rural productivity	To be referenced through Programme 11/local recovery response
Somerset County Council	Make the offer unique to specific opportunities	Made clearer within the restructure
SCC	Needs to be much clearer about its proposition and what it can deliver	It's designed as a high level document for government
SCC	Ensure plans are referenced and linkages made to national policies	Included more plan and policy links throughout
SCC	Ensure that HotSW impacts of Covid are better reflected	Updated with reference recent LEP Covid bulletin
SCC	Use template for programmes 3&4 which are clearer	Agreed
SCC	Redraft Programmes 1 and 2 to ensure there is clarity on the proposition	Programmes 1 and 2 have been merged
SCC	Either remove 8,9 & 11 or make clear how they contribute to BBB	They have been reframed as enabling Programmes
SCC	Make better linkages and connections between programmes of activity	Have tried to make this more explicit where possible

Who	Comment	Response
SCC	Specific suggestions made for metrics	Measures of success shown in relation to Programmes
Association of Local Councils	The focus on the M5/A38 corridor has been to the detriment of rural communities	Rural communities explicitly referenced in new Programme 11
ALC	What does it mean for towns and parishes	Towns and parishes explicitly referenced in new Programme 11
ALC	Climate change and sustainability should be considered	Covered by new narrative on the clean growth opportunity
ALC	Concerns around inclusivity – how do we achieve it within/between communities	To be the focus of the Inclusive Growth Panel
ALC	Have the programmes been assessed for climate and carbon emissions	No – this is a high level positioning document
ALC	Not enough emphasis on lower skilled/paid jobs	The People Programme covers all level of jobs/skills
ALC	Programme 2 – route to inclusive growth but speed of thinking is a problem	Programmes 1 and 2 have been merged
ALC	Programme 7 – include training & opportunities for the professionalisation of care	Too detailed for this document
ALC	Programme 9 – to include rural social enterprises and local innovation	Programme 9 covers all businesses, including SE
ALC	Programme 11 - to support enterprise in rural and peripheral areas	Explicitly referenced in new Programme 11
ALC	Programme 13 – further detail is needed	Programme 13 has been removed
ALC	Programme 15 – to reference cycle route development and cycling enterprise	Done
ALC	Needs to support rejuvenation of high streets	Explicitly referenced in new Programme 11
ALC	Remember to support the cultural offer	To be referenced through Programme 11/local recovery response
ALC	Give the rural hinterland as much of a focus as the M5/A38 corridor	Explicitly referenced in new Programme 11
TDA	Needs more emphasis on sectors/areas being disproportionately affected by Covid	To be referenced through Programme 11/local recovery response
TDA	More on levelling up needed and ref: to Levelling Up Fund	Now more explicitly referenced

Who	Comment	Response
TDA	Programme 7 – ref: Torbay’s hospital plan	Investment in hospitals now referenced more generically
TDA	Programme 9 – should be more about reach and impact for all businesses	Programme 9 covers all businesses
TDA	Stronger links needed between Programmes 10 and 11 (innovation support)	Done
TDA	Fishing needs its own support programme	To be referenced through Programme 11/local recovery response
TDA	Does Programme 14 put all eggs in one funding basket?	Now a transformational Programme underpinned by enablers
TDA	Programme 15 needs to ref: strategic employment land	Done
TDA	Need to understand how the detail under each programme will be shaped	To follow separately
Scrutiny C’ttee	Will there be an equalities impact assessment	Govt have advised this isn’t needed for LISs and the national Industrial Strategy has been evaluated. Building Back Better is based on the LIS but in recognition of Scrutiny’s feedback, one will be developed for this document
DETAILED COMMENTS		
Devon partners	Co-design should extend to communities	Text amended to reflect that
Devon partners	Should recognise benefits of devolved funding	Noted and one of the key asks
Devon partners	Needs to be clearer about how it will impact on rural and coastal communities	Explicitly referenced in new Programme 12
Devon partners	Link between programmes and clean/inclusive growth needs to be clearer	Made clearer
Devon partners	Is an environmental and carbon impact of the plan going to be undertaken	No – not required for this type of document
Devon partners	Needs to reflect more of the assets across the whole area	High level document – not possible to name check all assets
Devon	There is no mention of community energy production	Now added

Who	Comment	Response
partners		
Devon partners	Should say Enterprise Zone rather than Growth Point	Has been rephrased
Devon partners	Existing investment in energy networks, public transport etc are down-played	Addressed energy network in re-drafted Programme 1
Devon partners	Programme 5 doesn't sufficiently talk about Innovate UK funding	Innovate UK funding referenced more clearly in new Programme 4
Devon partners	Needs to recognise longer term sustainability of Exeter airport	Exeter airport referenced more clearly in new Programme 4
Devon partners	Programme 6 needs specificity and recognition of Exeter's knowledge base	University of Exeter referenced here
Devon partners	Sustainable agri-food systems should align with Exeter uni's circular economy work	Made clearer
Devon partners	Programme 7 should reference social enterprises	Done
Devon partners	Programme 7 - mention massive investment in re-building Devon's hospitals	Investment in hospitals now referenced more generically
Devon partners	Should also link to current pharma companies/technologies including N. Devon	Too detailed for this document
Devon partners	Skills development should be referenced in Programme 8, building in Devon's work	Skills development is explicitly included
Devon partners	Unemployment / underemployment / Low Skills / Low Pay need to be referenced	Woven into Programme 8
Devon partners	P7 – needs to recognise longer term sustainability of bedrock sectors	Explicitly referenced in new Programme 11
Devon partners	Should expand on how economy can diversify/make some sectors more productive	Explicitly referenced in new Programme 11
Devon partners	Unesco North Devon Biosphere Reserve (land and marine) should be identified	It's a summary map – not able to mention every project/place
Devon partners	Programme 9 - needs to recognise the Growth Hub and how models can develop	Programme 9 has been restructured
Devon	P9 – query what the review of financial instruments means	SW Mutual referenced in the new inclusive growth

