

**WEST OF
ENGLAND**
Combined Authority

WE ARE
WEST OF ENGLAND
LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP

BUSINESS PLAN

2018-19

INTRODUCTION

The West of England is one of the UK's most prosperous regions with an economy worth over £33.2 billion a year. A net contributor to the national purse, with a population of over 1 million and over 43,000 businesses, our region competes on a global scale.

We will be a driving force for clean and inclusive economic growth in the West of England. We will ensure that people benefit from more job opportunities, a stronger economy and a high quality of life.

In 2016, three councils in the West of England – Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol and South Gloucestershire - signed a devolution deal worth £1 billion. As a result, significant powers and funding have been transferred to the region through the new West of England Combined Authority (WECA) and West of England Mayor.

WECA also provides support to the activities of West of England Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), which includes North Somerset Council.

an economy worth over
£33.2bn
a year



OPERATING FRAMEWORK

The operating framework sets out our priorities and forms the basis of WECA's annual business plan for 2018/19. It will inform our regional response to the Government's Industrial Strategy.

The operating framework identifies three priority areas for this year: Infrastructure fit for the future, World class skills and Businesses that succeed.



BUSINESS PLAN

The business plan on the following pages sets out the key activities that WECA will deliver over the 2018 – 2019 period. It includes plans to bring further investment into transport, homes and skills to ensure the West of England is at the forefront of growth and innovation, where economic, cultural and environmental diversity is celebrated and forms the foundations of prosperity for all.

It is structured around the three strategic aims identified in the operating framework. The plan is focused on next year, however it contains some reference to activity that we are already committed to in the coming years.

High-level aspirations have been identified for each of the three priority areas; more detailed metrics will be developed as part of project development.



WORKING TOWARDS A LOCAL INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

WECA has started discussions with the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) on developing a Local Industrial Strategy for the West of England. This is an important opportunity for the region, as the intention is that funding and further devolution discussions will follow the priorities identified in this process. WECA will work closely with BEIS and across Government to develop this Local Industrial Strategy.

The business plan will be updated as the Local Industrial Strategy is developed and as policy evolves.



FINANCIAL STRATEGY

The medium term financial plan, available on our website, summarises the financial considerations for WECA over the next three years. It covers funding sustainability and aligns investment proposals with the operating framework and our key financial challenges and opportunities.



WORKFORCE AND ORGANISATIONAL DESIGN

WECA is built around the principle of operating as efficiently as possible, maximising opportunities for collaboration with our constituent councils and other partners. A workforce strategy will underpin the business plan, ensuring that WECA has the skills and resources it needs to deliver now, and into the future.

Our four key areas of responsibility are:

- Infrastructure – delivering our ambitions around housing, planning, digital infrastructure and transport.
- Business and skills – attracting inward investment, supporting businesses and developing an ambitious skills agenda.
- Chief executive's office - policy and strategy, legal, democratic services and communications.
- Investment and corporate services – finance, human resources, investment and procurement.

INFRASTRUCTURE FIT FOR THE FUTURE

We need joined-up and reliable transport, to reduce congestion and help people move around the region. This includes suburban rail services, road schemes, improved public transport, as well as better connections for motorbikes, cyclists and pedestrians. This will support the delivery of new homes, as set out in the Joint Spatial Plan. Improved transport will also improve access to jobs, by linking new homes with employment areas.

We will continue to work closely with Government to develop an ambitious Housing Deal, to secure extra investment to accelerate the delivery of new homes, including affordable homes, particularly over the early years of the Joint Spatial Plan.

Activities below are aligned with five objectives:

1. Better links to reduce congestion and connect people
2. Improve national and international connections
3. More affordable homes with a range of housing types
4. Employment spaces to meet the needs of all businesses
5. World-leading digital connections across the region



INFRASTRUCTURE FIT FOR THE FUTURE

OBJECTIVE 1

Better links to reduce congestion and connect people

WHERE WE WANT TO BE

- Reduced level and cost of congestion
- More people travelling to work using sustainable methods (eg walking, cycling, train, bus)
- More reliable services

