

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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