

# CREATING A BETTER FUTURE FOR ALL





**It's two years since the West of England Combined Authority was set up and I was elected as the first Regional Mayor. Since then, I have worked with our constituent councils, businesses and universities, and other partners across the region to address our shared challenges and make the most of the opportunities to drive growth and improve people's lives.**

As Regional Mayor, one of my key ambitions is to improve job opportunities, ensuring that everyone, regardless of their circumstances, can access support to develop workplace skills and fulfil their potential here in the West of England. We are supporting young people to get the best career opportunities through our Careers Hub; improving skills to help people succeed at work with Future Bright; supporting business to prosper via our Growth Hub and attracting new business investment through Invest Bristol & Bath.

Our transport plans focus on long-term, sustainable solutions and we're already investing in getting the region moving. We're improving the Severn Beach line, creating a 'turn up and go' service which takes you from South Gloucestershire to Bristol, Bath and beyond without having to change trains. This will connect more of our communities together. We're also opening new

train stations in Portishead, Henbury and Portway – with more in the pipeline.

We're pushing ahead on some big construction projects too. Through our Local Growth Fund we have invested millions, including £32 million at Bath Quays, £64m at Avonmouth and £55m at Temple Quarter. Our region is also leading the way on advances in clean energy – we host the South West Energy Hub and are committing funding to low carbon innovation so that our growth is sustainable.

I also have ambitions for us to become a smart region. I'm incredibly proud that the first major trial of our 5G Smart Tourism project took place at the Roman Baths – with visitors trying out technology which immersed them in the site's rich history. This new technology is a game changer and will help improve the way we live, move around the region and so much more.

**Tim Bowles,  
West of England Mayor**



**The West of England is one of the country's biggest economic success stories, but, like many regions, we also face challenges as we grow. The Local Enterprise Partnership plays a key role in representing the interests of business and universities, ensuring that we work together with the public sector, as we address these challenges.**

The richness and diversity of our business community in the West of England is one of our great strengths. With well-established links to our universities, the West of England has a strong track record in translating academic research into real-world applications. From cutting-edge innovations in advanced engineering to world-class creative media, we are building fast-growing companies and high value jobs. Our continued focus on skills and talent through initiatives such as Workforce for the Future and Women into Digital Jobs Employment and Training, will ensure that our economic growth works for all.

Devolution has given us a great opportunity to work more closely with government and we welcome the opportunity to work with them on our Local Industrial Strategy. Our emerging strategy focusses on harnessing our region's innovation to tackle some of the grand challenges we face.

As we look to the future, there will be funding challenges ahead, but the West of England has strong foundations for continued success with our talented workforce, innovative business community and dynamic civic leadership.

**Steve West,  
Chair of West of England  
Local Enterprise Partnership**

# DRIVING INCLUSIVE GROWTH

Our economically successful region is home to over 45,000 businesses and one of the highest skilled workforces in the country. We have many high-quality jobs and want to give locally grown talent every opportunity to secure employment in our region by improving skills and encouraging entrepreneurs.



## Adult Education Budget

This year, we have taken control of the region's Adult Education Budget, to help equip adults over 19 with the skills and qualifications needed for life, work, apprenticeships and further learning. This will enable us to target funding in the right way for our region, helping residents reach their potential and ensuring our businesses can find employees with the right skills.

## Future Bright



benefits, to improve their job prospects, security and income.

**"The support I've received from my career coach has been huge. I finally feel like a role model for my son."**  
Katie from Kingswood

During 2018/19, we started delivery of Future Bright – a £4m innovation pilot funded by the Department for Work and Pensions. The scheme has already supported over 700 people in work and on