Who	Comment	Response
partners		opportunity
Devon partners	P14 – scope to extend reach (work hubs) in to less populated and connected areas	Explicitly referenced in new Programme 11
Devon partners	Strategic employment sites are not specifically drawn out (with challenges)	Explicitly referenced in new Programme 11
Devon partners	Programme 13 – needs to reference the North Devon Biosphere	Programme 13 has been removed as a stand-alone Programme
Devon partners	Programme 15 - missed opportunity for innovation within rural communities	Explicitly referenced in new Programme 11
Devon partners	Programme 15 – should focus on links within the area	Explicitly referenced in new Programme 11
Devon partners	The North Devon Rail Line should be prioritised for investment	To be considered in taking forward strategic connectivity
Devon partners	Needs to reference natural capital and ways or working better	Referenced in the inclusive growth and clean growth opportunities
Devon partners	Needs more overt reference to social economy/social inclusion/high streets	Social economy referenced in the inclusive growth opportunity
Devon partners	Link between healthy population and economy is missing	Inclusive Growth updated
Devon partners	Needs more on developing a flourishing social economy	Social economy referenced in the inclusive growth opportunity
Devon partners	Pictures are very industrial – more green and innovative needed	To be covered in the final design
Devon partners	Long term impacts from the EU Exit not referenced	Too detailed for this document
BLG	Should reference joined up business support (not just single gateway)	Programme 9 has been restructured
BLG	Delivering business support in partnership is missing from the narrative	Programme 9 has been restructured
BLG	The term “navigate business support eco system” is important	Programme 9 has been restructured
BLG	Reference publicly funded and private business support	Programme 9 has been restructured
BLG	Complexity around business support needs to reduce – call for	Programme 9 has been restructured

Who	Comment	Response
	simplicity	
BLG	Reference wider encouragement around good employment and business practices	Programme 9 has been restructured
BLG	Reference environmental support for businesses & “cleaner” businesses practices	Programme 9 has been restructured
BLG	Access to finance and financial instruments, should plug gaps re: attitudes to risk	Programme 9 has been restructured
BLG	Business Hubs should have less focus – more people working from home	No longer a stand-alone Programme
BLG	Longer term projects (10 years) – more effective	Noted – focus on transformational programmes
T&ND	P5 - co-design needs to extend to communities	Text amended to reflect that
T&ND	P5 - recognise benefits of devolving funding	Noted and one of the key asks
T&ND	P6 - needs to be clearer about how it will impact on rural and coastal communities	Explicitly referenced in new Programme 11
T&ND	P7 - Unesco North Devon Biosphere Reserve (land and marine) should be identified	It’s a summary map – not able to mention every project/place
T&ND	P7 - What is there in the plan to overcome that dependence on tourism	Too detailed for this document
T&ND	P7 - query graphic on p7 for those outside local govt	Noted
T&ND	P8 - Devon Business and Economy Recovery Prospectus uses different terminology	Terminology reflects the LEP’s published route-map to recovery
T&ND	P8 – why is there a sep. plan for Devon – could it be incorporate in Devon Plan?	It’s been designed as a high level document for government
T&ND	P9 – more detail on the review of local financial instruments is needed	SW Mutual referenced in the new inclusive growth opportunity
T&ND	P10 – would be good to see more about other areas of energy generation	Text has been expanded
T&ND	P10 - is an environmental & carbon impact screening to be undertaken of the Plan	No – not required for this type of document
T&ND	P12 – needs to mention investment in re-building Devon’s hospitals	Investment in hospitals now mentioned more generically
T&ND	P12 - also link to current pharma companies/technologies including	Too detailed for this document

Who	Comment	Response
	N. Devon	
T&ND	P13 – skills network needs to be reinforced	Too detailed for this document
T&ND	P13 – is the single gateway for business support the best model for the geography	Programme 9 has been restructured
T&ND	P14 – requires a stronger spatial perspective	Explicitly referenced in the new Programme 11
T&ND	P15 – not just about farming and fishing	Noted
T&ND	P15 - needs to reference the North Devon Biosphere	Programme 13 on Natural Capital has been removed
T&ND	P15 - missed opportunity for innovation within rural communities	Made clearer in Programme 10
T&ND	P16 - should focus on links within the area	Explicitly referenced in new Programme 11
T&ND	P16 - the North Devon Rail Line should be prioritised for investment	To be considered in detailed strategic transport connectivity
T&ND	Why no reference to Appledore Shipyard	Northern Devon referenced in Marine programme
T&ND	Has any research been done on clusters?	Draft is based on the LIS and its extensive evidence base