

BUSINESS PLAN 2019-20



INTRODUCTION

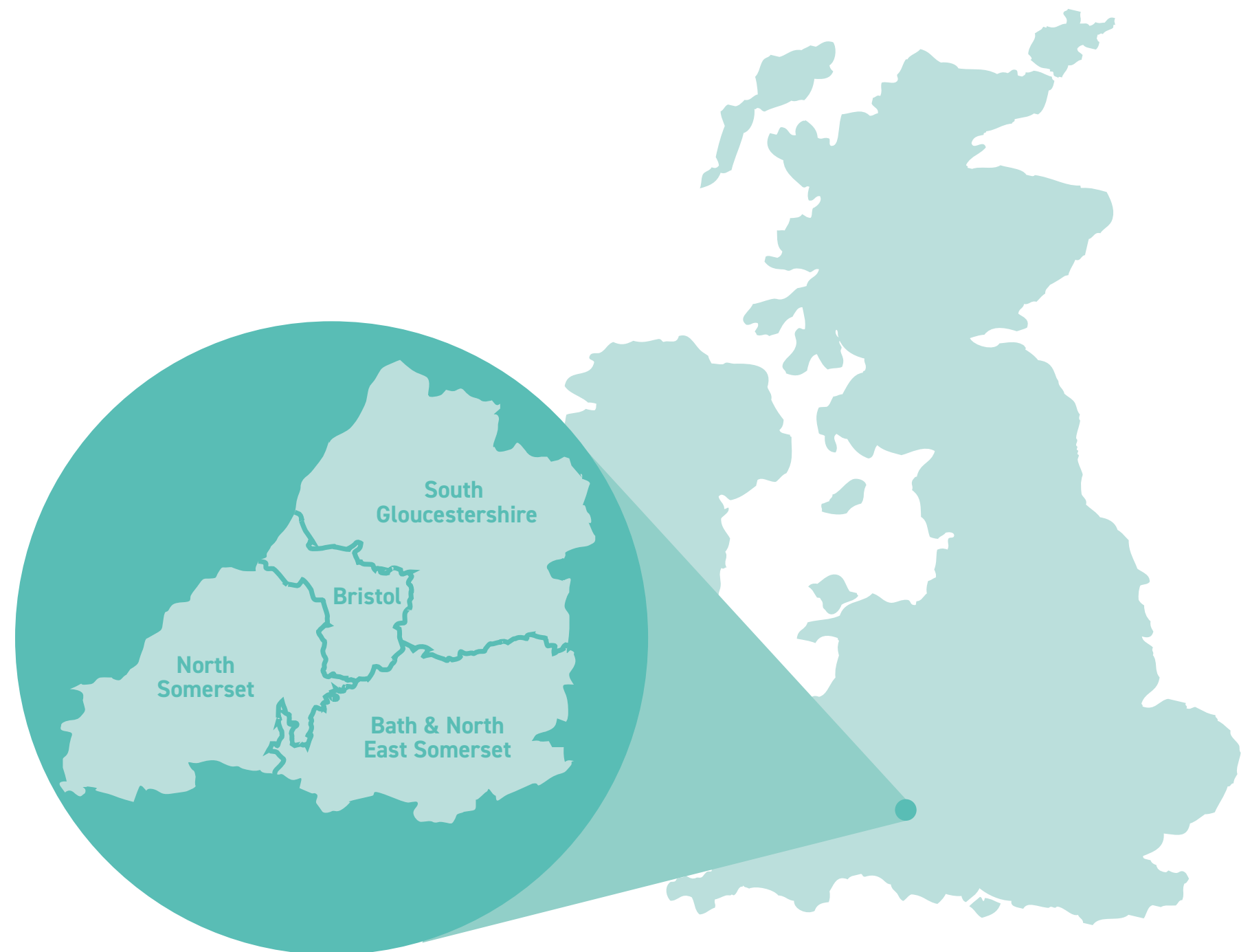
This is a mid-year update to our 2019-20 Business Plan to reflect the publication of our West of England Local Industrial Strategy on 19 July 2019.

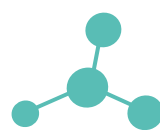
The West of England is one of the UK's most prosperous regions with an economy worth over £33.2 billion a year. A net contributor to the national purse, with a population of over 1 million and over 43,000 businesses, our region competes on a global scale.

