

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 around bus franchises, and determining local bus network routes
- **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 transfer of powers, and control of funding from central Government will enable decisions to be taken closer to the point of service delivery, and will allow greater flexibility to respond to the needs of local communities. In this way, a Devolution Deal will support the Council's ambitions outlined in the Corporate Plan.

The Heart of the South West Prospectus for Productivity has a strong emphasis on driving growth and will help, depending on the negotiations, deliver the Council's ambitions around jobs, skills, homes, investment and infrastructure. Whilst we will work together across the partnership to produce a Productivity Plan, in order to fully capitalise on the transformational opportunities in the Plan, we will require freedoms and flexibilities from Government that we don't currently have.