TITLE	SUMMARY
Suburban rail and MetroWest	Develop plan, with Department for Transport, Network Rail and Great Western Railway, to significantly increase rail usage, reducing congestion and improving air quality.
Bristol Temple Meads	Continue to work with Network Rail, Bristol City Council, Homes England and the University of Bristol to produce a master plan for the redevelopment of Bristol Temple Meads station and surrounding Temple Quarter to create a new, improved gateway to the region.
Roads	<p>Identify a new Key Route Network (KRN) to improve existing transport routes to support new homes and access to employment.</p> <p>Complete business cases looking at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bath & Somer Valley Enterprise Zone • Hengrove • Lockleaze • Hicks Gate • Cribbs/Patchway New Neighbourhood Cycling package • Great Stoke roundabout <p>Complete feasibility studies into:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temple Meads Masterplan • Mass transit options • South Bristol Orbital route • East of Bath link • Freezing Hill Lane • Wraxall Road roundabout
Bus strategy	<p>Identify activities to increase bus usage, and reduce use of cars.</p> <p>To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interim report assessing performance of existing and potential supported services, setting out principles, objectives and funding options. • Review existing network routes, frequencies, stops and interchanges, looking at potential changes and their impact. • Report on future delivery options, including franchising and funding options • Develop bus information strategy. • Report identifying further smart and integrated ticketing opportunities. • Consultation on preferred operating framework.
Cycling and walking routes	Promote active travel, developing a cycling and walking scheme as part of new Joint Local Transport Plan (JLTP).
Integrated Transport Authority functions	<p>As the responsible body, WECA will review and develop arrangements for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus information including real time information • Concessionary travel • Community transport • Supported bus services (joint power with the constituent councils)

INFRASTRUCTURE FIT FOR THE FUTURE

TITLE	SUMMARY
Transport to support Joint Spatial Plan	<p>Co-ordinate, commission and support business case development for transport schemes required to support the Joint Spatial Plan. This includes completing feasibility studies funded by WECA, incorporating the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South East Bristol and Whitchurch • A4-A37 orbital route (including Hicks Gate roundabout improvements) • A37-Bristol Link • A4 MetroBus (Bristol to Keynsham MetroBus) and Callington Road Link • Orbital Metrobus • Park and ride provision • A4 Bristol – east Keynsham • Avon Mill Lane to A4 link • Keynsham rail station improvements • Yate strategic corridor • A432 MetroBus and strategic cycle route. • A432 park and ride • Yate station enhancements • Winterbourne / Frampton Cottrell bypass • A38 (J16, Almondsbury to Falfield) • MetroBus and strategic cycle route to Thornbury (and Buckover), including A38 park and ride • Charfield rail station • M5 J14 improvements • Park and rides around Bristol • M32 park and ride • A4018 park and ride • A38(S) park and ride • Bristol urban living package • Walking and cycling package including strategic cycling routes • Greater Bristol Bus Network 2 • City centre movement
Joint Local Transport Plan	<p>Consult on, and complete, the Joint Local Transport Plan (JLTP).</p> <p>Build on this to develop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New programme of transport schemes to tackle existing and future transport issues, and support the Joint Spatial Plan. • Bus strategy to increase passenger numbers. • Ways of improving air quality and promoting active travel. • Innovative approaches and new technology, eg driverless cars. • Strategic Environmental Assessment to minimise the impact of the JLTP.
Clean Air Zones	<p>Continue work with Bath & North East Somerset Council and Bristol City Council on emerging Clean Air Plans.</p>
Sub National Transport Board	<p>Work with partners in the south west to establish a Sub National Transport Body/Board in shadow form based around existing West of England governance.</p>
Highways England	<p>Agree a Memorandum of Understanding with Highways England to enable greater collaboration and maximise benefits to the travelling public.</p>
Network Rail	<p>Memorandum of Understanding to be signed with Network Rail to enable greater collaboration.</p>