This document sets out our business plan for 2019-2020. It builds on our current business plan and supports our aspiration to be a driving force for clean and inclusive economic growth in the West of England. The activities included in the business plan aim to 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.

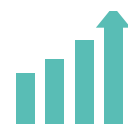




OPERATING FRAMEWORK

The operating framework sets out our priorities for clean and inclusive economic growth and forms the basis of WECA's annual business plan for 2019-2020.

The operating framework (see page 15) identifies three priority areas: 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 2019-2020 period. It builds on our current business plan, and sets out how we will continue to bring investment into transport, homes and skills. This will ensure the West of England is at the forefront of growth and innovation, a region where economic, cultural and environmental diversity is celebrated and forms the foundations of prosperity for all.

The plan is structured around the three strategic aims identified in the operating framework and is focused on 2019-2020, however it contains some reference to activity that will continue in the coming years.



WEST OF ENGLAND LOCAL INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

Our Local Industrial Strategy sets out clear priorities to drive long-term growth in our regional economy. The strategy draws on the unique strengths of our region and sets out our ambition to be a driving force for clean and inclusive growth.

We have a plan that will prepare us for a future where technology will be doing things that we haven't even dreamt of yet. To deliver it, we need to continue to work together, sharing ideas, and bringing people together to celebrate our strengths and address our challenges.

Our Local Industrial Strategy action plan, appended to this business plan, sets out what we need to do to achieve our strategy's objectives and will form the basis of our 2020-21 Business Plan, which will be published early in 2020.



FINANCIAL STRATEGY

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

We will continue to work on the integration of the various funding streams available to the West of England, incorporating the Investment Fund, Transforming Cities Fund, Economic Development Fund, Local Growth Fund, Housing Investment Fund and Business Rates Retention in order to build a longer-term strategic approach to financial planning.



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, and securing external project funding wherever possible.

Our workforce strategy is closely linked to the business plan and financial strategy to ensure that WECA has the skills and resources it needs to deliver now, and into the future.

INFRASTRUCTURE

We need joined-up and reliable transport, to reduce congestion and help people move around the region. This includes suburban rail services, road schemes and 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 (JSP). Better, more affordable and resilient transport will also support inclusive growth by improving access

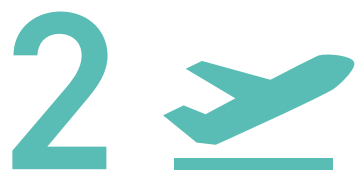
to jobs, linking new homes and communities with employment areas.

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 JSP.

Our activities are aligned with five objectives:



Better links to reduce congestion and connect people



Improve national and international connections



Enabling the required housing growth in the region promoting affordability and an appropriate housing mix



Employment spaces to meet the needs of all businesses and communities



World-leading digital connections across the region



Better links to reduce congestion and connect people

Suburban rail and MetroWest

Develop plan, with Department for Transport, Network Rail and Great Western Railway, to significantly increase rail usage, as part of a comprehensive approach to public transport investment, including the delivery / joint delivery of key schemes such as MetroWest Phase 1.

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

Continue business case development for the following schemes, moving to construction where full business cases approved:

- Bath and Somer Valley Enterprise Zone
- Hengrove
- Lockleaze
- Hicks Gate
- Cribbs/Patchway New Neighbourhood Cycling package
- Great Stoke roundabout

Continue to develop feasibility studies into the following, moving to outline/full business cases where studies are approved:

- Mass transit options
- South Bristol Orbital route
- Support Highways England to undertake a strategic review for an East of Bath link
- (Freezing Hill Lane) A420 to Bath Transport Improvements
- Wraxall Road roundabout

Bus Strategy


Prepare and run consultation on the key elements of the strategy, namely the bus network review, programme of investment and preferred operating framework.


Cycling and walking routes

Promote active travel, by developing a cycling and walking investment programme as part of the new Joint Local Transport Plan (JLTP).

Transport Authority functions

As the responsible body, WECA will work closely with its constituent councils to integrate the core functions of Bus Service Information, Concessionary Travel, Community Transport and Supported Bus Services (joint power with constituent councils) and develop options to build a regional team to lead policy development.

