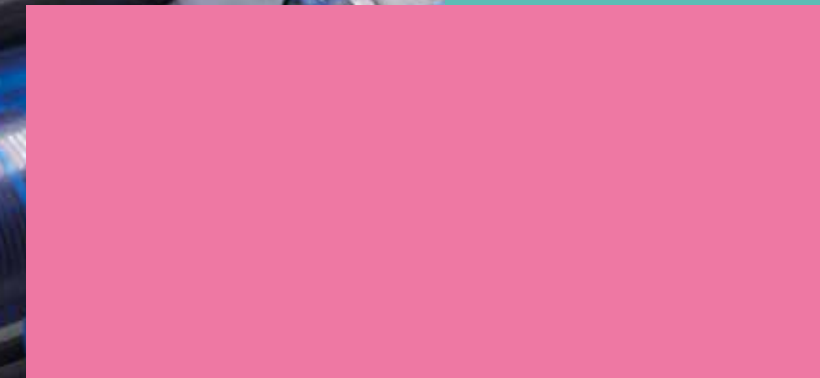
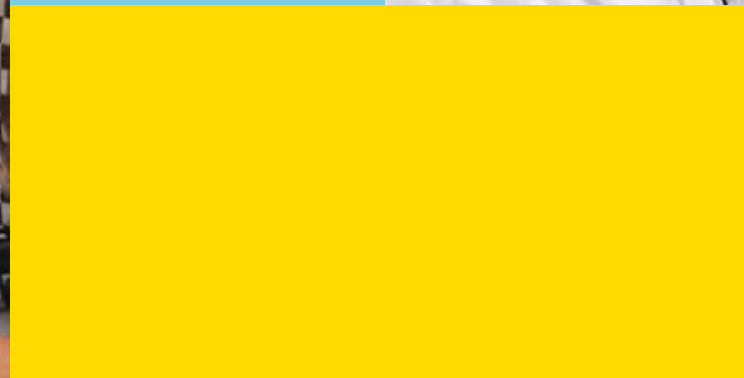


# BUSINESS PLAN 2021-22



# INTRODUCTION

The West of England Combined Authority (WECA) was established in 2017 and is made up of three of the councils in the region – Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol and South Gloucestershire. WECA also supports the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), which is business-led, and covers the four West of England councils, including North Somerset Council.

This document sets out our business plan for 2021-22. It builds on our Local Industrial Strategy, our Climate Emergency Action Plan and our Regional Recovery Plan, which sets out our response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Home to the world-famous cities of Bristol and Bath, the West of England is a great place to live. With a population of over 1.1 million, it is a place where highly-skilled people work, ideas flourish and businesses grow.

The West of England is an economic leader and will be key to the UK's recovery from the impact of Covid-19.

This business plan has been developed against the backdrop of considerable uncertainty. The Covid-19 pandemic continues to impact significantly on the businesses and residents of the region and the true implications continue to emerge. We will monitor impacts as the pandemic runs its course and will respond to new and emerging challenges as they arise.

Supporting the recovery of the region from the Covid-19 pandemic is WECA's top priority. We're taking action to help people and businesses immediately affected. We're working with regional partners, and with government, to ensure people and businesses across the region are getting the support they need.

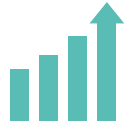
We continue to champion the region internationally, bringing in investment and creating opportunities for our businesses. We want our town and city centres to be great places where people want to live. We want them to be less reliant on cars, and to be more pleasurable, with better air quality. We want more people to walk, cycle and use public transport because these are the best options.

We're working to ensure that all the elements of a successful region are connected – creating communities that are linked to jobs and training, opening up more opportunities for more people.

Our business plan sets out how we will achieve our ambitions by investing in three priority areas: infrastructure, skills and business.



# OVERARCHING OBJECTIVES



## INCLUSIVE GROWTH

The West of England is a prosperous region with a highly skilled workforce, diverse business base, economy, and communities. However, it is also a region that faces challenges, with some parts experiencing real deprivation.

Our businesses have skills shortages in some areas and there are pockets of deprivation, where finding a job and affordable housing is difficult and poor transport links can act as a barrier to jobs and opportunities.

Skills and training are at the core of our economic recovery and growth. Whether that's helping residents keep their jobs, find new opportunities or join the workforce for the first time. We're identifying opportunities for our key and important business sectors to emerge strongly from the pandemic and working to ensure that all our residents have access to the skills they need to prosper and secure jobs that are being created here.

