

Bath & North East Somerset Council		
MEETING:	Council	
MEETING DATE:	20 <sup>th</sup> November 2025	
TITLE:	West of England Combined Authority – West of England Growth Strategy	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report:		
West of England Growth Strategy- <a href="https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/about-us/our-strategy/west-of-england-growth-plan/">https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/about-us/our-strategy/west-of-england-growth-plan/</a>		

## THE ISSUE

The West of England Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) has developed the West of England Growth Strategy. It sets out the action the MCA will take over the coming decade – contributing to the Government’s growth mission and the wider missions that have been set for the country. This will be achieved by looking at sectors, at enabling activities and also focusing on growth zones – two of which are within B&NES. This strategy has been developed in partnership with the MCA, B&NES Council, South Gloucestershire Council and Bristol Council.

### 1 RECOMMENDATION

The Council is asked to;

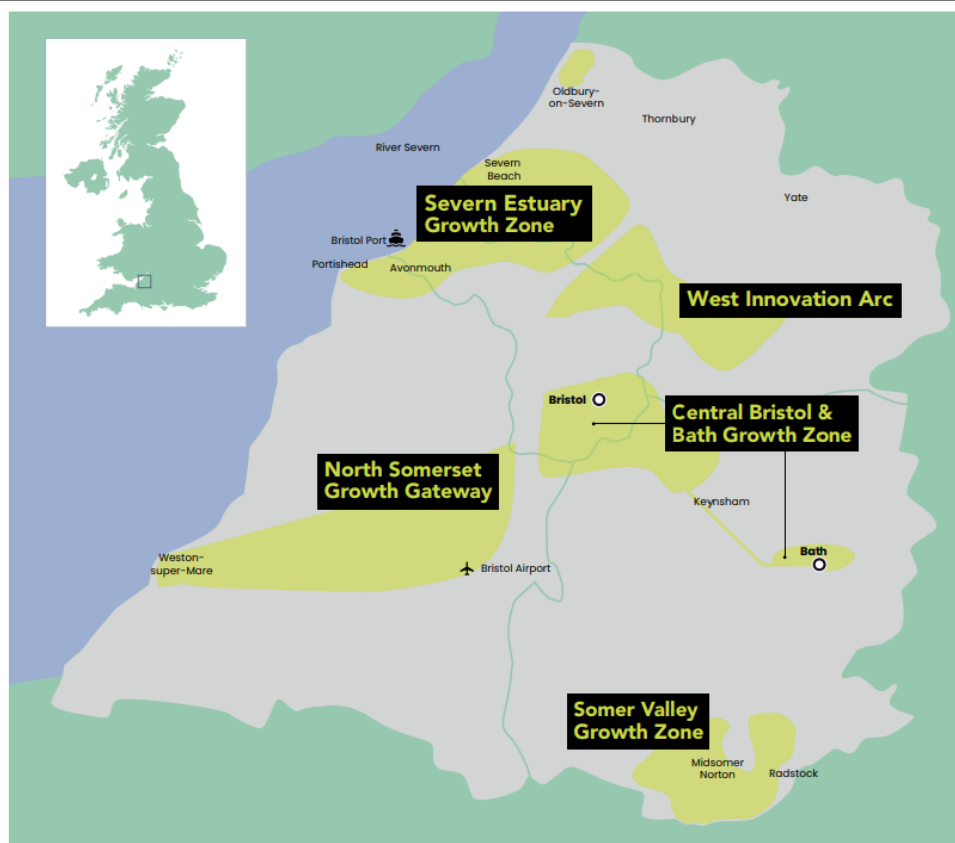
- 1.1 Endorse the West of England Growth Strategy as a Bath & North East Somerset Council document.
- 1.2 Support the Mayoral Combined Authority in promoting the West of England Growth Strategy and the West of England as a destination for inward investment.

### 2 THE REPORT

- 2.1 The West of England Growth Strategy sets out the ambitions and a plan of how growth can be achieved for the benefit of all in an inclusive and sustainable way.

- 2.2 The development of the West of England Growth Strategy took a partnership approach in its creation. The MCA, B&NES Council, Bristol City Council and South Gloucestershire Council worked together to develop the strategy to reflect both the individual partners' economic strategies and also the combined goals and ambitions of the region.
- 2.3 The Growth Strategy marks a change in the approach for the region as the document states '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.' This reflects the approach of the B&NES Economic Strategy, with its focus on inclusive and sustainable growth.
- 2.4 The Growth Strategy reflects the high-level ambitions of the council: both the overall approach to growth – that it is developed in an inclusive and sustainable way; and also that it focuses on the key aims and areas of development in the Growth Zones – Bath City Centre, the Bristol to Bath Corridor and Somer Valley.

#### Network of regional growth zones



- 2.5 The Growth Strategy recognises both the Bristol-Bath corridor and the Somer Valley as regionally significant Growth Zones, reflecting our key commercial and employment areas within the Bath Riverside Innovation District, and in the Somer Valley alongside the Bristol to Bath corridor. This will strengthen our case for future infrastructure funding and inward investment in these key employment sites.