<div><div>1</div><div></div><div>Better links to reduce congestion and connect people</div></div>	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 (JSP), including the following work packages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• South East Bristol and Whitchurch package• A4 Bristol – East Keynsham arterial corridor• Yate strategic corridor• A38 (J16, Almondsbury to Falfield)• Park and rides around Bristol• Bristol Urban Living Package
	Joint Local Transport Plan	<p>Consult on, and adopt, the Joint Local Transport Plan (JLTP).</p>
	Clean Air Zones	<p>Continue work with Bath & North East Somerset Council and Bristol City Council on emerging Clean Air Zones.</p>
	Highways England	<p>Clarify actual and forecast impact of removal of Severn crossings tolls and agree mitigations with Department for Transport.</p>

<div><div>2</div><div></div><div>Improve national and international connections</div></div>	Sub-national Transport Body	<p>Work with partners in the South West as part of a shadow Sub National Transport Body, to build a strong regional evidence base to support future bids into the National Roads Fund.</p>
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Enabling the required housing growth in the region promoting affordability and an appropriate housing mix

Delivering the Housing Package

Start joint working programme with Homes England, National Housing Federation and registered providers on new ways of delivering homes, including affordable homes. Incorporate plans for strategic master planning and land acquisition and continue discussions with Government on the Housing Deal.

Housing Infrastructure Fund

Develop a robust business case to secure funding for Bristol Temple Meads to Keynsham A4 corridor and A38-M5 corridor schemes.

Infrastructure Investment and Delivery Plan

Prepare Implementation Plan with partners including the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, Homes England, Department for Transport, Network Rail, Highways England, Natural England and the Environment Agency. Incorporate WECA project management governance, to include procurement of necessary specialist support, and establish any business cases needed.

Housing Delivery Board

Establish a team of strategic partners to support delivery of the housing agenda, including the Infrastructure and Investment Delivery Plan (IIDP), and work in relation to One Public Estate and Modern Methods of Construction.

Innovation in building new homes

Identify new and innovative products and ways of delivering homes. Establish strategy to drive ongoing activity via One Public Estate Wave 7 Bid, demonstrating demand and showcasing innovation at a range of locations.

Joint Assets Board

Agreed approach implemented.

Joint Spatial Plan

Programme manage and support the Examination in Public, including applicable Monitoring Framework.

Explore piloting a Strategic Green Infrastructure Authority to deliver shared aims with DEFRA and our Green Infrastructure Plan. Provide a 'sponsorship role' for Local Nature Partnership.

Mayoral Spatial Plan

Develop a Mayoral Spatial Plan, agreeing scope and approach, including implementation of associated planning powers. Action will be shaped dependent on the progress of the JSP. This is therefore dependent on that outcome.



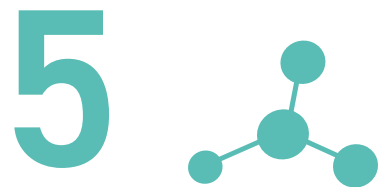
**Employment spaces
to meet the needs of
all businesses and
communities**

Employment space

Develop portfolio of employment space that anticipates business demand, supporting growth aspirations set out in the JSP and JLTP.

Work closely with development industry, businesses and communities to identify and help bring forward new opportunities for employment sites, including Enterprise Zones and Areas. To include opportunities for scale-up businesses.

Develop Employment Space Strategy.



**World-leading digital
connections across
the region**

Digital Strategy

Agree ambitions for regional digital connectivity and identify priority areas for action.

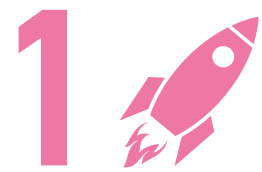
Lead regional bids for investment in digital infrastructure to support Smart City Region aspirations.

BUSINESS GROWTH

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 to support and promote an innovative and inclusive economy. We want to find better ways to work with 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 and communities that makes us unique. Increasing productivity and exports are key areas of focus, along with continuing to find new ways to support innovation and promote inclusivity, which is at the heart of so much of our success.

