

**WIDER SOUTH EAST SUMMIT 11 JANUARY 2019:  
“ADDRESSING GROWTH CHALLENGES ACROSS THE WIDER SOUTH EAST”  
NOTE OF KEY POINTS**

**1. Summit**

- 1.1 The Summit was held in the Living Room at City Hall on 11 January 2019. There were short presentations and panel discussions from representatives across the three regions, including a keynote address by the Mayor of London Sadiq Khan.
- 1.2 The theme of the Summit was ‘Addressing Growth Challenges Across the Wider South East (WSE)’ and attracted over 100 senior Councillors, LEPs and officers from across the WSE.
- 1.3 It was the first Summit since the draft London Plan was submitted for Examination in Public (EiP), starting the following week (15 January). Summit discussion therefore focused on possible joint actions building on previous member discussions and the approach set out in the emerging London Plan. The outcomes of the EiP and next steps on the London Plan will also remain a key issue for the WSE political partnership, to understand the implications for joint working.
- 1.4 It was evident from the contributions to the plenary sessions and the table discussions (also see summaries in Annex A and B) that there is an appetite to build on the WSE work to date and develop more substantive collaboration between the councils and other organisations involved.

**2. Key Themes Emerging from the Discussion**

- 2.1 Four principal strands of activity were referred to during the discussion:
- 2.2 Consolidating the collaboration - Several contributors referred to the potential for consolidating and deepening the collaboration between the organisations involved in the WSE work. The presence of key members from the new Sub-National Transport Bodies (Transport for the South East, England’s Economic Heartland and Transport East) was valued. Reference was also made to strengthening the collective voice of local government following discussions between the chairs of the East of England LGA and South East England Councils. One contributor suggested whether the WSE Political Steering Group should meet more often to help speed progress.
- 2.3 One voice - Contributors from the platform and the floor spoke about the value of more joint cross-party/cross-tier initiatives to influence government. This was also raised in several of the table discussions. Examples of where this would be useful include:
  - Making the infrastructure investment case;
  - Articulating the benefits of economic growth in the WSE for the national economy;
  - Pursuing policy improvements on, for example, action to accelerate residential development; or influencing Government policy where it is having unintended negative consequences eg. permitted development rights which are reducing funding for infrastructure/affordable housing and allowing unplanned development.
- 2.4 Pooling resources - Points were also made about scope for joint work across the WSE including, for example, pooling or jointly commissioning research. Two examples included: research on the future of town and city centres, and the GLA’s Smart Digital Development Data project which makes gathering / analysing / disseminating development data more effective.
- 2.5 Specific priorities and opportunities for collaboration - Several contributors referred to the value of exploring collaboration on specific growth opportunities - reference was made to the Thames Estuary, the Oxford-Milton Keynes-Cambridge Arc, the London-Stansted-Cambridge Corridor and emerging Garden Communities. One contributor suggested that comprehensive mapping of the possible opportunities could be a way of building momentum. Working together could also focus on strategic cross boundary issues such as commuting, housing, homelessness, skills, economic growth, and the ‘willing partners’ approach set out in the draft London Plan.
- 2.6 **The over-riding challenge and opportunity is to agree a resource-light way of building momentum following the Summit and making progress on these four themes.**

## **ANNEX A: TABLE DISCUSSION 1 - SPECIFIC PRIORITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION ON 'GOOD GROWTH'**

### **SUMMARY OF TABLE DISCUSSION FEEDBACK**

#### Employment

- Facilitate moving/promoting employment opportunities outside London to provide jobs locally and reduce travel and take pressure off London.
- Facilitate bilateral discussion on these opportunities.
- Build on existing employment sector clusters eg. film/media, and corridors eg. London-Stansted-Cambridge and London-Reading.
- Consider Garden Communities in Essex and Herts for long term locations.

#### Pooling resources

- Build and share professional skills where there is a deficit/lack of understanding eg. development viability.
- Work with Sub National Transport Bodies to ensure we are using the same evidence base and do not duplicate any work.
- Perhaps undertake some joint research, for example the impact of technology on commuting patterns or the current experiences of the local high street.
- Represent the opportunities for growth across the WSE in a geographical format.

#### Share experiences and innovation

- Learn from innovation in other areas in the UK and internationally (Milton Keynes was cited as an example, smart ticketing, smart motorways, setting up of development companies).
- Highlight examples of collaboration that has worked well – there should be many in the WSE.

#### One Voice

- Agree a long-term vision that is cross-party on a number of issues, such as housing, strategic transport, green belt, economic development.
- Undertake more prioritising with regards to what the WSE PSG focuses on. Perhaps have one priority for the WSE and concentrate fully on that?
- Ensure existing assets are fully utilised before moving on to build new assets (improved understanding of existing housing stock compared against need was an example here).
- Continue and improve on the lobbying efforts and ensure all opportunities are utilised (eg. PDR consultation).
- Agree and lobby on strategic infrastructure to present a strong voice to central government. This needs a generic acceptance that the region has seen a significant transport investment shortfall over decades, which requires filling before residents in some areas would accept further growth.

#### Improved collaboration

- Work more collaboratively across administrative boundaries, eg. pooling housing targets and infrastructure projects across borders, jointly developing local strategic plans with neighbouring authorities. This may help with funding and gaining more concessions from central government.
- Engage more proactively with LEPs and key businesses, including SMEs and developers to strengthen the case to government.
- Engage further with less obvious partners, such as universities and private sector firms to stimulate debate and innovation.
- More detail on how to engage with the Mayor and GLA on the 'willing partner' approach.
- Some areas have concerns about an outmigration of homeless people from London.

## ANNEX B: TABLE DISCUSSION 2 - SHAPING WSE PRIORITIES FOR 2019

### SUMMARY OF TABLE DISCUSSION FEEDBACK

#### Employment

- Areas of collaboration on economy and jobs between London and the rest of the WSE should be explored to ensure employment hubs grow outside London as well.

#### Pooling resources

- Mapping of the willing partners and their specific asks and offers.
- Development and planning resources and skills across WSE, including new ways of working.

#### Sharing experience and innovation

- How to deliver more affordable housing and land value capture or the use of pension funds.
- Ensure places are built to high quality standards, cannot leave this purely to the market.

#### One Voice

- Articulate the strategic infrastructure requirements for the WSE, including links with other English regions. Need to co-ordinate and align priorities with STBs.
- Establish a statement of intent.

#### Improved collaboration

- Develop a common approach and standards for housing and transport data to enable improved coordination and collection of data across the WSE.
- Explore through-ticketing across the WSE and across different transport modes.
- Meet more often as the WSE PSG to
  - Monitor delivery of relevant aspects of the London Plan and the implications if WSE fails to meet housing needs.
  - Deliver a programme of work on engagement with 'willing partners' and expectations.

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