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Mps & Business Call On Government To Back The South West With Ambitious Growth Charter For Region

Today, on the eve of the Autumn Statement, a group of South West MPs, led by Gary Streeter, along with representatives from Pennon Group and the CBI South West, battled rail chaos to submit their 'South West Growth Charter' to 10 Downing Street.

The Charter, a product of the recent massively over-subscribed South West Growth Summit with Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Sajid Javid MP, outlines key initiatives that the group hope the Government will implement and support to enable growth and prosperity in the South West.

Seeking to mirror the success of the Northern Powerhouse and Midland's Engine, the South West Growth Charter outlines a 'new partnership for the South West' with firm commitments from the region around collaboration, innovation, investment in industry, infrastructure, environment and people, sharing the benefits of growth across a self-sustaining region. In return the charter seeks a new Government partnership with the South West, investment in digital, energy and transport connectivity.

The presentation of the Charter follows an impassioned Westminster Hall debate this morning which discussed growth in the South West. Gary Streeter MP, who tabled the debate, along with MPs from the region, pressed the case for investment and growth with Industrial Strategy Minister, Jesse Norman who heard the business and industrial case for renewed attention and focus on the South West. Speaking in the debate, Gary Streeter said that digital connectivity is 'more important than ever' in the region, and that the three key themes for his debate were 'infrastructure, infrastructure, infrastructure.'

Speaking on the Charter in more detail, Mr. Streeter said:

'I am strongly supporting the South West Growth Charter that has captured the imagination of the region. It is a positive, forward-looking vision for the region's economic future. It sets out the ideas for making the most of the opportunities available as the UK leaves the European Union. It spells out the economic framework the region needs in terms of transforming infrastructure, energy requirements and connectivity. To make the most of these opportunities it is crucial that business works hand in glove with the Local Enterprise Partnerships in Devon, Cornwall and Somerset and local Members of Parliament who are able to speak up for the region in the House of Commons.'

I am very keen to support this business initiative and congratulate Pennon Group for taking the lead and look forward to working with them and businesses across the region to ensure we receive our fair share of investment and infrastructure.'

Sarah Heald, Director of Corporate Affairs at Pennon Group, said:

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"The South West is a place where innovative, successful businesses like Pennon are able to thrive in spectacular surroundings. But more than that, the South West is a peninsula perfectly positioned to drive sustainable, inclusive economic growth."

"Today MPs from across the region threw their weight behind the South West Growth Charter sending a resounding message to Government that the South West is ready for a new partnership for growth, recognising its true potential. The South West is a great place to live, invest and do business. We look forward to tomorrow's autumn statement as an opportunity for Government to #backthesouthwest"

ENDS

Notes to editors:

South West Growth Charter: A New Partnership for the South West

OUR COMMITMENTS:

TO COLLABORATE FOR GROWTH

We will drive greater collaboration between business, public sector partners and Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) focused on achieving growth for the South West.

TO INVEST IN A SELF-SUSTAINING SOUTH WEST

We will invest in building regional self-sufficiency, seeking to decrease reliance on grant aid and increase innovative funding solutions.

TO INVEST IN INNOVATION, INDUSTRY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

We will invest in innovation, with collaborative new industrial clusters around aerospace, marine, defence, energy, engineering and digital technology. We will support their infrastructure requirements for growth.

TO INVEST IN PRODUCTIVE PEOPLE AND RETAIN TALENT WITHIN OUR REGION

We will invest in a stronger partnership between education, business, public sector partners and LEPs focused on boosting productivity, attracting high-quality direct investment and nurturing high-value businesses to retain talent in the South West.

TO INVEST IN OUR ENVIRONMENT AND SHARE THE BENEFITS OF GROWTH

We will drive increased investment in our environment, infrastructure, in places and in sharing the benefits of growth across our region.

OUR ASKS:

A NEW GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP WITH THE SOUTH WEST

A firm focus on South West Growth in the Government's Industrial Strategy and a funding roadmap so the South West can move from funding reliance to more innovative funding solutions.

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INVESTMENT IN DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY: HIGH-SPEED BUSINESS

Ultra-Fast South West, a new partnership with the private sector to deliver ultra-fast South West 5G mobile, fibre and wireless broadband through to 90% of the population by 2030.

INVESTMENT IN ENERGY CONNECTIVITY: 'SWITCHING ON' TO OPPORTUNITY

Addressing transmission and distribution restrictions that restrain regional growth, to be completed by 2025.

A renewed focus from Ofgem, National Grid and Western Power Distribution.

INVESTMENT IN TRANSPORT CONNECTIVITY: GETTING BUSINESS MOVING

Backing the Peninsula Rail Taskforce's long-term plan for rail improvements to be outlined in the report to be published later this year.

Re-affirming commitments to road improvement projects in the pipeline (A303, A30, A38, A358).

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