INFRASTRUCTURE FIT FOR THE FUTURE

OBJECTIVE 2 Improve national and international connections		WHERE WE WANT TO BE
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced average travel times to major UK cities • More reliable services • More passengers travelling to and from Bristol Airport by public transport
TITLE	SUMMARY	
Bristol Airport expansion	Complete WECA-commissioned feasibility study on mass transit links to airport.	
Mass transit	Study into mass transit routes to serve South Bristol and the airport, A4 corridor to Bath, Bristol East Fringe and Bristol North Fringe. Consider options and next steps.	
OBJECTIVE 3 More affordable homes with a range of housing types		WHERE WE WANT TO BE
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 105,500 new homes by 2036 • 30,065 affordable homes by 2036
TITLE	SUMMARY	
Delivering the Housing Package	Develop joint working programme with Homes England and registered providers on new ways of delivering affordable homes. Develop joint working with Homes England on acquiring land and infrastructure to help secure new homes.	
Housing Infrastructure Fund	Develop business case to secure full £250m for Bristol Temple Meads to Keynsham A4 corridor and A38-M5 corridor schemes.	
Delivery and infrastructure investment plan	<p>Prepare delivery and infrastructure investment plan with partners including MHCLG, Homes England, DfT, Network Rail, Highways England, Natural England, Environment Agency.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish project management and governance arrangements to develop the plan. • Agree brief and scope and procure any necessary specialist support. • Business case development to target funding streams and investors. 	
Development industry panel	Establish a WECA and Joint Committee Panel to look at quality and design of homes, and explore partnership approaches to delivery.	
Innovation in building new homes	<p>Explore opportunities for innovative ways of delivering new homes, eg off-site manufacturing techniques.</p> <p>Form joint partnerships with new investors, registered providers and Homes England.</p>	
Joint Assets Board	<p>Establish project management and governance arrangements to develop options for a Joint Assets Board.</p> <p>Agree the approach to implement.</p>	
Joint Spatial Plan	<p>Submit to Secretary of State.</p> <p>Programme manage and support the Examination in Public.</p>	
Mayoral Spatial Plan	<p>Develop a Mayoral Spatial Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree scope and approach to development of Mayoral Spatial Plan. • Agree approach to implementation of associated planning powers. 	

INFRASTRUCTURE FIT FOR THE FUTURE

OBJECTIVE 4
Employment spaces to meet the needs of all businesses

WHERE WE WANT TO BE

- More successful businesses starting up and growing in the region
- More businesses in our Enterprise Zones / Areas and other key employment locations

TITLE	SUMMARY
Employment space	Develop portfolio of employment space that meets business demand, supporting growth aspirations set out in JSP and JLTP. Close working with development industry and businesses to identify new opportunities for employment sites, including Enterprise Zones and Areas. To include opportunities for scale-up businesses.

OBJECTIVE 5
World-leading digital connections across the region

WHERE WE WANT TO BE

- Improved broadband coverage
- Improved download and upload speeds
- Improved mobile coverage
- Leaders in 5G technology

TITLE	SUMMARY
Digital Strategy	Complete evidence base to support the development of a West of England Digital Strategy. Agree ambitions for regional digital connectivity and identify priority areas for action. Lead bid for Local Full Fibre Network Challenge Fund Wave 3. Lead bid for 5G Connected Cities funding.

WORLD CLASS SKILLS

We have high employment and a skilled workforce in the region, but there is more to be done. We need to continue work to better align workforce skills with the skills that business in our region need, not only now, but for the future. We have to develop an evidence base and plans that will enable us to do this effectively.

We will help residents progress their careers with better access to training, practical advice and support, which will boost their career aspirations and help them fulfil their potential.

We must also take advantage of the opportunities that joint working presents, through better planning of the education, employment and skills system -for example, developing a regional approach to the new technical reforms being implemented by Government.

We will also begin to take advantage of the benefits of devolution as we move closer to taking control of the Adult Education Budget for the WECA area, enabling us to direct resources in a way that best meet the needs of learners and our economy.

