WEST OF ENGLAND MAYORAL COMBINED AUTHORITY

WEST OF ENGLAND GROWTH STRATEGY

Contents

WE ARE THE WEST OF ENGLAND

Foreword

The West of England is where I am proud to call home. It is a place of diverse talents and communities. A place where we are pushing boundaries and shaping the future, a place bold for business and full of restless creativity. Our region is a national growth opportunity. In this new chapter, I am determined to deliver the growth we need to improve people's lives right across the region.

WEST OF ENGLAND

HELEN GODWIN
MAYOR OF THE WEST OF ENGLAND

Economic growth is a top priority for the Government and that is an ambition I share. For me, growth means that the residents of this region will see and feel a real difference in the opportunities they and their families can access, the services available to them and the places they live. This strategy sets out the action we will take over the coming decade.

Productivity growth is important and will drive tangible change, but we are not pursuing economic growth for its own sake. This Growth Strategy is about securing investment for our part of the world: new jobs for local people; better transport to cut congestion and boost productivity; and cleaner, cheaper energy.

I am driven by an ambition for a better future for everyone across the West, something shared by all our councils' Leaders. Through this Growth Strategy, together we will deliver:

- Better paid jobs that offer career progression and opportunities that support us all to reach our full potential.
- A region where residents feel better off and more able to manage household costs and have a little extra to enjoy West Country life.
- A transport network that meets the needs of our region – enabling people to get where they need to be easily, quickly and safely.
- Action to help lift children here out of poverty, giving families the support that they need.
- Step change on the childcare crisis, supporting families to access affordable childcare and working with businesses to help recruit and retain staff.
- A clear route from education into work for our young people, working with education, business and families to offer pathways to jobs of the future.
- Thousands of new homes in the right places, helping more people get on the housing ladder or have a secure tenancy.
- Vibrant new districts across our region where businesses want to be, where people want to live, and where we can access nature and culture.
- The protection of the stunning landscapes and nature that attract people to the region.
- An economy transformed to drive green innovation and opportunity, and cut pollution, as we progress towards net zero.
- A truly diverse and outward-facing economy, with strong global trade and investment relationships that will directly benefit our communities.
- New investment in our four world-class universities linked to their areas of academic excellence.
- More businesses based here and thriving – accessing a talented workforce and amazing facilities.
- A region that is resilient to the climate challenges of now and the future, so our growth can be sustained.

Growth should not be an intangible economic concept. It is about all of us – it is about our region working together for a brighter future.

We are the West of England. The future starts here.

Shaping the future: The West of England Growth Strategy

Our story: a thriving region with significant growth potential & strong drivers of growth

- Our people
- Our R&D and ideas
- Our diverse & collaborative economy
- Our places, nature & landscape
- Our culture, creativity & curiosity

Our strong economic foundations & sectors that will drive a decade of growth

21%
Regional economic growth in the past 10 years

£9.5bn
2022 Exports

£3.4bn (2016-2021)
Foreign Direct Investment into the region

Fast growing sectors:

Job growth since 2015

52%
Increase in digital and tech jobs (2015-2024)

82%
Increase in creative jobs (2015-2024)

42%
increase in large companies since 2010

SME
growth faster than wider UK

Sectors for growth

Advanced Manufacturing	**£2.9bn** GVA, faster growth than other parts of the UK
Digital & Technologies	**£3.8bn** GVA, fastest growth of any Combined Authority area
Clean Energy Industries	**140%** job growth since 2015
Creative Industries	**£1.6bn** GVA, and **82%** job growth since 2015
Everyday Economy	**£16.1bn** GVA, **57%** of all jobs in the region

A place with energy and ambition to push boundaries

Action to unlock growth:
To deliver economic growth and improve lives for residents, we will create the conditions for regional success by…

1. Contributing to national economic growth helping our businesses succeed & creating jobs
2. Connecting the region through better public transport & active travel
3. Creating and building homes and communities that are affordable, attractive and sustainable
4. Empowering residents with the skills to access the jobs that will shape our future
5. Making the West of England the home for green jobs and green growth
6. Lifting children and families out of poverty in the West of England

Our places

GROWTH ZONE — **WEST INNOVATION ARC**

GROWTH ZONE — **CENTRAL BRISTOL & BATH**

GROWTH ZONE — **SEVERN ESTUARY**

GROWTH ZONE — **SOMER VALLEY**

GROWTH ZONE — **NORTH SOMERSET GROWTH GATEWAY**

A network of places that will underpin the wider growth of the region. Across our growth zones, there are strong investment opportunities with nationally significant potential. We will publish an annually updated investment prospectus

Opportunities for investment: our initial prospects for growth

1. West of England Future Places Fund
Securing land to enable comprehensive development across our Growth Zones

2. Unlocking Mass Transit
With catalytic public investment, Mass Transit will be a significant opportunity for broader investment into the region

3. Engine West
Investment opportunities linked to our strengths in advanced manufacturing & security expertise

4. AI Supercluster
A globally competitive ecosystem bringing together research, infrastructure, talent and industry adoption

5. Creative Growth West
Building on this fast-growing sector of the regional economy with new production and research facilities

6. Clean Energy West
Building the next generation of clean energy infrastructure – investment in wind, nuclear and other energy priorities

7. Rural Productivity Incubator
A national testbed for rural productivity opportunities. Prospects for investment in the facilities and infrastructure needed to drive rural productivity.

8. Innovation in digital technologies, production & logistics
Maximizing the dual opportunity of investment in innovative production and manufacturing; and growth opportunities in digital technology and its supply chain.

1 Contributing to national economic growth helping our businesses succeed and creating jobs

1. Launch a new Business Board to support development of regional sector plans, supporting an acceleration in growth.
2. Publish a regularly refreshed investment prospectus detailing new investment opportunities across the region.
3. Explore innovative ways to deliver a variety of employment spaces, and to regenerate high streets and industrial areas.
4. Refresh our support for businesses looking to scale up.
5. Work with Government to strengthen international trade missions, and develop national and international partnerships.
6. Seek to agree an Innovation Deal with Government through the Local Innovation Partnership Fund.
7. Maximise the high-growth potential of our Creative Sector with new investment to unlock potential.
8. Deliver clearly defined pathways from education to work. Explore impact investment opportunities to unlock greater investment in the region and deliver social impact.
9. To future proof the region, deliver the digital and utilities infrastructure we need.
10. Support start-ups, spinouts, scaleups, and established businesses to grow locally through linking government, the MCA and the business community.

2 Connecting the region through better public transport & active travel

1. Deliver a new, bold, regional transport strategy to get the West of England moving.
2. Improve the suburban rail network – working with partners to deliver at pace.
3. Finally deliver mass transit for the West of England.
4. Make it easier to walk, wheel and cycle – working with Active Travel England and investing to do this.
5. Invest in the local people to upskill for delivery – from construction to engineering to green energy development.
6. Make it easier for people to travel across the network, moving between services on a single ticket and with single timetables across operators.
7. Working with national Government and transport agencies (like the Department for Transport, Network Rail, Highways England) to ensure our transport network plans unlock the housing growth opportunities across the region.
8. Make it easier to use public transport, offering support to people to access jobs, training and opportunities.
9. Align our transport, housing and climate resilience plans

3 Creating and building homes and communities that are affordable, attractive and sustainable

1. Establish a £500m Future Place Fund, enabling land acquisition to unlock growth opportunities.
2. Utilise our Strategic Place Partnership to unlock our pipeline of 15,000 homes that are stalled.
3. Deliver a Spatial Development Strategy, unlocking opportunity across the region.
4. Explore the case for new housing delivery mechanisms such as development corporations to deliver our nationally significant new city districts.
5. Pilot a Small Sites Accelerator in Bristol, delivering new social homes on council-owned brownfield sites.
6. Work to set the strategic direction of the new £39bn Social and Affordable Homes Programme.
7. Take an infrastructure first approach to delivering new homes, enhancing communities.
8. Work with all stakeholders to tackle high construction costs in the region.
9. Deliver homes and places that are low carbon, attractive, affordable to heat, well integrated with nature, and resilient to the impacts of climate change.
10. Deliver a Local Remediation Acceleration Plan, ensuring homes with cladding are remediated as soon as possible.

4 Empowering residents with the skills to access the jobs that will shape our future

1. Develop a new regional skills strategy: delivering on the ambition of this Growth Strategy.
2. Develop a new regional approach to support young people into high-quality education and skills pathways.
3. Support further devolution in the skills and post 16 space to provide residents with the skills for our future regional economy.
4. Boost skills training and employment support in the key sectors set out in our Growth Strategy.
5. Work with Further Education Colleges and Universities to support more young people from disadvantaged backgrounds into Higher Education.
6. Continue to deliver the West of England Connect to Work and Youth Guarantee Programmes – getting more people into work.
7. Deliver on our Get West of England Working Plan ambitions.
8. Increase apprenticeship numbers by setting up an Apprenticeships for Growth programme.
9. Support and work with more families in poverty to increase economic activity.
10. Develop a network of skills academies geared to our priority sectors – linking residents to jobs.
11. Deliver universal digital skills access and reskilling support.
12. Build the facilities our region needs to deliver skills for the future.
13. Work with the Department for Work and Pensions and Department for Education to identify national policy changes to deliver growth that benefits all.
14. Work closely with employers to recruit and upskill local talent.

5 Making the West of England the home for green jobs and green growth

1. Support Bristol Port to attract investment in the development of Floating Offshore Wind.
2. Unlock the opportunities of tidal energy on the Severn Estuary.
3. Continue to lead nationally in retrofit services.
4. Support businesses to accelerate the growth of green jobs through tailored skills and training programmes.
5. Deliver the West of England Local Industrial Decarbonisation Plan.
6. Work to identify local solutions to grid capacity constraints.
7. Turbo charge our clean energy industries by growing our nuclear energy capability.
8. Further support our strong community energy sector including considering further wind turbines and rooftop solar programmes.
9. Deliver the West of England Clean Energy Investment Plan.
10. Grow our regional leadership in the development of innovative approaches to building resilient places.
11. Work with partners to deliver the priorities of the region's Local Nature Recovery Strategy, protecting natural assets.
12. Work with partners to deliver the Bristol Avon Flood Strategy and other flood protection measures to protect our communities and businesses.
13. Work with R&D capabilities in the region to continue to innovate for the green economy.

6 Lifting children and families out of poverty in the West of England

1. Launch a strategy to tackle child poverty, by the end of 2025.
2. Explore and develop social impact investment opportunities to bring new solutions to structural challenges for young people in poverty.
3. Support more parents to work the hours they want through a renewed focus on affordable and accessible childcare.
4. Develop a regional co-operative bank of early years workers to support the childcare industry and increase economic activity.
5. Partner with Local Authorities, the VCSE sector, Integrated Care Boards and wider partners to improve health and wellbeing levels through identifying and tackling the wider determinants of health.
6. Work across the region to improve access to cultural activity – especially for young people.
7. Launch a new Social Value Framework to encourage a cross sector commitment to supporting children and young people in the region who are in poverty.
8. Through the Youth Guarantee Trailblazer programme, strengthen our support for young people at risk of leaving education, employment or training without a clear plan for their future.
9. Work with government to identify and make the case for national policy changes to improve lives for children and families.
10. Commit to using all the policy levers across the region to take as many young people out of poverty as possible.

The places across our region are ready for growth

Our region is a vibrant melting pot of creativity, community, and innovation. A region with thriving urban districts, a wealth of diverse cultural opportunities, natural assets and rural landscapes that attract both new residents and visitors to the region. We're committed to ensuring it's a place where everyone can live well.

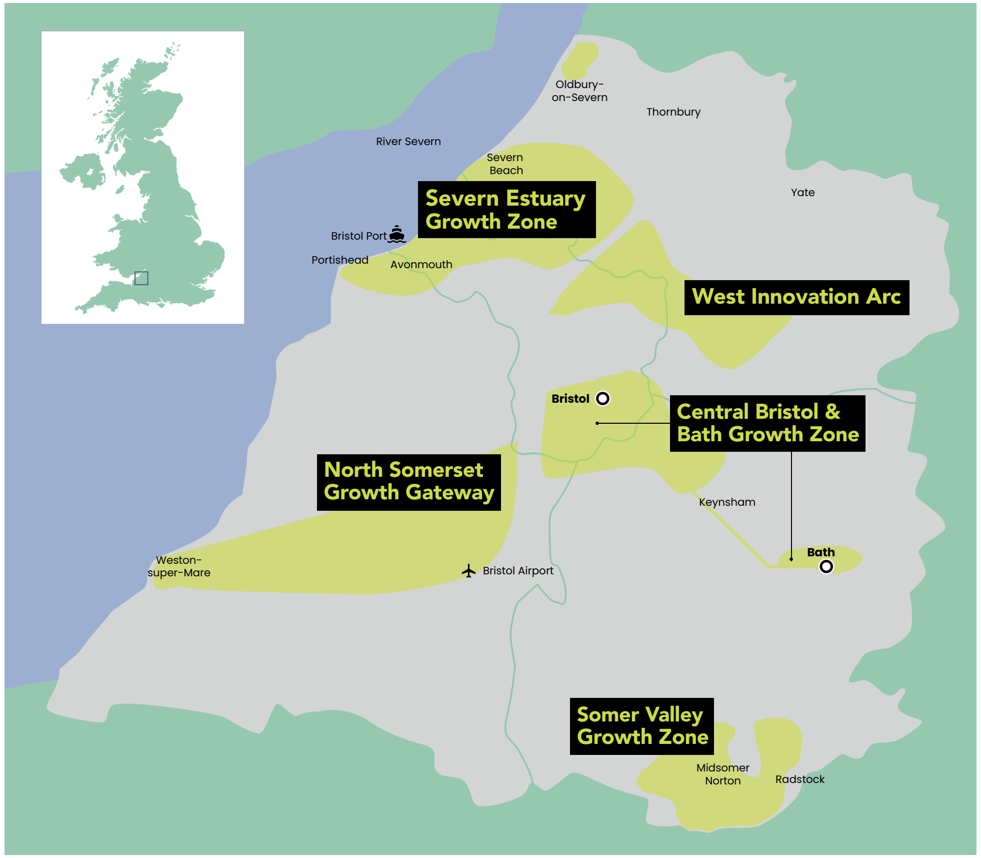
A network of regional growth zones will be central to our decade of growth, opening up a wealth of new opportunities for businesses and residents right across the West of England.

THE WEST INNOVATION ARC

The Arc is a growing new district that is home to our R&D, advanced manufacturing, innovation and security capability. With the new district of Brabazon at its heart, and fast-growing innovation led job creation, the West Innovation Arc will deliver nationally significant growth over the next decade. South Gloucestershire, home to the expanding Innovation Arc, is the fastest-growing part of our regional economy - and is rapidly emerging as a catalyst for nationally significant growth.

CENTRAL BRISTOL & BATH

Our major cities have a unique and diverse economic mix, including a thriving creative sector, internationally significant digital sector strengths and a culture that attracts visitors and new residents. With large scale development opportunities including housing growth – our cities will be our engines of growth.



Note: The picture on this page is illustrative, showing areas that will play a crucial role in driving economic growth. It does not reflect specific housing growth locations

SEVERN ESTUARY

The home of clean energy transition in the West of England, the Severn Estuary growth zone includes industrial capacity for nuclear energy, floating offshore wind and more. It is a place that can deliver at scale – making clean energy transition a reality. This zone includes Oldbury, a nationally significant site for nuclear, it also includes The Bristol Port, stretching into North Somerset and the surrounding industrial areas offer major investment opportunities in clean energy sectors. As well as the existing strengths in freight and logistics, Severn Estuary offers major investment opportunities in clean energy sectors. The Severn Estuary will be at the core of our national clean energy transition.

SOMER VALLEY

The Somer Valley is the West of England's opportunity to showcase rural innovation and sustainable industry. With a rich legacy of mining, engineering and manufacturing, the Somer Valley is now entering a new chapter, evolving from its industrial past into a modern, green productivity zone, where sustainable business, vibrant communities and landscape-led regeneration can go hand in hand.

NORTH SOMERSET GROWTH GATEWAY

The North Somerset Growth Gateway offers the dual opportunity of investment in innovative production and manufacturing; and growth opportunities in digital technology and its supply chain, stemming from the new Epic Campus.

Investing in the West of England makes sense: Every pound put into our region delivers real returns

The West of England offers one of the most dependable investment climates in the UK. With a skilled workforce, strong infrastructure, and a clear vision for growth that benefits all, this region delivers consistent returns. Backing the West isn't just safe - it's strategic.

Over the next decade, we will publish an annual investment prospectus setting out the growing range of investment opportunities. With an economy that has grown 21% in the past decade – faster than the national average – and plans for significant new infrastructure that will create homes, transport network, employment sites and much more, the West of England is a place for growth.

This plan sets out an initial set of investment opportunities, which will evolve and grow in the coming years. Government, regional and local investment will be needed to unlock our growth. A new regional Investment Strategy and thematic investment plans will set out the public sector investment that will unlock delivery.

We're bold for our future – those looking to invest in an ambitious, creative, innovative and positive region should come and talk to us.

Investment for growth: opportunities in the West of England

Future Places Fund: An opportunity to invest in a £500m fund that will pool private and public sector investment to unlock land for comprehensive and high-quality development. Building the homes and places fundamental to our economic growth ambitions.

Unlocking Mass Transit: Delivering mass transit will be driven by catalytic devolved infrastructure funding but will also represent a major investment opportunity for the private sector. From construction, to rolling stock, to service provision – Mass Transit will deliver returns on investment.

Engine West: Investment opportunities to grow the West Innovation Arc as the home of UK advanced engineering. The region is well placed to unlock billions of private and institutional investment, sustain thousands of high-value jobs and establish the UK as a global leader in future flight, resilient space and AI-enabled engineering.

West of England AI Supercluster: Establishing the Supercluster will create a wealth of investment opportunities, particularly in the industrialisation of AI, which will be phase 2 of development. Across Bristol, Bath, and South Gloucestershire – home to the West Innovation Arc – new business investment will follow the growth of university and industry led R&D institutions.

Create Growth West: Investment opportunities across the region will include the West of England Film and TV Centre, creative industries scale up investment and investment in new and existing heritage and cultural institutions, capitalising on the fast-growing creative sector and strengths of the West of England.

Clean Energy West: Significant investment opportunities linked to the rapid growth plans for Floating Offshore Wind and nuclear energy. Building on regional experience at Hinkley, skills and supply chain investment opportunities will come forward, alongside direct investment in new energy generation.

Rural Productivity Incubator: We are establishing a national testbed for rural productivity, ensuring this vital part of our economy grows. Investment opportunities for innovative new businesses and construction opportunities will come forward.

Innovation in digital technologies, production & logistics: The North Somerset economy, which works hand in hand with the wider region, contains the dual opportunity of investment in innovative production and manufacturing; and growth opportunities in digital technology and its supply chain, stemming from the new Epic Campus.

Investing to strengthen our vital Everyday Economy

Alongside the investment opportunities that will accelerate growth in 4 of our core growth sectors, we will take action to strengthen the 5th growth sector – our vital Everyday Economy

We will direct more funding towards the everyday economy and launch the Mayor's Everyday Economy Fund

We are absolutely committed to supporting the caring economy and will focus on developing a broader workforce and support more people from across communities into these roles.

We will promote the sector, launching a "This Is Essential Work" campaign highlighting the value of roles in the everyday economy and the career opportunities the sector offers

We will explore how we can better support workers in the night-time economy, who are essential both to people's lives and the wider economy

We will take investment decisions around skills, housing, and transport that deliver for essential workers

We are transforming our region

The next decade will see the West of England change. Growth will mean more job opportunities, new homes, an injection in pace and investment in the transformation of our transport network, and the strengthening of those relationships that will help us deliver. In 10 years, the action in this plan will deliver tangible change and improve the lives of the people who call this region home.

The change we will deliver:

28%
Increase in GDP

15%
Employment growth in our core areas of economic sector strength

72,000
New jobs across a range of sectors

7,750
Subject to agreement in our Spatial Development Strategy, we will aim for this annual growth of homes

45%
The proportion of commuting journeys by active travel and public transport

135
megawatts clean energy capacity installed, contributing to UK net zero

25%
Decrease in young people not in employment, education or training

WE ARE THE WEST OF ENGLAND

WE ARE PUSHING BOUNDARIES AND SHAPING THE FUTURE

Our future growth will be underpinned by the set of world class universities that are located here and are home to globally significant expertise in a range of disciplines that underpin the economic sector strengths of the region. Working together, our universities and industry are creating a new generation of innovators and ideas that will once again be a catalyst for growth. From Artificial Intelligence (AI) to cyber security, national resilience to clean and green energy generation. The West of England is at the forefront of discovery.

WE'RE A PLACE WHERE HERITAGE MEETS INNOVATION

We're a place with UNESCO world heritage status. We're the longstanding home of the aerospace sector and we were at the heart of Victorian industrial innovation. The West of England celebrates its past, drawing on our history to shape our future. Our future will once again deliver advances in the way the world travels with expertise in sustainable aviation, autonomous vehicles and more. And we're a place where enduring curiosity and new ideas are celebrated: our heritage underpins our confidence to nurture innovation – we know it delivers.

WE'RE A PLACE THAT IS BUILT FOR BOLD BUSINESS

The next decade of growth in the West of England will see our growing strength in green industries become a bedrock of the regional economy permeating every sector. From green energy generation to green construction to green transport developments, our future will not be a choice between economic growth and our environment, green growth is fast becoming the major driver of our economic opportunities.

WE'RE A PLACE OF RESTLESS CREATIVITY

Our future economic growth will be driven by the creativity of our region. As a growing home to UK film and TV production, digital creativity, art, theatre, music and festivals – the West of England will become a key national creativity centre over the next decade. The connections between our creative industries and our cutting-edge innovators create the sparks where new ideas are found. That restless creativity will drive a new wave of ideas and growth opportunities.

WE'RE A PLACE PEOPLE CHOOSE

Our growth will be driven by the diverse people and communities that call the West of England home. A thriving Everyday Economy will mean people and businesses across the West of England have access to the services they need to thrive and grow – from public transport, to retail, to childcare – the West of England's growth will be underpinned by a focus on the social infrastructure and services that are crucial to successful places. Our future economic growth will be supported by the creation of resilient new places and the redevelopment of key growth locations. We're creating new towns and districts where homes, jobs, services and opportunity go hand in hand. As we grow, we will ensure our nature and biodiversity continue to be protected – they are a vital component of why people choose the region. Our future will be driven by a desire for people to see and feel the benefits of growth – by a desire to remain a place where people choose.

Our economy never stands still. One of the strengths of the West of England is its constant evolution – it's a place that sets the pace and drives new ideas. We're a place for growth. A place for the future. The future starts here.

01.

Our story: The West of England's drivers of growth & strong economic foundations

The West of England is a place where people have freedom to create, space to explore, and have bold ambitions for the future. Our region is open to new ideas and is a place for people to build their futures – to live, work and play.

We're a region whose time has come. The people and communities that call the West of England home are ambitious for the future.

Our strong, diverse economy and young, dynamic population are both growing faster than the national average. Our ambitions to transform the region are based on firm foundations and strong growth potential. Our region will be an economic growth success story of the next decade.

The West of England is a beacon of creativity, innovation and heritage – and we're just getting started.

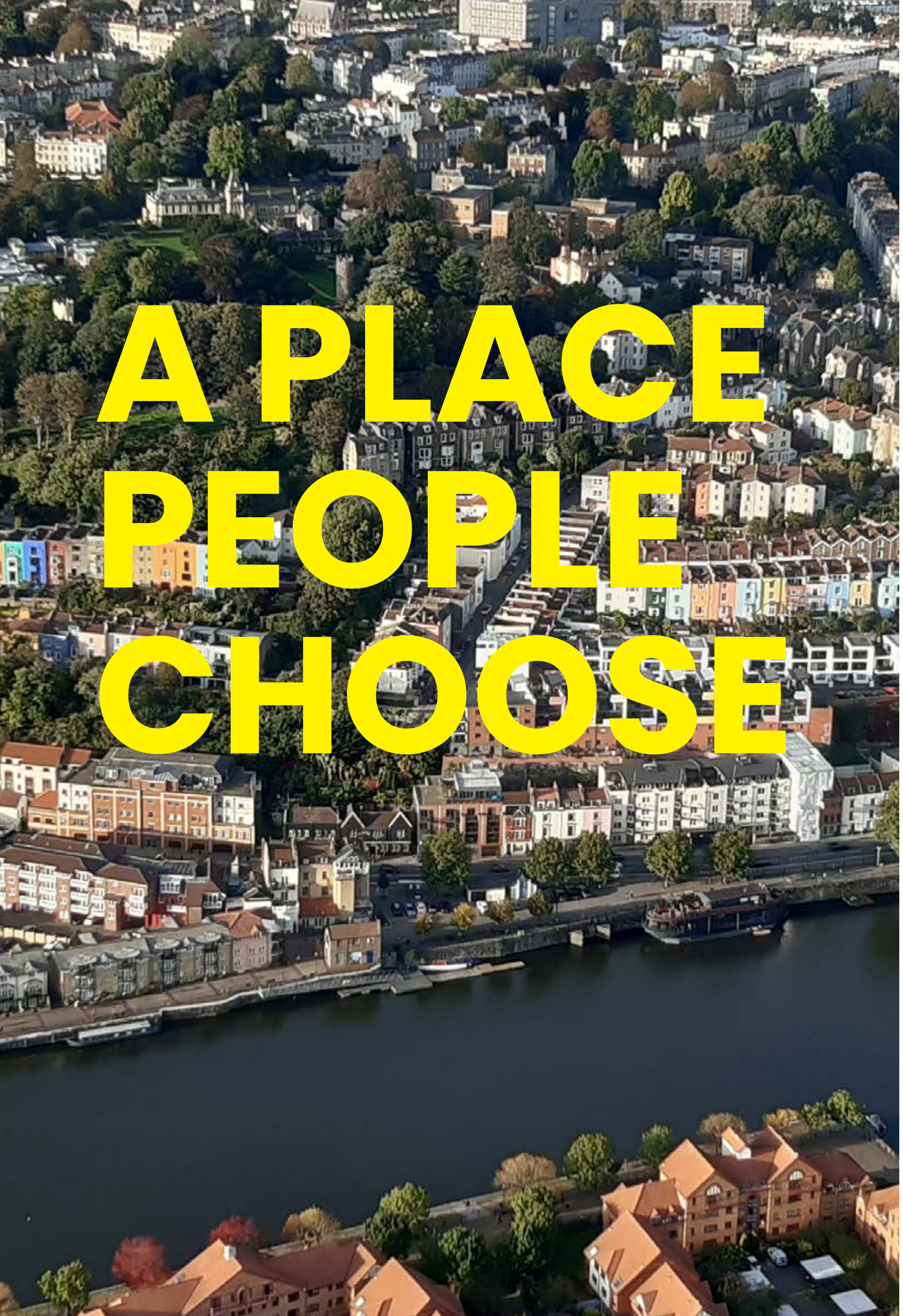
We're a unique mix of people, ideas, collaboration, places and landscapes, culture, creativity and curiosity.

A place with energy and ambition to push boundaries and shape the future.