Our activities are aligned with four objectives:



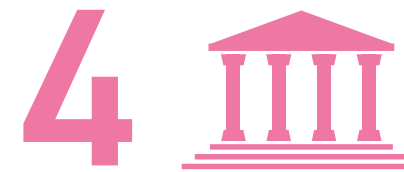
Helping businesses to start-up, grow and flourish, nurturing inclusive growth



Supporting businesses to make the most of export opportunities

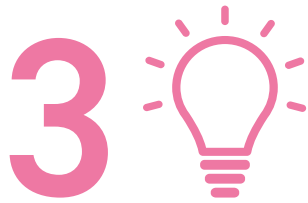


Supporting an innovative economy



Protecting and promoting our region's culture

<div><div>1</div><div></div></div> <div>Helping businesses to start-up, grow and flourish, nurturing inclusive growth</div>	<div>Support growing and high-growth potential businesses</div>	<div>Help build the region's pool of skilled labour through inclusive and progressive recruitment, skill and career development practices (linking to population and housing growth).</div> <div>Work with the Department for International Trade and the region's firms and institutions to identify and develop commercially-driven, high-potential opportunities.</div> <div>Provide up-to-date information on modern business practices, including for export, use of technology, access to finance, management and leadership.</div> <div>Provide 1:1 support to high-growth potential businesses through West of England Growth Hub.</div>
	<div>Support inward investment</div>	<div>Ensure early and appropriate responses to business enquiries and put together an appropriate team(s) to fulfil clients' requirements.</div> <div>Through Invest Bristol & Bath, support businesses coming to the region, in particular Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) to create new jobs, recruiting from local areas and contributing to skills provision.</div>
	<div>Support business growth</div>	<div>Establish key accounts to support growing and FDI businesses; maintain relationships and use regional, national and international support, e.g. FDI expansion opportunities.</div> <div>Support partnerships between big business, small and medium-sized enterprises and academia/innovators to help build confidence, capacity and capability, creating social value.</div>
<div><div>2</div><div></div></div> <div>Supporting businesses to make the most of export opportunities</div>	<div>Support investment opportunities</div>	<div>Develop and agree a strategy and approach, influenced by the Local Industrial Strategy, to guide existing and new projects to enable suitable investment and innovation.</div>
	<div>Support current projects</div>	<div>Support delivery of existing funded projects, including:</div> <div>Talent Institutes</div> <div>5G Smart Tourism</div>
	<div>Develop new projects</div>	<div>Develop new projects and programmes, supporting sectors that drive growth in the region.</div> <div>Consider options for grant scheme to support high growth companies, aligned to Growth Hub.</div> <div>Encourage new research and innovation from business and stronger business research collaborations.</div> <div>Identify funding gaps in priority areas or sectors.</div>



Supporting an innovative economy

Energy Strategy

Develop and agree an Energy Strategy to set priorities for a resilient, low carbon and affordable local energy system.

Digital Strategy

Develop a Digital Strategy in partnership with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, including plans to optimise and accelerate the arrival of 5G.

Support current projects

Support delivery of existing funded projects, including:
Love our High Streets
Creative scale-up



Protecting and promoting our region's culture

Cultural Strategy

Agree an approach to supporting cultural development in the West of England, to support our visitor economy and strengthen our regional industries.

SKILLS

We have high employment and a skilled workforce in the region, but there is more to be done to address regional inequalities and generate prosperity for all. 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 must also take advantage of the opportunities that joint working presents, through better planning of the education, employment and

skills system – for example, ensuring greater access to a range of skills development opportunities to support an inclusive economy.

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. This will help address core skills required for a productive workforce, enabling us to direct resources in a way that best meet the needs of all learners and our economy.

Our activities are aligned with three objectives:



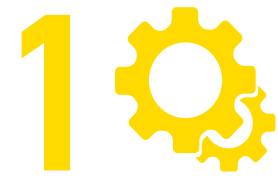
Improving skills and knowledge supply to meet existing and future demands



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



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



Improving skills and knowledge supply to meet existing and future demands

Deliver projects and programmes that improve skills for our residents and employers

Adult Education Budget: Ensure effective delivery of transitional 2019/20 year, alongside developing long-term strategy from 2020/21 onwards.

Skills Innovation Fund: Develop and fund proposals, with our partners, to support local people facing barriers to employment.