This is core to our region's ambitious Local Industrial Strategy, which is led by the West of England Combined Authority and Local Enterprise Partnership.



## CLIMATE EMERGENCY

The West of England declared a Climate Change Emergency in July 2019, committing the region to becoming carbon neutral by 2030. Our Local Industrial Strategy identifies a series of actions to take forward to support clean growth. This is supported and further enhanced by our Climate Emergency Action Plan, which was adopted in October 2020.

Achieving carbon neutrality will require change across the system, from national Government, councils, residents and businesses. WECA can play a key role in providing regional leadership, as well as in the decisions we make in procurement, capital spend, and setting policy.

Our Climate Emergency Action Plan highlights five grand challenge areas to help meet this ambition:

- Low carbon transport system
- Low carbon business
- Renewable energy
- Low carbon buildings
- The green environment

Activity is already underway, and we are investing to tackle congestion and improve public transport, support businesses to adopt energy efficient measures through the West of England Low Carbon Challenge Fund, and investing in research and innovation projects.



## RECOVERY FROM COVID-19

Covid-19 is having a huge impact on our region, our business and our residents.

The West of England Recovery Taskforce was set up following the outbreak of the pandemic to help understand the impact in our region, to identify where support was most needed and to help shape our response.

We have worked with our LEP and the wider business community across all sectors, as well as voluntary and community groups, to develop an ambitious West of England Recovery Plan that aims to:

- Rebuild business
- Get residents back to work
- Strengthen inclusion
- Support a green recovery
- Renew places

The strength and diversity of our economy, coupled with our regional strengths of progressing new ideas and doing things differently, mean we are in a strong place to build back better.

We recognise that our plan will need to evolve and will require us to be innovative, creative and responsive as we learn to adapt, recover and reset our world and to seize the opportunity to accelerate our plans to deliver clean and inclusive growth.



## LOCAL INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

Developed by leaders and businesses from across the region, working closely with government, our Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) draws on the unique strengths of the people and places across the West of England. It sets out the region's ambition to be a driving force for clean and inclusive growth.

The LIS represents a strong partnership between local and national partners and a recognition of the shared ambition and opportunity for the region.

Our LIS continues to form a key part of the operating framework which underpins our business planning process.

As we start to implement our recovery plans, we are also looking forward to the future and to the strategic questions that we will need to understand as we move out of the pandemic: to look at the future of the workplace, the future of city centres and the future of digital and to explore the impact that this will have on our communities.



# OPERATING FRAMEWORK

Our operating framework sets out our priorities for clean and inclusive economic growth in the West of England. It incorporates the four themes from the West of England Local Industrial Strategy and forms the basis of WECA's annual business planning cycle, focused on priority areas for delivery:

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

Our Climate Emergency Action Plan sets out five strategic principles:

- Low carbon transport system: working to decarbonise the transport system, increase cycling, walking and the use of public transport
- Low carbon business: helping business & local people benefit from growth in the green economy; maximising government investment in the region & supporting our businesses to build back better
- Renewable energy: working to decarbonise our energy system & increase local renewable energy
- Low carbon buildings and places: increasing the energy performance of buildings & develop low carbon standards in new developments
- The green environment: protecting & enhancing the environment through a proactive approach to green infrastructure

Together with our operating framework these principles set out our long-term vision and shape the shorter-term actions required to achieve this that are included in our Business Plan.



# PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Devolution and the creation of WECA builds on a strong track record of partnership working in the region. This includes joint working on existing major infrastructure projects such as the Metrobus network, and the delivery of a range of projects through the Local Enterprise Partnership, with investments from our £202m Local Growth Fund, £500m Economic Development Fund and £57m Revolving Infrastructure Fund programmes.

Our devolved Investment Fund has enabled us to develop and extend our reach both in addressing immediate challenges and in helping bring forward a number of longer-term strategic interventions including Mass Transit, the redevelopment of Temple Meads Station, Temple Quarter Enterprise Campus and the Somer Valley Enterprise Zone.

Our ability to progress these challenging initiatives builds on the strong foundations of effective partnership working with delivery partners such as Network Rail, Highways England and the Environment Agency.

Our Local Enterprise Partnership is essential in bringing the voice of business to help shape our activities. This has been critical in supporting the development of our regional recovery plan which has been shaped through discussions with our LEP and the wider business community. We have worked with over 180 businesses across all sectors as well as voluntary and community groups and have canvassed more widely the views from thousands of individuals and businesses across the region to ensure that our recovery is inclusive and representative.