The West of England is a place where people and ideas come to grow.

"We're a region where culture, leisure and nature serve as rocket boosters to our economy: attracting people, investment and creating a unique environment"

A PLACE PEOPLE CHOOSE



We're a region where people matter.

We're ambitious to do even more over the next decade to make sure that every resident, community, idea and business has a place to thrive. We know that our people are the most crucial drivers of growth for our economy.

We're investing in public transport, building affordable homes and unlocking opportunities for every community. From our festivals to our factories, our culture to our classrooms, our woodlands to our wetlands, this region is rich in promise.

The West of England Combined Authority is a partnership that brings together the Mayor with local government and works with stakeholders and partners right across the region and beyond. We take decisions together to ensure our region is growing and we work with business, regional anchor institutions, the VCSE and residents. We're drawing on the collective strengths our region holds to shape a bright future.

Devolution can power our region forward.

A new Mayor was elected in 2025 and with a new, ambitious devolution framework from Government, we have a unique opportunity to accelerate our devolution journey and the positive impact it is having for our region.

We are taking decisions together for the region to deliver the transport, homes, training and green growth that will accelerate economic growth. We are building a more resilient economy for the future.

We're building on strong foundations and are ready to deliver the growth that will change lives and contribute to national success.

A place for people to build their futures

The West of England wants to see every person benefit from the impact of growth – lifting children and families out of poverty and creating a brighter and healthier future for the whole region.

Our strong foundations for a decade of growth

Our people

A rapidly growing population

1,225,000 today, 9% up by 2040

56% have higher level skills

57% of the workforce is in our everyday economy

112K student population

Our R&D and ideas

4 universities with world leading science and research capabilities

Bristol & Bath Science Park home to international R&D centres

47% of our businesses are innovation-active. We're home to R&D in aerospace, green energy and more

Hosts 3 national Catapult Centres

CATAPULT Network

Our diverse & collaborative economy

Home to nationally recognised business incubators – driving collaboration and growth

5 Unicorns have grown in the region (Graphcore, OVO Energy, Pax8, Pismo & Vertical Aerospace)

46,000 businesses in the region, working together to generate new opportunities

Hosts partnerships like SETSquared, Space West, and MyWorld – each playing a distinct role in driving innovation and investment

Our places, nature & landscape

Bath is the only double inscribed UNESCO World Heritage Site in the UK

The Western Forest, first new National Forest in 30 years. 20m new trees by 2050

A home for globally important nature protection, including Severn Estuary and Avon Gorge

National Landscapes
- Mendip Hills
- The Cotswolds

Our culture, creativity & curiosity

150+ cultural organisations

32m annual visitors to the region

7,000 cultural and creative businesses

A network of major institutions, including Bristol Old Vic, Theatre Royal Bath, Arnolfini, Watershed, Bath Holbourne Museum

Home of the UK festival industry

Drivers of growth: our people

Our people are the greatest asset the West of England has – they will be the drivers of growth over the next 10 years.

The West of England is home to over 1.2m people, and our population is growing at a faster rate than the national average. By 2040, our population is projected to grow by 9%, double the English average. We're a place geared to the future.

The region has a highly skilled workforce. 56% of people have the higher-level qualifications that employers are looking for. Our thriving Everyday Economy is a core ingredient of our economic success and is especially important in our rural and coastal communities.

Our universities play a central role in sustaining and enhancing the Everyday Economy. They are major employers, skills providers, and cultural anchors whose activities directly support health and social care, retail, hospitality and the wider services sectors across the region.

Our world class universities, with their diverse specialisms have brought the region a student population of over 112,000. A large number of graduates choose to stay here to build their future.

With a young, dynamic and highly skilled workforce – we have a crucial building block for growth. People in the West of England live long, healthy lives – with life expectancy above the national average. Young and old alike help make our region a diverse and welcoming place.

More than 90% of residents live in the towns and cities that make up our region with 10% living in more rural areas. This mix contributes to the unique feel of the place. As we grow, delivering both rural and urban sustainable economic growth will be vital to maintaining our unique communities.

Across the West of England, more than 92 languages are spoken. We are a place that welcomes and respects the contribution all communities make to our region.

But we know that some people in the West of England face challenges. This Growth Strategy isn't just about delivering economic growth – it's about achieving growth in ways that tackle the issues our communities face.

For some young people, the opportunities growth brings are out of reach. While we're a highly skilled place, educational attainment at GCSE level is below the national average.

And we know that people with disabilities, those living in areas of higher deprivation (such as the parts of Bristol and North Somerset that are among the most deprived 5% in the country), people from racially and ethnically diverse communities and women are more likely to have lower pay and opportunity.

Our Growth Strategy must deliver growth that benefits all, helping tackle the poverty and challenge that some of our communities experience. That means, part of our growth story has to be about creating the conditions that support people right across the region to benefit from the opportunities growth brings. We know people need access to good transport, housing, digital infrastructure, clean energy, good jobs and more – delivering that is our part of the growth deal.

The West of England is a place people want to live, a place where people can thrive and a place that welcomes new people, businesses and new ideas. Our people are a crucial building block for sustainable economic growth.

A growing, diverse population with a young workforce

1,225K residents

Up 9% by 2040

92 languages spoken

28% aged 18-35, significantly higher than the national average

A highly skilled region, where people want to stay and many people working across the thriving everyday economy

57% of the workforce is in our everyday economy

56% have high level qualifications – the highest rate across Combined Authority regions

112K student population

51% of South West graduates stay

An economically active, healthy population where inequalities are tackled

One of the highest employment rates in the country – **78.9%**

Life expectancy is above the national average

Gender employment gap is 3% - significantly better than the national average (6.7%)

But challenges to address

3.7% of 16–17-year-olds classed as 'NEET', above the national average

A growing number of people out of work due to long-term sickness

Over 11,000 increase since 2019

27% Children in the region living in poverty, rising to 35% in Bristol alone

Drivers of growth: R&D and ideas

Over the past decade, despite difficult times nationally and internationally, the West of England has risen to the challenge. Our region is more connected, more sustainable, a trailblazer of green growth and a major attraction for inward investment. We've created thousands of exciting new jobs in businesses that are working at the cutting edge of innovation.

Our world-leading universities and industry work together to unlock major advances in AI, quantum, deep tech, and compound semiconductors that power breakthroughs in health, energy, manufacturing, creative-tech and defence. Research and Development (R&D) and the nurturing and championing of new ideas are at the core of our economic growth. Time and again – ideas that have reshaped our future have been nurtured in the West of England. Our next decade of growth will once again be powered by innovation.

We are pioneers in areas like unlocking the next generation of 6G technology, in AI, in digital engineering, in robotics, in creative technologies and more. The West of England is the place to come if you want to shape the future. We're built for bold ideas and bold business.

In Bristol University, we are the home of Isambard-AI, the country's most powerful and sustainable supercomputer, enabled by Nvidia technology based at the Bristol and Bath Science Park in South Gloucestershire.

The capability of the supercomputer will revolutionise the way new ideas are translated – AI is already changing the world; the West of England will remain at the forefront of this transformative technology and by working across academia and industry, we'll accelerate the real-world application and impact of AI.

And at the University of the West of England cutting-edge research in robotics, digital futures, and immersive technologies, anchored by the Bristol Robotics Laboratory, the UK's leading and largest academic centre for multi-disciplinary robotics research, strengthens regional leadership in digital and technology and creates opportunities for innovation adoption across industry.

Our universities are centres of research and ideas, but they also play a crucial role in shaping places. The University of Bristol is a driving force behind the Bristol Temple Quarter transformation, anchoring the regeneration with its new Enterprise Campus. And in Bath, the University will play a key role in shaping the new Bath Riverside Innovation District by bringing in top-level research and a strong culture of innovation. Leading companies and academics will co-locate to accelerate applied research, develop high-value skills pipelines, and translate discovery into commercial and societal impact.

Our unique mix of academic and industry excellence has made the West of England a hotbed for inward investment.

In the past decade, over 45,000 businesses have started-up or scaled-up across our region, many with the support of our universities' award winning deeptech incubators in Bath and Bristol. From vertical farming in the agritech sector through to quantum sensing in defence technologies, our R&D strengths are diverse. We're leading the way as a home that supports industry of the future to evolve and grow.

Business is attracted to the West of England in part because of our deep talent pool – people who are agile, innovative and ready to power growth. It's a region where smart ideas turn into commercial success.

With a wide and deep range of skills and an innovative mindset, the West of England is a strong investment location. New industries locating here are more likely to succeed.

Our next decade of growth will once again be powered by innovation

Drivers of growth: our diverse & collaborative economy

The diverse strengths of our economy give the West of England a unique mix and a unique offer. The diversity of the West of England is something we champion and which we will continue to grow alongside the creative problem solvers who come to join us.

The West of England is a place of connections. With different sectors of the economy working together, new ideas are sparked. Cross-sector innovation is championed here – no one has to 'stay in their lane'. The rebellious and curious spirit of the place is a real economic growth asset.

And that collaboration which is found right across our economy is delivering far reaching results.

- The West of England is an international leader in advanced manufacturing with 13 world-leading aerospace companies and a dense supply chain. From that strength, world leading expertise in advanced materials, robotics and net zero engineering has grown.
- Across digital and technology we have globally recognised expertise in Quantum, AI, Cyber, and national security. Advances at the cross-roads of digital and advanced manufacturing that are happening here are changing the world.
- We are home to around 400 companies working in clean energy industries. Over the next decade, we will grow the clean energy sector at pace (including tidal, floating offshore wind and nuclear energy). With our abilities to deliver clean energy innovation at scale – enhanced by our advanced manufacturing strengths, the West of England will be at the heart of the clean energy revolution. This is not only about how we generate clean energy, but also how we use it: from decarbonising transport and homes to powering advanced industries in more sustainable ways. It's also about the ideas we create and export around the world. Our sectors are working together to deliver the clean energy revolution that is fundamental to our future.
- The West of England is a major player in the UK's film and TV production sector – ranked as the third-largest in the UK. As home to the BBC natural history unit, C4, and a thriving community of independent production houses, the West of England is a partner in the UK Government's Creative Places Growth Fund and will be scaling up this sector over the next decade. On the Creative Tech side our blending of world-class digital talent with cutting-edge storytelling, immersive media, and design innovation is a fast-growing success story.
- Our everyday economy is a bedrock of growth. This is the sector that keeps the region moving, fed, healthy and cared for, educates the next generation, welcomes visitors and more. It's a crucial component of our growth vision. It can also underpin high growth – such as the innovation in food and drink production that is led from our region.

Collaboration: An AI Supercluster for Global Leadership

Our collaborative economy is having far reaching impact not least in the fast growing world of AI. Building on the success of Isambard AI, a new phase would deliver Isambard Park – a transformational supercluster that positions the West of England as a world-leading hub for AI research, innovation and adoption. This combines cutting-edge modular data centre capacity, enabling rapid deployment and scaling across our key sectors, and the potential for using waste heat from high-performance computing to power district heat networks.

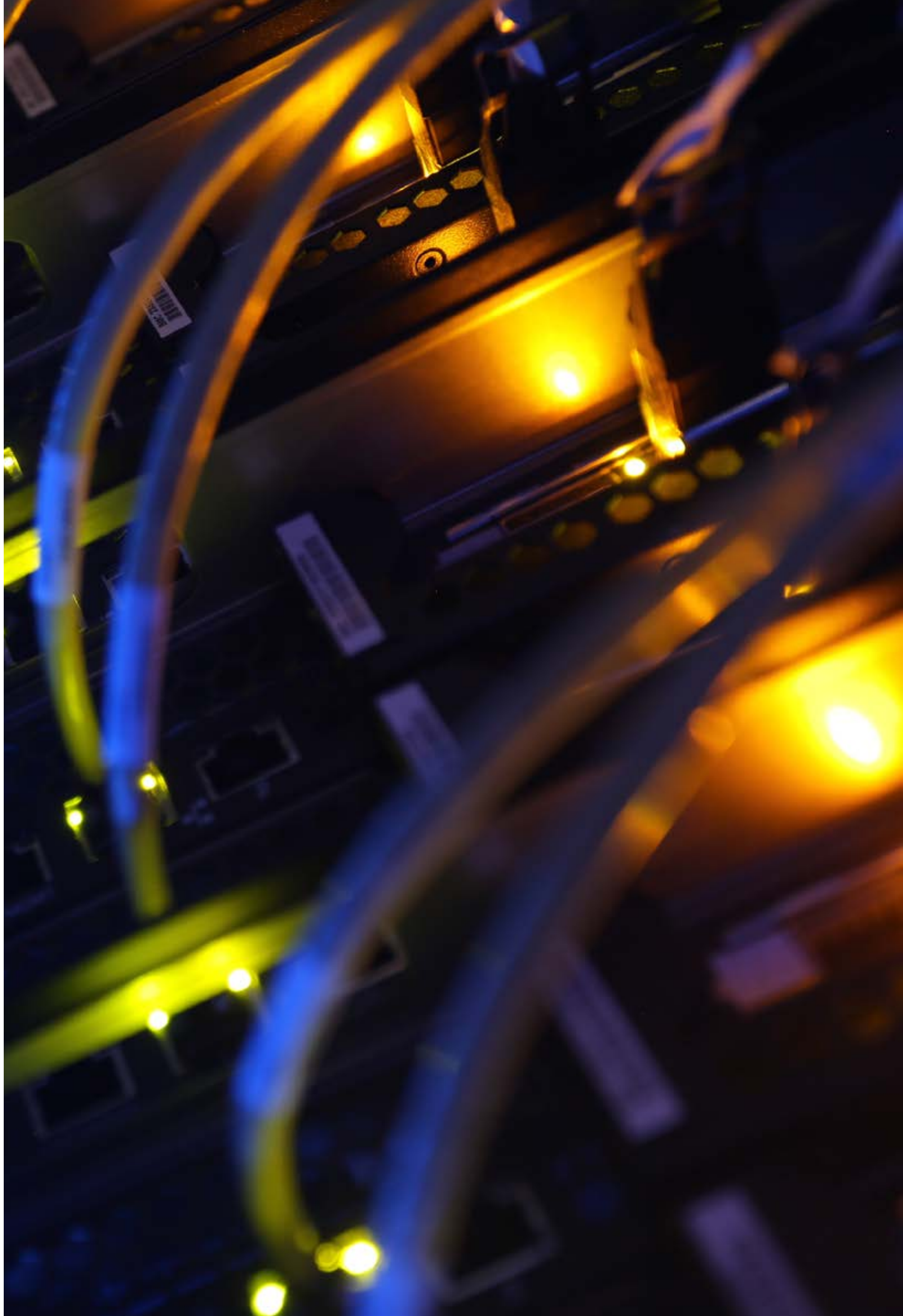
Isambard Park would act as a magnet for global talent, inward investment, and high-growth businesses, improving productivity, commercialisation and skills development.

This will ensure the UK's sovereign competitiveness in AI. Our ambitions directly deliver on the UK's AI Opportunities strategy, while positioning the region as a designated AI Growth Zone focussed on world-class research and industry-led adoption.

Our universities and major innovation organisations, like the NCC, Airbus, Rolls-Royce and GKN in South Gloucestershire are creating AI advancements that will deliver immediate regional and national value. And with a range of AI and technology companies looking to increase their presence in the region the supercluster is set to swiftly strengthen.

This is just one example – but it illustrates the impact that the collaborative economy that exists in the West of England can have far reaching impact for the UK economy, growing international presence, and innovative advances that will improve lives across the world.

By making strong connections across sectors, the West of England economy is both innovative and diverse in ways that cannot be replicated elsewhere.



Drivers of growth: places, nature & landscape

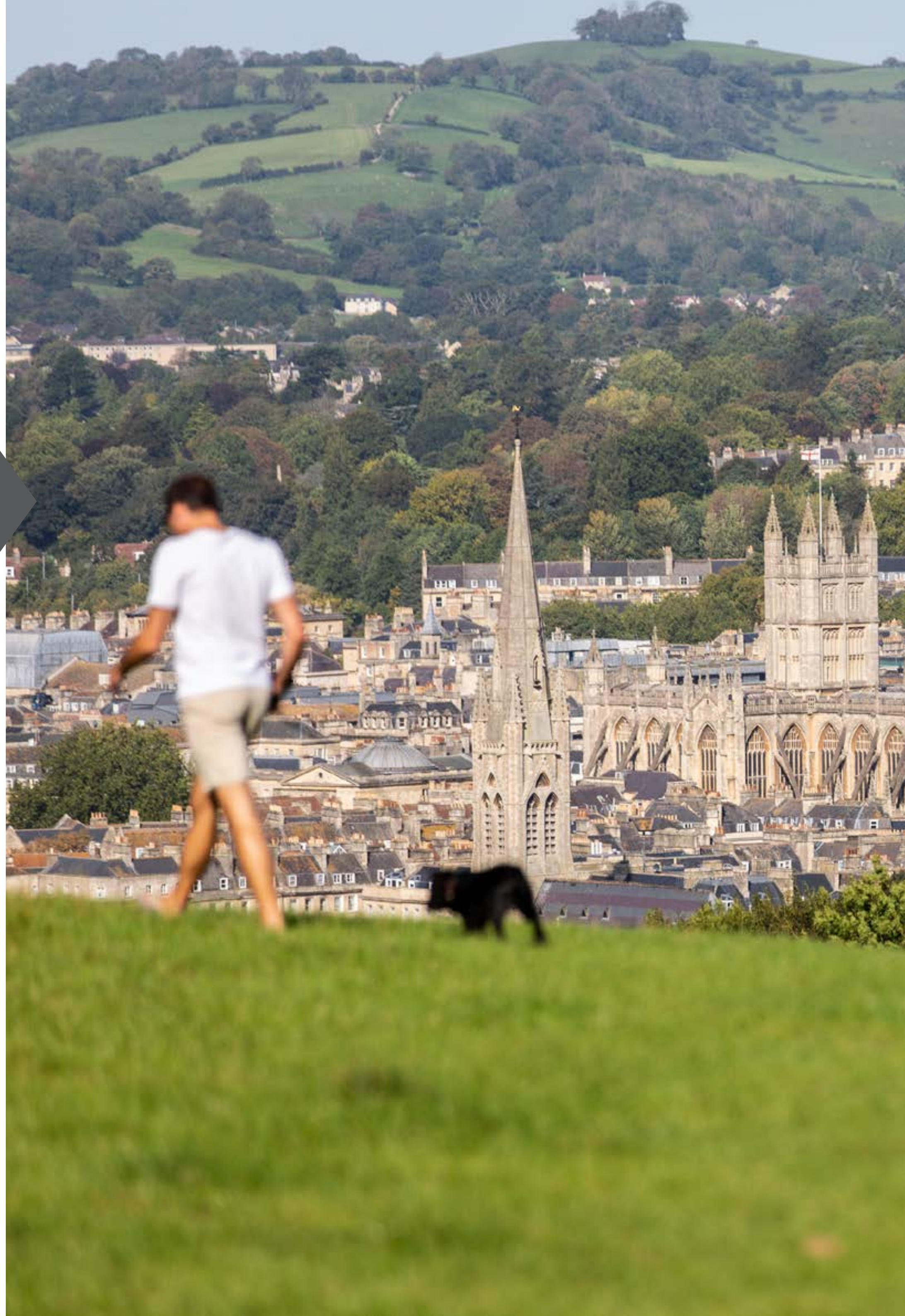
The West of England is a region where people choose to live, work and invest – to breathe clean air, enjoy our coasts, and draw inspiration from landscapes on their doorstep. Few UK regions offer such close proximity between internationally significant natural assets and high-performing urban centres.

Bristol is an international city, leading the way with bold, creative ideas and thriving green tech and digital sectors. Bath's UNESCO world heritage site charm draws global visitors and fuels a dynamic knowledge economy. South Gloucestershire is fast becoming a national engine room of advanced manufacturing building on long-term strengths in aerospace and national security, anchoring our region's future.

And in North Somerset, the coastal draw of the region can be found alongside access to the Mendips National Landscape. Weston-super-Mare, a major coastal town is growing by around 20%, with a population approaching 85,000 as well as significant economic opportunities.

People choose to live here, to breathe our air, and fill their souls by accessing our landscapes and coasts

Our natural beauty inspires creativity – from artists and filmmakers to cultural industries that thrive on the landscapes and stories of the region. This fusion of culture, creativity and environment strengthens the West's global reputation as a vibrant, liveable region.



But nature here is not just beautiful – it is a high-value economic asset. It attracts millions of tourists each year to our rural and coastal communities, sustains agriculture and food production, and underpins health, productivity and quality of life. By reducing risks from flooding, heat and other climate impacts, our natural assets cut avoidable costs to infrastructure, health and business, while enhancing the long-term asset values of housing and infrastructure. Embedding nature in our growth strategy strengthens housing delivery, improves transport resilience, and boosts workforce skills and wellbeing – helping to solve systemic challenges rather than add to them. Nature also plays a crucial role in the health and wellbeing of residents. It's central to our growth ambitions.

We are leading the way nationally. The West of England was the first region to produce a Local Nature Recovery Strategy, pioneering how nature recovery can be integrated alongside energy, housing and transport to drive sustainable growth. We're setting innovative financing mechanisms that blend public and private investment, unlocking the scale of capital required to deliver lasting change and secure resilient growth for generations to come.

The Western Forest is a flagship example of this approach. The UK's first new national forest in 30 years, spanning the West of England and neighbouring Wiltshire and Gloucestershire, it will create 2,500 hectares of woodland by 2030, ultimately growing to 20 million trees. It will connect communities, deliver climate resilience, support nature recovery and attract private investment, while providing a major visitor attraction – boosting both our environment and our visitor economy.

The West of England's unique fusion of people, place and nature is a strategic advantage – attracting talent, improving health and wellbeing, boosting productivity, and securing long-term prosperity. Protecting and enhancing our landscapes is not an optional extra: it is integral to our growth story.

CASE STUDY: WESTERN FOREST

The Mayoral Combined Authority, working with partners like the Forest of Avon Trust, has secured £7.5m of government funding to deliver a new national forest across the West of England, and neighbouring Gloucestershire and Wiltshire. The Lower Chew Forest, recently purchased by Avon Needs Trees, will become part of the new Western Forest. In total, by creating new woodlands and integrated existing ones, the Western Forest will see 20 million new trees planted by 2050.

As well as the benefits to wildlife and reducing flood risk, the new trees will absorb an estimated 2.5 million tonnes of carbon dioxide.

Drivers of growth: our culture, creativity & curiosity

Bristol, Bath and the wider region is a hive of creativity. With a thriving Screen Industry, our region is home to iconic shows such as Skins and Doctor Who and the award-winning content from the BBC Natural History Unit. A generation have grown up with Wallace and Gromit – and in Aardman Animation we have a production house that has helped create what is now a world-renowned production centre. These are just some of the reasons that the region has a thriving visitor economy, attracting people to visit from across the UK and the world to invest in our local cultural economy.

We're a place where restless creativity solves future problems, inspires ideas, and reaches a global audience.

With venues like the Bristol Old Vic, Bath Playhouse, the Curzon, Tropicana, Bath Theatre Royal, Bristol Beacon and the new YTL Arena, museums and galleries - the West of England is full of cultural venues that attract artists of all types.

Ours is a region steeped in history, with iconic landmarks such as Bath's Roman Baths, Bristol's Clifton Suspension Bridge, and medieval market towns that tell a rich story of trade and craftsmanship. However, the culture here is far from just historical - it is a thriving, contemporary force.

Bristol's street art, theatre scene, and festivals attract global attention. We're the home of the UK festival industry. And Bath is a thriving hub for literature and performing arts. The region is known for its community spirit, with grassroots culture, local businesses, independent restaurants, shops and cafés, and a regional food scene that creates a vibrant and welcoming atmosphere. A strong sense of identity and pride connects people. Alongside this our film and TV sector continues to grow, with Bristol's Bottle Yard Studios hosting major productions that reach audiences around the world.

CASE STUDY: CULTURE WEST

Culture West is a £3.1m trail blazing programme, co-designed with over 150 regional based creative and cultural organisations, partnering with the Mayoral Combined Authority, local councils, health and education providers and freelance creatives to devise the programme's priorities. These include growing sector resilience and upskilling and diversifying our workforce.

Culture West has exceeded original targets including doubling the number of new jobs created, supporting twice the number of freelance creatives into employment and attracted more cash match funding including private investment into the sector.

The region is a creative melting pot. A packed festival programme, museums, art and music that foster community and the sharing of ideas are a fundamental building block of the West. We support one another and champion creativity.

The West of England is alive with visitor experiences that defy convention. Heritage meets innovation across city streets, coastal paths, and countryside escapes. From repurposed industrial spaces to reimagined rural landmarks, the region is turning every corner into a destination.

Developments like The Wave, a world-class inland surfing destination in the South Gloucestershire countryside; and Shredenhams – a unique temporary skate park in the centre of Bristol that is making use of an empty building until planned redevelopment takes place.

With a strong night-time economy, growing range of leisure facilities and a home to major sporting events like the Women's Rugby World Cup, the West of England is a place where you can never be bored.

Culture and creativity are playing a crucial role in regeneration in the region. For example, in Weston-super-Mare the re-vamping of the Tropicana, a former Lido that also hosted Banksy's Dismaland is proving how work and play can be combined to bring both quality of life and economic growth.

Culture, nature, and creativity also underpin our thriving and growing visitor economy.

The visitor economy fuels economic growth by turning cultural capital into commercial opportunity: driving footfall, supporting local jobs, local high streets, our independent businesses, and a diverse food, drink and hospitality sector. The visitor economy is amplifying the West of England's identity on a national and global stage.

