



## Great South West Pan Regional Partnership

### Board Working Lunch, 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023 – Follow Up Note

#### 1. Summary

This paper provides the Great South West (GSW) Board with a summary of the key points raised and discussed at its Working Lunch on 12<sup>th</sup> December. It confirms decisions which the meeting took following discussion of the Board Reset Paper and Revised Partnership Budget, circulated in advance of the session, and the comments provided by Board members in advance but who were unable to attend in person

#### 2. Decisions Taken By GSW Board

- Agreed to partner contributions for GSW operations from each local authority, University and LEP on the GSW Board to be set at £5,000 for 2023/24 and £10,000 for 2024/25
- Noted that the majority of partners have confirmed their contributions to the GSW in advance or at the meeting - two organisations (Devon County Council and Exeter University) were unable to confirm their contributions at the time of the meeting and the GSW Director will follow up directly with these partners. *Note – BCP has now confirmed its partner contributions and broad support for the proposals*
- Approved each of the recommendations set out in the *Partnership Board Reset Briefing Paper* of 30<sup>th</sup> November
- Approved the revised partnership budget to June 2025, set out in the *Budget Paper* of 7<sup>th</sup> December
- Approved the establishment of a dedicated Executive Team to create the necessary capacity to take forward the revised priorities of the GSW, as recommended in the *Partnership Reset Board Briefing Paper* and supported by the *Budget Paper*
- Agreed that any HotSW LEP funds earmarked within the budget be ringfenced and subject to the outcome of the transition process currently being taking forward by local authority partners and the LEP Board
- Action each Board member to provide a list of 10 senior business leaders and influencers who would be key to mobilising behind the GSW and our engagement with ministers and investors in Westminster and in national campaigns for the region
- Agreed to host the planned GSW Annual Conference in early September 2024, complementing a series of Westminster events during the year for London audiences



### 3. Key Points Raised

The meeting allowed for Board members to share their reflections on the progress of the partnership so far, the points raised in the Board Reset paper and how the GSW needs to work moving forward. The comments and formal positions on the recommendations of the two papers received from Board members unable to attend the session in person were also shared during the meeting to inform the discussion.

In summary the key points raised were as follows:

- the 6Cs appear to provide a good framework for the GSW work programme
- a much clearer focus on priorities, with a clear work plan with agreed milestones, deliverables and outcome is warmly welcomed going forward
- supportive of the changes to board format, the focus of the officer group and strategic focus
- very pleased to see the focus on in person/hybrid meetings to ensure we all get to know one another and understand our collective strengths
- agreement to the need to resource the partnership but there needs to be recognition generally of the budgetary challenges which local authorities presently face
- the workstreams that are proposed need to have clear TOR, clarity of purpose/focus and clear deliverables/outcomes/outputs. Work streams need to have clearly defined objectives. The lack of this to date could be part of the reason for limited buy-in
- focus on blue / green should be retained in the revised strategic focus as it is where GSW can add most value; the other work streams need to ensure energy transition as part of their focus. We should also encourage GSW to do more in support of nuclear (SMRs etc).
- important to ensure that the revised/reworked narrative includes 'creative' in the same phrase as 'key technologies and innovation' – it can be in its widest interpretation, but not including this word, is *de facto* not recognising a major strength across the whole of the GSW region
- the revised strategic framework gives us more of a structure – we need to be clear what the distinct offer is from the region which is globally competitive and unique within the UK and of scale, investible and attractive
- our work engaging Westminster and London generally really needs to step up and it's good to see that the paper is recognising this – we need to break out of our internally focused approach and agenda and understand we need to look outwardly and make



the case more forcibly for the key industries and markets where we really have a lot to champion

- in order to get senior business leaders to get behind our agenda we need to make it relevant to business – cut through the noise and get the politics out of the way; otherwise, it will be really hard to mobilise them behind our work
- we need to mobilise our big hitters who have direct engagement into Westminster – if the chancellor calls and wants a meeting we need to be confident in knowing who we need to line up as our key voices and players
- we need to sell the region better utilizing the asset base more effectively, getting the APPG more aligned and being clear what we want our MPs to lobby for us

Following the discussion and the feedback submitted by members unable to attend the meeting in person, the Board approved the recommendations set out in *Board Reset* and *Revised Partnership Budget* papers. However, it was agreed that the HotSW LEP funds earmarked within the budget to support legacy activities which will transfer into the GSW should be ringfenced and subject to the transition process being taken forward by the LEP Board and constituent local authorities. At the time of the Board working lunch three organisations (Devon County Council, BCP Council and Exeter University) were not able to confirm their position prior to session. The Board asked the GSW Director to follow up with these partners to move the proposals forward. Subsequent to the session, BCP Council has now confirmed their broad approval for the proposals and its contributions for the financial years 2023/24 and 2024/25, in line with the recommendations set out in the Reset Paper.

The Board has also recognised the need to develop a pool of senior business leaders and influencers who can be mobilized to support the GSW in our engagement with Westminster and in national compaigns. Each member of the Board is asked to share a list of 10 key players within / has a relationship with the region whom we can look to approach as part of the wider advocacy work we will advance in 2024.

There was also discussion on the proposed timing of the GSW Annual Conference which has been earmarked in the work programme as a key opportunity to promote and position the region with national figures. In light of the political cycle and the expected timing of the general election, members agreed on aiming to host the event in the region in early September before the party conferences and look to land senior figures to attend.

#### 4. Next Steps

The GSW Director will work with the Officer Group to develop out the work programme in line with the refocused strategic focus and underpinning budget. Further dialogue will also be undertaken with remaining Board members to secure their commitment to the proposals approved by the Board.



We will also move forward with recruitment for the Executive Team in close consultation with the Accountable Body and Plymouth University as the employer of the team. Additionally, Board meeting dates and timings will be updated to reflect the shift to in-person sessions around the region with an extended meeting programme. A 'save the date' for the annual conference in September will also be circulated in early new year once we have established available venues.

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**Great South West**