Our region is highly collaborative, with research & development, academia, industry and the public sector working together across multiple sectors. We understand the benefits of a strategic approach within sectors to support innovation and development. We bring together key private, public, and civil society organisations to tackle grand challenges through mission-led innovation.

In delivering the West of England Local Industrial Strategy we are driving investment in high tech R&D capacity, notably across the South Gloucestershire Tec Arc, led by the Bristol & Bath Science Park and National Composites Centre and supporting primes such as Rolls Royce and Airbus, innovation in the green economy and innovative partnership working with the higher education sector to develop new capabilities such as the Institute of Advanced Automotive Propulsion Systems (IAAPS).

Through our different roles of convener, adviser and leader, we support our key sectors in their innovation journeys, including their supply chains, SMEs and people. We are establishing fora for co-creation and to test ideas in the real world and develop new products and services for market. Our work also attracts businesses, investment, funding and talent to the region, further fuelling our innovation ecosystem. We're also working with partners to ensure that all our residents have the opportunity to get the skills and training they need to succeed, and to secure the jobs that are being created here.

WECA hosts the South West Energy Hub, which is a partnership of seven LEPs across the wider south west region, set up to increase the number, scale and quality of local energy projects. To date it has supported 25 projects with an investment value of £109m, which could save nearly 35,000 tonnes CO2. The SW Energy Hub has provided 20 community groups with grants totalling £618,988 from the Rural Community Energy Fund. The Energy Hub is also delivering £53m of housing energy efficiency improvements across the wider south west region next year, as part of the Government's Green Homes Grant programme.

WECA, the constituent Unitary Authorities and North Somerset Council are all within the wider Western Gateway area and are working with Department for International Trade to develop a strong pan regional inward investment proposition.

Our 2021/22 business plan builds on our strong partnerships to enable us to achieve our ambitions by working with our partners and communities to deliver our priorities for infrastructure, skills and business as we start to look to the opportunities for our region post-pandemic.

# STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

The projects and programmes described in this business plan are expected to deliver significant benefits to the region when they are completed.

We have made an estimate of the impact of these projects. This includes projects across all of WECA's funding streams, for delivery up to 2023. These measures identify the key strategic themes of delivery, but do not capture the full value of these projects, which will provide a range of other specific benefits.

By 2023, WECA will deliver the following against our strategic themes:

### Economic growth

- £1.7bn of economic output (gross value added)
- Over 14,000 new jobs

### People and Skills

- Over 45,000 learners gaining new qualifications or skills
- 1,870 people supported to gain increased earnings, and many more moving into work
- 470 small businesses benefiting from skills and training support

### Business

- Approximately 7,000 business receiving enterprise support
- 195 businesses supported to bring inward investment to the region, and hundreds of new businesses started

### Innovation

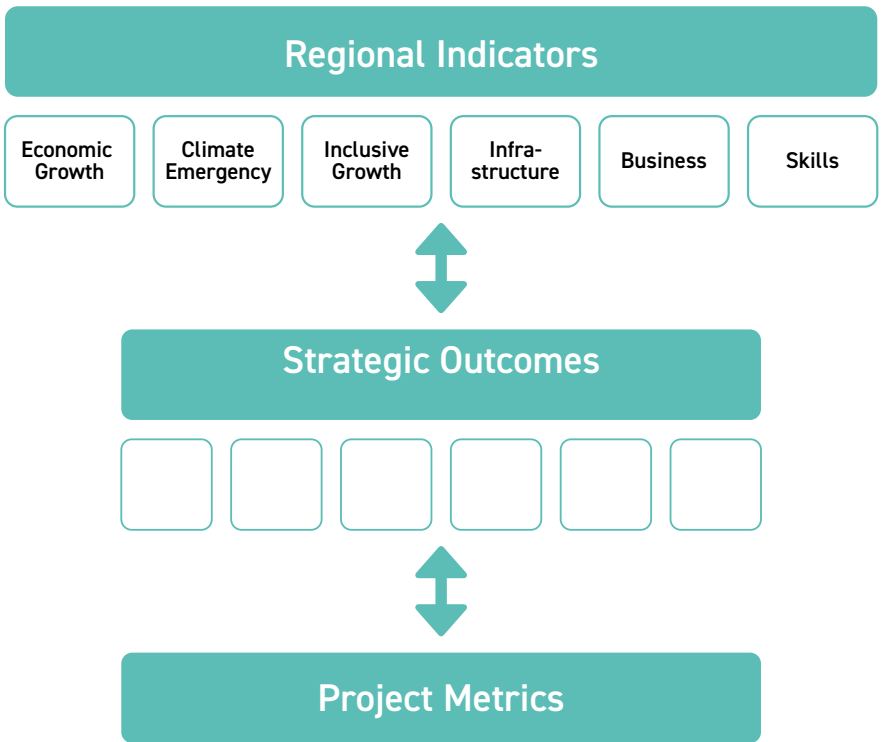
- 90 new products or services brought to market through WECA support
- 110 new research and development projects carried out
- Engage 1,000 small businesses in innovation and provide intensive support to 470, including registering intellectual property rights