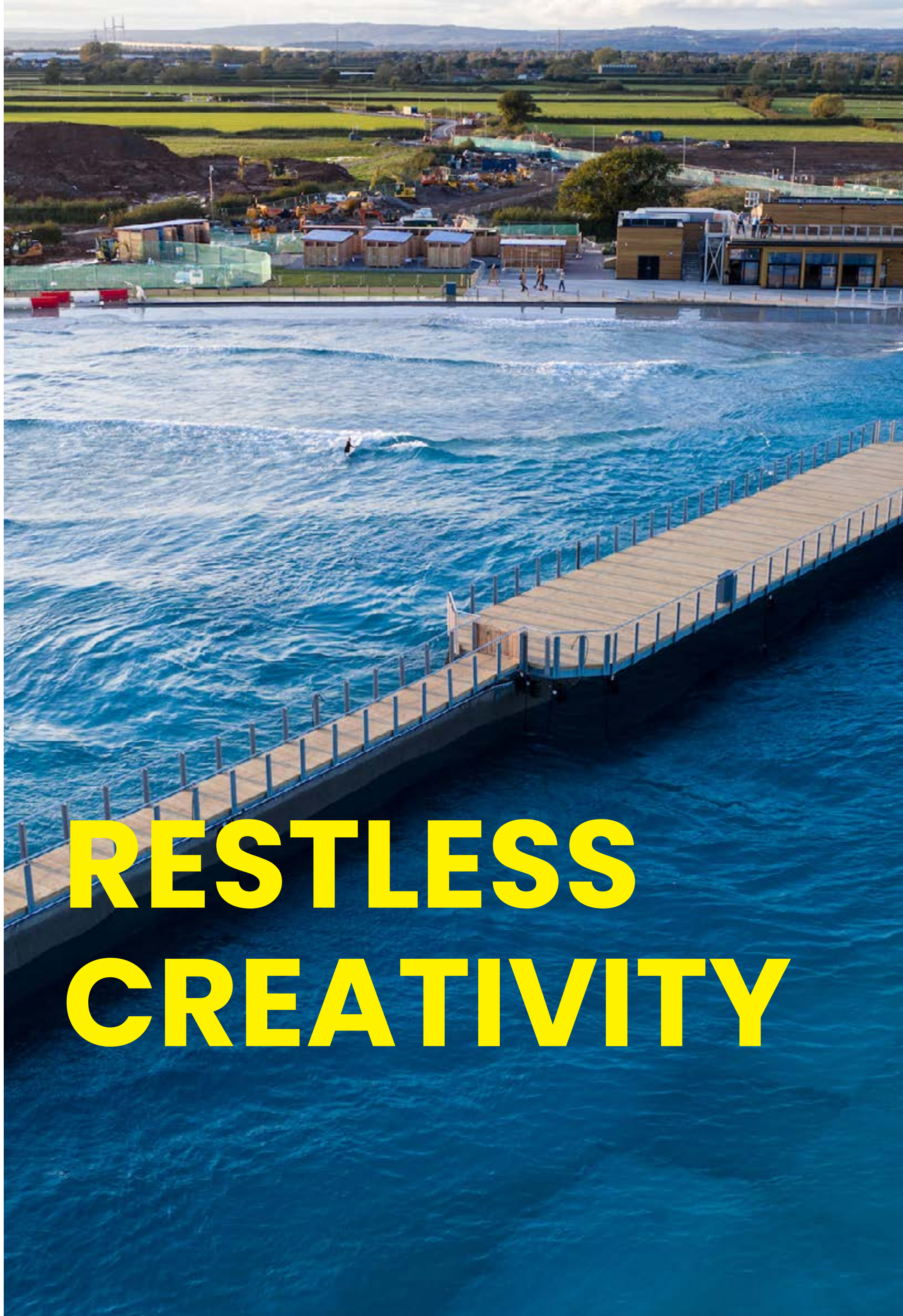
Supporting over 45,000 jobs and contributing nearly £2.5bn annually to the regional economy, tourism is an economic engine that will continue to be a vital building block of growth.

The West of England is fast gaining recognition as a leading destination for sustainable tourism, where visitors are drawn not just by the landscapes, but by a commitment to low-impact travel. From eco-conscious accommodation to carbon-cutting initiatives woven into the visitor experience, the region is redefining what responsible tourism looks like.

Our region is also a hub for sport. From the region's rugby and football clubs to rowing along the Avon and River Severn, the region celebrates sporting excellence while promoting health and wellbeing for all ages.

As the action in this plan is delivered, new venues and opportunities will grow. We'll create spaces for communities to come together and ensure the vibrant curiosity that is a hallmark of our region continues to thrive.

As our regional attractions continue to flourish, and with Bristol Airport serving as a major international gateway, the West of England's culture, creativity and curiosity will be a growing asset to our growth ambitions.



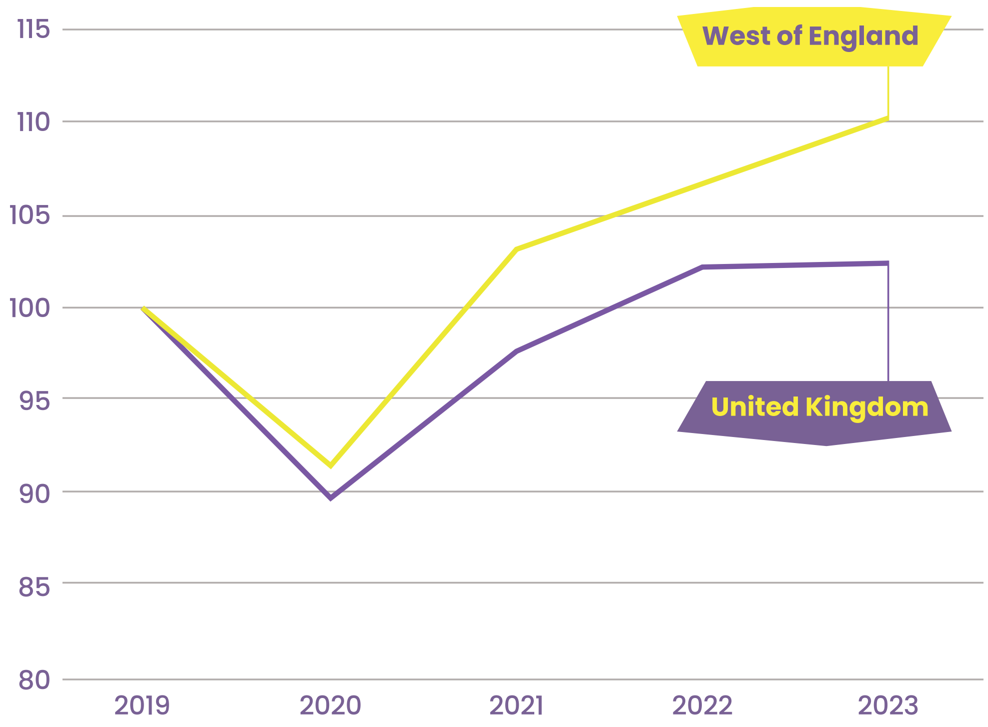
The West of England is outperforming the national economy, and its untapped potential is ready to power the UK's next wave of growth.

The West of England is one of the UK's most dynamic economies worth over £54 billion and growing faster than the national average. Over the past decade, our economy has surged by 21%, and since 2019, we've achieved an average annual growth rate of 2.4%, well ahead of the UK's 0.6%. With the highest productivity levels of any Combined Authority outside London, the West of England is a national growth asset, primed for investment, innovation, and impact.

South Gloucestershire stands out as a nationally significant growth opportunity. The economy in this part of our region has consistently outpaced the national average, and it's not just a marginal lead, it's a standout performer with exciting further growth potential in the pipeline. This growth is enabled by region-wide strengths in education, employment and the broader infrastructure of growth.

As the heart of the still growing regional capability in advanced manufacturing and advanced engineering, South Gloucestershire's rate of economic growth is set to continue playing a crucial part of our regional growth story.

Bristol, our major core city will be an engine of regional growth, with far-reaching infrastructure plans, major regeneration programmes like the new Bristol Temple Quarter district, an innovative economy, and a strong focus on tackling inequalities to ensure growth benefits all – Bristol will be a place of real inclusive growth.



Economic Growth 2019-2023. Index: 2019 = 100.

Bath will drive regional growth through its strengths in creative industries, advanced engineering, heritage-led innovation and a growing focus on harnessing rural productivity. Momentum is also gathering in the North Somerset economy, with the delivery of Epic's European Headquarters at Long Ashton, growth businesses ready to expand and a rapidly growing population.

These are firm foundations on which to build increased levels of economic growth in the decade ahead – investment in the West of England will deliver a national dividend.

Our strong economic foundations

The West of England is home to a hub of high-value industries. From advanced manufacturing and aerospace to information and communication technologies. With 18,000 people employed in advanced engineering and aerospace, and 95,000 in professional and business services, the region is driving innovation at scale. Bristol leads the UK's tech landscape, ranked number one by CompTIA in 2022, and now home to over 65,000 tech jobs.

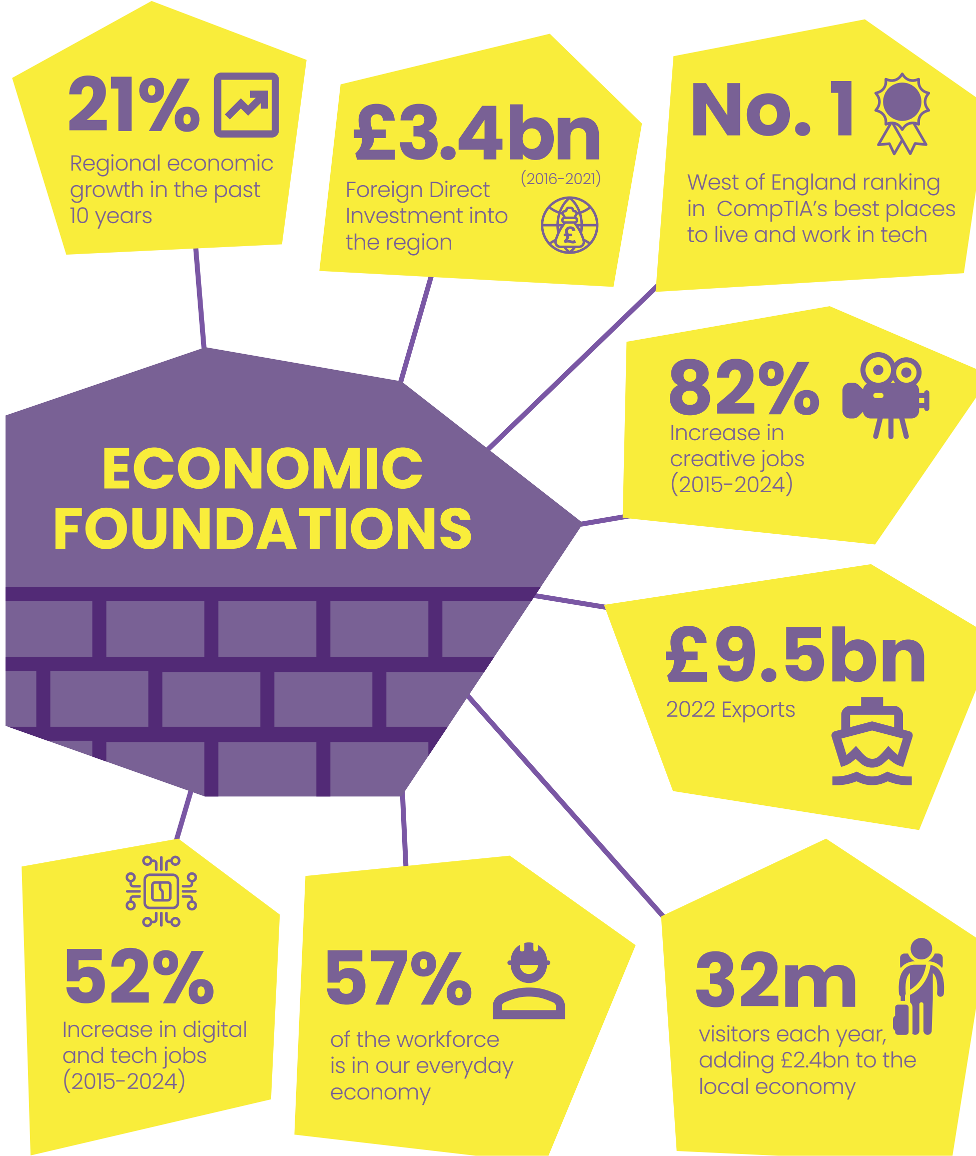
Creative industries are thriving too, with an 82% surge in employment since 2016 - now supporting 40,000 jobs across the region. These strengths aren't just economic - they're strategic.

The West of England plays a vital role in national resilience, with capabilities spanning national security, clean energy, AI safety, ecosystem restoration, and sustainable food production. This is a region not only building the future - but safeguarding it.

Our region is outward facing with exports of £9.5 billion in 2022. And with over 32 million visitors each year, our strong visitor economy is continuing to grow.

Our region is also driven by a large everyday economy with significant numbers of people employed across retail, wholesale, and in the professions that ensure our residents are well cared for and able to learn. The Everyday Economy accounts for around 57% of all jobs across the region including over 91,000 in health and social care and over 8,000 teachers.

With our strong economic foundations – The West of England is set for a bright future.



Strong and growing inward investment

Since 2019, the region has seen significant inward investment, particularly from the private and international sectors.

The total value of all foreign investments in the region more than doubled between 2018 and 2021, from £16.5 billion to £42.8 billion, with overseas-owned companies earning over £2.3 billion in profits locally in 2021 alone.

The West of England is built for bold business

Despite recent global headwinds, the region secured 36 FDI projects in 2022–23, its best year on record, creating 1,408 new jobs, and a further 24 projects and 1,112 jobs in 2023–24.

Investments in the West of England reflect strong international confidence in the region's innovation strengths, talent pipeline and business environment.

With international partners such as YTL investing significantly – inward investment to the region is helping to unlock new opportunities, homes and jobs right across the West of England.

But while private and foreign capital has grown rapidly, public investment has not always kept pace, and demand is now outstripping capacity in key areas such as transport, digital connectivity, grid capacity and specialist workspaces – particularly in high-growth clusters. As competition for investment intensifies, targeted public investment will be essential to maintain momentum and crowd in further private capital.

A growing location for international investors

Advanced manufacturing

Recent investment includes a £32 million Global Technology Centre in Bristol funded by GKN Aerospace and government partners.

Digital and Technologies

Bath is home to £1.3bn valued NCR Voyix, following the acquisition of Zynstra (from University of Bath Innovation Centre) by NCR

Clean Energy

The £1 billion Bristol City Leap partnership is decarbonising Bristol's homes, buildings and energy infrastructure, supporting communities to decarbonise, creating jobs and more.

Creative Industries

Inward investment from global producers including Disney+, Netflix and the BBC generated over £20m in local production spend in 2022. This is helping regional companies, like Plimsoll Productions – now the 3rd biggest production house outside London – grow.

Growing new places

YTL's catalytic £4bn investment in the UK is centred on the new town at the heart of the West Innovation Arc. With a new arena, homes, employment sites and a hive of innovation, the Arc will be a thriving new national growth opportunity. And in North Somerset, the £400m investment from Epic in establishing their European Headquarters will have significant impact on the growth of the region.

An economy founded by ideas

The West of England has a long history of being at the forefront of new ideas – it is a bedrock of our economy and our growth potential.

From Brunel to Concorde, 5G to Quantum, the impact of the West of England is felt across the globe. Since 2000, we've seen an explosion of innovation – new start-ups, creative growth that drives the wider economy to innovate, and new technology that is revolutionising the way we live our lives. The West of England is consistently recognised as one of the country's leading start-up ecosystems.

Our innovation-led economy is not only powering local prosperity – it is a national asset for growth.

2000

2001
SETsquared Bath opens at the Innovation Centre

2005
Aardman Animations win 4 Oscars to date

2007
GKN established

2008
NCC established

2009
Ovo Energy founded

2010
Bottle Yard Studios opens

2011
Bristol & Bath Science Park opens

Bath Spark launched in Bath 2011 (lead to TechSpark).

2012
Bristol Robotics Lab opens

2014
JustEat opens Tech Development Hub

Open Bionics founded in Bristol – Developing the world's most advanced bionic arm

Bath Digital Festival started (led to Bristol Tech Festival)

2015
Bristol designated 'European Green Capital", the 1st UK city to achieve the award

Banksy opens Dismaland art project in Weston-super-Mare

2016
Future Space Innovation centre opens at UWE

CAMERA launched in Bath 2016 (moved to Bottle Yard Studios 2020).

2017
Bristol named UNESCO City of Film

Oracle Global Cloud Accelerator, Dyson, and Ultrasoc open

2018
Graphcore becomes the West of England's first unicorn company

Tech Nation name Bristol and Bath the UK's most productive tech cluster

2020
Channel 4 opens in Bristol

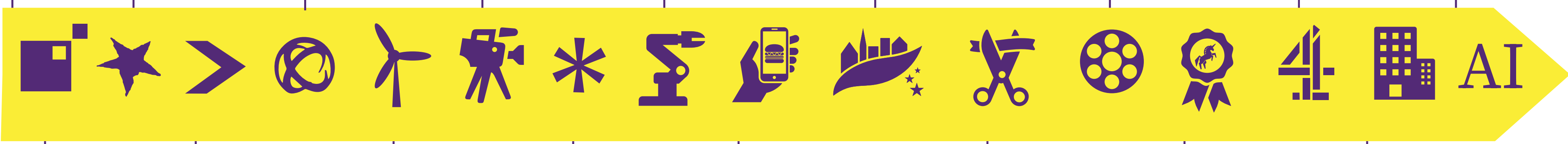
2021
GKN Aerospace open its £32M Global Technology Centre in Filton

MyWorld – a new £46m creative hub launches in Bristol and Bath

Bath became the only double inscribed UNESCO World Heritage Site in the UK

Food Works South West opens

2025
Isambard-AI Supercomputer officially launched



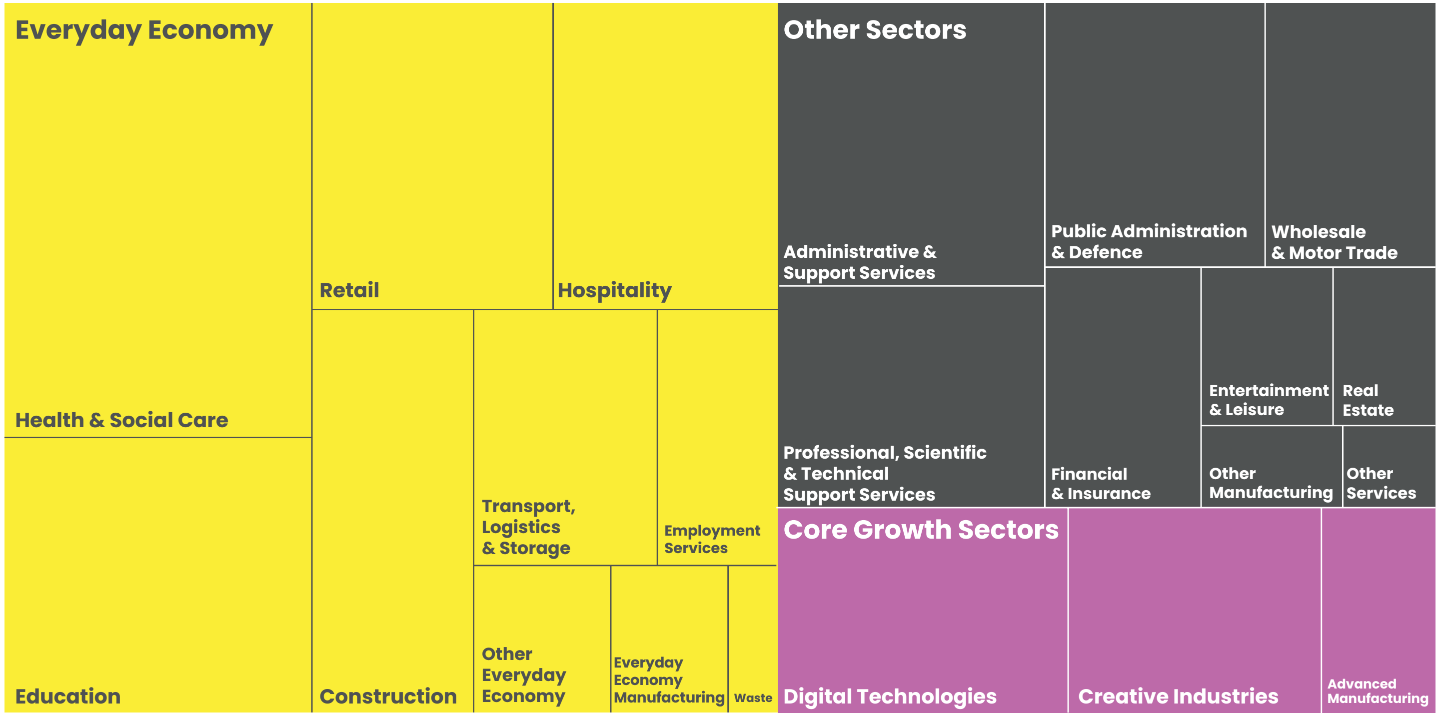
The West of England's diverse economy is a launchpad for high-impact growth across multiple sectors.

The West of England has recognised sector strengths that will be crucial drivers of growth over the next decade. Alongside this, the region has a diverse economy, and growing strengths in a wide range of sectors that are creating high-quality jobs and dynamic businesses which compete well beyond our region.

We have a thriving professional services sector, including finance, law, and consulting, which underpins and supports the region's innovation and business activities. These services are crucial for the smooth operation and growth of businesses across various industries, providing essential support in areas such as legal advice, financial management, and strategic planning.

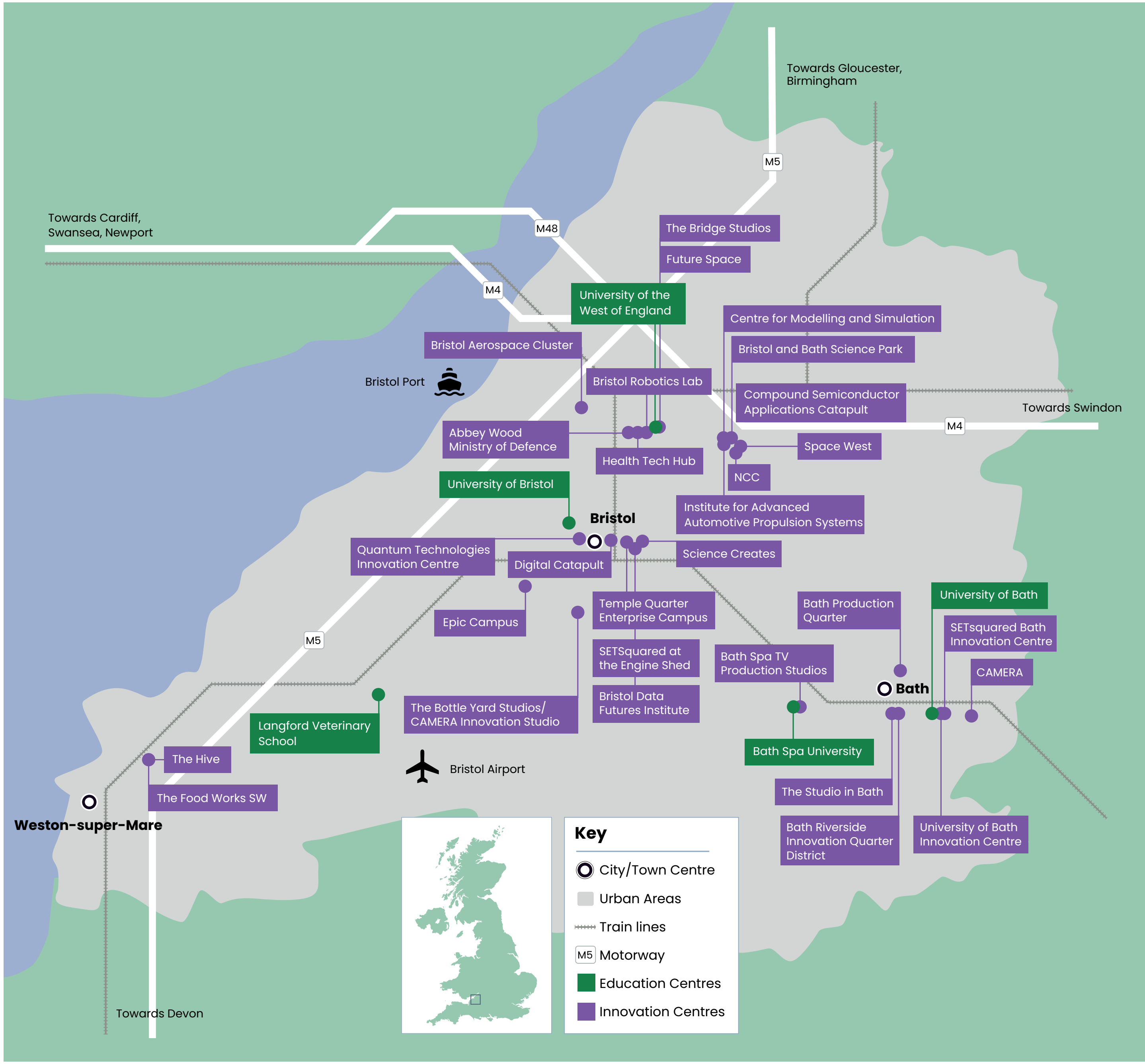
We also have a strong financial services and insurance sector, growth in construction, and growing expertise in areas like life sciences.

While our Growth Strategy will focus on our core areas of strength, the decade ahead will unlock broad investment potential across the West of England; driving prosperity, creating high-quality jobs, and improving quality of life for communities across the region.



Employment by sector across the West of England

The West of England is rich in growth-driving assets, from world-class research centres to a diverse portfolio of commercial and innovation spaces. Our R&D infrastructure rivals the best globally, and it's expanding fast. This is a region building the future, with space designed to scale breakthroughs and attract investment.



Drivers of growth: addressing our challenges

The West of England is a thriving part of the country with immense growth potential. But we know not everyone is sharing in the benefits that growth can bring.

While we're a place where people actively choose to live, the potential of some of our communities is untapped – particularly among people who are born here.

To help communities that are not yet benefiting from the success of the region, we will:

- Create the right conditions for businesses to grow and create jobs in places people can access. That means creating the spaces, access to finance, skills and infrastructure that helps businesses move to the next level.
- Make public transport accessible and affordable for everyone. It needs to be a tool that opens up opportunity.
- Build more homes and improve the quality of existing housing so that everyone is able to live in a safe, warm and affordable home.
- Ensure crucial broader infrastructure is in place, including childcare provision.
- Ensure that as we grow, we are building resilient places. That means investing in flood defences, greening our urban centres and protecting nature and natural assets that are fundamental to keeping places happy and healthy. Health is fundamental to wealth and the achievement of strong economic growth. As we plan, we will ensure issues such as transport to health centres and alignment with neighbourhood health plans is central to the way we work.
- Support workers and businesses in the everyday economy to boost growth, productivity, and improve people's wellbeing and living standards.
- Tackle long-term unemployment, long-term deprivation and the child and family poverty that has no place in our forward-looking region.
- Ensure a Just Transition to a green economy.

The West of England is a thriving part of the country with immense growth potential

Building our future: strengthening devolution

Government's English Devolution White Paper sets an ambitious vision – giving Mayors and regions a strong new set of powers backed up with integrated and consolidated funding.

The ambition of the White Paper is crucial to unlocking delivery of our Growth Strategy.

With greater control over planning, employment support, and innovation funding, we can tailor solutions to local needs - driving growth that benefits all, creating good jobs, and improving public services.

We're working at pace to access the highest level of devolved powers and funding currently available to Mayoral Combined Authorities, unlocking the full potential of devolution for our region.

The White Paper and coming Act is about more than the technical transfer of powers; it's about ending the era of distant decision-making and empowering communities with the tools to thrive. By aligning devolved powers with our strengths in creativity, clean energy, advanced manufacturing and more, we'll build a fairer, greener economy that delivers real opportunity and better lives for everyone across the West of England.

Devolution thrives on bold local partnership. It's not just about power – it's about trust, collaboration, and shared ambition. When councils, communities, and mayors unite around a common vision, we unlock smarter decisions, faster delivery, and real impact. Together, we build a region that's confident, connected, and ready to lead.

Cllr Mike Bell (North Somerset Council), Cllr Kevin Guy (Bath & North East Somerset Council), Cllr Tony Dyer (Bristol City Council), Mayor Helen Godwin, Cllr Ian Boulton (South Gloucestershire Council), Cllr Maggie Tyrrell (South Gloucestershire Council).