**£4m**   
skills innovation pilot scheme

## Careers Hub

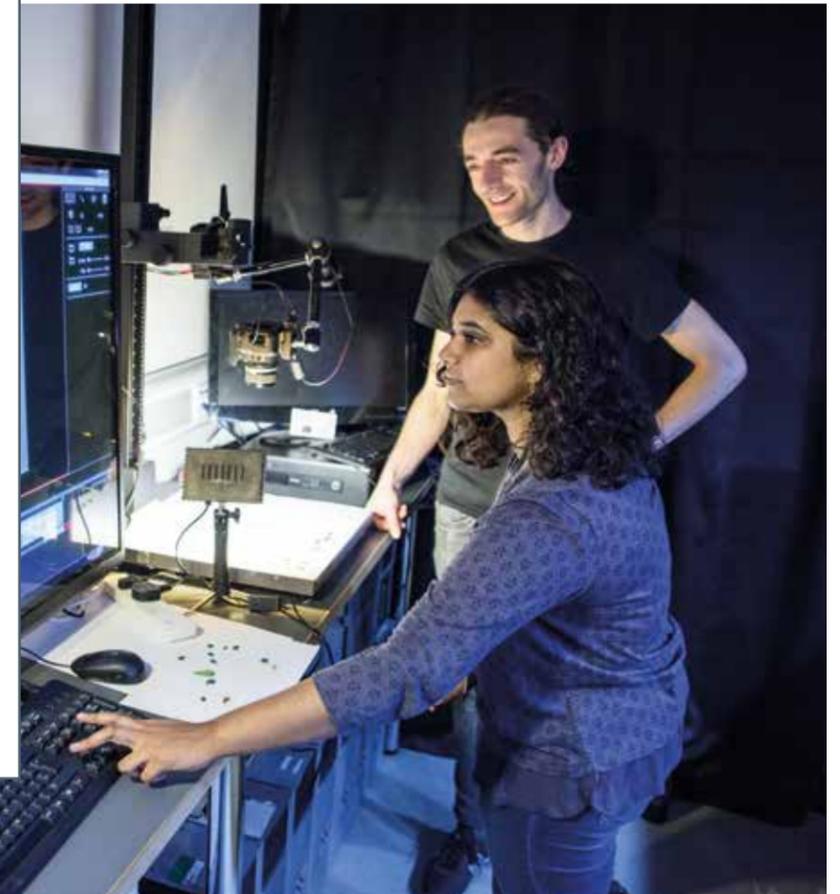
The new West of England Careers Hub is working with schools and colleges across the region to improve career opportunities for young

people. Our team of around 40 Enterprise Advisers works with schools and colleges, sharing their expertise to help improve careers

advice and work experience opportunities for young people.

## WIDJET

In March 2019, we secured £238,000 funding from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport for a new programme to support women into digital jobs, education and training (WIDJET). The programme launched in Spring 2019 with taster sessions and courses offered in skills including virtual reality, VFX design and software development. We are also planning new Digital Skills programmes for basic and advanced skills, opening up new employment opportunities for our residents.



## Workforce for the Future

In October 2018, we established the new £8m Workforce for the Future fund to support local people facing barriers to employment and encourage more small businesses to invest in training and development. The fund will launch in Autumn 2019.

**£8m**  
to support workforce development

## Skills West

Skills West is a partnership between Business West, the Western Training Provider Network and local and national training providers, and is funded through the European Social Fund and Education & Skills Funding Agency and commissioned by West of England Local Enterprise Partnership.

Skills West offers businesses:

- advice on new apprenticeship standards and funding, covering 90% of training costs
- help to identify skills and training needs
- advice on training and access to training providers
- guidance on how to attract and retain the best people
- advice on how to raise the profile of employment opportunities

# SUPPORTING THE REGION'S BUSINESSES TO GROW

We encourage entrepreneurs and support businesses of all sizes, helping them to start, grow and flourish. We also encourage high value businesses to invest in our region. We are working to ensure that all businesses have access to the support, skills, new technologies and innovations which drive growth and productivity.



## Investing in employment space



We want to create more employment space that meets the needs of our fast-growing business base. We also want to ensure businesses have access to facilities with

research and innovation activities. This year work started on the new food and drink innovation centre, FoodWorksSW, at the heart of the Junction 21 Enterprise Area in North Somerset. Funded through the Local Growth Fund, it will provide a range of specialist facilities and technical support for food and drink manufacturers across the region.

