

Heart of SW LEP Board meeting

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Report title: Great South West Update

Report theme: Board

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Purpose of the report

At previous board meetings we have outlined the value to be gained through cross LEP working and the development of a Great South West brand to add value to our work.

This paper updates the board on the progress being made with cross LEP activity under the emerging Great South West brand

Recommendations

1. To note how we are taking forward Great South West brand development
2. To get directors views on next steps to maximise value to HotSW

Background

At previous board meetings we have outlined the value to be gained through cross LEP working and the development of a Great South West brand to add value to our work. For brevity it does not outline the wide range of cross LEP working underway.

The start point for the public brand development work can be attributed to the SW Leaders Forum instigated by Pennon, which met in February 2017. Alongside this the 3 Chairs and CEX of Heart of South West, Cornwall Isles of Scilly and Dorset LEPs had agreed with taking joint responsibility for moving the Great South West (GSW) movement forward.

The main tasks for the LEPs were to develop lines of communication across both Public and Private Sector bodies to encourage engagement as well as to start to develop a Comms strategy and set of communication materials – ultimately leading to a prospectus for GSW that could/would be used to take to Whitehall to begin dialogue with Government.

Activity to date

1. SW Partnership Executive recruited

Working jointly the 3 LEPs decided to recruit a SW Partnership Executive who could take day to day project management responsibility for coordinating the efforts for GSW and oversee and manage the communications. Rozz Algar has been recruited for a 6-month project, and is taking responsibility for overseeing and coordinating work.

2. SW Leaders Forum

The SW Leaders Forum met again on 11th April at Hinkley C (invited by EDF). The Forum was well attended with over 35 different large regional businesses as well as representation from the majority of Universities in the region.

The meeting was incredibly positive and there was consensus that GSW was wanted and needed. It was also highlighted and agreed upon that it was felt very important that West of England and Bristol area in general engaged in the process.

At the meeting a briefing sheet was shared with the group (see Annex 1) to help to provide a clear direction and overview of what GSW means. This was approved in principal and being used as the basis for narrative development.

As a result of the Leaders Forum, more businesses and universities across the region have expressed an interest in becoming part of the process, and therefore more will likely be joining the next meeting.

The next SW Business Leaders Forum is scheduled for 20th June in Exeter.

3. Steering Group and Management Group

The Leaders Forum agreed to work as Steering Group for GSW, whilst a Management Group would keep things moving – this management group is made up of 3 CEX of LEPs, Sarah Heald, Pennon, Deborah Waddell, CBI, Bryony Houlden, SW Councils and Rozz Algar. This group has a conference call bi- weekly to ensure that the project moves forward.

4. Developing a Brand Identity

It was agreed (by the Leaders Forum) that whilst time could be spent researching and developing a 'name' it was more important to get going and thus Great South West is being used and a brand identity is being developed.

It may be that in the future should there be funding and support from Government for GSW the brand identity might need to reflect that of Northern Powerhouse and Midlands Engine, however for the time being it is important.

The branding (work in progress) is set out below – the colours selected reflect the colours used by Dorset, Cornwall and HotSW LEP.



5. Creating a Vision and Narrative

One of the key points raised at the Leader Forum was that a clear and succinct vision needed to be created. A working party of people from across the region (from each of the LEPs and various key business sectors) who have provided data and input to the development of the narrative and are currently reviewing and approving a first draft.

A first draft will be ready w/c 22nd May.

6. Communications

Given Purdah, there has not been the opportunity to outwardly communicate GSW however work is going on behind the scenes, including :

Social Media

A twitter @ has been set up @GreatSW_UK which will be actively used once Purdah has passed.

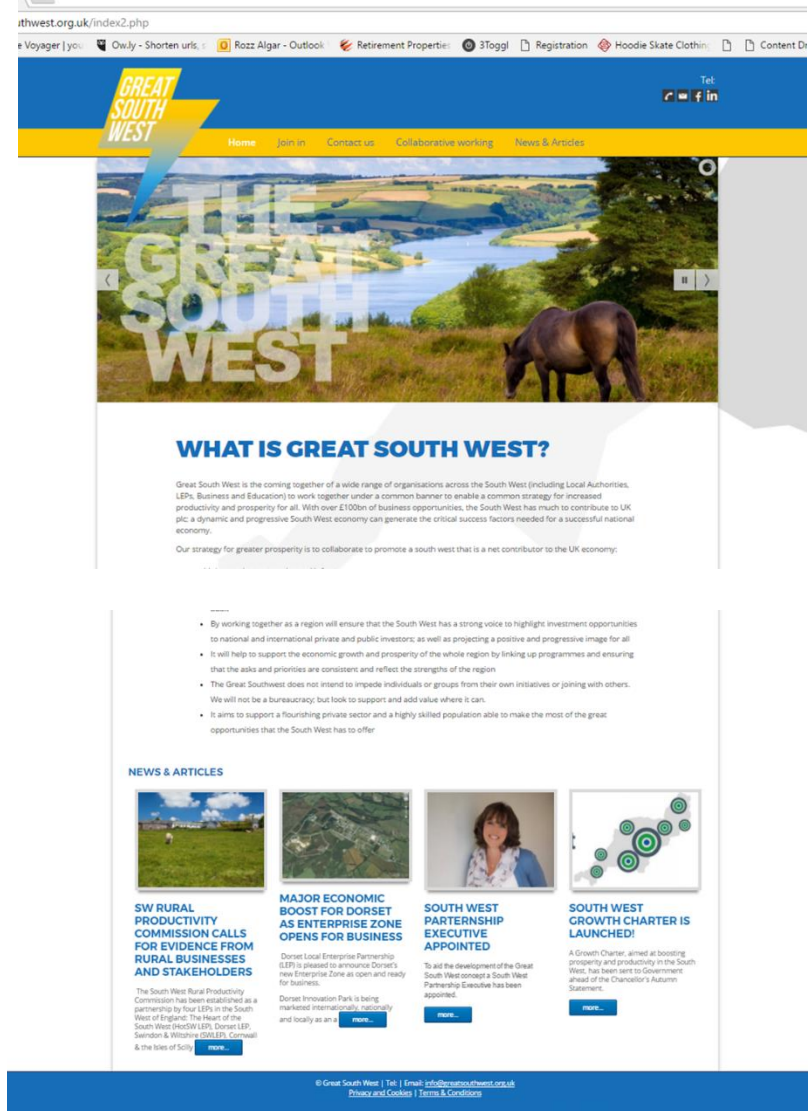
A LinkedIn group has also been set up which will become active post Purdah.