Our Growth Strategy is underpinned by a full evidence base. A snapshot of that evidence is included in the Strategy. The full evidence base is available on the West of England Combined Authority website and is updated annually.

Our evidence base is a detailed assessment of the strengths, challenge and future prospects of our region – it provides the starting point for our decision making on how we help the region grow.

For more information, you can find the evidence base here: https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/about-us/regional-insights/regional-evidence-report/

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Our sector strengths

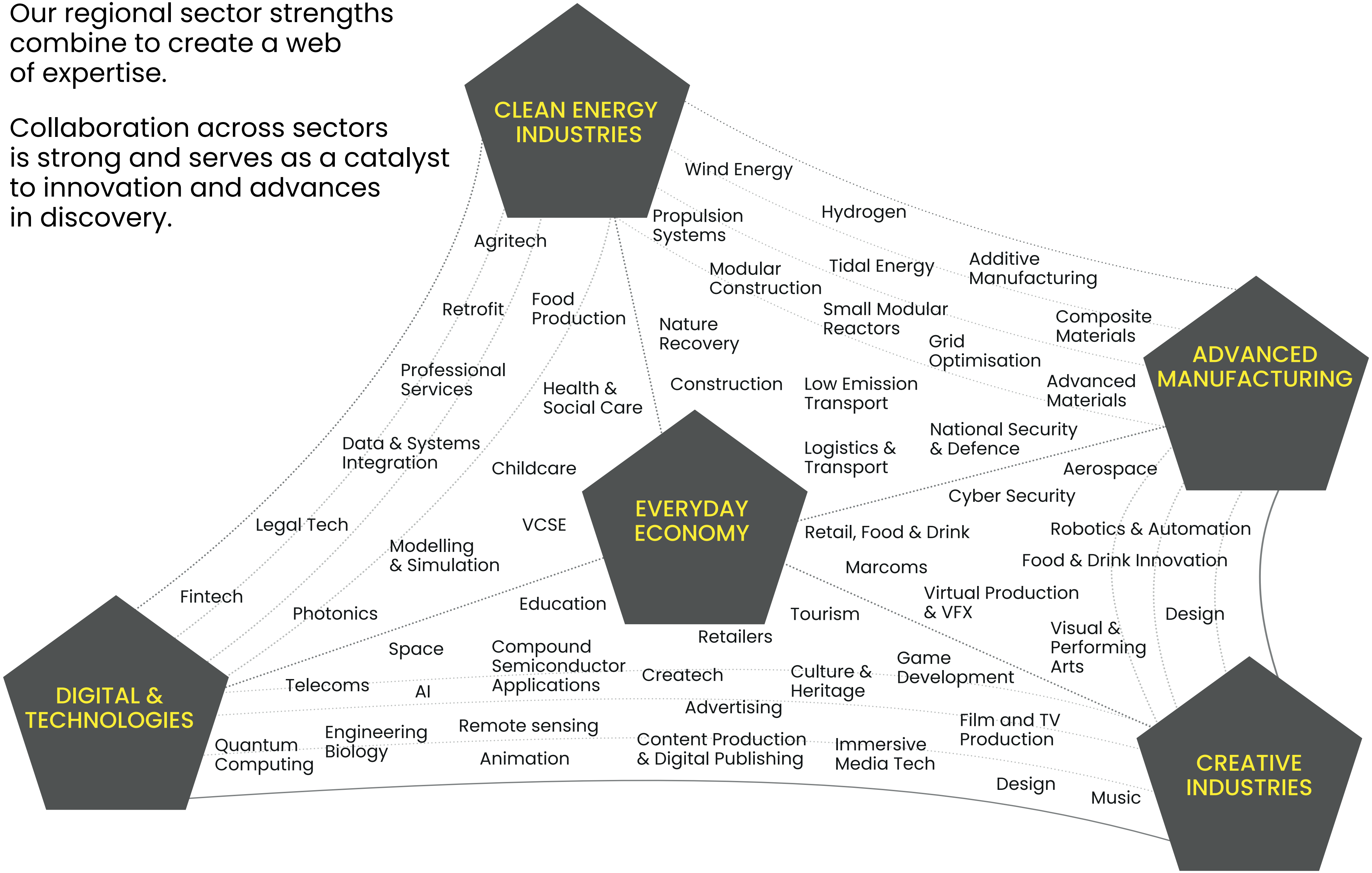
Our strong economic foundations are also driven by clear regional sector strengths. Over the next decade 5 priority sectors will drive our growth potential

WEST OF ENGLAND PRIORITY GROWTH SECTORS

1. ADVANCED MANUFACTURING
2. DIGITAL & TECHNOLOGIES
3. CLEAN ENERGY INDUSTRIES
4. CREATIVE INDUSTRIES
5. EVERYDAY ECONOMY

Our regional sector strengths combine to create a web of expertise.

Collaboration across sectors is strong and serves as a catalyst to innovation and advances in discovery.



ADVANCED MANUFACTURING

The West of England is one of the UK's most productive advanced manufacturing regions, combining deep industrial heritage with world-class innovation, engineering excellence, and a strong skills base. Concentrated in the West Innovation Arc, which is growing in South Gloucestershire, the sector employs over 18,000 people across aerospace, defence, robotics, space, and advanced materials, and is home to the UK's largest aerospace and defence cluster, valued at £2.9 billion.

Our advanced manufacturing supply chains link global names such as Airbus, Rolls-Royce, BAE Systems, GKN Aerospace, Cross Manufacturing and OHB with engineering innovators including Renishaw, Stirling Dynamics, Horstman, Rotork, and CFMS, as well as a wide network of specialist Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs).

These partnerships span design, prototyping, precision manufacturing, testing, and export logistics, with strategic enablers such as Bristol Port supporting the movement of high-value and oversized components to global markets and enabling access to advanced materials. Together, these capabilities deliver high-value, dual-use technologies, including next-generation wing design, hydrogen propulsion, and secure systems, that drive export-led growth, national security, and net zero delivery. Our advanced manufacturing sector is shaping the future.

The West of England is a national engine in advanced manufacturing and engineering. From composites and robotics to propulsion and smart materials, our R&D ecosystem drives innovation. Flagship investments like Airbus' Wing of Tomorrow and Rolls-Royce's UltraFan tap into world-class expertise from the NCC, Bristol Composites Institute (£50m portfolio), and IAAPS at the University of Bath. With Made Smarter funding boosting SME adoption of digital tech, the region is primed for growth.

Robotics capability is anchored by the Bristol Robotics Laboratory, the UK's largest academic robotics centre, with expertise in extreme-environment robotics, soft robotics, and autonomous mobility. Space is another growth area, with more than 300 organisations active in the South West space cluster and the Space West programme driving advances in satellite communications, navigation, and space-data applications.

By integrating global manufacturers, specialist supply chains, leading-edge R&D, and strategic infrastructure, the West of England offers one of the UK's most investable manufacturing platforms - attracting capital, creating skilled jobs, and strengthening long-term economic resilience.

ADVANCED MANUFACTURING: OUR STRENGTHS

EMPLOYMENT

18,000 people are employed in this sector across the region. Major employers like Airbus, BAE, Rolls Royce and GKN are based in the West of England.

ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION

Advanced Manufacturing is worth £2.9bn in the West of England economy.

IMPACT & GROWTH POTENTIAL

Advanced Materials, Robotics, and Engineering

Launchpad for innovation led supply chains for Clean Energy Industries like Floating Offshore Wind and Small Modular Reactors

AI-enabled assurance in advanced manufacturing process, Satellite communications and simulation technologies

Cutting factory time and cost attributed to material assurance and certification: Shaping new global standards and securing first-mover advantage

Satellite communications and simulation technologies

Supporting grid balancing, climate modelling, and logistics optimisation, crucial to green energy rollout

OUR ASSETS

- NCC provides access to state-of-the-art equipment to transfer digital and AI research capability into frontier technologies
- Project Acorn is pioneering hydrogen fuel, paving the way for decarbonisation of air travel, bringing together partners including Bristol Airport and IAAPS
- GKN's Global Technology Centre is driving next-generation aerospace manufacturing, accelerating the adoption of advanced processes and materials in global supply
- Rolls Royce's Ultrafan is delivering the world's most efficient large-scale aircraft engine technology, setting new benchmarks for fuel efficiency and emissions reduction
- Airbus's Zero Emission Development Centre is advancing hydrogen propulsion systems, supporting the transition to net-zero aviation through breakthrough design and engineering
- The FoodWorks Innovation Centre provides access to technology and specialist advice for growing and innovative food and drink production companies from across the globe

DIGITAL & TECHNOLOGIES

The West of England is where frontier tech meets commercial firepower. From AI and quantum to cyber and semiconductors, our globally competitive strengths fuel innovation across health, defence, finance, and advanced manufacturing. With world-class research, unique infrastructure, and a thriving business base, we offer one of the UK's most investable digital platforms.

From BT to BAE Systems, Oracle to Epic, the West of England is home to global tech giants and cutting edge start-ups. With players like Airbus, CGI, Hewlett Packard Enterprise, Ovo Energy, Immersive Labs, and YellowDog driving innovation in cyber, AI, and software, the region offers a resilient, collaborative ecosystem and a standout investment opportunity.

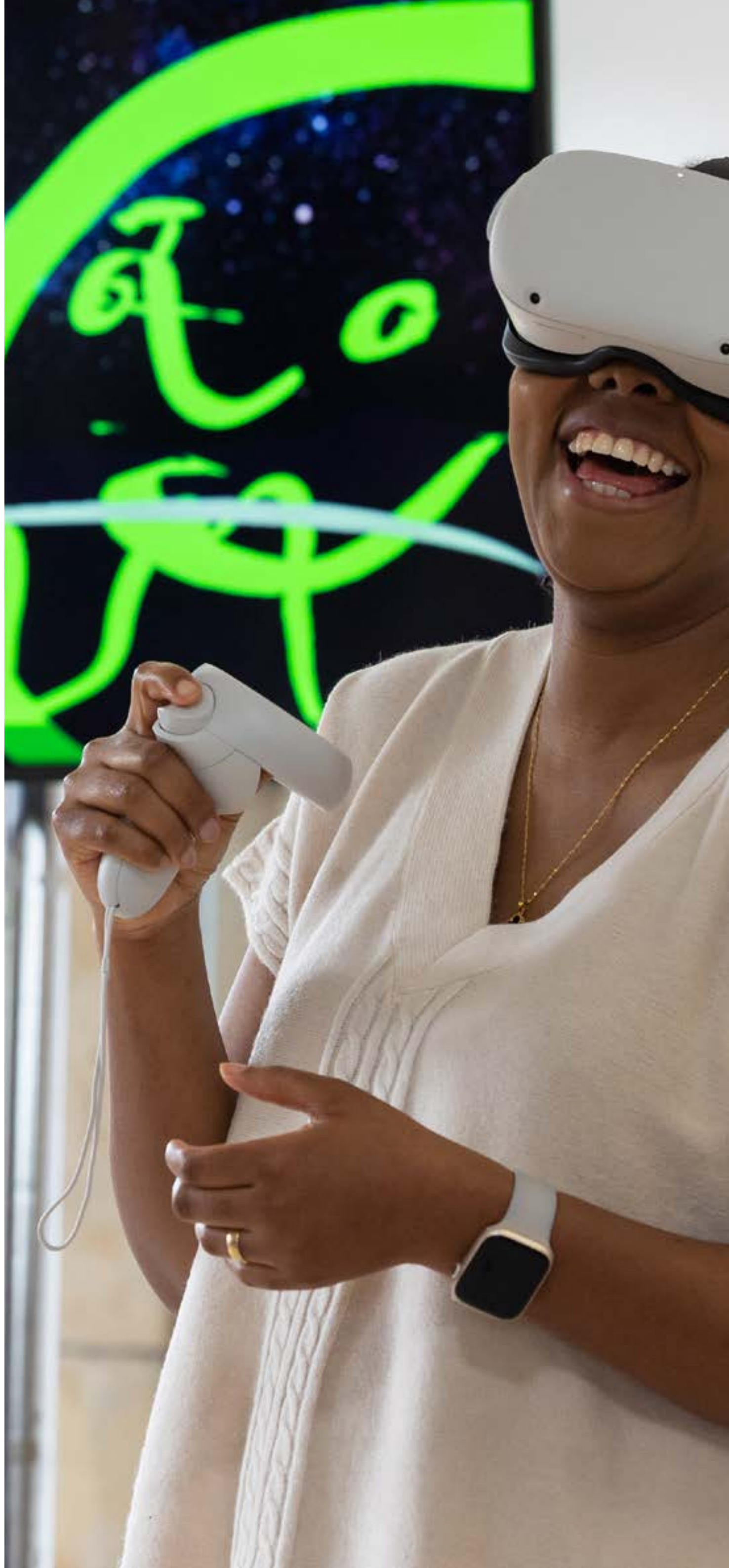
We're a place the digital & technologies sector chooses time and again.

AI is a flagship strength of the West of England. The region's fast-growing AI Supercluster links the University of Bristol's Temple Quarter, the NCC, and the £225m Isambard supercomputer – one of the UK's most powerful and sustainable. It gives industry a competitive edge: faster product development, smarter design, and lower costs. With integrated research, testbeds, skills, and SME support, it's powering adoption across aerospace, energy, life sciences, and defence – and unlocking major growth over the next decade. With scope for an AI Data Centre in the region – our AI future is strong.

The West of England is a national leader in responsible, trusted, and secure AI. As new technologies evolve, we prioritise safety, ethics, and public trust. Our universities offer a unique cross-institutional strength – blending world-class technical expertise with deep ethical and regulatory insight.

In health innovation, the region hosts one of the UK's largest linked health datasets, driving breakthroughs in personalised medicine and diagnostics.

We also play a pivotal role in accelerating digital transformation. The West of England is a key partner in the UK Telecoms Innovation Network, powers adoption of emerging technologies through the Digital Catapult South West, and proudly hosts the Compound Semiconductor Applications Catapult's Future Telecoms Hub.



DIGITAL & TECHNOLOGIES: OUR STRENGTHS

OUR ASSETS

- Isambard AI, one of the UK's most powerful supercomputers, drives breakthroughs in AI, machine learning, and complex modelling
- Science Creates is a deep-tech incubator network providing labs, co-working, and investor backing for high-growth AI, robotics, and engineering ventures.
- The Institute of Coding, led by the University of Bath, connects universities, industry, and learners: delivering flexible, industry-focused training across the UK
- The new 90 acre Epic Campus under development in North Somerset will create over 2,000 high quality technology jobs. The Campus will generate wider growth and investment in the area
- The Digital Catapult and Compound Semiconductor Applications Catapult are supporting innovation adoption and industrial pull through in digital and technologies growth markets
- University of Bath's Innovation Centre offers start-up companies support to develop and accelerate, raise investment, and access networks

EMPLOYMENT

Across the digital and technologies growth markets, there were 66,000 jobs in 2024, up 52% since 2015.

ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION

The Digital & Technologies sector contributes £3.8bn to the regional economy and is growing at a faster rate than any other Combined Authority area.

IMPACT & GROWTH POTENTIAL

Quantum-enabled imaging, sensing, and cyber tools

Enhancing healthtech innovation and patient data security, critical for NHS adoption

The region hosts one of the UK's largest linked health datasets, combined with growing AI capability

Enabling breakthroughs in personalised medicine, early diagnosis, and prevention

AI applied to robotics has broad impact and growth potential

Improves precision, safety, and efficiency in manufacturing, construction, and extreme environments

Digital and Technologies forms part of the Cyber expertise in the wider South West, with links to the cluster in Gloucester and Cheltenham

Our regional capability is a vital component to cybersecurity and national resilience: we're keeping the country safe

CLEAN ENERGY INDUSTRIES

The West of England is powering Britain's clean energy future. With strengths in generation and utilisation, the region is driving Net Zero innovation and unlocking major growth. Backed by our Local Industrial Decarbonisation Plan for the Severn Estuary and a bold Clean Energy Investment Plan, we're building a greener economy and positioning the UK as a global clean energy superpower.

The West of England leads the charge in clean energy innovation. From community energy to SMRs, tidal, hydrogen, and advanced wind, the region is shaping the future of sustainable power. Rolls-Royce SMR is a preferred bidder for the UK's first Small Modular Reactor programme, backed by world-class R&D from the region's universities and the South West Nuclear Hub. The Bristol Composites Institute and NCC are pioneering next-gen turbine tech and circular blade solutions, positioning the region at the heart of the UK's floating offshore wind sector - with Bristol Port primed as a strategic base.

Our Clean Energy Industries are building a world-class hydrogen economy. Hydrogen South West – which includes partners like Airbus, GKN Aerospace, Bristol Airport, and Wessex Water - is driving innovation across aviation, freight, energy, and skills. The University of Bath's IAAPS leads on hydrogen propulsion, while the NCC pioneers cryogenic storage tech. Bath also heads UK-HyRES, aiming to deliver practical hydrogen and alternative fuel solutions at global scale.

Clean propulsion is a global strength for the West of England. With deep expertise in decarbonising aviation, shipping, and logistics – especially at Bristol Airport. The region drives innovation through major employers, leading universities, and specialist R&D. The impact ripples across transport and energy sectors.

The West of England is scaling clean energy use. A booming retrofit and heat network market is cutting emissions, tackling fuel poverty, and boosting building performance. Local authorities, housing associations, and SMEs are driving delivery - powered by skilled installers and smart monitoring tech.

Our region is primed to power the UK's clean energy transition. With strengths in generation, utilisation, and retrofit - backed by industry, R&D, and active supply chains - the region is driving innovation and long-term growth.

CASE STUDY: LAWRENCE WESTON WIND TURBINE

The ACE Wind Turbine was the brainchild of Ambition Lawrence Weston, a local charity, which identified the potential to develop a wind turbine on locally owned land in 2016. With support from the Mayoral Combined Authority, the turbine is now in full operation.

The 4.2MWs generated by the turbine produces enough low carbon electricity to power 3,500 homes. The turbine also experimented with new technology, including edge serrations to reduce the noise emitted, and flat back air foils that improve lift and reduce the effects of blade soiling and the accompanying loss of performance.

The ACE Wind Turbine enables the community of Lawrence Weston to benefit from surplus income from the sale of renewable energy, supporting their work to tackle fuel poverty and improve the local environment.

CLEAN ENERGY INDUSTRIES: OUR STRENGTHS

OUR ASSETS

- Bristol City Leap is a pioneering public–private partnership driving a £1 billion programme of low-carbon energy infrastructure, creating green jobs, cutting emissions. It's part of our innovative approach to low carbon energy, also including adoption of heat networks and our Heat from Mines project.
- Community energy is already strong in the West of England. 2025 figures show that 48MW or just over 12% of the total community energy generation for England already comes from our region.
- The region has hosted climate-saving nuclear energy since Oldbury Power Station opened in 1967, generating 137 terawatt hours and avoiding over 80 million tonnes of CO_2. The Oldbury site, now owned by Great British Energy-Nuclear, is a candidate for Small Modular Reactor deployment
- Leadership in developing next-generation hydrogen storage and advanced wind turbine technologies

EMPLOYMENT

Around 400 high-growth companies already operate here. Jobs across this sector are growing rapidly, up 140% in the past 10 years. It will be a major part of our economic future.

ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION

Clean and green energy underpins our transition to net zero and offers long-term potential for investment, innovation and growth.

IMPACT & GROWTH POTENTIAL

Large-scale programmes to decarbonise homes, schools, and hospitals

creating thousands of local jobs in construction, installation, and maintenance, accessible to a wide range of skill levels

Clean propulsion systems for buses, freight, and delivery services

generating demand for mechanics, drivers, and supply chain workers, strengthening everyday service

A growing portfolio of clean energy – such as Floating Offshore Wind (FLOW) presents a major economic opportunity for the West of England

This will create high-value jobs, attract supply chain investment, and position the region as a leader in clean and green energy innovation and advanced engineering

Growing capability in rooftop solar development and installation

Vital to green construction and the growing community energy sector

CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

The West of England is one of the UK's most dynamic creative hubs, with global reach and deep roots in film, TV, immersive media, gaming and design. Bristol's UNESCO Creative City of Film status reflects decades of world-class screen production, and Bath has enormous appeal as a filming location as well as strengths in digital publishing and content production.

Our creative industries are growing. The impact on our economy and the creation of a diverse range of jobs is a regional asset that is set to grow further over the decade ahead . In 2022, natural history content alone generated £127.2 million - 44% of the city's £288 million screen industries turnover - and content made here is watched by more than 800 million people every month. The region is a significant film and TV production centre, anchored by icons such as Aardman Animations, major studios at The Bottle Yard (including the new TBY2), and leading independents like Plimsoll Productions, whose award-winning output drives both export earnings and screen tourism. Channel 4's regional base further reinforces Bristol's national profile as a creative hub.

The region's creative economy blends global names with an agile SME base across advertising, marketing, design, post-production, VFX, animation, Augmented Reality, Virtual Reality and gaming. Studios such as Lux Aeterna and game developer Ndemic Creations demonstrate how regional talent competes and wins on the global stage.

Our creative industries also play a vital role in the growth of other sectors. Sitting at the intersection of creativity and technology, Createch is the fastest-growing segment of the UK's creative industries and is forecast to generate 160,000 new UK jobs in the next decade.

The West of England's universities are powering the future of creative industries.The Bristol Digital Futures Institute, through MyWorld, offers cutting-edge studios and immersive tech for industry collaboration. UWE Bristol, Bridge AI Studios, and Digital Catapult South West drive AI and data-led production. Bath Spa University's Future Fashion Works links sustainable fashion to the Fashion Museum redevelopment, while the Somer Store gives student and early-stage creatives a real-world launchpad. Together, we're growing talent and exporting creativity worldwide.

The UK creative industries are predicted to remain on their strong growth trajectory over the next decade, and the West of England is positioned to shape the future of the UK's creative economy and export its stories, skills, and innovation to the world.

CREATIVE INDUSTRIES: OUR STRENGTHS

EMPLOYMENT

As one of the UK's top five creative clusters, the West of England is home to over 5,500 creative businesses employing over 40,000 people.

ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION

The sector generates £1.6bn in Gross Value Added (GVA) annually

IMPACT & GROWTH POTENTIAL

Strengths in AI, quantum, and supercomputing

Powering next-generation VFX, gaming, AR, VR, and personalised content production – fast growing sectors globally

Screen Tourism & Cultural Assets

boost hospitality, retail, and the visitor economy, driving demand in the everyday economy

Sustainable energy and green construction

support low-carbon studios, festivals, and live venues, making the sector a leader in green cultural production

West of England-South West Wales Creative Corridor

Collaboration shared assets, talent, and international reach with Cardiff's global media and broadcasting base with will further strengthen the West of England's position

OUR ASSETS

- MyWorld, a global centre of creative technology innovation is fuelling growth of the creative technology sector, providing access to state-of-the-art production facilities. It's giving businesses the opportunity to undertake R&D using the latest tech to advance their product, process, and prototype development. Working with partners such as Aardman, the BBC, and Netflix, and led by the University of Bristol, it is putting the region at the cutting-edge of media, immersive experience and digital storytelling.
- The Centre for the Analysis of Motion, Entertainment Research & Applications (CAMERA) focuses on intelligent visuals and interactive technology. Located at the University of Bath, CAMERA is helping change the face of real-time visual effects, motion capture, and immersive technology, supporting both academic and commercial innovation.
- The new Bristol Arena will be a major venue for live events and cultural showcases, attracting international acts and strengthening the region's global profile in music and live entertainment.
- The Bottle Yard Studio is the largest production facility in the South West, supporting hundreds of local crew and supply chain businesses, reinforcing the West of England's credentials as a full-service destination for screen production.

EVERYDAY ECONOMY

The everyday economy is the foundation of daily life across the West of England. It includes the services, sectors and most importantly the people who keep our region running, day in and day out. From schools to hospitals, care homes to cafes, high streets to warehouses, farmers to bus drivers, these are the jobs and workers that power everything and reinforce our region's unique identity. Supporting these everyday businesses and organisations helps shape thriving communities, creating spaces where people connect, access essential services, and share a sense of identity.

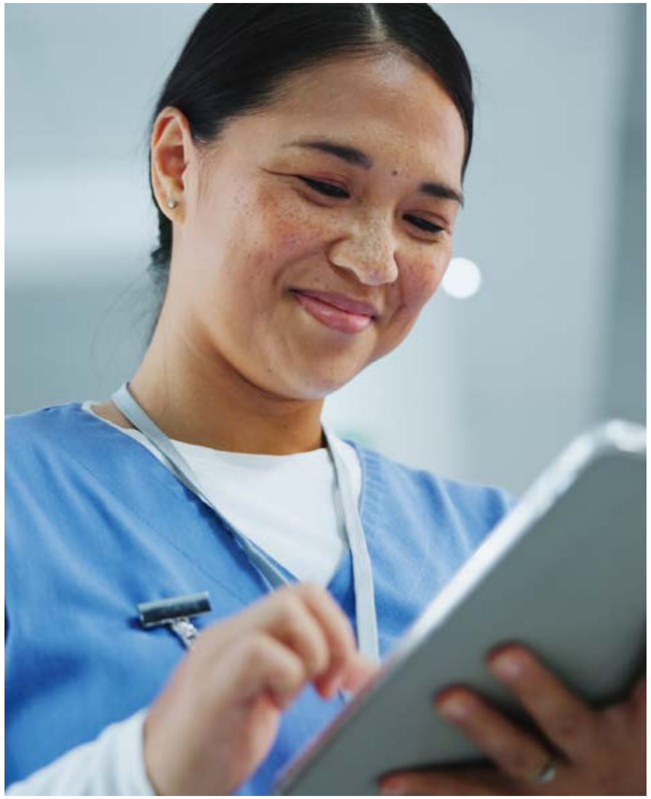
People are our number one asset. From the teachers and teaching assistants shaping young lives, to the cleaners, cooks, caretakers and admin staff who keep our schools running - they are essential to the success of our communities and future generations. It's the same in healthcare, where nurses, porters, technicians and clerical staff work alongside clinical teams to deliver life-changing services. At Southmead Hospital in Bristol, world-leading care is being delivered using state-of-the-art surgical robots, a shining example of how innovation and skilled staff come together to improve lives.

The caring economy is vital to the West of England, enabling parents to work the hours they want and supporting people to live independently through high-quality social care. We see the caring economy as not just a social good but a major driver of economic growth.

By investing in skills and career pathways, we strengthen our workforce, support local organisations, and create opportunities for more people to contribute to the region's prosperity. Our region is also known for its strong voluntary and community sector, which underpins the empathetic spirit of the region and the drive to make people's lives better.

The regions hospitality sector is a major economic engine, generating billions in revenue and sustaining tens of thousands of jobs in our cities and in rural and coastal areas. We are proud of our vibrant food, drink, and hospitality scene, from the buzzing independent restaurants, to farmers and growers, who provide fresh, quality produce and sustain community life, all enhanced and supported by residents and visitors to the region.

Our night-time economy is another key strength, enhanced and supported by visitors to the region, encompassing music venues, theatres, clubs, late-night transport, and



hospitality that together create a dynamic cultural offer, support thousands of jobs, and keep our streets active and safe well into the early hours.

