

WEST OF ENGLAND LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP

WE ARE A PARTNERSHIP FOR GROWTH

STRATEGIC ECONOMIC PLAN

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY
IMPACTS FOR THE WEST
OF ENGLAND STRATEGIC
ECONOMIC PLAN 2013-30

Equality and Diversity – Impacts for the West of England Strategic Economic Plan 2013-30

1.0 Introduction – The Role of Equality & Diversity in Meeting the West of England 2030 Vision

Delivering excellence in Equality & Diversity is intrinsically linked to the successful achievement of the WE 2030 Vision and this is explicit within our Strategic Economic Plan.

Equality is concerned with the desire to underpin relationships with values that open up the chance to develop and engage human potential unrestricted by limitation of presumption and stereotypes.

In nature, the presence of diversity always represents balance, vitality and success - in human affairs it reflects these same qualities. Diversity is concerned with all the ways in which people differ; in the context of the economy and business, it is the source of creative energy that has the potential to deliver sustained business results and growth.

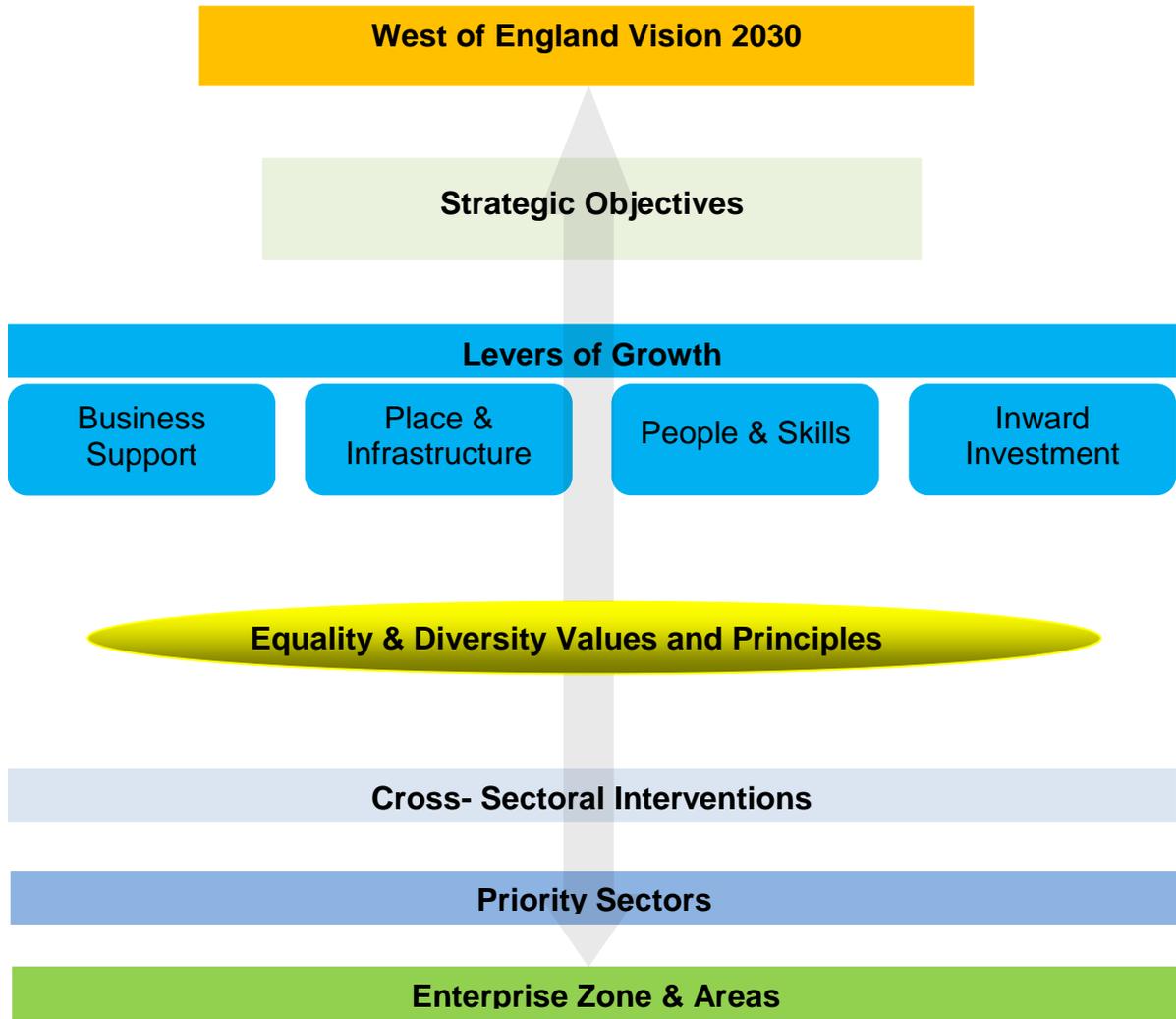
Simply put, Equality and Diversity are about 'healthy human relationships' and are essential qualities in the never-ending pursuit of excellence.