**£45m**  
invested this year through the Local Growth Fund

## Growth Hub

Our West of England Growth Hub offers free and impartial support to small – medium sized businesses, linking them to the best providers to help them invest, export, innovate and grow.

This year, the Growth Hub hosted the region's first Scale-Up Summit, bringing together over 70 entrepreneurs with finance and business growth experts to harness the potential of our high growth businesses.

**5,634**  
businesses supported by the Growth Hub since 2015



## Encouraging inward investment

Invest Bristol & Bath provides access to relocation support, research, property advice, skills and talent, networks and connections, for businesses looking to relocate to the region.

During 2018/19, Invest Bristol & Bath secured 37 new investments committing to create 1,165 new jobs, and led a successful bid for Channel 4 to locate its new Creative Hub in Bristol as part of the region's vibrant creative industry. Other recent successes include:

- Global IT consultancy delaware is creating up to 50 highly-skilled new jobs following the opening of its new UK client service delivery hub in Bristol in October 2018

- International industrial firm Bocard opened its new nuclear centre of excellence in Bristol in February 2019, creating 30 new jobs, in support of the Hinkley Point C Nuclear New Build team which will employ around 200 people
- International mechanical and electrical services specialist EnerMech will bring 100 jobs to the West of England over the next three years, following the opening of its initial base in Portishead.

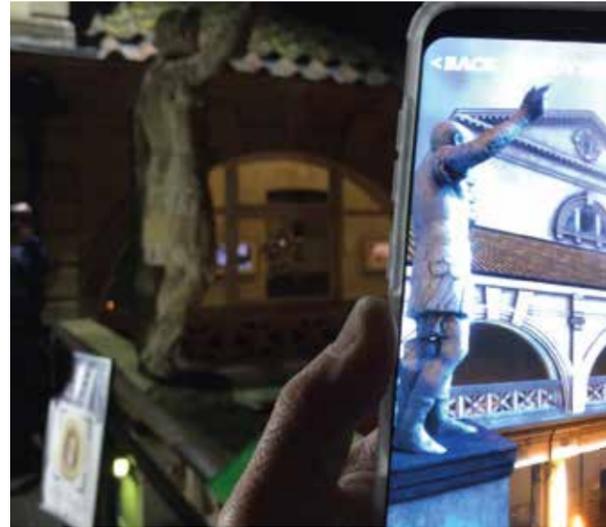
The team also led a delegation of over 20 regional partners to MIPIM – the world's largest real estate investment convention – to highlight key investment opportunities.

## Creative scale-up

In December 2018, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport announced that the West of England would receive £1.35m as part of its Creative Scale-Up Programme. The two-year programme will enable creative businesses in the region to grow by improving access to expert knowledge and experience as well as supporting businesses through training and advice on securing investment.

# FOSTERING INNOVATION

Home to the cities of Bristol and Bath, we host world-leading clusters in sectors such as aerospace and advanced engineering, financial and professional services, creative and digital. More recently, emerging businesses in areas such as robotics, artificial intelligence, driverless cars and 'Internet of Things' have put down roots here.



## Local Growth Fund

Through the Local Growth Fund we are supporting a number of innovative projects that will drive forward the region's productivity and ensure businesses have access to facilities for research and innovation activities.

Since the beginning of 2018, more than £45 million has been invested in major schemes which have been completed or started in 2018 including £1.3 million to establish a Health Technology Hub at UWE to support a research and innovation centre and £5.7m to support the purchase of Bristol & Bath Science Park as a centre



of excellence for research and development across the region.

Our investment supports our clean growth ambitions through projects including £10m awarded to the Institute for Advanced Automotive Propulsion Systems –

a global centre of excellence, delivering innovation in low-emissions vehicles. We've also invested in the National Composites Centre, which is developing lightweight materials that have the potential to increase carbon efficiency.

## 5G smart tourism

In 2018/19, the region hosted an £8.2m 5G Smart Tourism project to provide valuable insights into how new technology could revolutionise the way we all live, work and move around the region.