### Infrastructure

- 73,700m<sup>2</sup> of commercial floorspace enabled
- 500,000 new bus journeys per year, and significant improvements locally
- 1,380,000 new rail journeys per year
- Six new railway stations opened
- Delivery of 13km of improved cycle and walking paths
- Delivery of flood defences to protect and enable 19,400 jobs and £3.8bn of GVA

In addition to the direct benefit of jobs and economic output, WECA's programme will contribute to our objectives of clean and inclusive growth, and addressing the climate emergency through:

- enabling residents to take public transport
- increasing rates of walking and cycling
- supporting the development of affordable housing and employment space
- helping people across the region to gain skills and access jobs
- improving the innovation and productivity of businesses across the region
- supporting digital transformation



Our strategic outcomes provide a framework for understanding the collective impact of all of our projects and the benefits they deliver. **Our regional indicators** help us to track the overall issues WECA wants to see progress against.

# MANAGING DELIVERY

## Resourcing Strategy

WECA has published a £350m Investment Programme covering the period to March 2023. The programme aligns investment proposals with the operating framework, the Local Industrial Strategy and other key regional strategies and core objectives. We will continue to review all projects within the WECA Investment Programme on a regular basis to ensure: (a) their deliverability within the proposed time scale and set budget and (b) their relative priority status with regard to the impact of the Covid pandemic.

In line with the Investment Strategy, we will continue to integrate the various funding streams available to the West of England, incorporating the Investment Fund, Transforming Cities Fund, Economic Development Fund, Local Growth Fund, Getting Building Fund, Business Rates Retention and other available grant funding in order to build a longer-term strategic approach to financial planning. We will maintain strong links into government, collaborate with our Combined Authority and Unitary Authority colleagues, and strive to maximise further investment and grant funding into the region.

WECA is built around the principle of operating as efficiently as possible, maximising opportunities for collaboration with partners, and securing external project funding wherever possible.

Through these principles, we will ensure we have the skills and resources we need to deliver now, and into the future.

