

Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership looks to 2015 as the year of delivery

Press Release

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2014 was a year of achievement for the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership (HotSW LEP) as it embarks on a new phase of its Strategic Economic Plan in 2015 – a year of delivery.

Following HotSW LEP being established in 2011, a thorough analysis of the opportunities for economic growth in the Heart of the South West (the area comprising Devon, Plymouth, Somerset and Torbay) were explored and presented in the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) which forms the backbone of attracting investment – including from the UK and EU government.

Over the three themes of People, Place and Business, HotSW LEP is adding to its initial phase of creating the right conditions for growth by investment in infrastructure, to its second phase of maximising productivity and employment opportunities – such as those created through skills development, supply chain and export – as well as supporting new employment sites and new housing. By 2030 these catalysts are expected to have generated growth in excess of the UK average and 163,000 new jobs as the area capitalises on its distinctive assets in a global market.

In 2014 HotSW LEP reaped success in attracting funding of £170m from UK and European government, releasing an equivalent amount in match funding from local government and business, which is testament to the credibility of HotSW LEP's SEP and shows confidence in the area and the partners' ability to deliver.

This year HotSW LEP and its partners see many of these projects start on site, including: Taunton Railway Station enhancements; improving mobile hotspots with pervasive 4G infrastructure; flood prevention through the widening of the river Fowey near Bath and dredging of the Somerset levels; improving skills with new facilities at Bridgwater College, Somerset College and Plymouth College STEM centre; Hinkley Point Training Academy – to enable local people to take up employment opportunities generated by the new nuclear power station construction; construction is underway on new employment and innovation sites in Plymouth and Exeter, and is due to start at Whiterock in Torbay in 2015.

Also this year, the HotSW LEP launches the procurement of a new Growth Hub to enhance consistent and quality driven business support across the area.

HotSW LEP Chairman Steve Hindley said: "Following successes in 2014 in achieving investment and confidence in this area, we can embrace transformational growth to reposition the Heart of the South West economy on a national and global stage.

"Emerging markets in environmental, marine and knowledge based industries along with the legacy of the Hinkley project bring an unprecedented economic opportunity, and we look forward to working with our partners to achieve our ambitions."

HotSW Chief Executive, Chris Garcia said: "2015 will see the results of the work of the LEP and its partners that has been taking place over the last three years. Strategic planning and consultation to identify what projects would deliver the most beneficial effects to the local economy have paid off in 2014, with our success in attracting funding through the Growth Deal and the Growing Places fund of circa £170m, not to mention the additional investment in Hinkley Point C, Europe's largest engineering project, which will generate 27,000 new jobs.

"This year we are moving firmly towards delivery and making investments happen by getting the money into the hands of local business and getting the projects on site.

"We are not taking our foot off the pedal in attracting new funding; we look forward to working with our partners to prepare a robust pipeline of new projects so that we can be ready to apply when new opportunities become available.

"We continue to present a united message to Government and Europe that given the right conditions with a catalyst of investment in connectivity and skills, the Heart of the South West is on course to become a major contributor to UK plc."

Notes to Editors:

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Heart of the South West LEP

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HotSW LEP values the strong partnerships between the four county and unitary authorities; the fifteen district authorities and national parks; universities and colleges; a wealth of business interest groups; private sector companies; social enterprises and community groups.

The Heart of the South West LEP (HotSW) is one of the largest of the 39 UK LEPs and is tasked with generating economic prosperity

for the local resident and business community.

More information about the work of the LEP is available from the website www.heartofswlep.co.uk.