

PRESS RELEASE

Heart of the South West Partnership

For immediate issue – 20/03/2013

Local Enterprise Partnership welcomes budget announcement

Today's announcement by the Chancellor in his budget, outlining how recommendations from the Heseltine report will be implemented, has been broadly welcomed by the Heart of the South West (HotSW) Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

Tim Jones, Chair of the Heart of the South West LEP said: "We are encouraged and pleased to see a move towards the single pot funding system. This will enable us to adopt a much more focused approach, targeting investment at a local level in greatest areas of opportunity, and of course need.

"Understanding the local picture and nuances across our four authorities has been one of the key tasks for the LEP and we are proud of our achievements in securing transition funding, rural growth network investment and other funds that are specifically targeted at tackling local issues."

Private Sector HotSW Board Member and Chief Executive of Peninsula Enterprise Adam Chambers said: "We will be interested to learn how the funding will be allocated as the Heart of the South West does not have the critical mass in many respects that many cities and urban centres are able to command. We urge the Chancellor to look at a blend of funding mechanisms, which recognise the largely rural nature of our area, but give it the scope to realise its potential, contributing to economic growth across the peninsula.

"However, we welcome the Government's intention to look at further deregulation of the private sector. It has been instrumental in creating growth across the manufacturing and retail sectors by cutting unnecessary red tape and is a positive and helpful move."

Leader of Devon County Council, Councillor John Hart said: "We are heartened by the commitment to develop strategic economic plans in conjunction with the LEP and local authorities. This will help to strengthen our local partnership and joint understanding of the issues that affect our area.

"The local authorities are the engines behind the Heart of the South West, providing the economic intelligence and resource to develop effective initiatives. By combining public and private sector practice we can develop a much more creative approach, and maximise our chances of success. "

Tim Jones concluded: "Our access to Whitehall has been good and has steadily improved; we are nonetheless pleased to see that this has been formally recognised and that the appropriate structures are being put into place. Our ability to inform and influence policy is dependent on ensuring effective communications and this will greatly assist our work in advocating the needs of the Heart of the South West with central Government."

ENDS**Notes to Editors:**

For more information, contact Emma Parker or Julie Everett at Coast Communications on 07944 360631 / 01752 847135.

Heart of the South West

The Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) has been formed under the leadership of the private sector supported by the local authorities from Devon, Plymouth, Somerset and Torbay and the area's District Councils. It is one of 39 partnerships created since the Government's Local Growth White Paper published in October 2010. More information about the work of the LEP is available from the website www.heartofswlep.co.uk.