Behind it all, our logistics and transport sector keeps the region moving. From the distribution hubs at Avonmouth to delivery drivers, warehouse staff and supply chain coordinators, these workers are vital to ensuring goods reach homes, hospitals, schools and businesses.

The Everyday Economy is the backbone of the region – the ingredient without which growth would not be possible – it's a core sector for our growth vision.

EVERYDAY ECONOMY: OUR STRENGTHS

EMPLOYMENT

The everyday economy makes up 57% of the region's workforce, and reaches 68% in Bath & North East Somerset

ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION

The everyday economy generates £16.1bn in GVA annually and contributes 32.8% of the region's total output

OUR EVERYDAY ECONOMY

This sector includes:

- Health and social care
- Childcare
- Education
- VCSE sector
- Food producers
- Hospitality and the visitor economy
- Building and construction
- Retailers
- Transport and logistics
- Community safety
- Cleaning and waste collection

While the sector is thriving in our region, organisations in the everyday economy are facing challenges, including workforce and skills challenges, low margins, and cost of living pressures for their workers.

It is vital we invest in and support people and organisations in the everyday economy to both drive growth and productivity in the region but also to increase the wellbeing and living standards of our residents, and particularly those working in the everyday economy.

OUR ASSETS

- A dynamic food and drink and hospitality sector, vibrant high streets, with hundreds of retail shops in Bath alone, many of which are independents.
- The region attracts 32 million visitors a year to our cities, towns countryside and coasts.
- A vital logistics and distribution backbone, particularly in Severnside, that keeps goods moving and underpins a resilient, connected economy.
- 19 hospital sites, circa 30,000 Ofsted registered childcare places, 384 state primary schools and 95 secondary schools ensure the region is cared for and young people are supported to grow and thrive.
- The sector is underpinned by a powerful network of Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise sector (VCSE) organisations driving change in the region.

EVERYDAY ECONOMY: GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

The Everyday Economy is a sector where we will take targeted action essential both for the people who power it and for the region's long-term growth.

We are already supporting businesses in the everyday economy to innovate, aligning our skills offer to the needs of everyday economy organisations, and building a transport network that connects people to jobs. But we can and will go further, recognising the everyday economy is the engine room of growth, powering jobs, spending, and local resilience.

We will direct more funding towards the everyday economy and launch the Mayor's Everyday Economy Fund, targeting business and innovation funding at the sector, developing tailored support for workers, sharing best practice, and funding projects that support workers in specific sectors.

We are absolutely committed to supporting the caring economy and will focus on developing a broader workforce and support more people from across communities into these roles. In particular, we will take action to support the childcare workforce in the region, recognising the recruitment and retention challenges the sector faces as well as the vital role childcare workers play in early years education, development, wellbeing, and care; enabling parents to work the hours they want and helping to establish the foundations children need to thrive.

We will promote the sector, launching a "This Is Essential Work" campaign highlighting the value of roles in the everyday economy and the career opportunities and pathways within these sectors. This will focus on specific sectors and target underrepresented demographics.

We will also explore how we can better support workers in the night-time economy, who are essential both to people's lives and the wider economy. We will look at ways to ensure public transport options are available that work for those working shifts and those working at night.

We will work with partners to improve data on the everyday economy workforce, mapping where people live and work so our investment decisions around skills, housing, and transport can be made in a way that best supports our essential workers.

03.

Action to accelerate our decade of growth

Our decade of growth will see the West of England build a bold, innovation-led future. A place where people can live life well.

We will take action across 6 core areas that will enable growth.

The six core areas

1. Contributing to national economic growth helping our businesses succeed and creating jobs
2. Connecting the region through public transport & active travel
3. Building affordable and attractive homes in sustainable communities
4. Empowering residents with the skills to access the jobs that will shape our future
5. Making the West of England the home for green jobs and green growth
6. Lifting children and families out of poverty in the West of England

Our initial action for growth across each of these areas is set out on the next pages. We will build on these actions over time – shaping a future the West of England can be proud of.

Action to accelerate our decade of growth

Economic growth is powered by innovation, ideas and creativity. But it's also powered by seamless transport networks, high-quality and affordable homes, access to opportunity and happy, healthy, vibrant communities. Government, regional and other investment will be a key ingredient for growth.

Our new Investment Strategy will lay the groundwork for investment in the delivery of our action to accelerate a decade of growth in the West of England.

It will set out how we intend to maximise the impact of investment in the region including how we will deploy our funding and the range of approaches we will take to unlocking the broader public and private funding that will be needed to see our priority actions realised.

Delivering the ambition of the Growth Strategy will be the focus of all that we do.

As part of our approach to delivery, we have agreed joint action we will take with Government that will unlock our regional growth potential. These joint priorities are set out on page 115 of this strategy.

We want to move at pace. The Mayor and Combined Authority will work with partners and stakeholders in the 6 months following the launch of the Growth Strategy to determine steps to tackle the constraints on regional growth we have identified.

1 CONTRIBUTING TO NATIONAL ECONOMIC GROWTH HELPING OUR BUSINESSES SUCCEED AND CREATING JOBS

1 CONTRIBUTING TO NATIONAL ECONOMIC GROWTH HELPING OUR BUSINESSES SUCCEED AND CREATING JOBS

Our 10-year growth ambition to contribute to national economic growth, help businesses succeed and create jobs

28%

Increase in GDP in next 10 years

The West of England is ready to lead the UK's next wave of growth.

Already the most productive Combined Authority region, we're scaling up - with investment, innovation, and growth that benefits every community.

By 2035, we'll be known for further enhancing our thriving sectors like advanced manufacturing, creative industries, clean energy, digital and tech - underpinned by a resilient everyday economy.

With targeted R&D, sector growth plans, and our annual investment prospectus, we'll attract more UK and global investors.

Backed by high-performing services like the Growth Hub and Invest Bristol and Bath, businesses will scale, export, and compete globally with confidence.

We'll invest in skills, infrastructure, and digital connectivity, with our universities driving discovery and commercial success. From low-carbon innovation to digital security and creativity, the West of England will be a live lab for new ideas - with SMEs and entrepreneurs supported to grow and go global.

We'll grow the West of England as a hub for innovative public services, backing new ideas and bold thinking. Our economy will work for everyone – with thriving local businesses, fair wages, and high-quality jobs that deliver opportunity across every community.

1 CONTRIBUTING TO NATIONAL ECONOMIC GROWTH HELPING OUR BUSINESSES SUCCEED AND CREATING JOBS

Current regional growth constraints

While the West of England attracts significant inward investment – shortages of high quality and specialist commercial space acts as a barrier to growth. Limits in some of our digital infrastructure also hold back our growth potential.

- One of the top questions businesses looking to locate here ask is around energy supply and grid connection. We need to future proof our growth potential by ensuring this is not a barrier for businesses.
- Demand for office space is returning towards pre-pandemic levels and yet a limited development pipeline leaves supply unable to meet demand, with only 2.4% vacancies for grade A office space in Bristol.
- Industrial and warehousing space is constrained across the region, especially in Bath. This limits the type of businesses that can locate and grow here. A lack of supply also drives high commercial rents, restricting our ability to deliver comprehensive regeneration on strategic sites like Temple Quarter. Where land is available, this often needs remediation and investment to come forward, creating a barrier for businesses who are otherwise ready to invest.
- Specialist lab and R&D space is needed to meet the needs of some of the start-ups based here. The region has seen some businesses leave the region to access the space and facilities they need to grow.
- Digital infrastructure is inconsistent across the region. Parts of our region are behind the national average in terms of the full-fibre roll-out and in some areas, there is poor 4G and 5G connectivity. Without a speed up in the roll out of digital infrastructure, our tech heavy priority growth sectors will be limited.
- Unlocking productivity through targeted business support: businesses need access to tailored growth support to thrive. This includes improving access to finance, export support, technology adoption, and addressing persistent skills gaps.

Growth constraints we will tackle

Grid supply

Grade A office space

Industrial space

Lab & R&D space

Digital infrastructure

Specialist business support

1 CONTRIBUTING TO NATIONAL ECONOMIC GROWTH HELPING OUR BUSINESSES SUCCEED AND CREATING JOBS

Action for growth: To contribute to national economic growth, help our businesses succeed and create jobs we will...

1. **Launch a new Business Board**, which will help swiftly identify and tackle barriers to growth around new investment opportunities across the region. The Board will convene sector groups that will develop 'sector growth plans' for each of our core regional sector strengths, supporting an acceleration in growth.
2. **Publish an inward investment prospectus**, that will be reviewed regularly, to help promote the opportunities across the region, reshaping our approach to inward investment to be more targeted around our areas of sector strength.
3. **Explore innovative ways to deliver a variety of employment spaces** to include additional office, industrial and specialist R&D space, and to regenerate high street and industrial areas, meeting the needs of our current and future employers.
4. **Refresh our support for businesses looking to scale up**, focusing on enabling them to remain in the region as they grow – we will target this on our core sectors in the first instance.
5. **Work with Government to strengthen international trade missions**, grow visitor numbers, and develop national and international partnerships, landing even greater levels of inward investment and strengthening new trade links. We will deliver additional trade support to help our companies export. We will work with other regions where that strengthens our trade and export opportunities.
6. **Seek to agree an Innovation Deal with Government** through our proposals to unlock a Local Innovation Partnership Fund allocation, enabling delivery of the AI supercluster proposition with regional partners. This will enhance R&D and innovation-driven AI capability across priority sectors, driving productivity and economic growth throughout the West of England.
7. **Maximise the high-growth potential of our Creative Sector** by building on our designation as a priority investment area through the Creative Places Growth Fund. We will increase innovation and R&D, improve access to finance, particularly through investment, and boost international trade to help creative businesses scale up their products.
8. **Deliver clearly defined pathways from education to work** that will grow and benefit our priority sectors
9. **Explore impact investment opportunities and the impact economy** supporting purposeful businesses, social enterprises and civil society to help address regional challenges and drive growth that benefits all.
10. **To future proof the region, deliver the digital and utilities infrastructure** we need to bring us in line with the rest of the UK and enable our growth ambitions to be realised.
11. **Support startups, spinouts, scaleups, and established businesses to grow locally** through linking government, the Combined Authority and the business community driving regional growth and creating opportunities for young people. We will work in collaboration with the VCSE sector to boost business resilience and sustainability.

2 BETTER CONNECTIVITY THROUGH PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND ACTIVE TRAVEL

2 BETTER CONNECTIVITY THROUGH PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND ACTIVE TRAVEL

Our 10-year growth ambition for public transport and active travel

Transport is the backbone of growth – and the West of England is building a network fit for the future.

Transport shapes the way we live our lives, the jobs we take or the places we choose to study. A high-quality transport network makes a place attractive to investors and visitors, improves the environment, increases access to new places, and moves people and goods efficiently. Transport connects people to services and to one another. Transport makes a place.

We're connecting more people to jobs, services, and housing through high-quality, sustainable corridors that prioritise public transport and active travel. New transport hubs will make switching modes seamless – linking communities to major employment zones and unlocking opportunity across the region.

We're delivering sustainable transport corridors along key radial and orbital routes – designed as places for people. These corridors will prioritise public transport and active travel, unlocking growth, boosting wellbeing, and connecting communities across the region.

We're transforming bus services with a growing fleet of visible green electric buses already on the road – and we're moving fast to improve reliability. Rail investment will deliver £43m in annual economic benefit, with five new stations, more frequent services, and the Portishead–Bristol line connecting 50,000 people to the city.

We're investing to become the UK's most cycle-friendly region, making walking and cycling the first choice in towns and cities. With integrated ticketing and better options, more people will choose sustainable travel.

By electrifying buses, cars, vans, and rail – and building climate-resilient infrastructure – we'll decarbonise our transport system and lead the UK's clean mobility revolution. This is about more than movement – it's about creating places where people thrive.

To deliver the transport network our region deserves we will:

- Transform our bus network, to meet the needs of different communities
- Improve our suburban rail network, delivering the frequency of service that people deserve
- Improve connectivity through mass transit and wider transformation of public transport
- Integrate services and ticketing so people can experience one seamless journey

The proportion of commuting journeys by active travel and public transport

45%

2 BETTER CONNECTIVITY THROUGH PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND ACTIVE TRAVEL

Current regional growth constraints

Our transport network currently holds back growth.

- **Transport connections across the region limit opportunity.** Some residents and visitors cannot easily reach job, training, and leisure opportunities. Only 50% of the region's population can access a major centre within 30 minutes.
- **Transport connections limit housing and commercial development.** If there is no public transport in place to support new developments, this results in car dependence and increases environmental impact.
- **Congestion and delays are high across the region.** Both Bath and Bristol are in the top 10 cities nationally for traffic delays. Delays on key routes make it hard for people to get around the region to work and learn. This leads to lost productivity as people sit in traffic.
- **Poor public transport reliability** is in part driven by congestion and a lack of priority for buses. With transformation of the network to better integrated transport services, ticketing and timetabling, service improvements would be seen.
- **Accessibility improvements are required** to ensure people with disabilities have equal access to public transport
- **Public transport costs** can be high and act as a barrier to both employees and businesses locating in the region.

Growth constraints we will tackle

Linking people to opportunity

Unlocking commercial development site

Congestion & delays

Public transport reliability

Accessibility

Public transport fares

2 BETTER CONNECTIVITY THROUGH PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND ACTIVE TRAVEL

Action for growth: To connect the region through better public transport and active travel, we will...

1. **Deliver a new, bold, regional transport strategy** to get the West of England moving. This will be published in 2026 setting the course for the transport improvements that are a crucial component of our growth and environmental ambitions
2. **Deliver improved buses**, giving residents the bus network they deserve. Increasing connectivity, accessibility and integration by working with our Unitary Authority partners to create a bus friendly environment and improve the passenger experience, including rolling out more electric buses
3. **Improve the suburban rail network** by opening new lines and stations, increasing service frequencies making train travel an option for many more residents. Including opening the Portishead line by the end of 2027, connecting over 50,000 to the rail network, and delivering at least £43m per year economic benefit. Broader rail improvements will be vital to delivering developments such as Brabazon
4. **Finally deliver mass transit for the West of England**, improving connectivity to and between our growth zones and along key corridors, and expand public transport choice
5. **Make it easier to walk, wheel and cycle** – working with Active Travel England and investing to provide high quality infrastructure and training and support to make these ways of travelling the natural choice for shorter trips
6. **Build the skills we need to deliver our transport vision**. We will establish a skills for transport construction partnership between developers, skills providers and SMEs – ensuring construction across the region opens up job and business growth opportunities for residents and SMEs.
7. **Make it easier to travel across the network, moving between services on a single ticket ticket and with single timetables across operators**. Our improved transport network will be enhanced with integrated ticketing – starting with integration across our bus network and ultimately making it easier for people to move between different modes of transport, creating a mass transit network for the region.
8. **Working with national Government and transport agencies to ensure our transport network plans unlock the housing growth opportunities across the region.** This will include work with National Highways and Network Rail on key opportunities that will unlock housing and commercial development, ensuring they are well linked to public transport hubs.
9. **Make it easier to use public transport, offering people support to access jobs, training and opportunities**. We'll do this in a range of ways, including by extending and broadening discounted public transport travel in ways that support our growth ambitions. We will explore how we can best use our transport system to lift children and families out of poverty.
10. **Align our transport, housing and climate resilience plans to unlock growth** - ensuring all new housing developments have appropriate transport links and infrastructure (including social and environmental infrastructure, access to green spaces, and access to EV infrastructure) that are fit for the future.

3 BUILDING AFFORDABLE HOMES IN SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

3 BUILDING AFFORDABLE HOMES IN SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Our 10-year growth ambition for more affordable homes in sustainable communities

Subject to agreement in our Spatial Development Strategy, we will aim for annual growth of

7,750 homes

Housing is a core foundation of growth - and the West of England is ready to build.

Everyone deserves a safe, decent, affordable home. We'll deliver a major uplift in housebuilding across all tenures, with a strong focus on affordability, diversity, and sustainability – linking people to jobs, opportunity, and prosperity.

We'll invest in the 524,000 homes we already have, cutting bills and accelerating low-carbon heating. We'll support high-quality conversions and re-use of buildings in accessible locations, and fast-track remediation of unsafe cladding through our Local Remediation Acceleration Plan.

Growth will be driven by urban and brownfield development in Bristol Temple Quarter, the West Innovation Arc, and Weston-super-Mare - bringing homes closer to jobs and infrastructure.

We'll champion compact, walkable neighbourhoods along key transport corridors like the Bristol to Bath Corridor, embedding mass transit and services.

Housing investment will reach every corner - city centres, suburbs, and rural areas – while protecting access to nature, culture, and leisure. New homes will be net-zero, climate-resilient, and energy-efficient. Every development will deliver social value - creating jobs, training, and opportunity for local people.

This is housing that powers a fairer, greener, more prosperous West of England.

3 BUILDING AFFORDABLE HOMES IN SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Current regional growth constraints

The West of England is a vibrant and attractive place where people want to live. This is an asset for our region and our growth potential. But our historic under-delivery of new homes is constraining further economic growth.

- **Housing affordability and availability** is a challenge. Housing costs are around 9 times annual median earnings, well above the England average of 7.7 times median earnings, becoming unaffordable for many. This has left over 50,000 households on the waiting list for social housing.
- **Quality of life i**s impacted by poor housing. Over 66,000 homes in the region do not meet the decent homes standard and over 2,000 children are living in temporary accommodation. Overcrowding is also an issue.
- **Viability** is a major constraint for our urban sites. While greenfield development is predominantly viable in edge locations, high costs of infrastructure and site remediation limit the financial case for urban delivery. In many parts of Bristol and Bath, purpose-built student accommodation is the only form of development that is market attractive and deliverable without subsidy.
- **There is not enough brownfield land to meet all our housing need**. In addition to reimagining how we unlock small sites, this will mean difficult decisions on greenfield growth.
- **A lack of skills/workforce supply constrains our ability to meet demand**, particularly for retrofit and construction.

Growth constraints we will tackle

Housing affordability & availability

Housing quality

Viability of development sites

Land availability

Construction skills

3 BUILDING AFFORDABLE HOMES IN SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Action for growth: To build affordable and attractive homes in sustainable communities, we will...

1. **Establish a £500m West of England Land Acquisition Fund**, strategically intervening on key sites to deliver comprehensive and high quality development that is infrastructure-led.
2. **Utilise our Strategic Place Partnership to unlock our pipeline of 15,000 homes** that are stalled, working with Homes England to combine public and private investment to tackle viability challenges and accelerate delivery.
3. **Deliver a Spatial Development Strategy** this Parliament to spatially define our long-term vision for growth, taking a regional approach to meeting housing need and supporting the case for a step-change in transformational infrastructure including mass transit.
4. **Explore the case for new delivery mechanisms** such as development corporations to deliver our nationally significant new city districts, including Bristol Temple Quarter, the Bristol to Bath Corridor, and the West Innovation Arc.
5. **Pilot the Small Sites Accelerator in Bristol**, expanding it across the region to deliver new social homes on council-owned brownfield sites and cut the number of families living in managed homelessness. This will complement wider regional initiatives to support a diverse SME development sector.
6. **Work to set the strategic direction of the new £39bn Social and Affordable Homes Programme**, including shaping the tenure mix and identifying sites for housing development to be supported by grant.
7. **Take an infrastructure first approach to delivering new homes, enhancing communities**. This will include childcare and other services as well as the transport that supports growth. This action will ensure more people have access to the services they need.
8. **Work with all stakeholders to tackle high construction costs in the region**, including through prioritising a joint workstream with Homes England through the Strategic Place Partnership.
9. **Deliver homes and places that are low carbon, attractive, affordable to heat, well integrated with nature, and resilient to the impacts of climate change**. To achieve this, we will:
   - Integrate green and blue infrastructure into new developments, improve flood defences and improve resilience of individual buildings.
   - Create attractive places as we grow housing numbers. We will integrate nature and green spaces into new developments.
   - Ensure new developments are served by green and clean energy solutions.
10. **Deliver a Local Remediation Acceleration Plan**, ensuring homes with cladding are remediated as soon as possible.

4 EMPOWERING RESIDENTS WITH THE SKILLS TO ACCESS THE JOBS THAT WILL SHAPE OUR FUTURE

4 EMPOWERING RESIDENTS WITH THE SKILLS TO ACCESS THE JOBS THAT WILL SHAPE OUR FUTURE

Our 10-year growth ambition to empower residents with the skills to access jobs that will shape our future

72,000

new jobs across a range of sectors over the next 10 years

Skills power growth – and the West of England is ready to lead.

We'll build a future-ready, diverse workforce that drives innovation, strengthens our everyday economy, and ensures no one is left behind. With national reforms and greater regional control, we'll shape an employment and skills system that meets tomorrow's economic demands.

Our approach is bold and inclusive:

- **Opportunity for all**: Lifelong learning pathways will be open to every community. Young people will have clear routes into high-growth sectors and vital everyday roles.
- **Industry-led education**: Training will be built with employers, delivering real-world experience and the talent businesses need to grow.
- **Digital & automation readiness**: We'll lead in 6G, AI, and robotics – equipping workers and boosting productivity.
- **Green & sustainable skills**: Net-zero and nature-positive growth will create demand for new expertise in energy, infrastructure, and ecology.
- **Regional collaboration**: A joined-up system will align education with long-term economic priorities, including through the Colleges West collaboration that is forming across our Further Education sector.

By 2035, our young people will thrive, adults will access good jobs, and employers will find the talent they need. Vacancy rates will fall, inequalities will shrink, and the West of England will be a national leader in skills innovation.

4 EMPOWERING RESIDENTS WITH THE SKILLS TO ACCESS THE JOBS THAT WILL SHAPE OUR FUTURE

Current regional growth constraints

The West of England has high employment and people who live here have high skill levels. However, businesses across the region report difficulty finding candidates with the right skills for growth. This shortage limits innovation in growth sectors and impacts service levels in the everyday economy. Key challenges we need to overcome include:

- **Regional Skills and workforce shortages** - The region has one of the highest rates of vacancies due to skills shortages of all major UK urban areas. We also have notable workforce shortages in sectors key to our economy, such as care and construction.
- **Employment inequalities** - Employment rates and levels of economic inactivity vary considerably across the region and communities. There is growing economic inactivity due to ill health. Many people out of work are also impacted by the lack of affordable transport, housing, childcare and carer support options
- **Outcomes for young people growing up in the region** - We're attracting top talent and have strong universities, but educational attainment lags the national average, and too many young people aren't fully benefiting from the region's opportunities.
- **The accelerating pace of automation and AI adoption** presents a significant displacement risk for the West of England's labour market. Reskilling opportunities must be part of our future.
- **Our skills offer will need to better align with the infrastructure investments** we have planned in the region. There is need to join up sector and employer mapping with skills provision, giving a clear picture of future jobs and pay rates to stimulate demand.
- **The funding landscape for skills delivery** is complex and disjointed, with a range of different funders providing funding across different and conflicting timescales, eligibility criteria, and aims.

Growth constraints we will tackle

Skills shortages

Structural barriers to employment (transport, childcare and more)

School outcomes

Rate of growth in skills to support core sectors

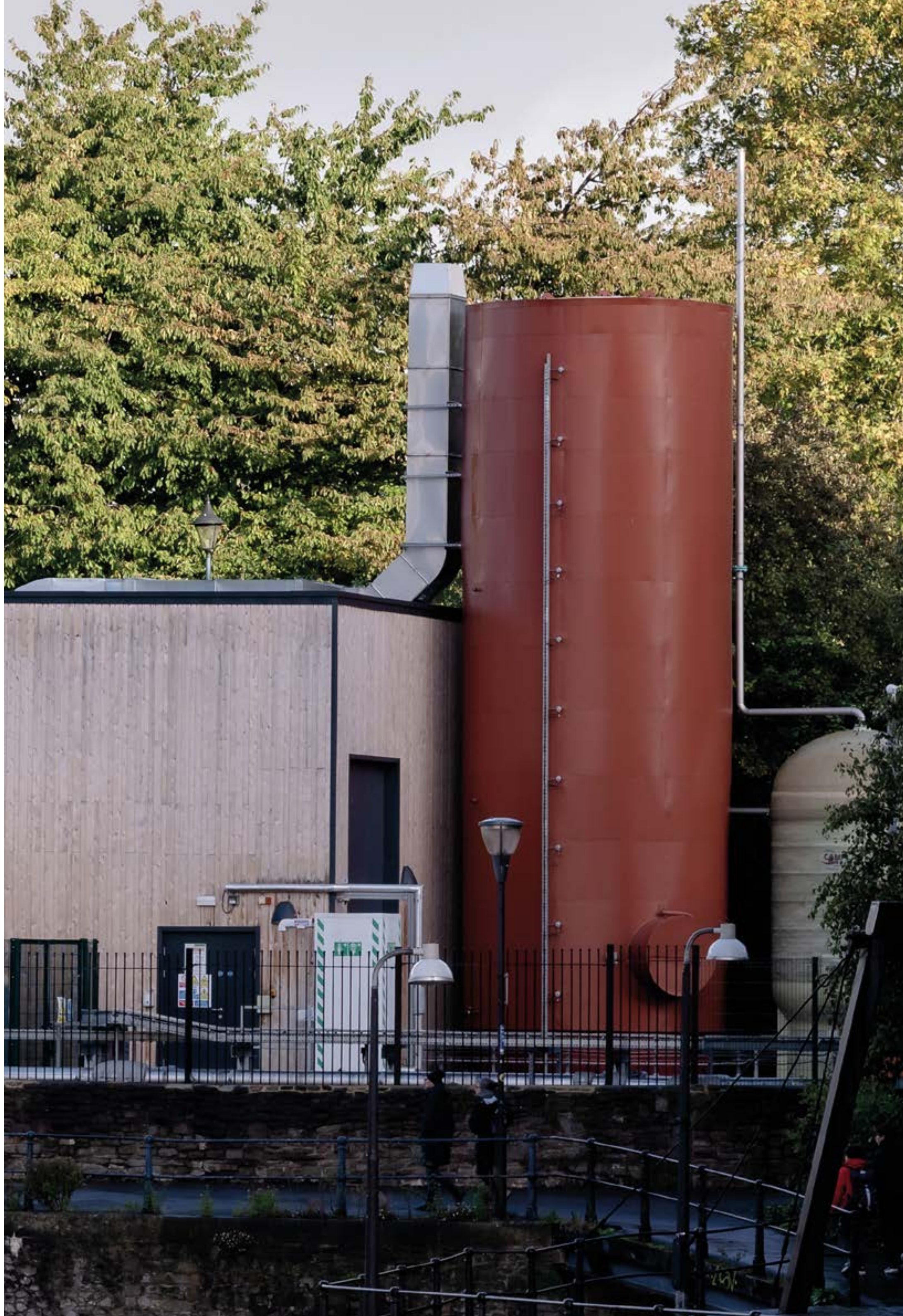
Greater skills devolution needed

4 EMPOWERING RESIDENTS WITH THE SKILLS TO ACCESS THE JOBS THAT WILL SHAPE OUR FUTURE

Action for growth: To empower residents with the skills to shape the region's future, we will...

