

Is there a strategy for the central South?

Professor John Denham

Dr Simon Eden

Southern Policy Centre

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Why a 'regional' perspective?

- Powers and resources devolved to city regions and strategic corridors
- Promoting the region to potential investors
- Effective policy implementation
- A powerful voice to influence national debate

The Project

- We examined existing strategies and plans: that's what the central South says to the world
- We looked across the geography of three LEPs: Dorset, EM3 and Solent
- We held three seminars to 'road test' with experts our emerging conclusions on the economy, housing & planning and infrastructure

What makes a 'region'?

“What is your asset or edge?”

Lord Jim O'Neill

- Compelling future vision based on shared strengths and challenges
- A robust cross-sector partnership
- A clear geography
- Common public investment priorities, shared delivery plan
- Strong levels of private sector investment
- Strong business, higher education, third sector networks
- A clear and strong marketing message
- A distinctive and authoritative voice to government

What makes a 'region'?

- No re-organisation
- No re-drawing of boundaries
- But... a shared narrative
- ... which complements individual ambitions and activities

Current headline messages

Defined by institutional boundaries:

- *‘The Enterprise M3 area is a national asset’* (EM3 LEP)
- *‘Dorset is a county with tremendous opportunities’* (Dorset LEP)
- *‘An internationally-recognised economic hub, the **Solent...**’* (Solent LEP)
- *“**Southampton** – a city of opportunity where everyone thrives”* (SCC)

Current headline messages

Perhaps to be expected, but the picture painted is one of:

- No presentation of a common narrative
- No reinforcement of shared ambitions
- Little acknowledgement of shared challenges or opportunities
- Occasional recognition of the importance of collaboration

Building blocks for a regional strategy?

- Cooperation and collaboration
- Economic synergies
- Shared challenges
- Gateway region
- Critical infrastructure
- Natural environment
- HE, culture and heritage
- Shared aspirations
- Shared sense of place

Co-operation & Collaboration

Examples of well-developed cross-boundary partnerships between LEPs and between local authorities in support of key economic sectors, planning and transport, and in response to government initiatives:

- Sectoral: South coast marine cluster
- HE: Innovation South
- Transport: Regional connectivity reviews
- Energy: Regional energy strategies
- Planning: PfSH

Economic synergies

- All three LEPs identify **defence and aerospace** as key sectors. **Marine and maritime** are of particular importance to the coastal LEPs.
- The **digital economy**, which ranges from gaming to big data and from creative industries to 5G communications, is a strength in all three areas.
- **Health, life sciences, and medtech** ranging from innovative service delivery, to pharmaceuticals and health data, are priorities across the study area.
- **Business and financial services** are priorities for Dorset and EM3 LEP.
- **Advanced engineering and manufacturing, digital enabling technologies**, and **life sciences** are seen as important areas of capacity and expertise.

Shared challenges

Dorset, parts of South Hampshire, Southampton, Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight share economic challenges of:

- improving productivity and economic growth rates
- growing and attracting high performance businesses
- improving skill levels

...less of a challenge in North Hants/Surrey

A 'gateway' region

- *'The two ports...alongside Southampton International Airport, are our three International Gateways, and represent significant economic assets and ensure that the Solent is globally connected.'* **Solent LEP**
- *'Enterprise M3 sits at the heart of a transportation hub connecting UK business to the rest of the world...close to Heathrow, Gatwick and Southampton airports and...Farnborough Airport.... The ports of Southampton and Portsmouth are linked via extensive road and rail connections...'* **Enterprise M3 LEP**
- *'The transport connections to and around Dorset make the county an excellent gateway to the rest of the UK, Europe and beyond'.* **Dorset LEP**

Critical infrastructure

- Common approaches to shared local transport challenges:
 - Solutions to local congestion/access problems
 - Increased utilisation of new low carbon and digital technologies
 - Improved public transport
 - South East Transport review strategic priorities match LEP's
 - M3/A34 junction
 - A27-M27 Corridor
 - South Western Mainline/M3
 - Cross-Country line/A34
 - Portsmouth line/A3
- ... but they are rarely jointly articulated

- *‘Surrey and Hampshire are known for their rich natural environment. ...two national parks and sites of outstanding natural beauty and heritage... **Enterprise M3 LEP***
- *‘...is bordered by two national parks and with a natural geography comprising three islands and two peninsulas, it has renowned heritage, countryside and coastline’. **Solent LEP***
- *‘The strategic importance and value of Dorset’s natural environment and heritage is recognised internationally...environmental and historical designations cover more than 65% of Dorset’s landscape’. **Dorset LEP***
- *‘World class economy, world class environment’ **New Forest National Park***

Natural environment

- Mix of strong, complementary HE institutions with a broad partnership emerging:

‘Innovation South has 16 universities - a powerful diversity including Southampton, the UK’s number 1 for engineering, and Surrey’s internationally renowned 5G Innovation Centre. High-profile research institutions include the Atomic Weapons Establishment and TRL, the Transport Research Laboratory in Berkshire.’ **Innovation South**

- However, all LEPs name their own HEIs, and only Enterprise M3 highlights universities outside their own area
- Thriving cultural and heritage offer of international repute, but not presented as an integrated offer

HE, culture & heritage

Shared aspirations

- Energy - renewables
- Tourism and the visitor economy
- Climate change – mitigation, adaptation and carbon reduction
- Housing – tackling affordability

- .. *'a new city by the sea – **Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole** – is being created that is comparative in size to Bristol*
- *'We want to build on **Southampton's** unique sea city location'*
- *'Make **Portsmouth** Britain's premier waterfront technology and innovation city'*
- Common understanding of complementary relationship between urban and rural areas

A shared sense of place



But what 'region'?

- Assessed possible 'regional geographies' from South East to single city regions
- Different regions fit different challenges (transport, innovation, service delivery, economic sectors, local focus, voice)

'Best fit':

- Focus on three major coastal cities
- Reaches into Dorset/Hampshire
- Stresses strong links to NE Hants/Surrey/Thames Valley
- Relationship with London
- *'fuzzy boundaries'*



Key:



Waterfront cities



Universities



Interconnected population



Strong cultural offer



Natural environment



Gateway region



Important links

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Waterfront cities



Universities



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Important links

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'The central South'?

- Three waterfront cities: complementary economies and ambitions
- 6 universities
- Large and (potentially) interconnected population
- Strong cultural offer
- Set in distinctive natural environment
- Gateway region
- Important links with South West/NE Hants/Surrey/Thames Valley/London