## Business Plan

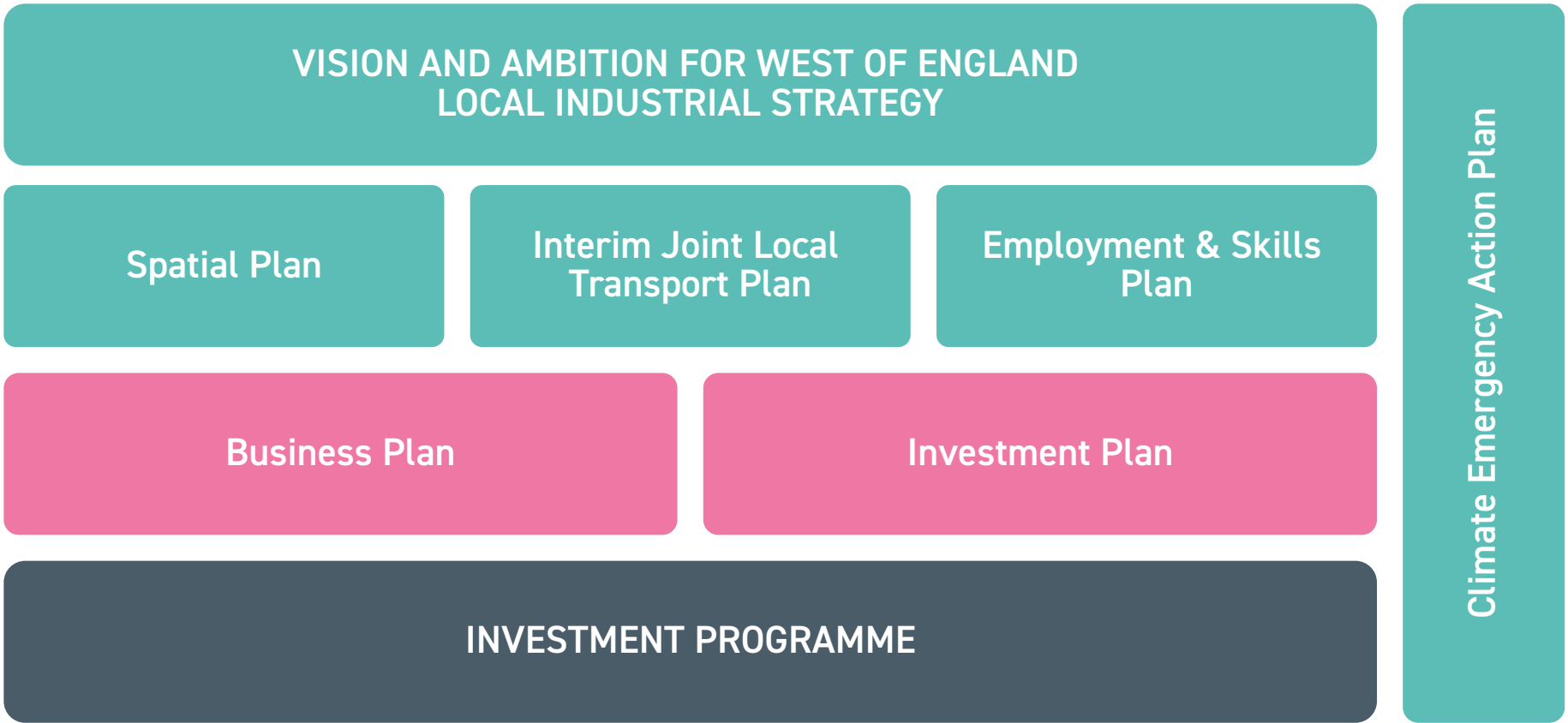
The business plan on the following pages sets out the key activities that WECA will deliver during the financial year from April 2021 to March 2022. It demonstrates how we will work to deliver the priorities identified in our LIS, Climate Emergency Action Plan and Regional Recovery plan to secure investment into transport, homes, business and skills. Delivery is guided by our strategic programmes focused on Spatial Development Strategy, Joint Local Transport Plan and Employment and Skills Plan.

The plan supports the delivery of a number of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

[UN SDGs], including: climate action; affordable and clean energy; good health and wellbeing; decent work and economic growth; industry, innovation and infrastructure; sustainable cities and communities; responsible consumption and production; life on land; and partnership for the goals.

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 business plan is aligned with our 2021-22 budget, but also contains reference to activity that will continue in the coming years.



# INFRASTRUCTURE

Our ambition is to enable residents to move seamlessly around the West of England region between work, home and leisure activities, and to provide high quality, affordable homes.

We are working towards that ambition in a way that addresses our commitment to achieving zero net carbon by 2030. The right

infrastructure is central to that commitment, both physical and digital. Infrastructure is also key to maximising productivity across the region, connecting rural and urban communities, and driving clean and inclusive growth.

## Our activities are aligned with five objectives:



Better links to connect people and encourage use of sustainable transport



Improved national and international connections



Regional housing growth that promotes a mix of sustainable and affordable homes



Employment spaces that meet the needs of businesses and communities



World-leading digital connections to support innovation and collaboration

Working towards our Net Zero Carbon Emissions ambition – 2030



## Strategic activities



Develop a 25 Year Strategic Outline Business Case, 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 delivery of key schemes such as MetroWest.



Work with the Unitary Authorities to establish infrastructure led strategic masterplans for areas associated with our Key Route Network. Northern Fringe and South West Bristol being the first two programmes. This sits alongside the masterplanning work underway for Yate, Keynsham and Brislington/Hicks Gate.



Developing a Strategic Outline Business Case as the first stage of our regional Mass Transit programme.



Continue to work on the delivery of our Bus Strategy, including our infrastructure plan focused on key routes, and linkages with Park & Ride facilities.



Development of a Strategic Outline Business Case for the Bristol to Bath Strategic Corridor.



Promote active travel, utilising the Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan as an evidence base and establishing an investment strategy and implementation plan.



As the Transport Authority, WECA will work closely with its constituent councils to deliver core public transport functions and continue to build our regional team to lead policy development.



Continue work with Bath & North East Somerset Council and Bristol City Council on emerging Clean Air Zones.



## Strategic activities



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 Government.

Prepare a new evidence base to inform and support the preparation of the WECA Spatial Development Strategy (SDS), and Local Plans.

