

Draft Minutes of the meeting of the Heart of the South West (HotSW) Joint Committee Virtual Meeting, 12.00pm on Friday 29 January 2021.

Attendance

Members:

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Cllr Val Keitch | Leader – South Somerset District Council (Chair) |
| Cllr Tudor Evans | Leader - Plymouth City Council (Vice-Chair) |
| Cllr David Fothergill | Leader – Somerset County Council |
| Cllr Bob Deed | Mid Devon District Council |
| Cllr Philip Bialyk | Leader - Exeter City Council |
| Cllr David Worden | Leader - North Devon District Council |
| Cllr Judy Pearce | Leader - South Hams District Council |
| Cllr Ken James | Leader - Torridge District Council |
| Cllr Claire Hodson | Deputy Leader - Torridge District Council |
| Cllr Neil Jory | Leader - West Devon Borough Council |
| Cllr Ros Wyke | Leader - Mendip District Council |
| Cllr Gill Slocombe | Deputy Leader - Sedgemoor District Council |
| Cllr Paul Hayward | East Devon District Council |
| Cllr Swithin Long | Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Tourism and Housing - Torbay Council |
| Cllr Paul Arnott | Leader - East Devon District Council |
| Cllr Marcus Kravis | Somerset West and Taunton Council |
| Cllr Andrea Davis | Deputy Chairman - Exmoor National Park Authority |
| Cllr Liz Leyshon | Mendip District Council |
| Cllr Liz Brookes-Hocking | Devon/Somerset Associations of Local Councils |
| Cllr Rufus Gilbert | Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills – Devon County Council |
| | |

Officers/Local Enterprise Partnership etc:

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Phil Norrey | Chief Executive – Devon County Council |
| Sue Rose | Policy Lead – Devon County Council |
| Scott Wooldridge | Strategic Manager, Governance and Democratic Services – Somerset County Council |
| Andrew Randell | Clerk to the Joint Committee – Somerset County Council |
| Tracey Lee | Chief Executive – Plymouth City Council and Senior Responsible Officer, Heart of the South West Partnership |
| Alison Ward | Regional Portfolio Manager – Plymouth City Council |

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Mark Williams | Chief Executive – East Devon District Council |
| Anne-Marie Bond | Chief Executive – Torbay Council |
| Stephen Walford | Chief Executive - Mid Devon District Council |
| Ken Miles | Chief Executive - North Devon Council |
| Pat Flaherty | Chief Executive – Somerset County Council |
| James Hassett | Chief Executive - Somerset West and Taunton Council |
| Alex Parmley | Chief Executive - South Somerset District Council |
| Karl Tucker | Chair - Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership |
| David Ralph | Chief Executive - Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership |
| Andy Bates | Chief Executive - South Hams District Council |
| Doug Bamsey | Strategic Director – Sedgemoor District Council |
| Michael Tichford | Head of Place - North Devon Council |
| Mike O’Dowd- Jones | Strategic Manager Highways &Transport – Somerset County Council |
| Sean Kearney | Head of Communities and Place - Torridge |
| Suzanne Bond | Cities & Local Growth, BEIS |

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from:-

Ian Collinson Devon Clinical Commissioning Group

Pamela Woods Dartmoor National Park

Cllr Alistair Dewhurst – Teignmouth District Council

Rufus Gilbert attended as a substitute on behalf of John Hart - Devon County Council

Sean Kearney attended as a substitute on behalf of Steve Hearse – Torridge

Swithin Long attended as a substitute on behalf of Steve Darling – Torbay Council

2. Declarations of Interest

Rufus Gilbert and Tudor Evans both declared interests as Board members of the LEP

3. Minutes of the Previous HotSW Joint Committee Meeting

The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 9th October 2020 as a correct record, following an amendment for Councillor Leyshon to be listed under Mendip District Council and not Somerset County Council.

4. Public Question Time

No Public Questions were received in advance of the meeting.