Talent Institutes: Complete feasibility study and outline business cases for development of Talent Institutes in the WECA region.

Encourage take-up of apprenticeships and technical education

Work with employers, schools and colleges to encourage better use of the Apprenticeship Levy and promote the benefits to align with and support the Careers Hub programme.

Provide support for a regional Institute of Technology.



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

Implement West of England Employment and Skills Plan

Develop and deliver a long-term plan for employment and skills, including a specific post-16 plan which complements and supports the emerging Local Industrial Strategy.

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.

Develop a West of England Skills Advisory Panel

Establish a group in partnership with Department for Education, focused on joining up the education, employment and skills eco-system, including graduate retention.



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

Deliver effective careers advice

Careers Hub: Host Enterprise Co-ordinators, working for Careers Enterprise Company (CEC) to deliver effective advice for all schools. Co-ordinate other CEC-funded activity in the region.

Deliver Future Bright, a project to improve the job prospects of 3,000 people in low-paid, low-skilled employment and promote good employment practice in the region.

Inform and empower those who might not fit Future Bright eligibility criteria to help them see and apply for roles that will allow them to progress their careers and grow their disposable income (an added value to the project).

CORPORATE SERVICES

Corporate Services concentrates on one objective:



Support the organisation to deliver the business plan

Industrial Strategy	Co-produce and agree a Local Industrial Strategy for the West of England, working with regional partners and Government. A Local Industrial Strategy will enable us to build on the strong foundations of our region, growth and devolution deals, to deliver our ambition for clean and inclusive economic growth.
Committee and LEP support	Administer the West of England Combined Authority and Joint Committee meetings, LEP Board, Audit Committee, Scrutiny Committee and Advisory Boards.
ICT and Workplace	Procure a long-term solution to provide fit-for-purpose ICT services which meet the current and future demands of the organisation. Manage a smooth transition from the existing to the new ICT provider.
Risk management	Manage corporate risk framework to ensure key risks are identified, mitigations agreed and activity monitored. Continue to embed a risk management culture and ownership within the organisation.
Communications	Ensure proactive communications, marketing and engagement activity to support business plan objectives.
Human Resources	Manage workforce plan to ensure that WECA has the right resources and skills to deliver now and into the future, working in close partnership with our constituent authorities and others.
Finance	Improve transparency and understanding of financial reporting – building a longer-term, sustainable approach to financial planning which has clearer links to regional objectives and priorities. Continue to explore alternative funding solutions, reducing reliance on short-term grant funding and time-limited business rate retention.
Performance management	Ensure measurement and reporting is in place to satisfy local and national requirements. Continue to develop, and improve, linkages between delivering outcomes to the region with financial allocations and specific project delivery.