Prepare a statutory Spatial Development Strategy, a long term 20 year strategic plan, that will set out where homes, jobs and infrastructure (including green infrastructure), are needed to support clean, inclusive growth and recovery.

To support the SDS, prepare Infrastructure and Investment Delivery Plan (IIDP) and engage 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.

Continue to work with the Local Nature Partnership and other partners to implement our Joint Green Infrastructure Plan and Action Plan.

Apply our Placemaking Charter, setting out the quality standards expected in the region, which developers, architects and house builders will be encouraged to sign up to.

Continue to work with strategic partner organisations via the West of England Joint Assets Board and The West of England Housing Delivery Board to increase the identification of surplus land and accelerate delivery of new homes, including affordable homes.

Develop and implement our Housing Delivery Strategy as part of a joint working programme with Homes England, other government agencies and departments, the National Housing Federation and registered providers.

Strategic activities



Lead work related to One Public Estate and Modern Methods of Construction at regional level to develop innovative approaches to further increase and accelerate delivery of housing and mixed-use regeneration.



Through the preparation of the shared evidence base for the SDS, engage with development industry, businesses and communities as appropriate to help inform how we may identify and plan for new opportunities for employment sites. To include consideration of a range of needs including scale-up businesses.



Deliver our Future Transport Zones work, including 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.



# BUSINESS GROWTH

Our focus is on rebuilding a strong regional economy, to enable long-term recovery for the West of England, following the impact of Covid-19. We will help businesses build their financial resilience, innovate and adopt best practice, and boost their productivity.

In line with our Regional Recovery Plan, we will help our businesses to achieve their potential through recovery as well as attracting more businesses to start, grow and thrive in the region.

Our activities are aligned with four objectives:

- 1



Help businesses to start-up, grow and flourish, nurturing inclusivity and entrepreneurial spirit
- 2



Support businesses to invest in the region and realise export opportunities
- 3



Drive an innovative and collaborative economy
- 4



Protect and promote our region's culture

Working towards our Net Zero Carbon Emissions ambition – 2030



## Strategic activities



Develop the Growth Hub core business support offer to enhance and improve accessibility and navigation of support resources on offer, including bespoke support packages focused on financial resilience and technology adoption.



Deliver a universal business support service which will allow a broad range of complementary products to be delivered at a local authority level, meeting a diverse range of business needs, branded and coordinated as Growth Hub.



Introduce an improving resource efficiency package designed to provide direct advice to SMEs to help them adapt processes to compensate for climate change and adopt good practice in carbon reduction.



Deliver a transformative productivity through people programme for SME leaders to support senior leaders through an intensive 12-month programme to transform working practices and productivity.



Deploy an expert Intellectual Property Office resource to provide information, advice and guidance to companies.



Work with Department for International Trade to develop an export support project closely aligned with the existing International Trade Advisor network to explore opportunities for bi-lateral activities across investment and trade.



Through a Mentoring for Growth project, mentors from leading firms will be matched with SME owners to improve performance by increased leadership practices.



Work with Be the Business to pilot a regional 'trail-blazer' approach to creating real firm level change using national assets and connectivity aligned to local priorities.



Build on the region's many successful sector networks, to create a suite of collaborative network peer to peer activities and content to share experience, good practice and stories of growth.



## Strategic activities



Using our Workforce for the Future programme, help SMEs to meet their current and future skills needs more efficiently and effectively and help them play a much more active role in realising their workforce for the future.



Deliver a business to business talent retention platform to underpin a WECA led multi-agency approach to supporting businesses through economic shocks.



Set up and deliver an SME Business Resilience grant fund to support businesses transition, pivot and grow.



Provide direct information, advice and guidance to businesses as we transition from the European Union to a new regime for international trade and investment.



SME Business Advisory Board programme; partnering with Be the Business to provide SMEs with a non-executive Board to help with strategic planning and management, and building diversity and inclusivity.



Work with major public and third sector bodies across the West of England to widen opportunity for Food and Drink SMEs to engage in public procurement through a West of England Food Network.



Establish and roll out a quality assured regional good employer standard that will be adoptable at board level and used to recognise and promote good employment practice, including living wage within specific sectors, employee engagement, recruiting and nurturing diverse talent and considering climate adaptation and carbon impact.



Evaluate the need, opportunity and approach for a scale-up programme to increase access to relevant capital for growing firms that balances solving market failure with return on investment over the long term.



Identify, attract and support investments by companies in high value regional clusters which realise the triple dividend of commercial value for investors and economic and community value for the region and the UK.



