

# **Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) – The Partnership Manager**

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*Strategic Director:* Rina Singh, *Strategic Director (Place and Performance)*  
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## **1. Purpose of the Report**

To introduce the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Partnership Manager (Heidi Hallam) to the District Executive Committee. Heidi will give a short presentation on her role and the scope of her work. It will also provide an opportunity for committee members to ask questions about the LEP and the Partnership Manager role.

## **2. Public Interest**

Local Enterprise Partnerships were set up in England in 2010 and 2011. The role of the LEPs is to bring together the business community and civic leaders so that they can work together to drive sustainable economic growth and create the conditions for private sector job growth in their communities. As local partnerships, LEPs are by design, accountable to their local communities; they are diverse bodies with roles which reflect local priorities.

## **3. Recommendation**

That Members note the content of the report and the accompanying presentation made by the LEP Partnership Manager.

## **4. Forward Plan**

This report and presentation are intended to provide members with an update on the improved lines of direct communication between the LEP and Local Government partners. The report is driven by the need to develop stronger communication and understanding between the LEP and SSDC. The February District Executive meeting provides the earliest opportunity to present to the committee.

## **5. Background**

Many people and organisations have incorrectly assumed that the LEPs are the successor organisations to the former Regional Development Agencies (RDA). The LEP has a distinctly different role to the RDA with the LEPs being facilitators of Economic Development rather than active developers of infrastructure and sites. Their role is to enable partnerships between business partners and civic authorities that can influence and bring forward economic development in their communities. The LEPs are also conduits for several major funding streams.

Unlike the former RDA, the LEP has no administrative HQ and until 2014 had only two full time officers. Maintaining effective communication between the LEP and its partners had proved challenging. To that point The LEP had maintained its main line

of communication through the upper-tier authorities with information then being cascaded downwards to local authorities. This process was not without its difficulties.

Later in 2014, three additional full time appointments were made at the LEP. These were: a Head of Strategy; an Inward Investment Manager and a Partnership Manager. The latter role was created to ensure a more effective flow of communication and dialogue directly between the LEP and its partner organisations.

## **6. Report**

The LEP Partnership Manager is Heidi Hallam. Her role has three high level objectives:

- Working with the Local Authorities
- Working with larger business groups
- Providing a co-ordinated, single point of advice for E.U. funding

Communication and information flow between the LEP and its Local Authority partners is now noticeably more effective, yet the Partnership Manager still faces the challenge of maintaining that dialogue between the Heart of the South West LEP and its nineteen Local Authority partners in Somerset and Devon.

Heidi has visited the council and will sustain direct contact through the Assistant Director - Economy.

## **7. Financial Implications**

There are no direct financial implications associated with this report.

## **8. Risk**

There are no direct risks associated with this report.

## **9. Corporate Priority Implications**

Effective partnership working with the LEP will particularly assist SSDC in meeting its corporate aims for Jobs and Housing as set out in the Council Plan 2012-15. It will also enable the council to meet a range of the objectives set out in the SSDC Economic Development Strategy 2012-15.

## **10. Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications**

There are no current implications associated with this report.

## **11. Equality and Diversity Implications**

There are none directly associated with this report.