## **2.6 Council Strategies**

- 2.7 Our Economic Strategy, published in 2024, has influenced the regional strategy, informing priority sectors and areas for local growth, and there is strong alignment around principles of sustainable and inclusive growth. The Growth Strategy sets out the broad regional context, the B&NES Economic Strategy details our strategic ambitions and the B&NES Local Plan is the spatial expression of this, setting out the locations and policies shaping future development.
- 2.8 There is a dovetailing with the Economic Strategy, the B&NES Local Plan and the West of England Growth Strategy. They operate in parallel with each other and contain the same goals and ambitions which we have set out as a council. The Economic Strategy is our core document setting out our ambitions and activities as a council. The Growth Strategy sets out the overarching ambitions and activities with which they are enabled.
- 2.9 The Local Plan Options document references the Growth Strategy as one of the B&NES Strategies and Delivery Plans. The Growth Strategy is also included within the Key Requirements section as providing important context for the Local Plan, especially in reference to site opportunities.

## **2.10 Key components of the Growth Strategy**

- 2.11 The West of England Growth Strategy is based around three groupings of activities – investment opportunities, regional growth zones and prospects for growth. The West of England Growth Strategy sets out the ambitions and a plan of how growth can be achieved for the benefit of all in an inclusive and sustainable way. The activities set out within the Growth Strategy are grouped around six key actions.
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
- 2.12 There is also a focus on investment opportunities, setting out our regionally significant investable projects under eight ‘prospects for growth’, alongside geographically focused investment opportunities within the growth zones. This element of the strategy will be further developed by the MCA through the upcoming Investment Prospectus.
- 2.13 Thus there is a holistic approach to growth with the investment opportunities grouped geographically and within sectors strengths of the region. This reflects the ambitions, sectoral strengths, geographical areas of focus and enabling

activities necessary for inclusive and sustainable economic growth within B&NES.

## **2.14 Endorsement**

2.15 The endorsement of the West of England Growth Strategy will enable the council to take forward the ambitions and aspirations of the strategy. This will also enable the council to work across the region to activate any funding streams which are released by central government. This will develop both our own individual key projects and also cross regional infrastructure projects.

2.16 The development of the West of England as a key inward investment location will boost jobs and wider opportunities for B&NES as a whole. Increased inward investment has the potential to improve productivity and increase the development of commercial space and skills. This development of inward investment will be targeted around our areas of sector strength. The focus on both sectoral and geographic areas of investment allow for us to focus on our key areas of delivery.

## **3 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS**

3.1 No statutory considerations

## **4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)**

4.1 There are no resource implications connected to this strategy.

## **5 RISK MANAGEMENT**

5.1 The MCA completed all necessary risk management assessment for the Strategy's development.

## **6 EQUALITIES**

6.1 The MCA have completed all necessary equalities assessments for the strategy's development. No additional EqIA required.

## **7 CLIMATE CHANGE**

7.1 One of the key actions to unlock growth within the strategy is the focus on 'Making the West of England the home for green jobs and green growth'. This element contains thirteen key actions that will be focused on to develop green jobs and green growth.

7.2 These actions will support the climate goals of the council and the focus on the 'Greener Economy' in the B&NES Economic Strategy. This is one of the six pillars of the B&NES Economic Strategy and a central area of focus.

7.3 The focus on enabling activities includes public transport improvements, especially through connecting the Growth Zones; alternative energy provision; green industries; and support for nature and the landscape.

7.4 Within the Growth Strategy there is a commitment to increasing the clean energy capacity in the region. We as a council remain committed to more ambitious actions on renewables. As our own Climate Strategy includes the ambition to

achieve 300MW of locally generated renewable energy in Bath and North East Somerset.

- 7.5 By working at the regional level with the MCA and the other unitary authorities this will enable larger funding bids to be made and economies of scale in support of our climate goals.

## 8 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 8.1 None

## 9 CONSULTATION

- 9.1 Monitoring Officer approval given.

- 9.2 Section 151 Officer approval given.

<b>Contact person</b>	Bea Symington
<b>Background papers</b>	<p>West of England Growth Strategy- <a href="https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/about-us/our-strategy/west-of-england-growth-plan/">https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/about-us/our-strategy/west-of-england-growth-plan/</a></p> <p>West of England Growth Strategy Executive Summary - <a href="https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/WE4915-Growth-Strategy-exec-summary_aw_web_v1.pdf">https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/WE4915-Growth-Strategy-exec-summary_aw_web_v1.pdf</a></p> <p>Economic Strategy - <a href="https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/B%26NES-Economic-Strategy-2024-2034.pdf">https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/B%26NES-Economic-Strategy-2024-2034.pdf</a></p> <p>Economic Strategy Evidence Base - <a href="https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/policy-and-documents-library/economic-strategy-evidence-base">https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/policy-and-documents-library/economic-strategy-evidence-base</a></p>
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