Activities below are aligned with three objectives:

- 1.Improving skills and knowledge supply to meet existing and future demands
- 2.A joined-up education, employment and skills system that meets the region's business needs
- 3.Provide residents with support, information, advice and guidance to unlock their career potential



WORLD CLASS SKILLS

OBJECTIVE 1

Improving skills and knowledge supply to meet existing and future demands

WHERE WE WANT TO BE

- Increased educational attainment (including STEM and vocational training) across all communities.
- More apprenticeship starts / completions / timely completions
- 3,000 individuals supported through the skills innovation pilot, Future Bright

TITLE	SUMMARY
Future Bright	Deliver Future Bright, a project to improve the job prospects of 3,000 people in low paid, low skilled employment.
Partnerships	Build and maintain partnerships with national associations and Government, to attract funding Build on regional partnerships with universities, colleges, further education providers, multi-academy trusts and schools to help us better plan our education, employment and skills system – to benefit residents and employers.
Sector skills development	Develop proposal to improve digital skills, working with Institute of Coding and other partners. Develop proposals for a local Digital Skills Partnership, working with Department for Digital, Culture Media and Sport. Work with Construction Industry Training Board on regional action plan to improve construction skills and availability of workforce.
Skills capital plan	Allocate remaining funds for skills from the Local Growth Fund and develop a long-term skills capital investment plan (aligned with post 16 plan).
Skills Innovation Fund	Develop proposals for a Skills Innovation Fund to support innovative ways to improve skills, linked to key business need.
Apprenticeships and technical education	Develop plan to increase numbers of apprentices in key sectors from all communities, particularly at higher levels (level 4 and above). Develop a regional proposal to maximise the potential of the apprenticeship levy. Develop co-ordinated approach to technical education reforms, including support for a regional Institute of Technology bid. Develop new project to support apprenticeships, working with Careers and Enterprise Company. Work with Apprenticeship Ambassador Network including youth network, and Bristol Black and Ethnic Minority Apprenticeship pilot. Complete Apprenticeship Grant for Employers project.
Adult Education Budget	Develop implementation plan for AEB devolution for 19/20.

OBJECTIVE 2

A joined-up education, employment and skills system that meets the region's business needs

WHERE WE WANT TO BE

- Increased proportion of students from the region studying here
- Higher graduate retention
- Improved educational attainment across all communities
- More apprenticeship starts / completions / timely completions
- More employers providing in-work skills and training

TITLE	SUMMARY
West of England skills plan	Develop a long-term plan for employment and skills, including a specific post 16 plan.
Graduate retention	Develop proposals to increase graduate retention, working with universities and business.

WORLD CLASS SKILLS

OBJECTIVE 3

Provide residents with support, information, advice and guidance to unlock their career potential.

WHERE WE WANT TO BE

- Improved student perception of careers guidance (HE/FE surveys)
- Maintain our below average unemployment rate
- 3,000 individuals supported through the skills innovation pilot, Future Bright

TITLE	SUMMARY
Careers initiative	Review careers advice and guidance and develop proposals to improve this in our region, working closely with partners.
Labour market intelligence	Work with business and other partners to identify future workforce needs to help inform local people's learning and career choices.
Careers Enterprise Company	Host Enterprise Co-ordinators, working for Careers Enterprise Company. Develop regional proposal for a Careers Hub.
Work & Health Programme	Work with Department for Work and Pensions and local providers to ensure local people can access support through the Work and Health Programme. Explore opportunities to develop closer links with health and wellbeing activities, working with key partners including councils and NHS.
Overcoming barriers to employment	Develop proposals to support local people facing barriers to employment. Produce proposals to support those further from the labour market, and develop further bids to European Social Fund.

BUSINESSES THAT SUCCEED

We are an economically successful region and one where businesses start, grow and thrive in high numbers. We have a good business support system in place - but there is more we can do. We want to find better ways to support existing businesses to achieve their potential as well as attracting more businesses to our region. We need to build on our strengths, supporting our key sectors including aerospace, creative and digital, and professional services. We also need to build on the diversity and collaboration between sectors that makes us unique. Increasing productivity and exports are key areas of focus along with continuing to find new ways to support innovation, which is at the heart of so much of our success.