OPERATING FRAMEWORK

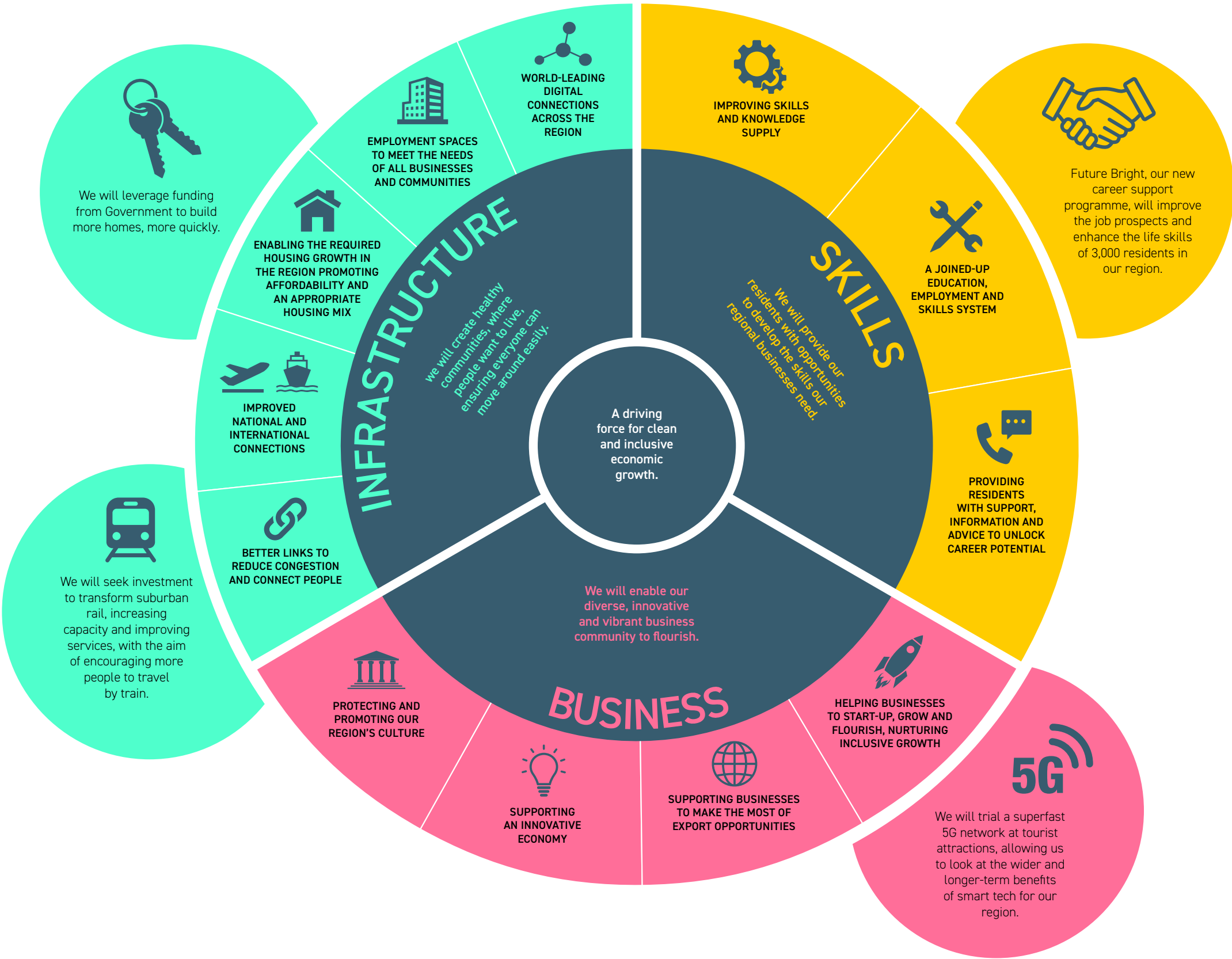
Our operating framework sets out our priorities for clean and inclusive economic growth in the West of England.

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.



WEST OF ENGLAND LOCAL INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY NEXT STEPS



The West of England Combined Authority (WECA) and Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) have brought together businesses, universities and local authorities from across our region, working closely with government, to develop the region's first Local Industrial Strategy.

Drawing on the unique strengths of our region and setting out our ambition to be a driving force for clean and inclusive growth, our strategy sets out how we will work with local and national partners to:

CROSS-SECTORAL INNOVATION	Establish a Global Centre of Innovation Excellence to focus the region's pioneering innovation to address national and international challenges such as an Ageing Society and Clean Growth.
	Establish a West of England Network of Living Labs, to test, develop and prepare new products and services to address the challenges of the future.
	Harness the region's powerful innovation assets to develop a Smart Alliance of local partners to support our ambitions for world class digital infrastructure, underpinning our vision for a smart region.
	Contribute towards reaching the national ambition of 2.4% of GDP investment in Research and Development by 2027, by ensuring businesses can access the skills they need and supporting the innovation ecosystem.
INCLUSIVE GROWTH	Identify a small number of places with high levels of deprivation in which to coordinate existing budgets and interventions to test the impact of aligning the work of local and national partners.
	Work with Arts Council England to develop a Cultural Strategy to define the role of culture in driving economic growth, identifying new mechanisms for funding and articulating the role of culture in supporting wellbeing.
	Build on lessons learned and relationships established through the £10m Love our High Streets fund, set up to work with communities to transform key high streets and support wider regeneration through pilot projects.
	Explore opportunities to secure funding through competitive bids to funds such as the Future High Street Fund or Stronger Towns Fund.
	Explore opportunities to strengthen existing joint working on tourism to support the ambitions of increased productivity set out in the Tourism Sector Deal. This will include skills development and business support with a view to increasing visitor numbers particularly off-season visits.
	Develop a regional Adult Education Budget commissioning strategy that aligns with the objective of our regional Employment and Skills Plan, ensuring provision drives improved outcomes for residents and aligns with the needs of employers.
	Develop a detailed understanding of existing Careers Information Advice and Guidance provision, enabling integrated and early careers insights, meaningful engagement with employers, and clear information on the range of career and training pathways.
	Through the newly formed Skills Advisory Panel, work with a wide range of regional and national partners, including Jobcentre Plus, to prioritise support for groups facing challenges in accessing the labour market.
	Support local people to respond to the changing labour market and redirect their careers to secure better jobs, including through engagement with the National Retraining Scheme.

