

West of England Strategy Discussion Paper Summary of Engagement

Introduction

Our vision is for all residents to benefit from more job opportunities, a stronger economy and higher quality of life. To achieve this, we need to develop a strategy that will be owned by everyone, allowing us to present a joined-up voice to government and promote the region nationally and internationally.

Earlier this year, we worked with the Local Enterprise Partnership, our constituent councils, business and others to develop a regional strategy discussion paper. Economic growth that benefits every resident is our main goal and the discussion paper includes high-level plans for delivering economic growth for all, under three pillars:

- Businesses that succeed
- World class skills for employment
- Infrastructure fit for the future

Engagement Activities

We want businesses, organisations and others to engage with us as we develop our strategy and it's vital we capture their views on how we can improve our ways of working and ensure we can drive economic growth and improve the quality of life for all.

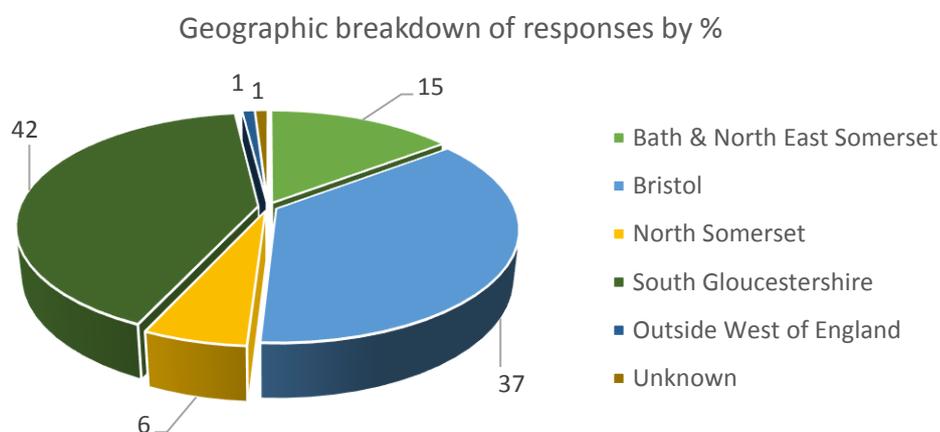
We launched the West of England strategy discussion paper at the Bristol Business School at UWE on Wednesday 27 July. This event marked the beginning of our engagement activities to reach key stakeholders within both the business and CVS community with the purpose to:

- Inform key stakeholders about the West of England strategy discussion paper
- Provide the evidence base gathered that has fed into the document
- Engage, seek views and gather feedback

We used online and offline channels to reach over 15,000 organisations and individuals. For more information on our methods for reaching stakeholders please see Annex 1.

Respondent demographics

The majority of responses we received were from South Gloucestershire, followed by Bristol and then Bath & North East Somerset.