## Strategic activities



Deliver an inward investment business development framework that focusses on targeted lead generation that corresponds to the region's key innovation opportunities.



Work with DIT and multipliers to secure inward investment projects providing direct value-added services to investing businesses.



Engage in a programme of strategic account management providing aftercare to foreign direct investors and servicing indigenous foreign owned companies; and maintaining relationships with key strategic businesses.



Deliver an enhanced West of England Business Innovation Fund awarding grant funding to enable SMEs to undertake R&D activities, with wrap around support.



Establish a flexible and agile innovation focussed 'Influence Fund' to be allocated to strategic and mission-focused R&D projects which include WECA as a grant partner, enabling the region to lever significant additional grant funding and 'crowd in' the private sector addressing missions and challenges that require public leadership.



Offer 60 SMEs a package of support to identify, protect and better exploit their IP commercially.



Target a research and option analysis to understand and alleviate causes of low and sporadic angel investment in the region.



Aligned to Government's 'Made Smarter' initiative, accelerate the adoption of digital technologies through focused support for manufacturing SMEs through a package of intensive support measures, including digital transformation workshops, small grants to purchase equipment, leadership and management training, student placements and bespoke digital transformation advice to 80 SMEs.



Design the concept of the region as a Professional Services Innovation Zone, including establishment of a model for incubation and scale; a digital sandbox for professional services to test and trial products and services early on relevant data sets; and to confirm the region's potential for applied R&D leadership in LawTech quality assurance.



## Strategic activities



Deliver a comprehensive regional analysis of feasible options and recommendations for additional life sciences lab space, identified as a key barrier to growth, in preparation for future funding opportunities.

In tandem with existing strategic work on Modern Methods of Construction technology and housing innovation, develop and deliver a proof of concept physical structure for a "Smart Home" in response to changing working practices accelerated by COVID-19 in collaboration with appropriate manufacturers.

Devise a process for creating 'missions' for challenge-led innovation and test on a real-life West of England challenge to prove that the concept of mission-orientation is a powerful tool for community and stakeholder engagement in the design and delivery of interventions that address complex systemic challenges in the region.

Enhance the region's data analytical capability and intelligence to enable our businesses, residents and the public sector to design, target and evaluate impact of innovation measures.

Scope the design for the creation of one or two demonstrator digital hyperhubs aimed at residents enabling work, rest and play in the community, in super-connected multi-purpose spaces.

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.

Build on lessons learned and relationships established through the High Streets Recovery Fund and the Love our High Streets project, work with communities to transform key high streets and support wider regeneration through pilot projects.

We will protect and promote our region's culture, and explore wider opportunities to work with communities enabling regeneration through working with Arts Council England to deliver a regional cultural compact to take forwards the regional strategy work.



# SKILLS

By 2036, the West of England will be internationally recognised for its sustainable, inclusive and diverse economy, providing a high quality of life, prosperity and opportunities for all its residents. Our people will be skilled, healthy and able to achieve their potential. Our businesses will play an active role in shaping employment and skills provision across the region and they will be

able to find the skills and talent they need to innovate, add greater value and thrive.

Our Employment and Skills Plan 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.

## Our activities are aligned with five objectives:



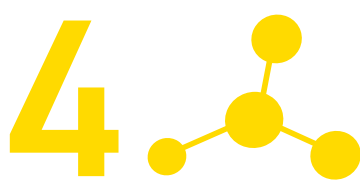
**Integrate our employment, skills and education system to align with employers' needs**



**Enable all young people to achieve their potential**



**Address barriers to employment and progression**



**Empower people to progress in employment and access higher paid opportunities**



**Ensure employers can recruit and retain the skills and talent they need to thrive**

Working towards our Net Zero Carbon Emissions ambition – 2030

## Strategic activities



Build intelligence and evidence-based forecasting to enable commissioning, and co-ordination of provision working with a range of regional and national partners through the Skills Advisory Panel.



Establish a map of all the provision available in the region, leading to development of an 'all age skills portal' ensuring that information is available and easily navigated. Information to include provision of training, employment, upskilling or reskilling and for all age groups and personal circumstances.



Working with all our key stakeholders, align plans to ensure employment and skills opportunities are understood and that our infrastructure links people to opportunities.



Through the West of England Careers Hub, schools and colleges will be supported to improve the quality of careers education, information advice and guidance available to their students.



Build strong links between employers and schools through the Enterprise Adviser Network, Workforce for the Future and wider engagement with employer brokerage services.