1. **Develop a new regional skills strategy:** delivering on the ambition of this Growth Strategy.
2. **Develop a new regional approach to support young people into high-quality education and skills pathways**, giving young people earlier careers advice and the skills needed for future careers across our priority sectors.
3. **Support further devolution in the skills and post-16 space to provide residents with the skills for our future regional economy**. We will have a specific focus on retraining opportunities linked to growth sectors across the region and simplifying the skills landscape.
4. **Boost skills training and employment support in the key sectors** set out in our Growth Strategy and required to enable economic growth such as construction and jobs in the everyday economy, ensuring economic growth opportunities benefit all.
5. **Work with Further Education Colleges and Universities** to support more young people from disadvantaged backgrounds into Higher and Further Education.
6. **Continue to deliver the West of England Connect To Work Programme** focused on supporting more people to be economically active and support more young people into work and training through the **West of England Youth Guarantee**.
7. **Deliver on our Get West of England Working Plan ambitions**, integrating health and employment services, supporting more economically inactive people into work in partnership with the voluntary sector and other partners.
8. **Increase apprenticeship numbers** to boost our core sector strengths by setting up an **Apprenticeships for Growth programme**.
9. **Support and work with more families in poverty**, to increase economic activity. Ensuring access to training, support, and job opportunities that can lift families and children out of poverty, particularly in our most disadvantaged areas.
10. **Develop a network of skills academies geared to our priority sectors – linking residents to jobs.** This will include strengthening green skills.
11. **Deliver universal digital skills access and reskilling support**, including an AI & Automation Skills centre to help residents and organisations to adapt and thrive.
12. **Build the facilities our region needs to deliver skills for the future**. Working alongside our universities and industry to ensure the space for cutting edge R&D facilities.
13. **Work with the Department for Work and Pensions and Department for Education to identify national policy changes** to deliver growth that benefits all.
14. **Work closely with employers** to support them to recruit diverse local talent and upskill their existing workforce.

5 MAKING THE WEST OF ENGLAND THE HOME FOR GREEN JOBS AND GREEN GROWTH



5 MAKING THE WEST OF ENGLAND THE HOME FOR GREEN JOBS AND GREEN GROWTH

135

megawatts of new clean energy capacity installed over the next 10 years

Our 10-year growth ambition to deliver green jobs and green growth

The West of England is powering a low-carbon future.

By 2035, our position as a national leader in clean energy, green innovation, and climate resilience will be further cemented – driving growth while protecting nature and preparing for climate impacts. Net zero will be our economic success story.

We'll lead in renewable energy – solar, wind, nuclear, and tidal – backed by smart grids and heat networks. Our transport network will be low-carbon, with expanded rail, electric buses, and active travel routes. EV infrastructure will support cleaner car travel.

New homes and buildings will meet tough energy standards, with heat pumps, retrofits, and smart systems cutting emissions. We'll build on Bristol's heat network leadership and unlock investment through Bristol City Leap and the Green Growth West Fund.

Thousands of green jobs will be created in carbon capture, sustainable construction, and environmental tech. Nature recovery will enhance green spaces, boost biodiversity, and build flood resilience.

Public and private sectors will work together to deliver sustainable growth that benefits all. We will be a nature positive, climate resilient region.

Our strategy will embed climate action across transport, housing, energy, and skills – making the West of England a beacon of sustainability and a leader in the clean energy revolution.

5 MAKING THE WEST OF ENGLAND THE HOME FOR GREEN JOBS AND GREEN GROWTH

Current regional growth constraints

The West of England has a growing foundation of green jobs and growth. There is the potential to turn this into a high growth sector. To do this, we need to address the following challenges:

- **Grid connectivity**. Progress in the transition to renewable energy generation is being held back by a lack of grid connection.
- **Access to Finance**. Despite a thriving clean energy sector, investment in green initiatives can still be challenging for some businesses. Job growth across this sector could be accelerated and deliver greater growth if firms have access to finance for growth.
- **Green Skills**. Understanding of the green skills opportunities and amazing career opportunities needs to be strengthened. Giving young people and those looking for a change in career the information they need to develop skills for green growth in sectors such as nuclear, FLOW and more.
- **Innovation support**. Clean energy industries are at the cutting edge of innovation. Advances such as sustainable aviation are within reach. Researchers and industry need access to the right mix of support to accelerate discovery.
- **Climate resilient infrastructure**. The impact of our changing climate poses threats to growth. Rising temperatures and flooding risks bring challenges that impact both infrastructure critical to growth and viability of some development sies.

As we look ahead at how we plan, design, and deliver the infrastructure necessary to drive our economic growth, it's essential that we set a clear ambition for working with nature, and prioritising climate resilience. This will ensure our investments generate long-term value by withstanding future risks, protecting communities, and supporting economic stability.

Growth constraints we will tackle

Grid connectivity

Access to finance

Understanding of green skills

Support for innovation

Climate resilient infrastructure

5 MAKING THE WEST OF ENGLAND THE HOME FOR GREEN JOBS AND GREEN GROWTH

Action for growth: To make the West of England the home for green jobs and green growth, we will...

1. **Support Bristol Port to attract investment in the development of Floating Offshore Wind**, which has the potential to unlock 4.5GW of new renewable energy capacity, enough to power more than 4 million homes, with the potential to unlock a further 12 GW of capacity in the Celtic Sea in future rounds.
2. **Unlock the opportunities of tidal energy** to capture the globally significant tidal resource of the Severn Estuary, which has the potential to deliver up to 7% of the UK's electricity demand.
3. **Continue to lead nationally in retrofit services**, building on regional strength in domestic and commercial retrofit to creating new jobs and driving our green economy.
4. **Support businesses to accelerate the growth of green jobs through tailored skills and training programmes**. Working with investors, the Green Growth West Fund also aims to support growth ready businesses to seize the opportunities of the Net Zero transition to help create 2,000 green jobs and helping to generate £300 million of turnover growth for local businesses.
5. **Deliver the West of England Local Industrial Decarbonisation Plan** to reduce industrial emissions across Portbury, Avonmouth and Severnside, helping the region transition to net zero while contributing up to £3.5bn to the local economy.
6. **Work with GB Energy and our partners to identify local solutions to grid capacity constraints**, including investigation of smart grid technologies, that improve efficiency and resilience to climate change.
7. **Turbo charge our clean energy industries by growing our nuclear energy capability** - working with government and regional partners to lay the groundwork for new nuclear development at Oldbury-on-Severn, with potential for construction to begin on the Government's Small Modular Reactor Programme in the lifespan of this 10-year Growth Strategy.
8. **Further support our strong community energy sector**, including considering further wind turbines and rooftop solar programmes, to help it deliver its 95MW pipeline and £110m capital investment, and deliver direct support to local communities.
9. **Deliver the West of England Clean Energy Investment Plan**, to support growth and a just transition across the region, through the investment of more than £3bn in the region over three to five years.
10. **Grow our regional leadership in the development of innovative approaches to building resilient places**, as well as building retrofit, we will grow our capabilities in the deployment of natural flood management, and greening our urban spaces – capability that can deliver right across the country.
11. **We will work with our partners to deliver the priorities of the region's Local Nature Recovery Strategy**, protecting our natural assets, creating rural and nature recovery jobs and working with nature to improve climate resilience of our built environment. Embedding nature-based solutions and green infrastructure to the way we grow will be crucial to our green growth ambitions.
12. **Work with partners to deliver the Bristol Avon Flood Strategy and other flood protection measures** that will protect communities and businesses from rising flood risk due to tidal surges and high river flows, while unlocking over £7 billion in economic benefit and preventing 1.37 million tonnes of carbon emissions over its lifetime.
13. **Work with R&D capabilities in the region** to continue to innovate for the green economy.

6 LIFTING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OUT OF POVERTY IN THE WEST OF ENGLAND

6 LIFTING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OUT OF POVERTY IN THE WEST OF ENGLAND

Our 10-year growth ambition to lift children and families out of poverty

The West of England is committed to lifting children and families out of poverty by focusing on the factors that shape long-term outcomes for children and families. This includes improving access to quality early education, supporting families into secure and well-paid work, and ensuring children grow up in healthy, safe environments. Our ambition is for every child in the region to have the opportunity to thrive, regardless of their background.

Tackling child poverty is essential for both economic growth and social fairness. When children grow up in poverty, they face significant barriers to education, health, and future employment limiting their potential and reducing the region's overall productivity and talent pool. Breaking the cycle of poverty means investing in families and in the next generation, enabling more young people to thrive, with the skills needed for future jobs, giving them the opportunity to contribute positively to society and the economy.

Every child deserves the chance to succeed, regardless of their background. Reducing child poverty promotes equal opportunities and helps build a more inclusive, cohesive society we can be proud of. By addressing the root causes such as housing, education, transport and health inequalities we not only improve individual life chances but also lay the foundation for a stronger, fairer, and more resilient region.

Supporting families: lifting children out of poverty

6 LIFTING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OUT OF POVERTY IN THE WEST OF ENGLAND

Child poverty remains one of the West of England's most urgent challenges

Despite a strong economy and high quality of life, too many children - especially those with SEND, in care, or leaving care- face barriers to education, employment, and stable housing. Economic success is not yet shared fairly.

Child poverty has risen sharply, with around 68,000 children now living in poverty after housing costs. In Bristol, one in three children are affected. Just 3% of Free School Meal eligible pupils in Bristol North West reach university by age 22, and Bristol East ranks among the bottom 10 constituencies for opportunity.

Mental health needs are rising, with Bristol ranking third nationally for pupils with social, emotional, and mental health challenges. In North Somerset, one in four children show signs of tooth decay. Social mobility is low - GCSE attainment lags behind national averages, NEET levels are high, and Bristol South ranks poorly for mobility.

Housing pressures compound the issue, with nearly 2,000 children in temporary accommodation. Economic inactivity is rising, with over 38,000 out of work due to long-term illness and 35,400 workless households.

To tackle child poverty, we must use every lever - transport, housing, skills, and cultural access - to shape policies and investments that improve outcomes and lift families out of poverty.

Challenges we will tackle

Equal access to opportunity

Access to affordable childcare

Housing costs & housing quality

Access to mental health services

School outcomes

6 LIFTING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OUT OF POVERTY IN THE WEST OF ENGLAND

Action for growth: : By the end of 2025, we will publish a strategy that focuses on lifting children and families out of poverty. Actions we will prioritise include:

1. **Launch a strategy to tackle child poverty, by the end of 2025**.
2. **Explore and develop social impact investment opportunities** to bring new solutions to structural challenges for young people in poverty and positioning the region as a leader in pioneering policies and initiatives to reduce it.
3. **Support more parents to work the hours they want** through a renewed focus on affordable and accessible childcare and offering parents tailored employment and skills support
4. **Develop a regional co-operative bank of early years workers** to support the childcare industry and increase economic activity, modelled on the NHS nurses bank model.
5. Partner across the MCA, Local Authorities, the VCSE sector, Integrated Care Boards and wider partners to **improve health and wellbeing levels for children and families** in the region through identifying and tackling the wider determinants of health.
6. Work across the region to **improve access to cultural activity and nature** especially for young people, focusing on improving health, wellbeing and educational attainment for families and children
7. **Launch a new Social Value Framework** to encourage a cross-sector commitment to supporting children and young people in the region who are in poverty.
8. Through the Youth Guarantee Trailblazer programme, **strengthen our support for young people at risk of leaving education, employment or training without a clear plan for their future**.
9. **Work with government to identify and make the case for national policy changes** that will help improve children and family outcomes in the region.
10. **Commit to using all the policy levers across the region to take as many young people out of poverty as possible.** This will include transport, housing and access to skills as well as working across the system to tackle health inequalities.

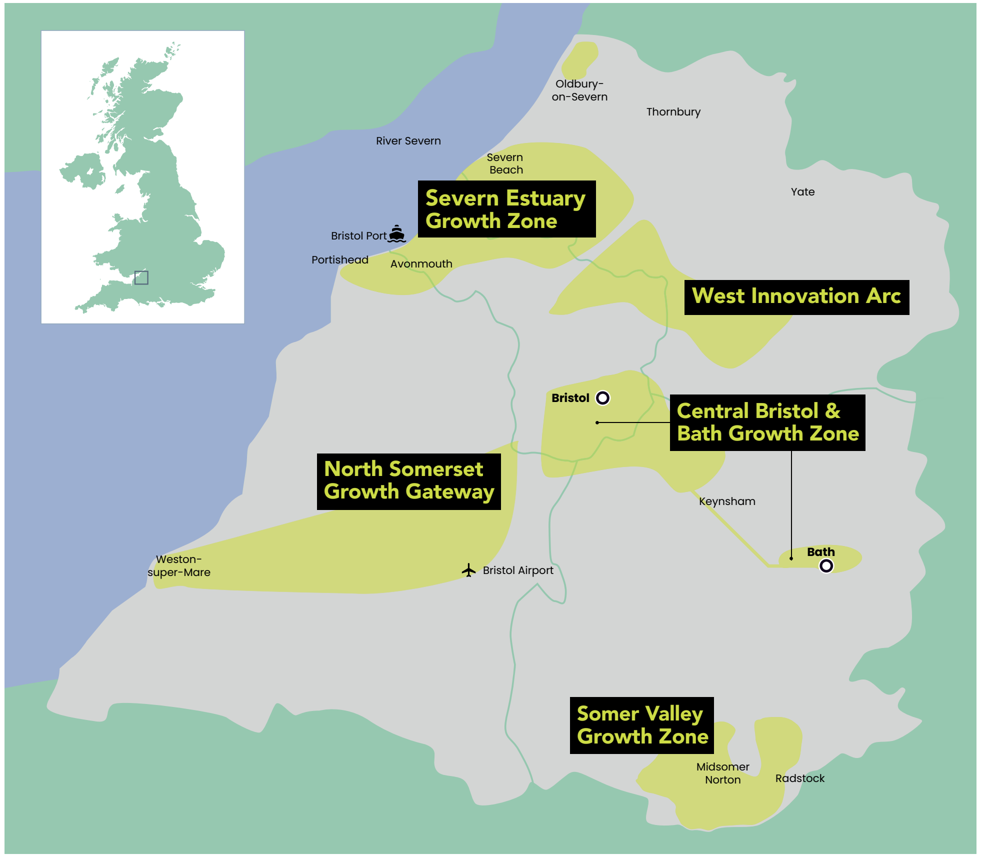
04.

Our places for growth

Places for growth

With a network of growth and investment opportunities across the region, the next decade will see the acceleration of growth across our core areas of sector strength, the creation of new places, and major growth driven regeneration. In 10 years, the region will look and feel different – providing opportunities for people right across the West of England. Our Growth Zones form a connected network, with sector strengths and investments in one zone driving opportunities and innovation across the others.

Working together as a region and with Government, we will take the action needed to transform our transport network, build new homes and places and ensure our Growth Zones and the wider region are primed for growth.



Our Growth Zones are:

THE WEST INNOVATION ARC

The West Innovation Arc is the West of England's Innovation District and home to investment opportunities linked to Engine West; a place where new ideas take flight and the heart of our advanced engineering sector. Rich in R&D capabilities and assets and containing one of the largest brownfield sites in the country, the Arc will be a major growth area over the next decade.

CENTRAL BRISTOL & BATH

Central Bristol and Bath are home to nationally significant growth zones. In Bath, the Bath Quays development anchors the Bath Riverside Innovation District: a flagship regeneration project combining new employment space, affordable homes, transport connectivity, and cultural assets. Temple Quarter in Bristol, one of the largest regeneration schemes in the UK, will deliver major growth for the region. Our urban core offers strong investment propositions for economic growth that will benefit all.

SEVERN ESTUARY

The Severn Estuary growth zone – home to investment opportunities to accelerate growth in the West of England Green Energy Portfolio - includes Oldbury, a significant potential national asset in the transition to nuclear energy. This zone also includes The Bristol Port, stretching into North Somerset and the surrounding industrial areas offer major investment opportunities in green energy sectors.

SOMER VALLEY

The Somer Valley is being developed as a hub of net zero manufacturing and rural productivity incubation. With the right investment, this area can serve as a testbed and national blueprint for rural productivity.

NORTH SOMERSET GROWTH GATEWAY

The North Somerset Growth Gateway stretches from the £400m Epic business campus near Bristol to the Junction 21 Enterprise Area bringing growth in digital technologies, production innovation and clean logistics with opportunities for 10,000 jobs and homes.

THE WEST INNOVATION ARC

The West Innovation Arc is the West of England's biggest Innovation District; a place where new ideas take flight. A world-leading hub for advanced engineering, its identity is rooted in the collaborative and pioneering culture in aerospace engineering that has defined the area for over 100 years.

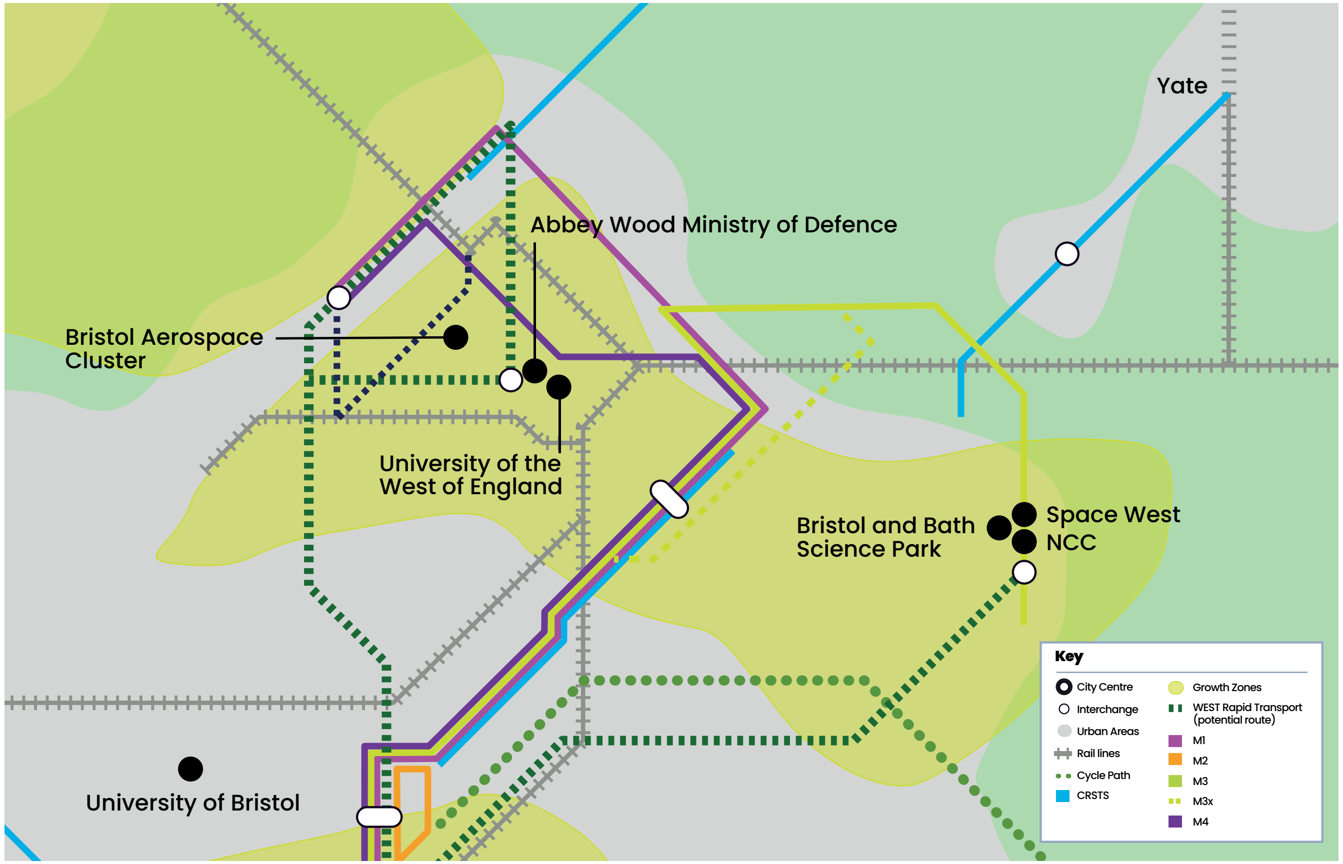
This is the place where ground-breaking solutions are discovered, across AI, robotics, clean and green energy and defence to help solve the world's future challenges. Its strengths, alongside investment in new infrastructure, mean a thriving and productive economy will be secured for the future.

THE WEST INNOVATION ARC

The West Innovation Arc, located in South Gloucestershire, is the regional hub of advanced manufacturing expertise. It is a key economic driver of the region and has all the ingredients to become a pioneering city district that can rival some of the best places in the world. Its communities have seen the businesses in their area achieve global accomplishments and there is huge pride and support for its innovation culture. The West Innovation Arc is at the start of a new chapter in which it needs to actively invest to catalyse a new era of growth.

YTL Developments has invested £2 billion in the transformation of the former Filton Airfield into Brabazon, a new city district for the region. The scheme will provide over 6,500 homes, three new schools, parks and community facilities, alongside more than 60 acres of employment space for offices, R&D, and advanced manufacturing. Anchored by the 17,000-seat YTL Arena Bristol, Brabazon will create a major cultural and economic hub, attracting visitors and investment from across the UK. The scheme is designed with sustainability at its core, incorporating extensive green infrastructure, active travel routes, and low-carbon building standards to support long-term growth that benefits all.

For the area to remain successful it must harness its fundamental strengths and continue to provide world-class space and cutting-edge technology that the technology industries depend on.



Alongside Brabazon and the Arc, the West of England and partners have developed a £2bn+ pipeline of investable housing, transport, and environmental projects that will reinforce and accelerate this transformation. Planned growth in the WIA and neighbouring East Fringe will create an exceptional built environment, enabling a step change in public transport connectivity along the A4174, which is a key orbital route connecting growth zones.

The innovation district will be defined by a network of neighbourhoods with three vibrant urban centres that are connected to each other, to Bristol and to Bath, by world class sustainable transport. The innovation spine will be an urban avenue of efficient public transport, high-quality cycle and footpaths, state of the art buildings and urban nature corridors that bring the district together. The three urban centres at Brabazon, a transformed Parkway station and the Science Park combine urban living, intensified innovation campuses, retail-leisure destinations and transport hubs to create vibrant, exciting places, with inspiring buildings, streets and spaces offering an exceptional quality experience.

CENTRAL BRISTOL & BATH

The Central Bristol and Bath Growth Zone is at the heart of our regional economy and the powerhouse that drives growth across the West of England by attracting people, business, and investment. Encompassing two globally recognised cities within a 15-minute travel corridor, and one of the UK's biggest urban regeneration schemes - Bristol Temple Quarter, this growth zone attracts millions of business and leisure visitors each year, drawn by its rich history, iconic landmarks, and internationally renowned festival scene.

Our cities are engines of growth. Bath Riverside Innovation District will be central to this transformation – a vibrant location where world-class research, skills and new employment space converge to attract global companies, support thriving communities, and generate opportunity that benefits all.

Our major cities have a unique and diverse economic mix, including a thriving creative sector, internationally significant digital sector strengths and a culture that attracts visitors and residents. With large scale development opportunities our cities will remain places people choose and places where bold businesses grow.

CENTRAL BRISTOL & BATH

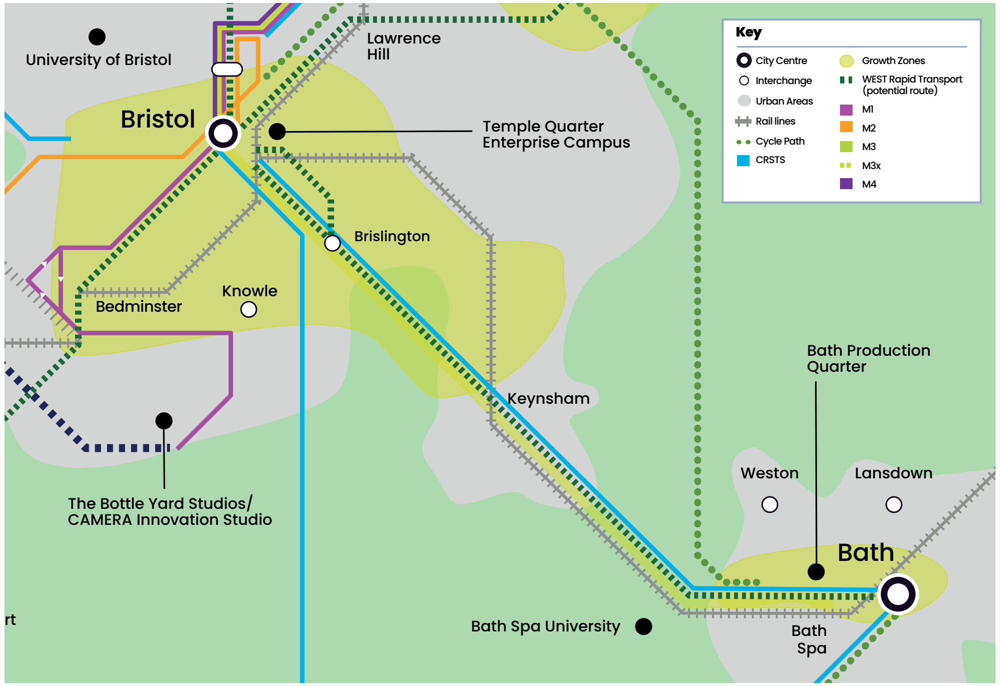
Central Bristol and Bath offer a high quality of life with world-class career and business prospects. Consistently ranked among the UK's most desirable places to live and work, they combine vibrant urban living with thriving industries and leading universities. The area's rich cultural offer - from world-class museums, theatres and music venues to independent shops, festivals and food scenes - adds to its appeal, attracting visitors and making it a place where people want to live, work and invest.

From incubation and start-up spaces to a culture of learning, creativity and disruption, this Growth Zone is known for its concentration of knowledge-based industries, intellectual property generation and enterprise development. Strengths include high-tech innovation, digital, and creative tech sectors, notably quantum technology and AI. Assets such as the Quantum Technologies Innovation Centre, Centre for Photonics and Photonic Materials, Science Creates, Engine Shed, BTQ Enterprise Campus, and the University of Bristol Business School bring industry and academia together to drive pioneering advancements.

The four universities in the West of England host leading R&D institutes, foster innovation, and produce skilled graduates to meet industry needs. Through partnerships, they support entrepreneurship and spin-outs that create jobs, while stronger connections and collaboration will further enhance their impact.

The economy is robust and diverse, spanning professional services, education, healthcare, hospitality and retail. This diversity underpins resilience and fuels the innovation and creativity that define the region. The everyday economy anchors the Growth Zone, enabling growth across the region by sustaining communities, supporting local enterprise, and creating the conditions for innovation to flourish.

Over the next decade, Central Bristol will undergo major transformation, including Bristol Temple Quarter, delivering housing, employment space, climate resilience and better connectivity. Placemaking will revitalise high streets and local centres as hubs for commerce, community and culture –



fostering creativity, encouraging footfall, and strengthening the city's social and economic fabric. Bath is also entering a new phase of growth through the Bath Riverside Innovation District, Production Quarter, and Bath Quays North. These will unite academic expertise and industry, create space for collaboration, and strengthen Bath's role in the regional economy. Housing and infrastructure along the Bristol–Bath corridor will connect communities and support sustainable growth.