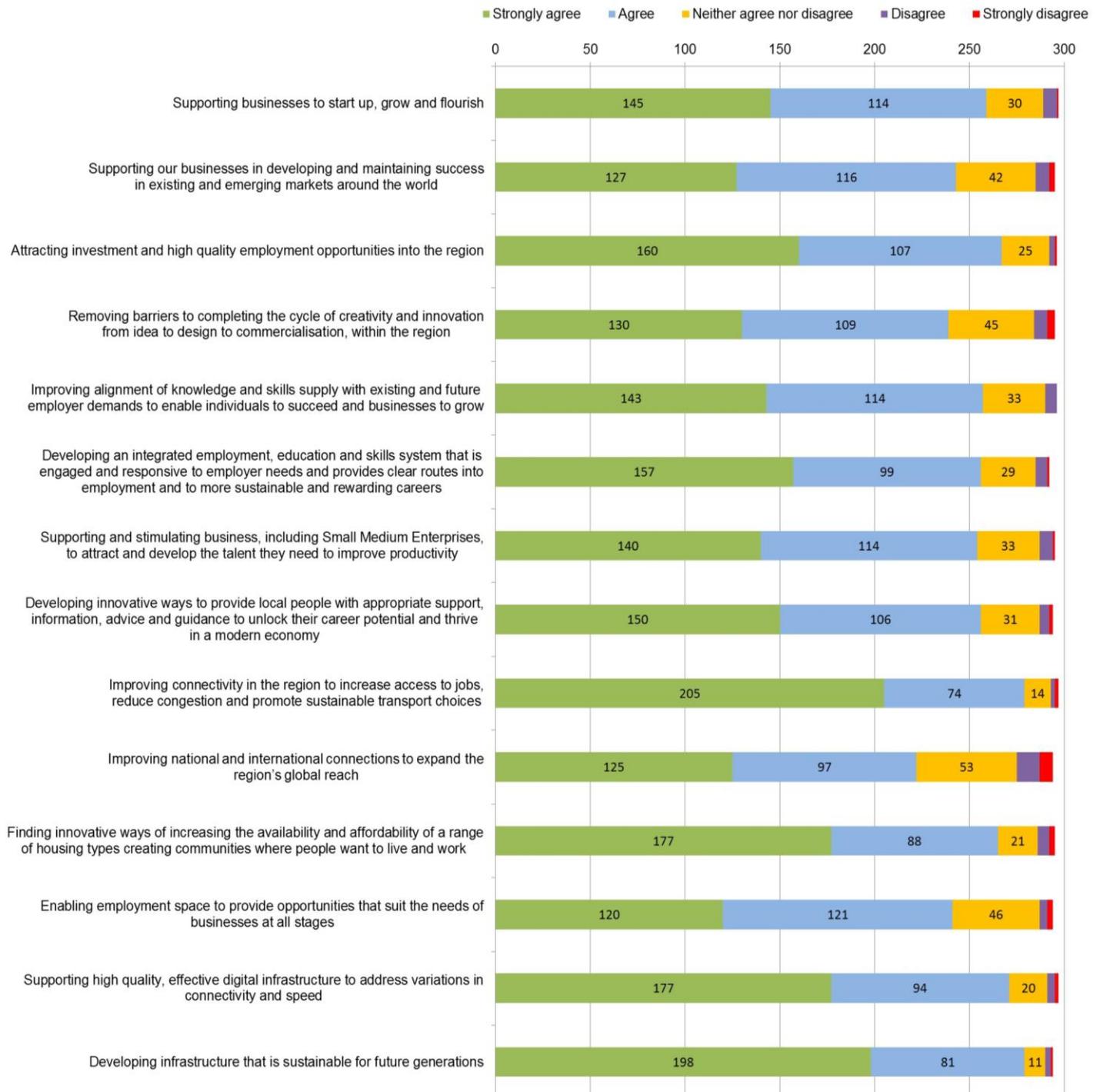
For more a further break down on age, gender, ethnicity and disability status, please see Annex 2.

Findings

An online survey was open for 9 weeks, from 27 July to 27 September. 301 respondents provided feedback via the online survey.

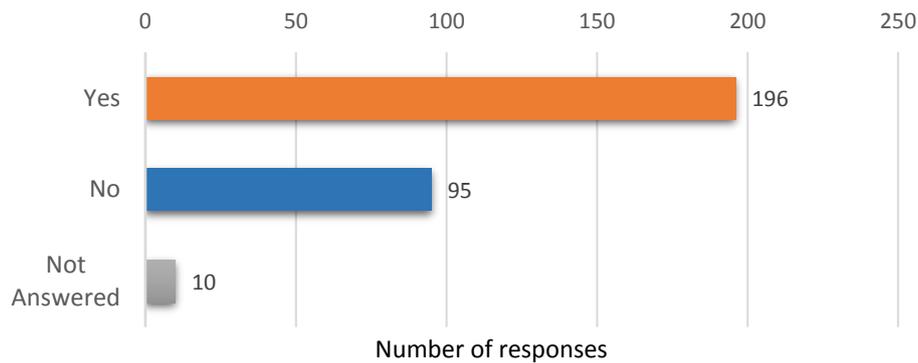
Overall, 85% either Strongly Agreed or Agreed with the principal areas of focus.

Support for Areas of focus
Number of respondents



As a follow up, respondents were further asked to comment on any other challenges to future prosperity they thought the strategy should address.

Are there any other challenges to future prosperity you think we should address?



196 online respondents commented within the free text responses. All free text responses were read and analysed independently by two individuals.

The highest number of responses (almost 30%) referred to the challenge of **transport** for the region (including infrastructure, existing and as related to potential new developments, public transport, cost and congestion). There were a number of direct responses relating to Bristol Airport through the online survey, received via email, and drop in sessions.

13% referenced **equality and diversity** as an issue, with particular reference to need for a strategy that provides benefit for all.

The **environment** featured strongly as another challenge with disappointment that there was not more explicit reference to **climate change** (almost 13%) **air quality** (6%) and **protecting our natural environment** (8%).

8% of on-line respondents made a reference to the fact that the region covers a large **rural** area as well as urban environment, and both need to be served by this strategy.