Led by the West of England Combined Authority and part-funded by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, it brought together 19 organisations and oversaw the creation of a testbed to demonstrate 5G capability, establishing the West of England as a world-leader in the development of advanced fixed and mobile communication systems.

**£8.2m**  
to fund 5G smart tourism initiative



## Local Industrial Strategy

We're one of the first regions in the country to be chosen to develop a Local Industrial Strategy.

Working with government this will set out how our region can achieve its ambition for clean

and inclusive economic growth. This is an opportunity to think long-term and create an innovative vision for the continued success of the West of England.

During 2018/19, we have gathered an evidence base for the Local Industrial Strategy and held a series of workshops with key businesses, community and voluntary sector organisations to develop the strategy.

Alongside the Local Industrial Strategy, we are developing an Employment and Skills Plan to ensure that by 2035 the West of England will be internationally recognised for its sustainable, inclusive and creative economy, providing a high quality of life, prosperity and opportunity for all its residents.



# INVESTING IN INFRASTRUCTURE

**We have ambitious plans to improve infrastructure for all our residents, including transport links and digital connections to unlock the region's full potential.**

We need a transport network that works for everyone, every day and for every journey. We've already allocated millions to kick-start improvements to our busiest transport routes – including rail, road, walking and cycling.

We are investing millions in our regional railway network, increasing services and building new train stations to connect more communities. We will create a sustainable and reliable bus network and offer safe, continuous and attractive walking and cycling routes across the region.

We know our region will keep growing. To meet the needs of the future we're exploring options for a transformational mass transit system linking our region together. We are also investing in our digital infrastructure to create high quality connectivity to enable businesses to improve productivity.



## High-quality new homes

The West of England is the first region in the UK to develop a joined-up planning approach to set out how the region will meet its housing and transport needs over the next 20 years. Our Joint Spatial Plan, led by the four councils of Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire, was submitted to the Secretary of State in April

2018 and is subject to examination by planning inspectors during Summer 2019.

A pioneering new West of England Joint Assets Board has been set up to bring together senior leaders from the public sector to look at how we use public land more efficiently and make more land available for much-needed new homes and employment sites.

## Digital infrastructure

High quality, effective digital infrastructure with consistent connectivity and speed is key to enabling businesses across the region to improve their productivity and compete. It is also crucial to enabling our residents to access goods and services and to work

flexibly from locations across the region. The recent 5G Smart Tourism showcase demonstrated the application of 5G technology in the region and forms part of our ambitions to develop a smart region in the West of England.

## A Joint Local Transport Plan

We have developed a Joint Local Transport Plan (JLTP) which supports our transport aspirations across the region as well as the ambitions of the Joint Spatial Plan. During early 2019, an extensive public consultation on the transport plan, engaged with local residents through face-to-face events and online, resulting in nearly 4,000 consultation responses to inform the further development of the plan.



**4,000**  
consultation responses received

**£10m**  
to support high street regeneration

## Love our High Streets

In November 2018, the West of England Combined Authority agreed to establish a Love our High Streets fund of up to £10m to support high streets across the region. Pilot schemes in Midsomer

Norton, Bath city centre, Twerton, Bedminster and Kingswood will explore new ways of making high streets fit for the future, including increasing footfall, attracting new uses and improving local facilities.