5. Formal Agreement of the Building Back better document

David Ralph presented an update which set out the pandemic response as a result of the build back better report. The report provided an update for the Constituent Authorities on the Build Back Better Document setting out that the Covid-19 pandemic had a greater economic impact on the Heart of the South West area than many other parts of the country; analysis by the Institute of Fiscal Studies set out that Heart of the SW was one of the areas most severely economically affected by the Covid crisis, as shown on the map presented in the annex.

This resulted in particular from the structural challenges the area has long faced and included a business mix with a higher proportion of sectors more severely impacted by the numerous restrictions of the last 9 months.

In autumn 2020 the Joint Committee and LEP published the area's Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) which highlighted the key opportunities, based on local strengths, to address long-standing challenges and deliver clean and inclusive growth. In so doing this would help ensure the area was more prosperous and that businesses, communities and individuals had a higher degree of resilience for future crises.

Starting from the LIS and reflecting the immediate recovery challenge, the Build Back Better plan set out the key programmes to deliver this ambition. Build Back Better set out a framework from which to make the case for investment in Heart of the SW, potentially as part of a 'recovery deal' for the area

During the consideration of the item the following comments were made: -

- Concerns were expressed the strategy lacked commitment and needed to address the health impact to communities as a result of the pandemic.
- Officers gave reassurance these concerns would be taken away for consideration and addressed.
- Town and parish Councils had expressed concerns to Local Government addressing the Climate Emergency.

- Ambitions to achieve clean growth and climate change proofing was requested in a document going forward. There was an increased requirement for access to cycling for commuting and leisure.
- The next steps were set out which included sharing feedback to board members and involve members in the task group to pick up issues going forward.
- Officers were conscious of being ready when approached by the government on the plan, but it was recognised more work was needed.

RESOLVED

The Committee agreed to: -

1. Welcome and fully support the continued joint work on economic recovery for the Heart of the South West with the LEP;
2. Endorses the draft Build Back Better plan for further engagement with partner councils and other key partners; and
3. Request that the final plan is reported for approval at the Committee's next meeting

6. HotSW 2020/21 Budget Update and Draft Budget Update 2021/22.

Scott Wooldridge presented the report, setting out allocations for the housing taskforce priorities.

The report provided a further update for the Constituent Authorities on the Joint Committee's pooled budget for 2020/21. The report follows from the report in October 2020 and contains some revised recommendations for budget allocations from the available budget. It also sets out updated proposals for a draft 2021/22 budget.

The background of the report was set out which included previous consideration of approval in September 2019 of funding allocations for 2020/21 with the proposed budget for 2021/22, within the envelope of budget contributions from Constituent Authorities and carry over funding from previous financial years.

Further information was provided in relation to HEROG support

Following the presentation, no comments or questions were raised by the Committee.

RESOLVED

The Committee agreed that:-

(a) as part of continuing to support economic recovery work that further funding is allocated and Somerset West & Taunton Council are re-appointed for 2021/22 until 22 January 2022 to provide staff resources to support the HEROG work (see section 4.4 and table in 4.5.1);

(b) the bulk of the 2020/21 funding already allocated for project officer resources to support and develop the Housing Task Force priorities is deferred to provide funding in 2021/22 due to the impacts of Covid 19 emergency work (see tables in 4.5.1 and 4.6).

(c) the revised draft 2021/22 Budget is endorsed (see section 4.6)

7. Coastal Communities Plan

Anne Marie Bond provided an update which set out the Coastal Productivity Plan (CPP) which responded to both the long term structural and the immediate Covid-19 challenges by setting out interventions to create opportunities and improve economic resilience and prosperity in seaside towns and coastal resorts. This would in turn contribute to delivery of the Heart of the South West (HotSW) Local Enterprise Partnership's (LEP) mission of repositioning the Heart of the South West's profile and reputation, nationally and globally. Connecting people, places, businesses and ideas to transform the economy, securing investment in infrastructure and skills to create more jobs and enable rewarding careers.