Email Communications

Rozz will now be using rozz@greatsouthwest.org.uk for all related communications and an info@ email address has also been set up for general enquiries.

Website

It was agreed that a website would be required as a matter of urgency. The URL www.greatsouthwest.org.uk has been purchased and a proofing site is up and being worked on. (www.greatsouthwest.org.uk/index2.php)



7. Building engagement

Conversations and dialogue are continuing to happen across the area to encourage engagement and raise awareness. Some key points are:

- Rozz Algar is liaising with Katie Jenkins at BEIS to ensure that we are on track and focused
- Bryony Holden liaising with SW Councils
- Various other conversations and meetings are taking place across the region, including with Chambers of Commerce, large organisations and Universities etc., and there is a general agreement that GSW will be socialised at any/every opportunity
- It is clear from conversations to date that West of England the Combined Authority in Bristol are focused internally at the moment and despite gentle discussions they cannot be persuaded to come on board.

- We are continuing to use advocates to encourage the West of England LEP to help forge links with West of England – several have met with Rozz Algar & Chris Garcia
- Rozz & Chris have had informal conversation with West of England officers but have concluded that little could be done to encourage engagement until the autumn because attention was currently focused on setting up their combined authority.

The main emphasis now is focused on being ready post the election to accelerate getting businesses and universities across the area to 'sign up' to GSW to build a large portfolio of supporters. This is likely to be visible on the website.

We are also providing SW Councils with material to support the engagement of Local Authorities. See Annex 1 – this is our base briefing sheet text.

Next Steps

The following are the next steps in the process

- Brand identity confirmed – w/c 15th May
- Vision and narrative approved – w/c 22nd May
- 'leaflet' using vision and narrative to be ready to use for engagement – w/c 22nd June
- Website and social media to be ready to go live immediately post election - 9th June
- Comms strategy established to ensure that there are regular updates – liaising with LEP comms teams to share information
- Gently liaising with parties outside of the committed group
- Working via Bryony at SW Councils to engage with Local Authorities
- Working with Katie Jenkins at BEIS to ensure that GSW is focused in the right direction

What is Great South West

In order to compete with other UK and international regions, Great South West is the coming together of a wide range of organisations across the South West (including Local Authorities, LEPs, Business and Education) to work together under a common banner to enable a common strategy for increased productivity and prosperity for all. With over £100bn of business opportunities, the South West has much to contribute to UK plc; a dynamic and progressive South West economy can generate the critical success factors needed for a successful national economy.

Our strategy for greater prosperity is to collaborate to promote a south west that is net contributor to the UK economy:

- with innovation, enterprise and infrastructure
- with productive people and rewarding careers within our area
- focused on our natural capital and sharing the benefits for all

We are focused towards having a clear and consistent strategy in time for the Autumn Statement.

What does that mean in practice?

- Great South West looks to build on existing good practice and collaborative working such as the science and innovation audit
- By working together as a region will ensure that the South West has a strong voice to highlight investment opportunities to national and international private and public investors; as well as projecting a positive and progressive image for all
- It will help to support the economic growth and prosperity of the whole region by linking up programmes and ensuring that the asks and priorities are consistent and reflect the strengths of the region
- The Great Southwest does not intend to impede individuals or groups from their own initiatives or joining with others. We will not be a bureaucracy; but look to support and add value where it can.
- It aims to support a flourishing private sector and a highly skilled population able to make the most of the great opportunities that the South West has to offer

Who should be involved

We look to build a network of partners who all believe strongly in the economic potential of the South West region and support the need for a combined effort by national and local government, education and business to realise that potential.

Great South West is not limited in its scope and looks to involve people, businesses, social enterprises, educational institutions and local authorities from across the region

What it is not

Great South West is not trying to replicate something from the past:

- It is not a RDA or a Devolution body
- It does not have an exclusive geography
- Neither is it mandatory or exclusive