**LOVE OUR HIGH STREETS**



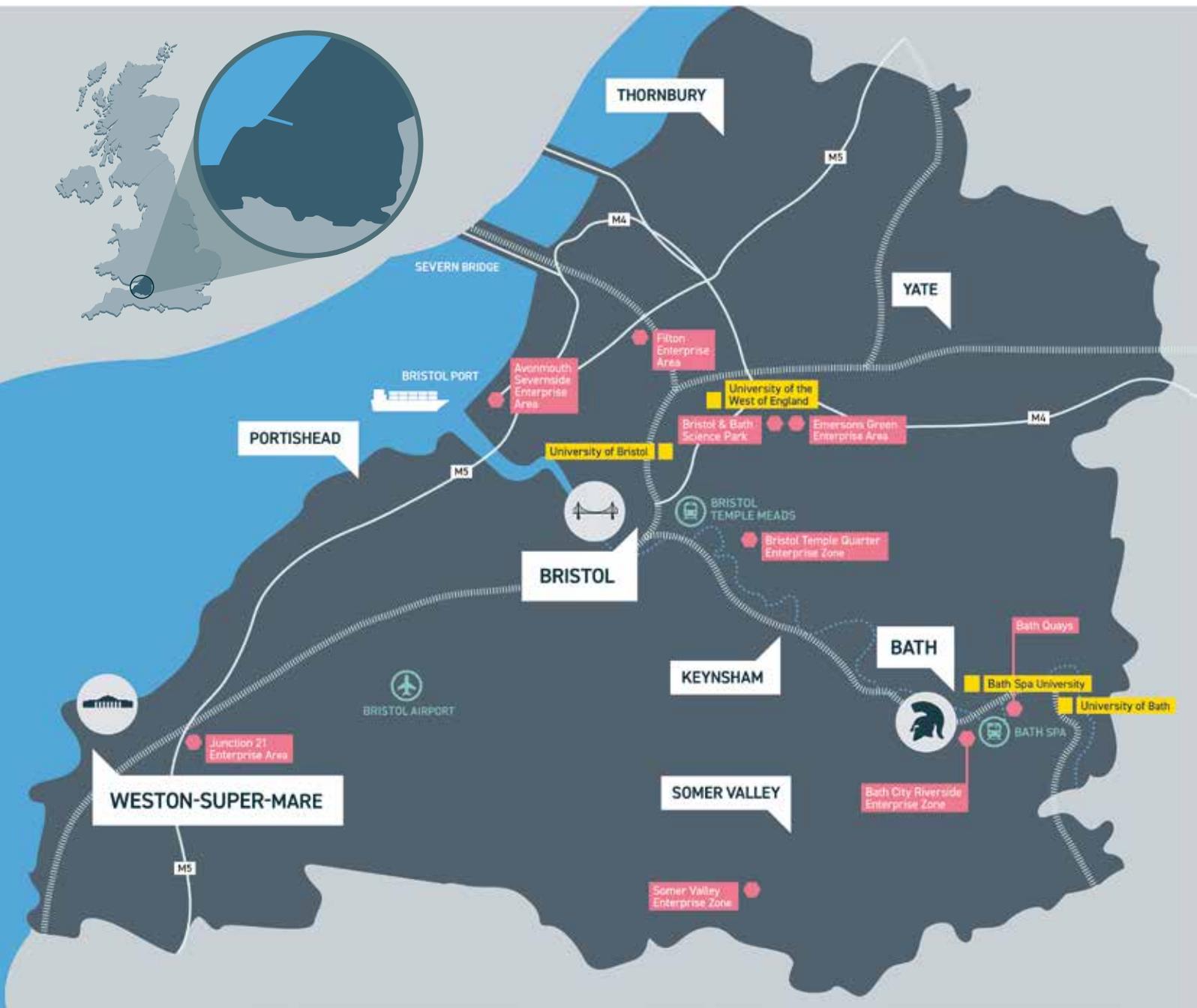
## Clean, green growth

In the West of England, carbon emissions have reduced 30 per cent since 2005, through local renewable energy generation, insulating homes and reducing coal generation while our economy has grown by 30 per cent. This demonstrates that economic growth can go hand-in-hand with decarbonisation.

We know we all need to do more, and achieving clean growth is at the heart of our emerging Local Industrial Strategy. It will increase our productivity, boost earning power and help protect the climate and environment upon which we and future generations depend.

The West of England Combined Authority hosts the South West Energy Hub. This £3.5m project, funded by government, supports projects that reduce energy use and increase clean energy capacity. We're also working with smaller businesses, and in May 2018 we will launch a £4.2m Low Carbon Challenge Fund to support micro, small and medium-sized business to adopt energy efficiency measures.





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