

THE WEST OF ENGLAND – A PLACE OF COLLABORATION, INGENUITY AND CREATIVITY

The West of England is a place where ideas flourish and businesses grow, where creative, digital and high tech meet traditional industry. It is at this interface that the solutions to the challenges of the future lie.

Across our towns and cities, there is an independence of spirit and pride in the diversity, creativity and ingenuity of communities. Diversity is valued as important not only to social cohesion, but to the success and vibrancy of our economy.

From the days of Brunel, through to the latest developments in robotics and virtual reality, the West of England has been at the cutting edge of technology.



Crane Dance Bristol, by Laura Kriefman, Hellion Trace Ltd. Lighting by Studio Three Sixty. © Jon Rowley

Our region hosts the biggest aerospace cluster in the UK; financial and professional services are thriving, and we have a world-renowned creative sector.

This innovation, ingenuity and creativity, alongside a highly skilled workforce, fed by four prestigious universities, ensures we are a major force in the global marketplace.

We are a critical gateway to the nation and to the world.

At the crossroads of major motorways and rail networks, with an international airport and port, our region provides the right environment for businesses to thrive and grow.

The strength of the UK in the global economy is dependent on dynamic, globally competitive, outward looking and creative places like the West of England.

STAYING AHEAD OF THE CURVE

Our region is attractive; people who live here, work here, and people who move here, stay and build their lives here. This ensures a steady supply of workers, but it also brings challenges. It can put a strain on health and social care, particularly for our ageing population. At times, our networks are congested, and demand for affordable housing outstrips supply.

Our businesses have skills shortages in some areas, particularly skilled trades, management and caring. There are pockets of deprivation, where finding a job and affordable housing is challenging, and there are significant gaps in educational attainment, leading to inequality of opportunity.

As the world changes around us, we need a plan

CASE STUDY: Open Bionics

A prime example of innovation in healthcare technology, Stoke Gifford-based Open Bionics combines advanced robotics with Disney designs from the Star Wars, Marvel and Frozen universes to deliver the Hero Arm – affordable, assistive devices that enhance the human body and turn children with limb differences into bionic heroes. The hi-tech firm has created the world's first medically certified 3D-printed bionic arm, with multi-grip functionality and empowering aesthetics.



to make sure we stay ahead of the curve, embracing new technology, creating a stronger economy and a better place to live and work for all.

CASE STUDY: GENeco



Supporting our ambitions for clean growth, Avonmouth's GENeco was created by parent company Wessex Water to help it become more sustainable. It treats huge volumes of varied wastes and transforms them into useful products. This includes food waste recycling from Bristol and Bath residents, and sewage from over 1 million people – producing enough renewable energy to power over 10,000 homes.

CASE STUDY: Living Labs

Knowle West Media Centre supports people from a range of backgrounds to come together and create new ideas, tools and technologies to help improve quality of life for all. As the Bristol Living Lab they offer a real-life test and experimentation environment to co-design innovative products, approaches and services, which could be taken to market. Residents, artists, technologists, businesses and public sector organisations can come



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together to address local challenges, innovate and explore new possibilities. We want to build on this great work and develop a West of England Network of Living Labs to explore solutions to some of our region's key challenges.

A STRATEGY FOR THE REGION, PRODUCED BY THE REGION

The West of England Combined Authority and Local Enterprise Partnership have brought together businesses and organisations from across our region, working closely with government, to develop a Local Industrial Strategy.

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.

At the heart of this approach are four key priorities:

Cross-sectoral innovation

Strengthening innovation and driving productivity by:

- Connecting researchers, businesses and residents through a Global Centre of Innovation Excellence to focus the region's innovative strengths on globally and nationally significant challenges.
- Developing, testing and preparing for market, user-centred products and services through a new West of England Network of Living Labs.



Inclusive growth

Introducing new measures to help all residents contribute to and benefit from our economic success by:

- Targeting support to communities facing challenges.
- Delivering the right employment and skills provision so that businesses can find the talent they need.
- Linking everyone to jobs, training and services via improved physical and digital infrastructure that is accessible, sustainable and low carbon.

The productivity challenge

Providing businesses with the space, networks and skills they need to boost productivity, grow and thrive by:

- Encouraging the uptake of modern technology, management and leadership practices to lift employee wellbeing, productivity and exports.

- Including more regional providers in businesses' supply chains and widening access to public procurement for small businesses.
- Supporting and incentivising companies towards low-carbon business models.

Innovation in infrastructure

Tackling climate change, addressing air quality and ensuring quality of life for current and future residents by:

- Supporting businesses to drive productivity by adopting new clean technology and energy efficiency measures.
- Investing in infrastructure that reduces energy demand, lowers carbon emissions and is resilient to the impacts of climate change.
- Building new carbon-neutral homes, using modern methods of construction and other housing innovations.

TURNING OUR PLANS INTO ACTION

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.

To see the full Local Industrial Strategy and to share your views, please visit www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/ourstrategy.



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