The CPP had been developed in consultation with the HotSW LEP, coastal local authorities and relevant stakeholders. It focused on five key themes: Ideas, People, Infrastructure, Business Environment and Place. Each one looking at the context and approach to the economic challenges and making recommendations to support growth.

The Ideas theme explored the role of natural capital and cultural assets in 'place-making'. They offer the opportunity for economic diversification and improved productivity, by encouraging creation of new job opportunities in sectors such as renewable energy, biomanufacturing, and biomimicry, along with offering new visitor related products which help extend the tourist season. These opportunities responded not only to the climate emergency but also to the launch of the Government's 10 point Green Plan.

The People theme examined the key issues impacting on residents of coastal towns such as the divergence in ambition and how this impacted on the 'brain drain', social mobility and widening pay gaps. The aim was not just growth but inclusive growth.

Infrastructure was a key enabler for productivity-led growth, particularly in coastal towns which were on the 'edge'. Investment in infrastructure was critical to turning the tide on decades of lost growth

Following the presentation, no comments or questions were made by the Committee

RESOLVED

The Committee agreed that:-

1. The Heart of the South West Coastal Productivity Plan and supported its publication.
2. That A Coastal Group is established to support delivery of the actions within the Coastal Productivity Plan.
3. That the Coastal Productivity Plan is used to lobby Government and direct future policy on coastal issues particularly in the design of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF).

8. Climate Emergency Update

Paula Hewitt provided an update in relation to the Climate Emergency Update.

Details were set out in relation to the status of the Devon Carbon Plan, current carbon reduction projects, work of the Climate Impacts Group and proposed governance. Progress of existing projects were set out which included solar farms, electric vehicle charging and Green Homes Grant

RESOLVED

The Committee noted the Climate Emergency Update for the Heart of the Southwest Area.

9. Peninsula Transport Update

Paula Hewitt provided an update in relation to Peninsula Transport. The following headlines were presented as part of the Progress update

- The Department for Transport had awarded £425k funding to the body to contribute towards the work programme with Local Authority contributions continuing.
- High level transport vision, goals and objectives were agreed, with vision document to be published and consulted on in March 2021.
- Integrated Impact Assessment Scoping Report had been completed and was due to be published for consultation to put in place robust framework for future strategy decisions. Covering Strategic Environmental, Equality and Health Impact requirements.
- Coast Communications appointed through procurement process to deliver comms activity.
- Programme management up and running with monthly programme meetings and monthly progress reporting to DfT. Project and programme dashboard in place. Meeting with DfT programme team every other month.
- Local Authority scheme promoters continuing to develop the prioritised Major Road Network (MRN) and Large Local Major (LLM) schemes in their areas.

An award of £425k of funding had been awarded from Government for the work programme enabling work to progress more quickly. Local authority contributions were continuing

During the consideration of the item the following questions were raised:-

- Developing high level strategic travel corridors would underpin the strategy work. This would be shared more widely in due course.
- It was recognised there was further investment required in the Southwest, particularly in relation to rail investment.
- Cliff stabilisation work in Dawlish was believed to be at least 7 years away from commencing, more demands should need to be made of government to address this timeframe. Work continuing to Lobby the Government about this subject, this was the highest priority and further funding was needed.
- Rurality continued to be a challenge along with the challenged around this needing to be voiced to central government, the Peninsula transport Board being the most rural of all the subnational transport boards.
- The creation of walking and cycling routes between market towns and communities would be fed into the plan, there was a recognised shift to this around active travel modes from the Department for Transport.
- The details of the consultation on the future of transport rural strategy would be published. With the following link requested to be included in the minutes <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/future-of-transport-rural-strategy-call-for-evidence>

RESOLVED

The Committee noted the Peninsula Transport Update

Closing Remarks and Planning for the Public Meeting

The next meeting dates set out below were noted by the Committee.

The possibility of the postponement of the local and PCC elections were referred to with a decision from Central Government expected towards the end of February.

12th March 2021

25th June 2021

1st October 2021

(The meeting ended at 1.50pm)
Chair