Activities are aligned with four objectives:

1. Helping businesses to start-up, grow and flourish
2. Supporting businesses to make the most of export opportunities
3. Supporting an innovative economy
4. Protecting and promoting our region's culture



BUSINESSES THAT SUCCEED

OBJECTIVE 1

Helping businesses to start-up, grow and flourish

WHERE WE WANT TO BE

- More businesses starting and growing
- Increased productivity
- Increased investment into regional businesses

TITLE	SUMMARY
Growth Hub	Develop and implement improved ways of working for the Growth Hub.
Investment promotion	Work with current and new businesses to support job creation and economic growth in line with regional objectives. Promoting the region at a series of events, including trade fairs and expos. Promoting the region to potential investors. Commission review of Invest Bristol and Bath.
Supporting scale-up	Develop options to provide suitable employment space for growing businesses. Explore options for a business grant scheme to support scale-up companies, to complement ongoing Growth Hub activity. Develop and implement a business engagement programme for strategically-important businesses.

OBJECTIVE 2

Supporting businesses to make the most of export opportunities

WHERE WE WANT TO BE

- Increased exports (goods and services)
- More trade visits and delegations

TITLE	SUMMARY
Business support	Ensure Growth Hub supports business seeking to export and grow.
Increasing export	Investigate options to improve export/trade support activity.
Overseas promotion	Investigate opportunities to jointly promote export for business in the region.

BUSINESSES THAT SUCCEED

OBJECTIVE 3
Supporting an innovative economy

WHERE WE WANT TO BE

- Increased investment in research and development
- More patents registered by companies in the region

TITLE	SUMMARY
Enable investment and innovation	Support the expansion of facilities that enable innovation and collaboration eg, Science Park 2, National Composite Centre. Encourage research and development and innovation to industrialise here through greater partnership with the universities. Support sectors to develop proposals that will help drive growth in and into the region.
5G Test Bed and Trial	To deliver the Smart Tourism 5G test bed project
Energy strategy	To develop and agree an Energy Strategy to set priorities for a resilient, low carbon and affordable local energy system.

OBJECTIVE 4
Protecting and promoting our region's culture

WHERE WE WANT TO BE

- Strong cultural offering in the region

TITLE	SUMMARY
Cultural Strategy	Agree an approach to supporting cultural development in the West of England that will support economic growth and benefit everyone in the region.

CORPORATE SERVICES

OBJECTIVE 1

To support the organisation to deliver its business plan

TITLE	SUMMARY
Industrial Strategy	Co-produce and agree a Local Industrial Strategy for the West of England, working with regional partners and Government. This will enable us to build on our region's strengths to deliver our ambition for clean and inclusive economic growth.
Business Plan	Track progress and manage performance.
Committee Support	Administer the West of England Combined Authority and Joint Committee meetings, Audit Committee, Scrutiny Committee and Advisory Boards.
LEP Board Support	Administer the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership Board.
Regional Partnership Board	Establish a Regional Partnership Board to provide a regular forum for public organisations responsible for the delivery of strategic infrastructure schemes in the West of England.
Public Enquiries	Manage all enquiries from the public, including Freedom of Information requests, complaints and subject access requests. Annual report to WECA Committee.
ICT and Workplace	Ensure that technology and office space meets the ongoing requirements of the organisation.
Information and Records Management	Ensure that information is managed appropriately and that key records are identified and retained in accordance with legislation.
Risk Management	Manage corporate risk framework to ensure that key risks are identified, mitigations agreed and activity monitored.
Communications	Communications and engagement activity to support the business plan
Human Resources	Developing a workforce plan to ensure that WECA has the right resources and skills to deliver now and into the future. Build the organisation through successful recruitment to key posts. Develop a robust staff performance management framework linked to overall objectives, with supporting staff policies and procedures.
Finance	Effectively manage budgets and investment. Continue to develop internal corporate governance processes. Incorporating new powers, funding streams and opportunities with appropriate financial governance arrangements.

OPERATING FRAMEWORK

This document sets out our priorities for clean and inclusive economic growth in the West of England for 2018/19. It will form the basis of the West of England Combined Authority's business plan and inform our regional response to the Government's Industrial Strategy.

OUR AMBITIONS

The West of England is a place of growth and innovation, where economic, cultural and environmental diversity is celebrated and forms the foundation of prosperity for all.

We are investing in people and places – including jobs, skills, transport, homes, and digital connections – to ensure we are creating healthy communities where people want to live, work and visit.

We will achieve our ambitions by investing in three priority areas: infrastructure, skills and business.

