

June 2016

## **What does Devolution mean for the Heart of the South West - and for Plymouth?**

Since the submission of the Statement of Intent in September 2015, the Heart of the South West Partnership have been working together to try and draw down greater powers, funding and freedoms from Government by securing a Devolution Deal for the area.

## **There are a number of underlying reasons to pursue a Devolution Deal and Combined Authority as a Heart of the South West Partnership**

The partnership has agreed the rationale and benefits for being involved in this process as follows:

- This is a unique opportunity to release powers and funding from Whitehall and enable us to have greater influence to deliver on the priorities we know are important to our sub-region
- It places our Partnership into an exclusive club with the 10 other deal areas and the advantages this can bring in terms of incremental shifts of power from the centre to local areas
- It is the start of an ongoing process that will allow us to build on our track record and credibility for delivery that makes a tangible difference to our communities

By working together as a Partnership we have a stronger voice with Government and greater clarity about our shared priorities. It puts decision-making closer to our communities so that we can plan, sequence and deliver what our areas need over the longer term. It will create a firm foundation for working together and for having conversations at a strategic level with neighbouring areas across the South West.

## **The benefits across the whole partnership of working together towards a Devolution Deal include access to new powers, for example around:**

- **Transport** – for example around bus franchises, and determining local bus network routes
- **Learning and Skills**– for example, control of the Adult Education Budget to redesign further education
- **Business Support** – having the freedom to join up a range of Government agencies locally to provide a better, more coordinated offer to businesses
- **Employment Support** – the ability to influence commissioning of the new DWP Health and Work Programme
- **Land and Housing** – greater influence over the use or disposal of central Government land and assets, and working with Government on planning reforms

# Devolution

for the Heart of the South West

## **Benefits for Plymouth**

The transfer of powers and control of funding from central Government will enable decisions to be taken closer to the point of service delivery, and will allow greater flexibility to respond to the needs of local communities. In this way, a Devolution Deal will support the themes in Plymouth City Council's Corporate Plan.

The Heart of the South West Prospectus for Productivity has a strong emphasis on driving growth and is entirely consistent with Plymouth City Council's Corporate Plan ambitions around jobs, skills, homes, investment and infrastructure. Whilst we will work together across the partnership to produce a Productivity Plan, in order to fully capitalise on the transformational opportunities in the Plan, we will require freedoms and flexibilities from Government that we don't currently have.

For Plymouth, this includes the focus on developing our expertise around the marine sector to make the city a centre of expertise of global significance, attracting international investment and research that will drive enterprise and innovation, creating high quality employment, and raising skills levels. Devolved powers will be geared around supporting the Plymouth and South West Peninsula City Deal to ensure it reaches its full potential and the benefits are widely felt.

The Prospectus sets out proposals to take control of adult education budgets, to have a greater influence over post 16 skills, and to work with DWP to help people back into work. There have been some excellent pilot projects in Plymouth, for example to help plug skills gaps in the construction industry, to encourage the take up of apprenticeships, and to inspire young people into manufacturing and engineering careers. Devolved funding streams will help us to do more and will provide the flexibility to re-shape the skills training on offer to match what employers need to grow their businesses.