THE PRODUCTIVITY CHALLENGE	<p>Set a productivity challenge for businesses to improve their performance by putting modern technology, inclusion, and leadership practices at the heart of their operations, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Be the Business to develop a plan to support productivity growth at firm-level, providing the inspiration, practical tools and guidance to encourage SMEs to become more productive. • Evolve the West of England Growth Hub offer to include tailored specialist advice, export support, technical support on environmental sustainability and development of peer learning networks based on specific places or across sectors.
	<p>Encourage greater access to economic opportunity and more inclusive supply chains by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – exploring the scope to establish a 'good employment standard' to engage key employers to promote good practice – widening the access for SMEs to public procurement; and – exploring how social value procurement can maximise the employment and supply chain benefits of WECA's own spending.
	<p>Explore options for a high impact enterprise scale-up programme – focused on coaching, investment and working space.</p>
	<p>Increase trade and investment performance by working with the Department for International Trade to target new growth markets, building on our specific sectoral strengths.</p>
	<p>Deliver the Employment and Skills Plan, which sets out how we will support residents to achieve their potential and businesses to find the skills and talent they need to innovate, add greater value and thrive.</p>
	<p>Drive increased uptake and diversification of Apprenticeships by exploring how we enhance existing regional provision such as the West of England Apprenticeship Hub.</p>
	<p>Continue to ensure strong coordination with important Careers Information Advice and Guidance organisations including the Careers and Enterprise Company, Jobcentre Plus and the National Careers Service, to best align their work with regional priorities.</p>
	<p>Build on the success of Future Bright, working with residents and businesses to enable progression in employment.</p>
	<p>Promote the uptake and delivery of a range of skills provision – such as T levels – to meet the needs of employers.</p>

INNOVATION IN INFRASTRUCTURE	Capitalise on the region's innovative strengths in the delivery of the Joint Spatial Plan and Joint Local Transport Plan.
	Develop a Placemaking Charter, which will set out quality standards expected in the region, which developers, architects and house builders will be encouraged to sign up to.
	Develop an ambitious approach to modern methods of construction and other housing innovations eg, co-living communities, smart homes, carbon/energy efficiency homes through the Joint Assets Board and other work programmes.
	Develop a West of England Smart Home, aiming to set the bar for new housing design, delivery and retrofit, and provide a new industry standard for housing developments, equipped for home working, independent living and energy efficiency.
	Work with businesses to help them access investment, including through the government's Transforming Construction Fund and the Home Building Fund, to support SMEs, Custom Builders and developers to use innovative methods of construction.
	Explore options for a local Mobility as a Service pilot to design and test replicable transport innovations that can improve connectivity, enhancing regional productivity, widening access to employment and creating globally significant use cases to drive investment.

In addition to actions set out above

CLEAN GROWTH	Work with the West of England Local Nature Partnership to identify green infrastructure priorities.
	Develop an action plan based on the West of England Strategic Energy Framework, which sets out our region's ambition for a diverse, resilient, and affordable energy system that enables economic growth whilst reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
	Explore options to support innovation in housebuilding and accelerate the development of carbon neutral homes, including exploring ways to encourage and incentivise sustainable building practices and retrofit.
	Grow the region's natural capital, supporting priorities for nature recovery and biodiversity, maximising the many benefits of green infrastructure.

We will establish an evaluation programme for this Local Industrial Strategy, which will form part of the existing overall regional Monitoring and Evaluation Framework agreed with government.

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