Ensure schools and colleges have relevant labour market information to ensure careers programmes are aligned to meet the needs of employers and the region.



Work collaboratively and strategically with external partners to achieve a joined up regional approach to support all young people achieve their potential.



Deploy investment to establish a community grant scheme for projects targeting local need or specific hard to reach groups.



In light of the impact of Covid-19 on communities already hardest to reach and furthest from engaging with training or employment, we will review the community grant scheme allocation and ensure that this programme of support is deployed to benefit local residents by April 2021.



Use AEB funded community learning to engage residents and help them to understand wider learning and training opportunities.



## Strategic activities



Align adult education provision (via AEB) to ensure that our providers deliver the skills and training needed for our residents to access work, move on in work, or to benefit from new or growing employer demands.



Complete review of post-16 education and skills delivery infrastructure to ensure it meets changing expectations and teaching/learning provision. This work is commissioned and will be reported in the quarterly business plan updates.



Continue delivering Future Bright to support residents to progress in work, find new, better paid work and to build their confidence.



Build and evaluate best practice from this programme, in order continue provision with Future Bright Plus.



Support key growth sectors and innovation 'ecosystem' i.e. through Global Centre of Innovation Excellence, Institute of Technology, Digital Skills.



Establish the Workforce for the Future programme to support our SMEs with their workforce planning. Providing advice, training, upskilling and support with apprenticeships to help our businesses thrive across the region, and adapt to the challenges created by Covid-19. Aligning this support to existing business focused activity via the Growth Hub.



Ensuring residents and businesses are well prepared for a changing labour market, including by ensuring join up of existing and new digital upskilling and training, particularly in the light of Covid-19, where all residents will need basic digital skills and access, and many will need higher level and specific skills to access employment opportunities in growth areas.



Further promote and support apprenticeships as a key employment tool by deploying funding to support the better utilisation of the apprenticeship levy in the region. This will be achieved by deploying support on the apprenticeship levy via the Workforce for the Future Programme.



Focusing on brokerage (people and businesses) to maximise uptake and linked to the Growth Hub.



# CORPORATE SERVICES

Corporate Services concentrates on one objective:



Support the organisation to deliver the business plan

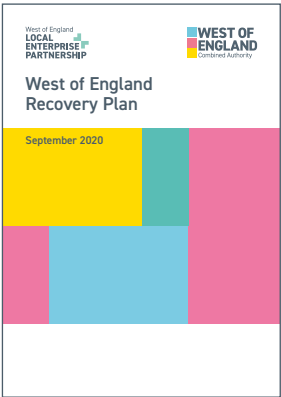
Working towards our Net Zero Carbon Emissions ambition – 2030

## Strategic activities

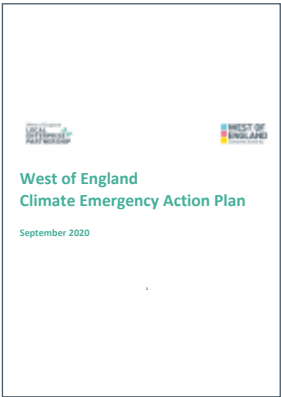
- Regularly challenge the WECA Investment Programme to ensure that limited funding is targeted at projects that are deliverable and best meet the priority needs of the region – particularly in relation to recognising the impact of the Covid pandemic.
- Maximise external investment into the region through accessing government grant and third-party match funding. Continue to lobby for a sustainable medium to long term revenue funding settlement for WECA in collaboration with the M9 (Combined Authority) Group.
- Administer the West of England Combined Authority and Joint Committee meetings, LEP Board, Audit Committee, Scrutiny Committee and Advisory Boards both in a physical and virtual environment.
- Continue to enable an effective and efficient remote working culture and environment whilst promoting and supporting the well-being of staff.
- Manage the 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 other relevant partners.
- Continue to develop and enhance ICT functionality to better meet the current and future needs of the organisation.
- Manage the corporate risk framework to ensure that key risks are identified, mitigations agreed, and activity monitored. Continue to embed a risk management culture and ownership within the organisation.
- Ensure proactive communications, marketing and engagement activity to support business plan objectives and celebrate success and progress across the region.
- Building on the success of recent procurement collaborations, drive further efficiencies through joined up commissioning across the region to include exploring how social value procurement can maximise local employment and supply chain benefits.
- 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.



# LINKS TO RELATED DOCUMENTS



Recovery plan



Climate emergency action plan



Local industrial strategy



LEP delivery plan

List of all projects in delivery

Regional indicators