Together, Bristol and Bath form a connected, high-performing Growth Zone where culture meets commerce, infrastructure meets innovation, and people and businesses thrive. With globally recognised assets, vibrant city centres, and a shared commitment to inclusive, sustainable development, it offers a compelling platform for investment, creativity and opportunity.

Encompassing the urban core of our region, the Central Bristol & Bath growth zone has three distinct areas with strong investment potential:

- Central Bristol
- Bristol to Bath Corridor
- Central Bath

The Central Bristol opportunity

Central Bristol offers one of the UK's strongest urban investment opportunities, building on a thriving city centre economy to deliver the next phase of inclusive, sustainable growth.

With targeted public investment in infrastructure, flood protection and land assembly, the region can unlock billions in private capital, enabling 30,000 new homes, 30,000 high-value jobs, and a transformation of the centre into a global hub for innovation and creativity. A series of regeneration sites across Central Bristol with approved frameworks and active development momentum offer the potential to deliver new homes, cultural spaces and modern work environments.

The waterfront economy, anchored by the Floating Harbour and Western Harbour, will evolve through coordinated placemaking strategies that balance heritage, leisure, and commercial uses - creating inclusive spaces for residents, visitors, and businesses.

The Bristol Avon Flood Strategy is central to this ambition, providing long-term resilience and unlocking major brownfield sites for redevelopment, while complementary investment in heat networks, transport and public realm will support climate-ready communities and attract private investment.

Opportunities for investors and partners span Bristol's fastest-growing sectors. In engineering biology, there is strong demand for new lab space and scale-up infrastructure, building on the success of Science Creates incubators and the University of Bristol's £500m Temple Quarter campus. Wet labs and bioreactors would enable businesses to accelerate innovation in areas such as therapeutics, sustainable materials, alternative proteins and agritech, addressing a national shortage of accessible scale-up facilities.

Alongside this, new workspace in Central Bristol such as the redevelopment of the former Evening Post building at Old Market into the Projekt building, is creating space for scale-ups in deeptech, digital and life sciences, with the potential to host a dedicated hub for high-growth firms. These opportunities ensure that Bristol can retain and attract scaling businesses, strengthening the city's role as a leader in science and technology.

The city also has a distinctive strength in the creative industries, with opportunities to build on the global success of its film, television and digital media sectors. The Bottle Yard Studios is already attracting national and international productions, reinforcing Bristol's reputation as a UK leader in screen industries. Further growth in production space, skills development and creative supply chains will underpin the city's reputation as a cultural and economic powerhouse.

Together, these opportunities in engineering biology, scale-ups and creative industries, unlocked by the delivery of new housing, flood resilience and infrastructure, make Central Bristol one of the UK's most compelling destinations for private sector investment. Investors can be confident of both strong commercial returns and a role in shaping a sustainable, globally competitive city at the heart of the West of England.

CENTRAL BRISTOL & BATH

CASE STUDY: BRISTOL TEMPLE QUARTER

Bristol Temple Quarter is one of the UK's largest city-centre regeneration programmes, aiming to transform 135 hectares of land around Bristol Temple Meads railway station.

Built on a public sector partnership between the West of England Combined Authority, Homes England and Bristol City Council, BTQ will deliver over 10,000 new homes, thousands of new jobs, and the community, travel and environmental infrastructure needed for high quality lives. In 2024, the partners formed the BTQ Limited Liability Partnership (BTQ LLP) to drive the programme forward.

The BTQ LLP works closely with Network Rail, noting the significance of the Grade 1 listed station at the centre of the scheme. Improvements to the station and the area around it will transform regional connectivity, creating a world-class gateway to the West of England.

At the heart of BTQ is the University of Bristol's £500m Temple Quarter Enterprise Campus. With a focus on deep tech, quantum technologies and innovation, it is a key catalyst of growth in the area and the city-region.

By creating the conditions for investment and delivering the homes and jobs the city-region needs, BTQ is expected to bring a £1.6bn annual boost to the regional economy.

The Bristol to Bath Corridor opportunity

The Bristol to Bath Corridor will create a connected, nature-positive growth zone that unites the economic strengths of two world-class cities while protecting and enhancing the Avon Valley landscape that lies between them. Today, Bath and Bristol are only 15 minutes apart by rail yet operate as distinct economies - combined, they would form the 7th largest conurbation in England. Delivering the Corridor will require significant public investment in transport, housing, and enabling infrastructure, but this will unlock transformative private capital in new homes, employment land, and local centres.

At its heart, the Corridor will be defined by sustainable, multi-modal transport links along the A4, active travel networks, and landscape-led masterplanning that allows communities at Hicks Gate, Keynsham, and Saltford to expand while remaining rooted in their natural setting. Public investment will enable the delivery of 10,000 new homes of all types and tenures, including genuinely affordable housing, alongside 10,000 new jobs in industrial, service and creative sectors. This growth will be tied to a new generation of exemplar net zero housing and climate-resilient place-making, supported by local employment, education, and high-quality public realm.

The Corridor's strength lies in its ability to knit together the region's major innovation assets. On one end, Bristol's Temple Quarter and Enterprise Campus are driving global leadership in digital, AI and creative technologies; on the other, Bath's Riverside Innovation District will anchor clusters in sustainable fashion, cultural industries and advanced engineering. The Corridor provides the missing link, offering connected neighbourhoods, modern workspace and industrial capacity in the Avon and Chew river valleys, all underpinned by resilient green and blue infrastructure.

This integration will create a single, high-performing labour market with sustainable transport choices, reducing car dependency and opening affordable access to jobs, education and culture. Once realised, the growth unlocked by the Bristol to Bath Corridor will add billions of pounds in GVA to the regional economy, while establishing a globally distinctive model of landscape-led, climate-positive growth. For private investors and developers, the Corridor offers scale, certainty, and long-term value: a once-in-a-generation opportunity to shape the future of one of the UK's fastest-growing and most attractive city-regions.

The Bath City Centre opportunity

Bath city centre is entering a new chapter. While it will continue to attract global visitors and benefit from landmark investments such as the new Fashion Museum opening by 2030, the bigger opportunity is to reposition the city as a hub for innovation-led growth. This shift will allow Bath to retain and attract talent, diversify its economy, and secure its long-term prosperity.

The Bath Riverside Innovation District provides the unifying geography to drive this transformation. Stretching for two miles from Bath Spa University at Locksbrook through to Bath Quays, the city's rail station and Milsom Quarter, Bath Riverside Innovation District links together housing, transport, culture and employment sites into a single connected vision. It offers the scale and coherence to deliver growth on a city-wide basis, where new homes, green infrastructure, cultural anchors and modern workspaces reinforce one another to create a thriving urban economy.

The challenge is clear: Bath's economy remains too dependent on tourism and the public sector, resulting in slow growth, lower than average wages and widening inequality.

The opportunity is to rebalance this model by shifting the centre of gravity towards innovation-based businesses. By creating the mid- and high-skilled jobs that residents and graduates need, Bath can strengthen its economic resilience while maintaining its global appeal.

With coordinated investment, Bath Riverside Innovation District has the potential to catalyse a significant pipeline of new businesses and attract private sector capital into the heart of the city.

As part of the Innovation District, the University of Bath and Bath Spa working together to deliver new employment space to attract new businesses in high value growth sectors, like Digital & Technologies and Advanced Manufacturing, alongside affordable housing, and transport access. With the potential to generate over 9,000 new jobs and £1.2 billion GVA uplift over 10 years, our universities are continuing to play a crucial role as drivers of growth.

Growth sectors such as health, sustainability, engineering, security and digital technologies are already beginning to cluster here, supported by the city's universities and by landmark cultural projects such as the Fashion Museum and Future Fashion Works. These interventions will not only diversify and strengthen Bath's employment base but also crowd in new retail, leisure and residential investment, ensuring the city centre remains vibrant and competitive.

By combining heritage and culture with cutting-edge innovation, Bath can reposition itself as a place where residents, students, and businesses thrive together - securing its future as both an international visitor destination and a modern hub for innovation-led growth.

CENTRAL BRISTOL & BATH

CASE STUDY: BATH RIVERSIDE INNOVATION DISTRICT

Bath Riverside Innovation District is a c.£2bn investment opportunity to transform the region's economy on 100 hectares of central Bath along the riverside. Bath Quays covers 2.2 hectares and is the central catalyst with co-location between organisations and the University of Bath as the anchor occupier, to drive economic growth and productivity. This development will provide new space for research, skills, innovation and enterprise activities, bringing important economic activity to the heart of the city.

The next phase of development centres on Bath Quays North (BQN). Extending Bath's business district will deliver an additional circa 200,000 sq ft of modern office space and commercial space alongside new residential space. It will also incorporate new pedestrian and cycling routes to promote active methods of travel. One of the main focuses for BQN will be the creation of spaces supporting inward investment.

The development of the Production Quarter, new Innovation Centre and commercial developments will boost and enable productivity and innovation within the area. Equally through the creation of the Centre of Excellence for Skills we will develop existing innovation elements - North Quays, City as Creative Campus, Innovation Centre - into one articulated inclusive growth mechanism to drive productivity.

SEVERN ESTUARY

The Severn Estuary growth zone includes the potential for development Severn Estuary of new nuclear technologies at Oldbury, a significant national asset in the transition to green nuclear energy.

This zone also includes The Bristol Port, stretching into North Somerset and the surrounding industrial areas, offering major investment opportunities in green energy sectors, as well as existing strengths in freight and logistics.

SEVERN ESTUARY

The Severn Growth zone will be a critical part of the UK's mission to drive growth, and the Government's mission to becoming a clean and green energy superpower.

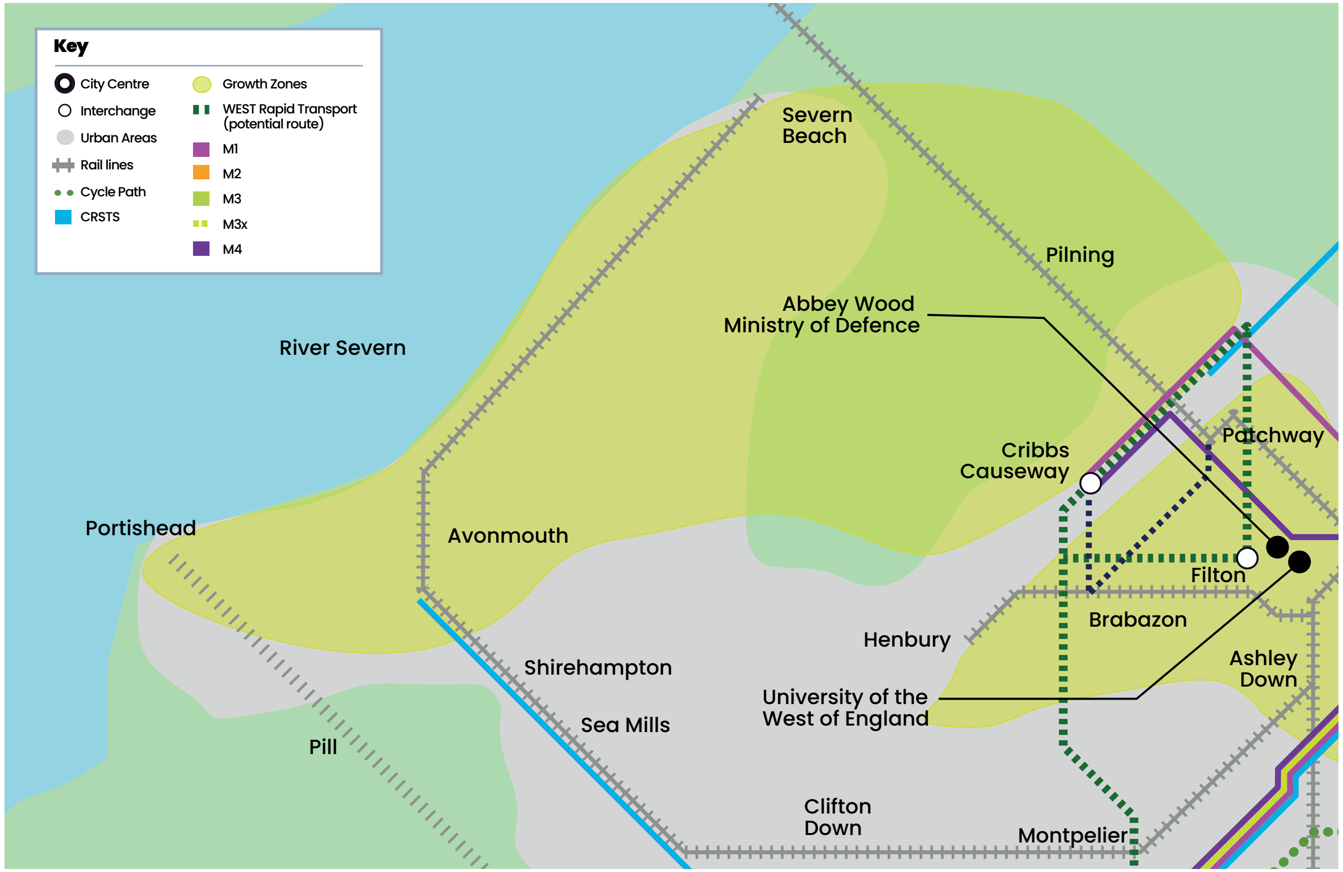
The zone is already a major employment hub for the region. It plays a key role in the foundational economy and the area supports supply chains across the country through its freight and logistics sector.

The growth zone encompasses parts of North Somerset, South Gloucestershire and Bristol and is therefore a real demonstration of the interdependency of regional economy.

This area has significant assets, including the UK's most centrally located deep sea port, an international airport just 45-minutes' drive away, and the ability to reach 85% of the UK's population in less than 5 hours.

The growth zone's proximity to nationally significant digital infrastructure, including two dark fibre lines and the Isambard-AI super computer, contributes to the region's strengths in digital innovation and connectivity and has a strong functional relationship to the other growth zones, including the Western Innovation Arc.

Leading the way in innovation-led green growth, research and development, this area has the potential to unlock over £3.5 billion in economic value and create over 15,000 jobs through opportunities spanning tidal energy, new nuclear technologies, heat networks, solar, floating



offshore wind, carbon capture, and hydrogen production.

The clean and green energy infrastructure here is adaptable to evolving trends and emerging technologies. This resilience enables us to test, develop, and implement innovative approaches, driving the green energy transition and advancing net-zero logistics. It can be a blueprint for clean energy generation and economic growth in coastal communities.

The Estuary is also one of the most ecologically significant natural environments in the UK and Europe, playing a crucial role in supporting biodiversity and sustaining wildlife. What makes the area so ecological vital, also means it is vulnerable to future climate changes. We will need to ensure new development continues to protect this vital habitat, and ensure new development is protected into the future.

By tackling the climate resilience challenges of the Severn Estuary, we can unlock new economic opportunities, from advanced engineering to green infrastructure, while protecting the assets that underpin growth across the wider region.

SOMER VALLEY

The Somer Valley is the West of England's opportunity to showcase rural innovation and sustainable industry. With a rich legacy of mining, engineering and manufacturing, the Somer Valley is now entering a new chapter, evolving from its industrial past into a modern, green productivity zone, where sustainable business, vibrant communities and landscape-led regeneration can go hand-in-hand.

There is an emerging cultural and creative economy that can be developed alongside investments in housing and industry. With emerging projects such as Trinity Hub and Old Printworks in Radstock alongside established community festivals such as Midsomer Norton Carnival, the cultural offer will be a vital component of creating vibrant communities.

This is a place where rural character and industrial heritage can combine to support new, low-carbon industry. The Growth Zone builds on the area's historic strength in manufacturing, and accounts for over a third of B&NES manufacturing jobs. Building on its strong local identity, this zone will deliver a new model for green growth in market towns and semi-rural communities.

SOMER VALLEY

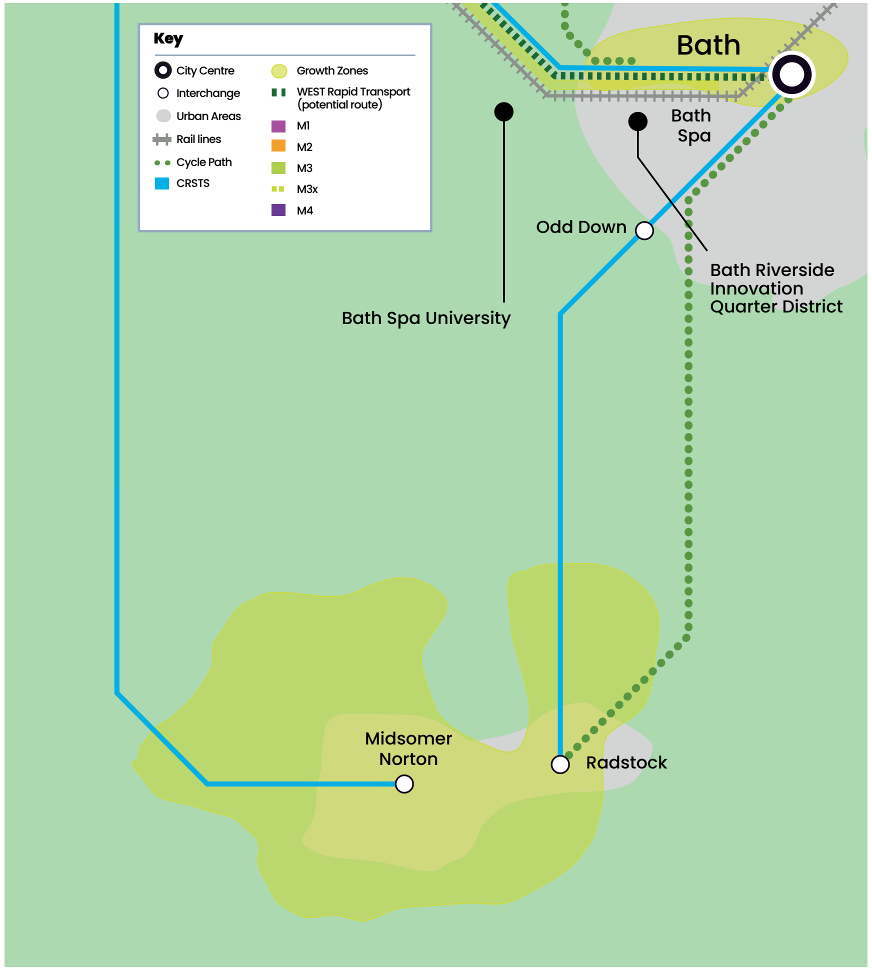
The Somer Valley has a rich industrial heritage and is comprised of a number of former mining towns, separated by unique identities. The Somer Valley has a manufacturing heritage rooted in its coalfield history, which gave rise to engineering, packaging, and light industrial sectors.

Today, it offers a platform to revive and evolve that legacy through modern semi-rural industry. It is well placed to support clean manufacturing, harnessing its heritage and community strengths to grow modern, green manufacturing clusters in a rural setting. This zone will focus on rural productivity development within market town centres.

Despite its proximity to major routes such as the A37 and A362, the Somer Valley faces connectivity challenges that limit access to regional and national markets. Targeted investment in transport infrastructure and improved public transport will be essential to facilitating growth. We will explore the range of options that will help deliver the growth potential and connect this zone to the wider region and beyond, including road improvements, cycle routes, and footpaths, will be essential to improve accessibility, enable sustainable travel and reduce commuting times for residents.

The Growth Zone also lies within an area of high ecological importance for woodland, grassland and river restoration as identified in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. This creates the opportunity for growth to go hand-in-hand with nature recovery - improving resilience, supporting biodiversity, and providing residents with health and wellbeing benefits through access to green space.

This growth zone presents a significant economic opportunity, particularly through the development of the Somer Valley Enterprise Zone (SVEZ). The Somer Valley's rich industrial heritage and existing skilled workforce provide a solid foundation for business growth and innovation. The availability of new commercial spaces, as planned in the SVEZ, addresses the current shortage of business premises, which will encourage local entrepreneurship, attract external investment, and create at least 1,300 new jobs. We are also exploring the potential for 6,400-7,400 new homes in this area.



NORTH SOMERSET GROWTH GATEWAY

Stretching from Weston-super-Mare to Long Ashton near the boundary with Bristol, the North Somerset Growth Gateway is set to deliver significant levels of low carbon, high economic value growth, directing investment to urban areas whilst enhancing our important natural assets and improving wider regional connectivity.

Sector opportunities include digital technologies, advanced food & drink manufacturing, creative industries and logistics, as well as clean energy innovation in hydrogen and sustainable fuels at Bristol International Airport.

Momentum is already gathering, with the delivery of Epic's European Headquarters at Long Ashton, growth businesses ready to expand out from the fully occupied FoodworksSW Innovation Centre, and the regeneration of Weston seeing its population head rapidly towards 100,000.

NORTH SOMERSET GROWTH GATEWAY

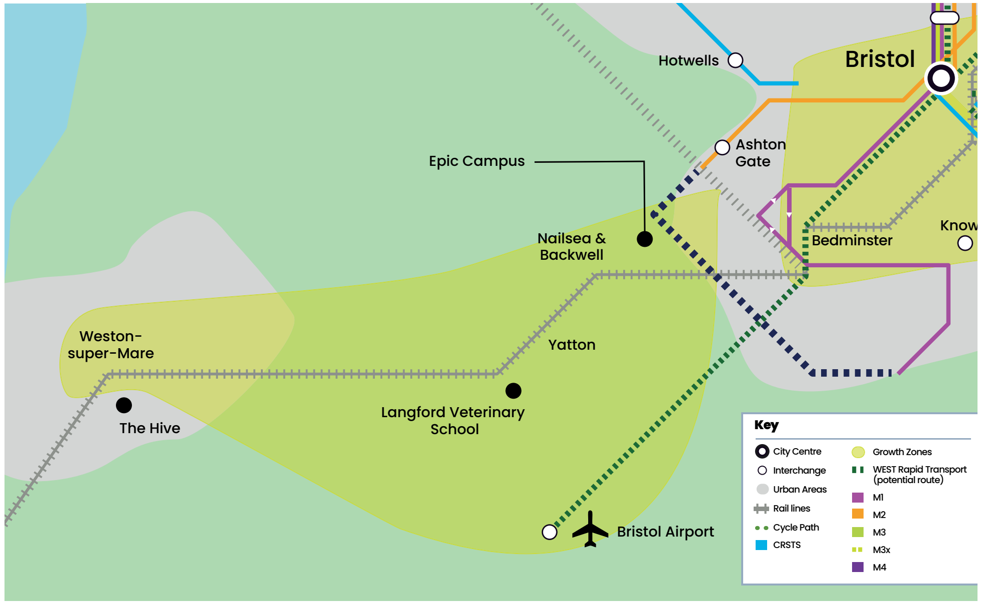
Across North Somerset, a major green growth corridor brings together a number of investment opportunities. Development is anchored by Epic's £400m European HQ at Long Ashton and the already established but still growing Junction 21 Enterprise Area at Weston-super-Mare, linked by the A38 / A370 and rail and intersecting Bristol International Airport.

Future growth will be focused at urban settlements delivering 10,000 new jobs plus existing commitments to at least 10,000 homes. Delivery of sustainable transport, biodiversity and renewables along the A38 / A370 corridors can demonstrate the positive value of such investments in boosting productivity and energy security whilst maintaining a high quality of environment for residents and businesses.

Mass rapid transport improvements to Bristol International Airport would enhance links to the wider region and beyond. The Airport is a national leader in the development, testing and application of sustainable fuel technologies including hydrogen.

Investment in the growth priorities of the North Somerset Gateway will deliver significant levels of low carbon, high economic value growth, directing investment to our urban areas, enhancing our important natural assets and improving wider connectivity to the region.

With opportunities for over £5bn of private sector investment across this area, North Somerset's economy is set to transform over the coming decade.



Growth across the region and beyond

While our Growth Zones will be a core focus of strengthening our growth potential over the next 10 years, there is a wider network of opportunities for growth across the wider region. The West of England is a network of cities, towns, communities, urban and rural areas. The diversity of the region brings a wide range of growth opportunities. From small scale housing development sites, to rural business development, to light industry – the West of England is a place where growth of all kinds can flourish. Our links to other parts of the country and internationally are vital and will be strengthened over the next decade.

While this strategy has core areas of focus that will drive our decade of growth, we will ensure the wider region and economy is at the heart of our growth journey. For growth to be of impact, it must reach all communities and be in line with our climate and nature ambitions.

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Opportunities for investment

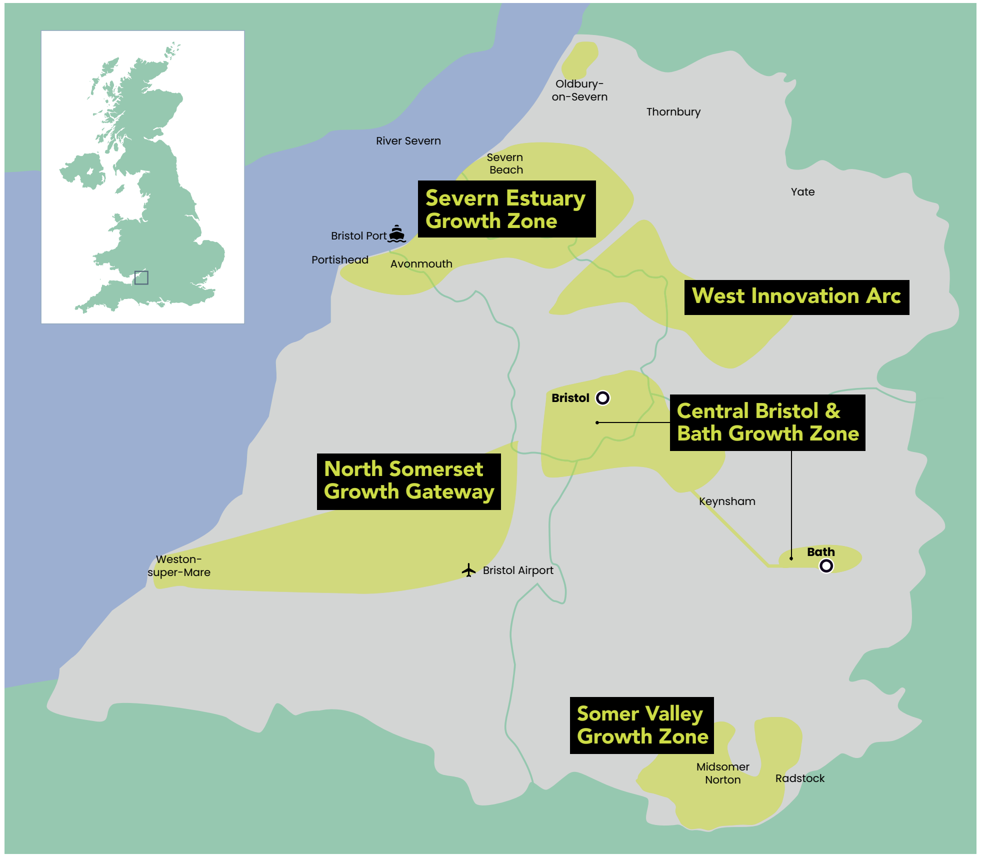
Investing in the West of England makes sense: Every pound put into our region delivers real returns

The West of England offers one of the most dependable investment climates in the UK. With a skilled workforce, strong infrastructure, and a clear vision for growth that benefits all, this region delivers consistent returns. Backing the West isn't just safe - it's strategic.