6% of respondents explicitly referenced **skills** and the need for skills for all, not just the young, nor just high tech. **Brexit** was identified as a specific issue (6%) that may impact on the region. 4% referenced the **creative and visitor economy** that is so important to this region. Digital and digital connectivity were recognised as opportunities with their own challenges.

Next steps

Feedback will be reflected in a revised regional strategy that will be published in early 2018.

The Strategy will form the basis of the business plan for the West of England Combined Authority and will inform the regional response to the Government’s Industrial Strategy.

Annex 1: Engagement Activities

The engagement programme included a range of methods through online and offline channels, reaching over 15,000 individuals/organisations.

Online activities:

Websites – WECA, LEP and external partners

- 3762 people visited the strategy page of the West of England Combined Authority website

Press Releases and newsletters:

- 442 people visited the news release page about the strategy, which was promoted in the West of England Combined Authority newsletter

Social Media:

Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook

- @westofenglanca posted 21 tweets with links to the discussion document and dates for 1:2:1 sessions. These generated 163 clicks through to our website with a total of 587 engagements (any interaction with the tweet). In total, the tweets had 33,193 impressions – that is the number of times users saw the messaging.
- The document was independently promoted on twitter by @bw_businesswest, @FSBGlosandWoE, @policybristol, @duriejames, @sust_ian, @bleadernews and @darrenhall2015 as well as by local authorities.

Emails:

- LEP Sector groups, Key Business Stakeholders, Community Groups, Training Providers

1:2:1 sessions:

- 20 people attended the 6 drop-in sessions

Roundtables:

- 77 people attended and took part in the 7 roundtables

Offline activities:

Six drop-in sessions were held within the Local Authority areas, these were publicised through multiple online channels. 20 people took up the opportunity to speak to someone 1:2:1. Most individuals booked an appointment in advance.

- Monday 11 September – Kingswood, South Gloucestershire
- Tuesday 12 September – The Hive, North Somerset
- Wednesday 13 September – Engine Shed, Bristol
- Monday 18 September – Filwood Green Business Park, Bristol
- Monday 25 September – The Guildhall, Bath & North East Somerset
- Tuesday 26 September – Bristol & Bath Science Park, South Gloucestershire

Seven Roundtables were held with targeted audiences to discuss some of the key issues in the West of England Strategy discussion paper and to obtain their professional input. In total 77 people took part in these discussions.

- Tuesday 19 September (AM) – High Tech
Hosted by the LEP High Tech sector group and facilitated by Mike Bartley, High Tech sector chair
- Tuesday 19 September (PM) – Business Roundtable
Hosted by West of England Combined Authority and facilitated by Tim Bowles, West of England Mayor
- Wednesday 20 September (AM) – SME Breakfast
Hosted by NatWest and facilitated by Matt Hatcher, Director Commercial Banking
- Wednesday 20 September (PM) – Skills Roundtable
Hosted by West of England Combined Authority and facilitated by Tim Bowles, West of England Mayor
- Thursday 21 September (AM) – Sustainability, Energy and the environment
Hosted by Bristol Green Capital Partnership (BGCP) and facilitated by Ian Townsend, Chief Executive
- Thursday 21 September (PM) – Creative
Hosted by the LEP Creative sector group and facilitated by Paul Appleby, Creative sector chair
- Friday 29 September (AM) – Infrastructure Roundtable
Hosted by West of England Combined Authority

The face to face roundtables, drop in sessions and emailed responses were almost all representations from sector or interest groups, from the business sector, to civic groups, from the construction industry, 6 groups representing those with an interest in the environment, parish groups (2), and the LEP interest groups (3). Only one appeared to be from an individual. The no shows at booked drop in session have not been included in the numbers (3).

Email submissions

- The West of England Combined Authority received over 40 responses via email or post.

Annex 2: Demographics for the online survey

We received 301 responses via the online survey, below are the geographic statistics from the submissions:

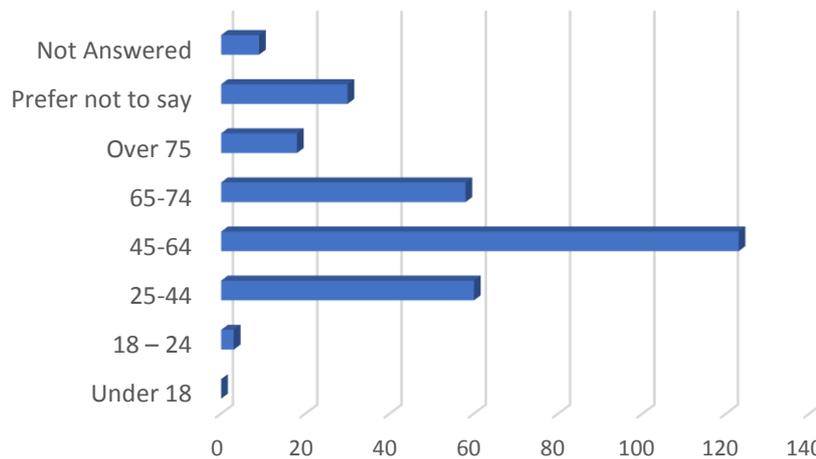
LOCAL AUTHORITY	% OF ONLINE RESPONSES (ROUNDED)
BATH & NORTH EAST SOMERSET	15
BRISTOL	37
NORTH SOMERSET	6
SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE	42
OUTSIDE WEST OF ENGLAND	1
UNKNOWN	1

A breakdown by Ward is available

Several respondents to the online survey also attended a drop-in session, a round table or emailed a response to WECA office (info@westofengland-ca.gov.uk).

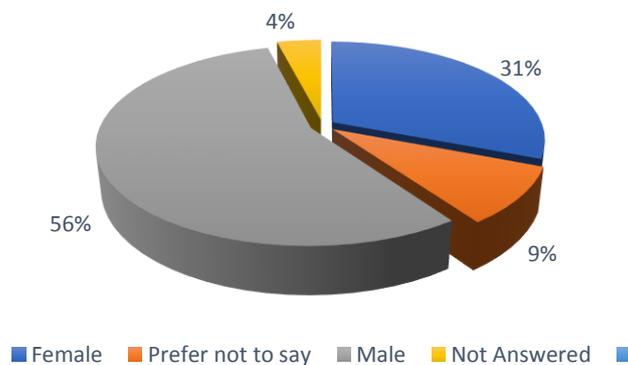
Age of respondents

87% of the total responses provided their age and the results included:



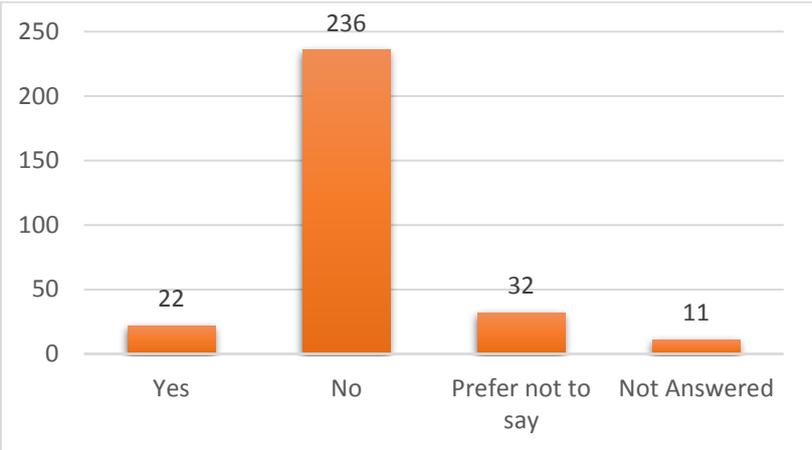
Gender of respondents

87% of the total responses provided their gender and the results included:



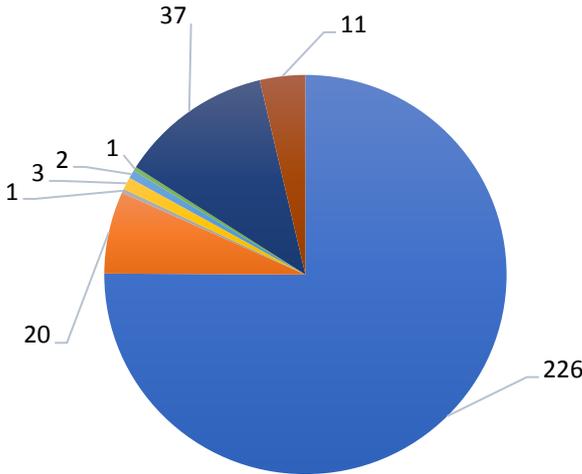
Disability of respondents

86% of the total responses answered the disability question and the results included:



Ethnicity of respondents

84% of the total responses provided their ethnicity and the results included:



- White British background
- Other white background
- Mixed / Dual Heritage
- Black / Black British
- Asian / Asian British
- Other ethnic group
- Prefer not to say
- Not Answered