PRESS RELEASE

28 October 2026

South West Councils Chair welcomes Strategic Mayoral Authorities for the South West

Cllr Bill Revans, Chair of South West Councils, welcomed Chancellor John Healey's commitment to give new powers to the people who know their areas best.

Following the Prime Minister's support for devolution in the region at PMQs last week, the Chancellor has committed to new devolution agreements which will deliver elected Mayors to thousands of communities and bring new regional voices to drive growth in the South West of England.

New Mayoral Strategic Authorities, covering **Wessex** (made up of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole, Dorset, Somerset and Wiltshire), **Devon, Plymouth and Torbay** and a Foundation Strategic Authority for **Cornwall**, are in the final stages of agreement.

Commenting on the announcement, **Cllr Bill Revans, Chair of South West Councils**, said:

Today marks a significant moment for the South West. The Chancellor's support for devolution in Wessex, Devon/Plymouth/Torbay, and Cornwall is hugely exciting for the region and will provide the opportunity to continue to grow our successful regional collaboration with newly elected voices.

For many years, councils and partners across the South West have worked together to make the case for the South West. This announcement reflects the growing strength of that collective voice and a recognition of the enormous contribution the South West makes to the national economy.

This is about more than funding alone. It is about strengthening our voice on the national stage, championing the interests of the towns, cities, coastal communities and rural areas which are the very essence of the South West, and ensuring our region's unique strengths are recognised and supported.

At the same time, it is difficult to celebrate fully as a region while Gloucestershire continues to be left in limbo. With their locally agreed LGR decision on pause, South West Councils wishes to see Gloucestershire achieve Foundation Authority status, and discussions regarding their membership of the West of England Combined Authority progressed.

Today's announcement is an important step forward and the culmination of years of collaborative effort for greater recognition for the South West. We look forward to working with Government and our partners to turn this opportunity into lasting benefits for the people, communities and businesses across our region.

South West Councils will work with all the new structures to continue to drive forward the **South West Voice** initiative to bring local authority leads, national government, and regional partners together to sustain vital collaboration and positive outcomes for the South West.