

APPENDIX

The vision for the West of England in 2026 and delivery priorities

(As agreed by the West of England Partnership. August 2005)

The West of England Partnership comprises the four **unitary** councils – Bath and North East Somerset Council, Bristol City Council, North Somerset Council and South Gloucestershire Council – and a range of social, economic and environmental partners, working together for the future well-being of the area. For further information, please visit www.westofengland.org

Overall vision

Our vision for how the area will be seen in 2026

In 2026 the area will have:

One of Europe's fastest growing and most prosperous sub regions which has closed the gap between disadvantaged and other communities – driven by major developments in employment and government backed infrastructure improvements in South Bristol and North Somerset.

A buoyant economy competing internationally, based on investment by innovative, knowledge-based businesses and a high level of graduate and vocational skills.

A rising quality of life for all, achieved by the promotion of healthy lifestyles, access to better quality healthcare, an upturn in the supply of affordable housing of all types **and the development of sustainable communities.**

Easier local, national and international travel, thanks to transport solutions that link communities to employment opportunities and local services, control and reduce congestion and improve strategic connections **by road, rail and through Bristol International Airport and seaport.**

Cultural attractions that are the envy of competitor city regions across Europe, making the West of England the place of choice for talented, creative workers and affluent visitors.

Success secured in ways that are energy efficient, protect air quality, minimise and manage waste and protect and enhance the natural and built environment.

Built upon the benefits of its distinctive mix of urban and rural areas.

Real influence with regional and national government, by demonstrating vision and leadership and delivering

The economy

Our vision for how the area will be seen in 2026

1 The West of England has anticipated, encouraged and shaped high levels of growth in employment, population and housing through its competitive, knowledge driven businesses and successful investment by government in **physical and** social infrastructure in accordance with the Sustainable Communities Plan for the South West.

2 The sub region enjoys a robust and diverse economy driven by knowledge, innovation, enterprise and excellence and positive support for key sectors, namely:

- advanced engineering, including aerospace and defence
- ICT, creative and media
- financial **and business** services
- tourism, including retail
- environmental technology
- construction

3 Achieving excellence in innovation through learning and research in our world class universities, business enterprise, collective action and investment in innovation and knowledge based businesses.

4 South Bristol and Weston-super-Mare are benefiting from increased business investment, economic growth, accelerated regeneration and an improved local environment, following government investment in a strategic road network. This has strengthened links between Bath, South Bristol, Bristol International Airport and Weston, and with motorways in North Somerset and South Gloucestershire.

5 The benefits from the growth and development of Bristol International Airport, the Port and other strategic sites have been maximised.

6 The large proportion of graduate level skills in the workforce has been complemented by a substantial increase in basic and vocational skills to produce a skilled, adaptable and well-motivated workforce. This has raised business confidence, investment and productivity.

7 Strong links developed between communities, educational establishments and employers have reinforced the importance of education and skills to job opportunities and reward, and enlarged the capacity to identify and address the skills gap.

8 Economic growth has enabled the sub region to increase economic and social inclusion through better long term employment opportunities.

9 A better distribution of economic opportunity across the sub region has been achieved through investment in transport links and infrastructure and co-ordinated spatial planning strategies for employment, housing and transport.

Delivery priorities

a Understand, strengthen and promote key business sectors in the sub region.

b Provide the circumstances that support the growth and development of key sectors:

- act to improve basic education and vocational skills, to sustain graduate level skills and to attract and retain a flexible and adaptable workforce.
- accelerate innovation through increased collective action and investment by companies, universities and business support agencies, including the active promotion of the Science Park.
- ensure the spatial plan provides adequate employment land sustained by proper investment in transport, housing and quality of life.
- Successfully develop existing and additional strategic employment sites in the sub region
- Sustain the success of businesses in the 'North Fringe' of Bristol by the M4 and M5 motorways but avoid accelerating development until investment is made in improved transport solutions.
- Conclude with government a sustainable Communities Plan for the South West; one that secures timely government investment in current and future **physical and** social infrastructure to support the spatial strategy for the sub region and significant economic growth.

c Market the West of England to grow and attract investment and encourage visitors.

d Secure the economic regeneration of disadvantaged communities, in particular South Bristol and Weston-super-Mare.