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Despite stories to the contrary, partnership working in the West of England is alive and well and is continuing more strongly through enhanced partnership arrangements.

The four councils in the West of England are continuing to work together on transport, planning, housing and waste as part of these enhanced arrangements. The councils will continue to engage with key social, environmental, economic and other partners, such as health on these important matters.

The new West of England Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) brings together the members of the West of England Partnership (the four local councils of Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire) and representatives of local businesses. This new partnership between the business community and the councils has already hit the ground running and is working hard to drive sustainable economic growth and prosperity in the West of England.

Through the LEP, the local authorities and the business community have already worked together to successfully lobby for rail electrification of the Great Western line and managed to move all five major transport schemes a step closer to receiving funding from the Government. The LEP has also recently announced Temple Quarter as the West of England's Enterprise Zone which will attract new businesses and deliver almost 17,000 new jobs.

Bristol City Council Leader Barbara Janke said: "The partnership between the four West of England councils is stronger than ever. On a range of issues from transport to the economy, we are pulling in the same direction, and working effectively to make a difference for all our residents. With the formation of the Local Enterprise Partnership, there is even more opportunity to co-operate closely and work with business to lobby Government and bring crucial investment to the West of England."

Cllr John Calway, Chair of West of England Partnership and Vice Chair of the West of England LEP, said: "The West of England has a strong history of successful partnership working which we are building on through the LEP.

"For example, transport remains a key priority for both residents and businesses in the West of England. In recognition of this, the hugely successful West of England Joint Transport Executive Committee will continue in its current form, and will be supported by the West of England Stakeholder Group (which will take a similar form to the West of England Partnership Board) and the LEP. This is an example of how partnership working in the West of England has become even stronger, not only between the councils but with the business community and other stakeholders."

Partnership working in the West of England will be supported by an office that will service the Local Enterprise Partnership Board, and its component groups and will have dedicated staff for certain functions.

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