Over the next decade, we will publish an annual investment prospectus setting out the growing range of investment opportunities. With an economy that has grown 21% in the past decade, and plans for significant new infrastructure that will create homes, transport network, employment sites and much more, the West of England is a place for growth.

This plan sets out an initial set of investment opportunities, which will evolve and grow in the coming years.

To help our economy grow, an annual West of England investment prospectus will be published detailing the opportunities our region holds for investors.



Unlocking our investment opportunities

These investment opportunities, linked to our areas of sector strength, offer existing opportunities for investors looking to work with a forward-thinking region.

Unlocking the full potential of these opportunities will require public investment from Government, national agencies, the Combined Authority and others. WECA will work with Government and others to consider funding requirements.

Our regional Investment Strategy will ensure we have the plans in place to direct public funding towards unlocking the ambition of our Growth Strategy over the years ahead.

Investment for growth: opportunities in the West of England

Future Places Fund: An opportunity to invest in a £500m fund that will pool private and public sector investment to unlock land for comprehensive and high-quality development. Building the homes and places fundamental to our economic growth ambitions.

Unlocking Mass Transit: Delivering mass transit will be driven by catalytic devolved infrastructure funding but will also represent a major investment opportunity for the private sector. From construction, to rolling stock, to service provision – Mass Transit will deliver returns on investment.

Engine West: Investment opportunities to grow the West Innovation Arc as the home of UK advanced engineering. The region is well placed to unlock billions of private and institutional investment, sustain thousands of high-value jobs and establish the UK as a global leader in future flight, resilient space and AI-enabled engineering.

West of England AI Supercluster: Establishing the Supercluster will create a wealth of investment opportunities, particularly in the industrialisation of AI, which will be phase 2 of development. Across Bristol, Bath, and South Gloucestershire – home to the West Innovation Arc – new business investment will follow the growth of university and industry led R&D institutions.

Create Growth West: Investment opportunities across the region will include the West of England Film and TV Centre, creative industries scale up investment and investment in new and existing heritage and cultural institutions, capitalising on the fast-growing creative sector and strengths of the West of England.

Clean Energy West: Significant investment opportunities linked to the rapid growth plans for Floating Offshore Wind and nuclear energy. Building on regional experience at Hinkley, skills and supply chain investment opportunities will come forward, alongside direct investment in new energy generation.

Rural Productivity Incubator: We are establishing a national testbed for rural productivity, ensuring this vital part of our economy grows. Investment opportunities for innovative new businesses and construction opportunities will come forward.

Innovation in digital technologies, production & logistics: The North Somerset economy, which works hand in hand with the wider region, contains the dual opportunity of investment in innovative production and manufacturing; and growth opportunities in digital technology and its supply chain, stemming from the new Epic Campus.

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY 1

Future Places Fund

The Future Places Fund represents a bold opportunity to unlock transformational growth across the West of England – and a compelling proposition for private investors.

We will explore the establishment of a £500 million Future Places Fund to accelerate development across our strategic Growth Zones. This fund will focus on securing land for comprehensive, high-quality development – particularly housing – enabling sites to come forward faster and with greater control over the outcomes. It will allow us to shape the pace, quality, and tenure mix of housing delivery, ensuring that affordability and innovation are built into the region's growth story.

Crucially, this will be a blended investment model, with WECA co-investing alongside patient capital from private partners – such as pension funds, institutional investors, and impact-driven financiers. The Fund offers a stable, long-term investment vehicle with clear commercial returns and housing delivery and regeneration outcomes.

For the private sector, this is a chance to be part of shaping the future of iconic development locations in our Growth Strategy. These areas are primed for growth, with strong transport links, proximity to employment hubs, and rising demand for housing and commercial space.

Beyond financial returns, investors will play a central role in delivering inclusive, sustainable communities – supporting innovative construction methods, climate-resilient infrastructure, and a diversified development sector. The Future Places Fund is not just a funding mechanism – it's a strategic platform for unlocking long-term value, regional prosperity, and impactful private sector partnership.

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY 2

Unlocking Mass Transit

Unlocking Mass Transit for the West of England will have a transformative effect for our economy and residents

Our plans for a modern, integrated mass transit system will reshape how people move across the region, connecting communities to jobs, education, and opportunity. It will reduce congestion, cut emissions, and support inclusive, sustainable growth. But beyond its public value, mass transit represents a major opportunity for private sector investment.

Catalytic devolved infrastructure funding will kickstart delivery – but long-term success will depend on strong public-private partnerships. Across the UK and globally, mass transit systems have unlocked billions in private investment across construction, service delivery, maintenance, and rolling stock. Investors are drawn to the long-term returns, stable demand, and regeneration potential that transit corridors create.

In the West of England, we will explore new financing mechanisms – from land value capture and joint ventures to green finance and approaches to revenue-sharing. Transit-oriented development will unlock commercial and residential growth, creating high-value investment zones around new hubs.

We will work with delivery partners to ensure the system is future-proofed, digitally enabled, climate-resilient, and designed for modal integration. Private sector expertise will be vital in shaping smart ticketing, fleet electrification, and service innovation.

This is more than infrastructure – it's a platform for regional transformation. For investors, it's a chance to be part of a legacy project that delivers economic, environmental, and social returns for decades to come.

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY 3

Engine West

Growing Engine West, home to advanced manufacturing & security expertise that is central to the developing West Innovation Arc.

The West of England is home to one of Europe's largest aerospace clusters, anchored by Airbus, Rolls-Royce, GKN and the Ministry of Defence at Filton, alongside the Bristol and Bath Science Park and a dense network of SMEs. This industrial base, together with emerging strengths in space and AI, positions the region to lead the UK in Future Engineering - securing national capability in aerospace, defence and advanced manufacturing while generating significant economic growth.

The region is well placed to unlock billions of private and institutional investment, sustain thousands of high-value jobs and establish the UK as a global leader in future flight, resilient space and AI-enabled engineering. Investment opportunities across this investment priority include:

The Space Innovation Centre of Excellence, builds on a regional base of more than 80 companies and 250 across the wider South West. With secure, open-access facilities for assembly, integration and validation of space systems, it will support products of critical economic and security importance. A UK Space ISAC and Test Range, linked to the global Space ISAC network, will address vulnerabilities to cyber and electromagnetic threats, safeguarding the space-based services that underpin 16% of UK GDP.

Facing an industry productivity challenge citing up to 20% of factory time and cost attributed to material assurance and certification, the future of UK manufacturing depends on investment in our digital capability. **The UK's Advanced Product Assurance Centre (APAC)** is an industry-led, 'triple-helix' programme taking R&D through to commercial development, at the heart of our AI supercluster. It will deliver a flagship national capability shaping new global standards and securing first-mover advantage for its firms in regulated and fast-moving markets.

Together, these facilities will reinforce the UK's resilience and provide a secure platform for export growth in the global space economy, forecast to reach $1.8 trillion by 2035 and the global market for testing, inspection, and validation which is expected to reach $328 billion by 2030.

Developing **Engineering Biology scaleup infrastructure** will enable industry to develop and commercialise innovations in sustainable materials, alternative proteins, agritech and novel therapeutics, and strengthen the UK's position in a rapidly expanding global bioeconomy.

The AI Supercluster connects these capabilities with advanced compute power through Isambard 3 and Isambard AI supercomputers, enabling the use of digital twins, AI-enabled modelling and secure simulation across aerospace, defence and space.

To support these growth opportunities, we are exploring partnerships between industry and education providers to build skills pipelines in technical excellence, including construction aerospace and defence.

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY

4

West of England AI Supercluster

Building the West of England AI Supercluster will capitalise on the fast-growing strength in digital & technologies, particularly around Bristol Temple Quarter. Capability and assets across the West Innovation Arc and North Somerset Gateway will underpin the growth of this supercluster – it will be a genuine region wide investment opportunity.

The West of England has the ingredients to create the **UK's first AI Supercluster**, a globally competitive ecosystem where research, infrastructure, talent and industry adoption come together to accelerate growth. Anchored in the Bristol & Bath Growth Zone and with strong links to the West Innovation Arc, the 1st phase of developing this supercluster brings together national assets like Isambard 3 and Isambard AI - two of the world's most powerful supercomputers, located at the NCC - alongside the Bristol Digital Futures Institute, the Bristol Robotics Laboratory, Science Creates, CFMS, and a network of innovative SMEs. This concentration of capability gives the region a unique platform to lead the application of AI across aerospace, advanced manufacturing, life sciences, defence, energy and creative industries.

Phase 2 of development will focus on the opportunity is to industrialise AI at scale by creating the physical and digital infrastructure businesses need to translate ideas into commercial products and services.

An **AI Industrialisation Centre of Excellence** would open access to supercomputing and AI tools, enabling companies to shorten design cycles, accelerate drug discovery, and cut the cost of developing next-generation technologies.

In parallel, scaling the CFMS into a National Centre for Modelling & Simulation would provide UK industry with secure, affordable access to AI-enabled modelling, robotics and digital twin capabilities, filling a critical national gap and helping firms de-risk innovation.

The impact on the West of England's Digital and Technologies sector would be transformational. By clustering world-class compute, AI expertise and translational infrastructure in one place, the region would create a magnet for inward investment and talent. Businesses would be able to scale faster, productivity would rise through earlier adoption of AI-enabled processes, and supply chains across aerospace, advanced engineering, creative tech and health would be more resilient. Over time, the AI Supercluster could capture £10–15bn in economic value, embedding the West of England as the UK's leading hub for applied AI and driving sustained growth across its Digital and Technologies sector.

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY 5

Creative Growth West

Establishing the West of England Creative Campus, which will bring a range of investment opportunities across our Central Bristol & Bath Growth Zone, home to a diverse and growing set of creative industries.

With its unique mix of cultural heritage, digital innovation and global reach, the West of England is already home to one of the UK's fastest-growing creative sectors, with internationally significant strengths in film, television, games, music, fashion and immersive media. The region has the opportunity to create a distributed but connected network of production, research and skills facilities spanning the region and linking into wider markets.

Our creative campus will create the **West of England TV & Film Centre**. This will enable the expansion of large-scale screen production and innovation facilities in Bristol and will create one of the UK's most competitive centres for film and television. With capacity to host major international productions, these studios are also home to a growing cluster of creative businesses and training opportunities, providing the infrastructure needed to keep pace with global demand for content. By linking production capacity with creative tech R&D in immersive media, robotics and AI, Bristol is shaping the future of storytelling and content innovation.

Building on the West of England Creative Growth pilot, we will establish a **Creative Industries Scale Up programme**, seeking to match investors with regional opportunities, attracting new investment to our thriving creative industries sector.

In Bath, the city's heritage and design strengths anchor the creative campus, with the Fashion Museum's move to the Old Post Office adding to a wider cultural offer including the Holburne Museum, the Roman Baths and the city's UNESCO World Heritage setting. In Bristol, museums and galleries such as M Shed, the Bristol Museum & Art Gallery and the Arnolfini complement Bath's heritage focus, together creating **a cultural ecosystem that spans history, art and innovation**.

A region-wide Creative Skills Academy will serve as an open "front door" into the sector, supporting freelancers, start-ups and SMEs to grow, diversify and export while also strengthening connections with neighbouring creative economies and opening new routes to overseas markets.

Regional hubs in Weston-super-Mare and South Gloucestershire's Patchway Studios form part of the distributed structure which strengthens connectivity across the West of England while creating natural synergies with neighbouring creative economies.

By uniting Bath's heritage-led fashion ecosystem, Bristol's global screen sector, and a network of regional creative hubs, the West of England can create a creative industries campus of international significance that could deliver high-value jobs and support businesses to create opportunities for our residents.

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY 6

Clean Energy West

Clean Energy West will drive expansion of the region's Clean Energy Portfolio by leveraging the fast-growing clean energy industries already rooted in the Severn Estuary Growth Zone.

With its coastal reach and world-class strength in clean energy innovation and advanced manufacturing, the West of England is positioned to become a a national anchor for clean energy. The region offers a portfolio of investable opportunities that together can accelerate the UK's energy transition, anchor industrial supply chains, and generate long-term prosperity. This portfolio will be a driver for securing the UK's clean energy future, and will anchor world-class industries, delivering high-value jobs and growth in the West of England.

Growing tidal energy capability at the Severn Estuary could power up to 7% of the UK's electricity within 15 years. With smart investment and planning, we can turn its world-class tidal energy into a clean, reliable source – while protecting the environment. It's a bold opportunity to lead Britain's green energy future.

At Avonmouth, the Bristol Wind Terminal (BWT) is planned as the UK's first purpose-built port facility for **Floating Offshore Wind (FLOW)**. Serving the 4.5GW already leased in the Celtic Sea, and up to 15GW expected, BWT will provide the heavy-lift quays and assembly yards essential for turbine construction. By anchoring supply chains in composites, marine engineering and logistics, the terminal positions the region at the heart of a global **FLOW** market forecast at £100bn per year by 2045.

The West of England also has the densest nuclear cluster in the UK, with Rolls-Royce, EDF and the Nuclear Futures Institute embedded locally. **Growing our nuclear energy capability is a strong investment opportunity**.

At Oldbury, the potential for tens of billions of pounds of government and industry investment in **Small Modular Reactors (SMRs)**, could create up to 3,000 construction jobs and hundreds of long-term roles in rural and coastal communities.

A complementary **Global Nuclear Innovation and Skills Centre** would train apprentices, graduates and PhDs, ensuring the region supplies the workforce for SMR rollout and captures global export markets in advanced nuclear technologies.

The West of England's clean energy leadership will accelerate with **ARCHER** - a proposed research and testing centre at IAAPS, Bristol and Bath Science Park, led by the University of Bath, a European leader in hydrogen and aviation. ARCHER will develop hydrogen and electric aircraft propulsion systems, advancing decarbonisation across aviation, marine, heavy-duty, off-highway, and defence. It's a major opportunity to drive R&D, investment, and growth across the South West and UK.

Community energy in the West of England offers a scalable, low-risk opportunity for private investors to back local generation projects with strong public support and long-term returns. With growing demand for clean, decentralised energy and innovative models like shared ownership and local grid solutions, the region is primed for impactful, place-based investment.

With existing regional strength in the development of Heat Networks as a solution to diverting electricity demand crucial to optimising the constrained grid capacity for economic growth, there is real scope for further investment and export of this approach to other places - building on Bristol's leading position.

The West of England has the skills, infrastructure and industrial base to pioneer new approaches to clean energy. From sustainable aviation fuels and tidal power to community energy, hydrogen, and heat from mines and networks, the region can translate innovation into delivery and attract investment, providing the capacity to support and accelerate national priorities as they evolve.

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY 7

Rural productivity

Our Somer Valley Growth Zone will create co-investment opportunities in advanced manufacturing, clean energy, and act as a national blueprint for rural productivity.

The Somer Valley offers the chance to establish **the UK's first testbed for rural productivity** - a place where advanced manufacturing, construction and green industries are harnessed to show how rural economies can lead in innovation and growth. With high concentrations of manufacturing and construction, the Somer Valley already has the sectoral strengths to act as a national demonstrator of how rural areas can create high-value jobs, adopt new technologies, and support the transition to net zero.

The Somer Valley offers a powerful opportunity to repurpose land that has long served us through food production – now ready to fuel the next chapter of rural prosperity. By unlocking new industries in rural productivity, we can create high-quality jobs and drive growth for local communities.

The anchor for this opportunity is the **Somer Valley Enterprise Zone (SVEZ)**, with capacity for 40,000 sqm of modern employment space and 1,300 jobs. This would enable new and existing businesses to grow in areas such as advanced materials, low-carbon construction, hydrogen, retrofit and battery technologies – all critical to the UK's industrial strategy. By attracting SMEs and scale-ups in these sectors, the Somer Valley can diversify its employment base while supplying solutions to national clean growth challenges.

As a testbed for rural productivity, the Somer Valley will pilot activities that bridge innovation with rural strengths, including demonstrator projects in low-carbon construction and retrofit, green industry accelerators for SMEs, rural digitalisation pilots, and skills pipelines that link apprenticeships to higher-level technical qualifications in engineering and construction. Drawing on the expertise at the Bath College Somer Valley Campus a truly local offer can be developed.

What makes this testbed distinctive is how it will connect into the wider innovation ecosystem of the West of England. Through enhancements in rural digital connectivity it will draw on the region's advanced manufacturing and aerospace capabilities in the West Innovation Arc, link to the AI Supercluster to adopt digital twins and automation in rural industries, and complement the region's leadership in clean energy and decarbonisation along the Severn Estuary. By plugging rural industry directly into these capabilities, the Somer Valley can demonstrate how rural areas benefit from, and contribute to, the strengths of the wider economy.

This regional testbed for rural productivity has the potential to create high-value jobs, attract investment into green industries, and prove that rural areas can be central to innovation-led growth, not peripheral to it.

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY 8

Innovation in digital, production & logistics

The North Somerset Growth Gateway offers the dual opportunity of investment in innovative production and manufacturing; and growth opportunities in digital technology and its supply chain, stemming from the new Epic Campus.

The new European Headquarters of Epic will create 2,150 high-quality jobs in the digital & technologies sector and is forecast to generate £140m GVA p.a. The catalytic investment will unlock significant broader **digital technologies and supply chain investment opportunities related to the Epic Campus**.

With a package already in place to support supply chain and further employment growth, the Epic campus can be a catalyst to wider employment growth with additional sites proposed to accommodate supply chain and spin-off opportunities.

At the Junction 21 Enterprise Area at Weston-super-Mare, the **FoodworksSW Innovation Centre** has been fully occupied since its opening in May 2021, providing space, access to technology and specialist advice for innovative food and drink production companies from across the globe. Proposals for a Phase 2 investment would provide space for companies already ready and waiting to grow, tying into the wider regional food and drink sector with nationally leading companies such as Yeo Valley pushing the boundaries of product development and sustainability.

30ha of employment land at the Enterprise Area has seen strong interest from manufacturing and logistics companies with a focus on the application of advanced technology and clean energy logistics. 10,000+ homes at Weston indicate the ongoing growth of this increasingly dynamic town, now approaching 100,000 population and with growing economic strength across the board including creative industries.

Bristol International Airport has secured consent for expansion to 12 million passengers per annum and is the country's busiest regional airport after Manchester and Birmingham. Already the first UK regional report to reach Level 4+ in the international carbon accreditation scheme, the airport runs an Aviation Carbon Transition (ACT) Programme offering £250k/annum to fund business and university research in alternative fuels and innovative technologies.

Interconnecting the development areas of the **North Somerset Growth Gateway**, some of North Somerset's most valuable **green corridors** are already seeing increased investment in habitats, biodiversity and renewables, presenting a regional-level opportunity to enhance our environment whilst also providing mitigation for sustainable development in the locations above. Investment in sustainable mass transit can connect growth to rail and national highway networks whilst active travel routes will facilitate access for residents and businesses of new communities to explore our beautiful natural environment.

06.

How we will deliver

How we will deliver

Delivering our Growth Strategy will be a partnership between the whole region.

The action in this plan and the economic plans of each of the Unitary Authorities across the region will combine to help deliver the future we want to see for the West of England.

Each of the Unitary Authority plans sets out clear action and ambition relevant to the different parts of our region – they are underpinned by a focus on achieving inclusive and sustainable growth. Our Growth Strategy is the tool that helps bring these plans together, helping unlock the fundamental building blocks that will accelerate delivery. We will build climate resilience and outcomes for people into everything we do.

With improved funding settlements for unitary authorities, we will be able to go even further to deliver for the region.

We are working together politically and organisationally, taking decisions together to deliver for the West of England. This includes working to support North Somerset's proposed membership of the Combined Authority.

We'll also work in partnership with our business community, universities, Further Education and skills providers, the VCSE and others. Our new regional Business Board will be launched in 2025 and will play a crucial role in supporting the delivery of this plan. Nick Sturge and Jo Dally, the Mayor's new Business Advisors, will help shape this important new Board.

The West of England is not an island. Our economic activity and the way people live their lives do not stop at our borders. With strong connections along the West Coast of the UK, to South Wales, and towards London and the Midlands – the West of England is a well-connected region.

This is a new era for the West of England and it is one that will be underpinned by collaboration, shared purpose and united action. That extends to how we will work with partners in other parts of the UK and around the world. The West of England is open for businesses and will create the partnerships that will help deliver this plan – we know the impact will be greater if we work together.

We'll have a positive new partnership with Government – our jointly held priorities for growth are set out in this plan.

To deliver this plan, we will put people first. In all the action we take, our overriding goal is to improve lives for all our residents. We want everyone in the West of England to live life well – as this Growth Strategy is delivered, we will maintain a laser focus on ensuring our action is delivering this outcome.

We'll have a positive new partnership with Government – our jointly held priorities for growth are set out in this plan.

Accelerating delivery

We're impatient for change. To accelerate delivery, we will work in new ways. This means we'll:

- **Revise our approach to investment**. A new regional investment strategy has been published alongside this Growth Strategy. It sets out how we will develop the multi-year investment plans that will put this plan into action on the ground. We will plan and invest for the long-term and we will set a clear forward plan that gives others the confidence to invest in the West of England. Our approach to investment will mean we are ready to take on greater devolution and the integrated funding settlement that comes with it.
- **Drive social value**. Social value is a powerful tool for achieving our Local Growth Plan ambitions. We will launch an updated Social Value Framework that will help make sure our organisational spending delivers the greatest possible impact for people in the region. This framework will also ensure our suppliers' social value efforts are aligned with the key regional challenges we are working to address.
- **Strengthening devolution**. The West of England is ambitious for further devolution that can help deliver on the vision in this Growth Strategy. We will continue to work with Government to extend devolution to our region as swiftly as possible. We know the greater freedoms and flexibilities that come with the highest levels of devolution will have a significant impact.
- **Explore opportunities to strengthen our public services**. Using the vast range of regional data and working in partnership with those delivering services, we will explore where there are collective challenges that we can collaborate in delivering change. Public service reform is crucial for achieving growth that benefits all – so we'll work together to explore what's right for our region to help improve lives.
- **Establish new routes to delivery**. For example, we'll work with the Universities and Further Education providers across our region to reach a growth agreement that strengthens our work together and will help ensure growth potential generated here has a tangible impact for the region and its residents as well as the global reach and impact our world class universities achieve. And we'll work in closer partnership with VCSE organisations who have a deep understanding of the needs of our communities.
- **Be open to new ideas**. Our region is rich with innovative thinkers and doers. We want to harness the capability of our region for our region. To achieve this, we'll explore innovative ways to leverage additional investment into the region including the potential of social investment funds. We will set new approaches to how we invest, ensuring everyone has an opportunity to share their ideas for delivering the outcomes we're looking to achieve.
- **We'll be bold**. The West of England is a place that has so much to shout about, so much to be proud of, and so much it can achieve in this decade of growth.

To realise our ambition, we will be bold, we will be positive, we will be open, we will be curious, we will be creative, we will be supportive, we will be collaborative, we will be rebellious, we will be inventive, we will be caring. We will shape a bright future.

Working with Government to deliver for the West of England

We have clear ambitions for the future of the West of England – we will be relentless in pursuing the investment, support and partnership required from Government and national agencies to deliver for our region.

To unlock the growth potential of the region, we have agreed a set of joint priorities with Government. We will take action across a range of areas to deliver a brighter future for the West of England.

OUR AGREEMENT WITH GOVERNMENT: ACTION TO SUPPORT REGIONAL GROWTH

- Increasing the availability and affordability of homes
- Improving transport connectivity
- Increasing the development of commercial space
- Ensuring skills provision is geared towards tackling high job vacancy rates

Working in partnership with government, we have agreed we will focus on:

Housing

We will increase the availability and affordability of homes across the West of England, ensuring people living and working in the region have access to good quality, affordable homes that meet their needs. Addressing this will require the Government and the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority to work together to explore actions including how to:

- Deliver innovative partnerships and models to secure investment and unlock sites for housing and commercial development
- Unlock new housing developments that make increasing use of modern construction models, and exploring scaling up the level of housing on key development sites
- Deliver our significant regeneration projects, including unlocking the development of a new city district at Brabazon near Filton, and maximising the potential of Bristol Temple Quarter
- Work together to address key barriers to delivering increased housing in the most sustainable locations, including addressing planning capacity constraints and local site viability issues
- Develop the necessary infrastructure to support the expansion of sustainable new homes, including aligning with the region's priorities on transport connectivity and delivering growth that aligns with the region's climate and nature priorities.

These actions will help deliver the housing growth needed to attract and retain businesses and workers vital to the economic growth of the region.

Transport

We will work together to improve transport connectivity across the West of England, ensuring people across the region have access to a safe, reliable, sustainable and affordable transport system. Addressing this will require the Government and the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority to work together to explore actions including how to:

- Identify options for an improved and better joined up transport network, ensuring the region is an increasingly attractive location for new investment
- Ensure action to improve transport connectivity in the West of England tackles issues such as the acute congestion in urban areas like Bristol; and linking market towns across the region to urban centres
- Ensure options to improve transport connectivity link the places people live to employment and training opportunities
- Ensure options for an improved and better joined up transport network contribute to the climate and nature priorities of the region.

This action will help improve accessibility to key growth locations across the region, attracting and retaining the workforce that businesses require to thrive while boosting productivity.

Commercial Development

We will work together to increase the development of the commercial space to drive up capital investment in the West of England, meeting the requirements of potential investors and regional priorities for driving growth. Addressing this will require the Government and the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority to work together to explore actions including how to:

- Prioritise unlocking land for specialist commercial development that meets the needs of the region's core sectors, supply chains and supporting businesses
- Support and create affordable and flexible innovation spaces.

This action will help to increase the supply and affordability of space to attract businesses and employers to the West of England and improve the region's ability to retain high-potential start-ups and spinouts.

Skills

We will work together to address high vacancy rates in key growth sectors across the region. Addressing this will require the Government and the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority to work together to explore actions including how to:

- join up national and regional employment and skills services, with a specific focus on boosting and retraining opportunities linked to growth sectors across the region
- boost skills training in key sectors required to enable economic growth such as construction
- address barriers to employment in the region helping more people to be able to progress in employment

This action will help address the high vacancy rates experienced by the region and help sectors with high growth potential fill the existing and new jobs that will boost regional productivity.

Want to know more?

Our more detailed evidence base that underpins this strategy is available on the WECA website: The State of the Region 2025

Unitary Authority plans highlighted in this strategy are:

Bristol City Council: Economic Strategy 2025-2035

Bath and North East Somerset Council: An Economic Strategy for Bath and North East Somerset 2024-2034

North Somerset Council: North Somerset Economic Growth Plan 2025 to 2035

South Gloucestershire Council: Council Plan 2024-28

Follow our progress at:

www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk

Want to be part of our future?

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