Equality is not simply about a moral perspective and compliance with the law. Traditionally, people have been defined as 'resources' and relationships as being incidental to organisational results. In a rapidly changing world, organisations are confronted with the nature, depth and speed of change which is evident through new technologies, in demographic changes in the workforce and customer identities, and in an increasingly global marketplace. As a result, organisations are challenged to adopt new ways of working where relationships are no longer seen as being incidental to results, but as being a vehicle for achieving enhanced organisational success. Those who value and encourage the diversity of their employees, suppliers and customers whilst rejecting prejudice have a clearly evidenced competitive advantage over others.

Managing Equality and Diversity focuses on how to use the differences between people to drive excellence and creativity in performance, and ultimately deliver real, long-term, performance, value and success.

The West of England Vision is explicit that by 2030 we will have "*closed the gap between disadvantaged and other communities*" and our strategic objectives are likewise explicit that we will "*ensure all our communities share in the prosperity, health and well-being and reduce the inequality gap*". Through our knowledge of the value that diversity brings and its abundance within the dynamic culture of the WE, this conscious planning from the outset of the SEP development, has ensured that the principles behind excellence in Equality & Diversity have been woven into the fabric of our 'Levers of Growth'. This will ensure that the myriad opportunities which Equality & Diversity bring to the West of England are central to us becoming one of the fastest growing and most prosperous sub-regions in Europe.

Diagram 1: The relationship between Equality & Diversity and our Economic Strategy



This document describes the strategic focus of Equality & Diversity throughout the WE SEP which will support our Levers of Growth, Priority Sectors, and our scheme development and delivery in order to maximise the impact which our approaches to Equality & Diversity will provide to our rapid growth and the ultimate achievement of the West of England 2030 Vision.

2.0 Strategic Focus for Equality & Diversity and its Contribution to the Achievement of our Vision

Our Levers of Growth are well detailed within our Strategic Economic Plan. The following section describes the relationship which Equality & Diversity has to these Levers of Growth and the core areas of focus we will take in ensuring proactive approaches to Equality & Diversity accelerate the successful delivery of our Strategy.

2.1 Lever of Growth: “People – Knowledge Economy, Skills and Social Inclusion”

Creating a skills and employment offer which supports all of the WE sectors, and delivers excellence in education with line of sight to employment, brings with it a major opportunity to ensure that the potential which our region’s rich diversity brings is a core element of our innovation, creativity and performance; and thus economic growth.

Education is a key determinant of life chances. As well as being a right in itself, education is an enabling right, allowing individuals to develop the skills, capacity and confidence to secure other rights and economic opportunities. The national picture informs us that educational attainment is strongly associated with socio-economic background. The gap in attainment between ethnic groups has narrowed, with some previously low-performing groups catching up with the average. Whereas a generation ago almost all the students on the university campus were White British, today 1 in 5 are from minority ethnic groups and an increasing number of disabled students are also attending. Women are now ahead of men in many aspects of educational success. However, in terms of both subjects studied, and in the obtaining of good degrees, differences are evident. Women remain less likely than men to study Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects. Gender differences in first degree subject choice appear to be declining over time, but high gender segregation in vocational training remains. The proportion of Black students getting first or upper second class degrees is at two-thirds of the level of White students.

In the WE, 50.6% of the population are female and 9.1% of the population classify as being from minority ethnic backgrounds. This rises to 16% in Bristol, slightly higher than the England and Wales average.

We know that in the WE, females are slightly less likely to be unemployed than males; people from all minority ethnic groups, regardless of gender, are significantly more likely to be unemployed than their White British counterparts; and likewise, disabled people are more likely to be unemployed than non-disabled people.

At the same time, we also know that 43.4% of economically active 16-64 year olds in the WE are qualified to NVQ Level 4 and above, with females being slightly more likely to have qualifications at any level than males; and that our educational institutions evidence high levels of performance in provision for all regardless of characteristics such as Race, Gender, Disability and Age.

Our strategy for Equality & Diversity is clear on the following principles:

- Diversity is to be seen from two points of view that are complementary: the economic and profitability aspects on one hand, and fundamental rights and non-discrimination aspects on the other. Diversity is economically beneficial and worth investing in, and at the same time, note that investors will not invest in a region where discrimination exists.
- Supporting diversity can be beneficial for all parties involved - for companies, governments and citizens. This involves changing mindsets, investing in talent, and tapping into our resources.
- Maximising our potential for growth means raising the number of people entering the workforce. The WE is an attractive place for qualified employees, no matter their ethnic origin, sexual orientation, age, etc. Improved proactivity in social inclusion are key to the maximisation of growth.
- Diversity is a catalyst for innovation, and thus economic growth. Real progress can be made by communicating to businesses that innovation stems from diversity.

Truly engaging with all diverse groups and ensuring flexibility in our approaches to the development of skills is central to the achievement of our Vision.

Strategic Focus

The Local Enterprise Partnership has clear opportunities to play a significant role in building the region's growth through skills development by:

- Proactively building on our providers' experience of meeting the skills needs of the WE through clear and well-defined engagement with all diverse groups.
- Engaging all diverse groups in the clear opportunities which emanate from our priority sectors.
- Ensuring the needs of all are met through our wide-ranging activity to improve employability.
- Ensuring flexibility and an accurate understanding of needs in our support for identified groups, including, but not limited to, NEET/Risk of NEET, unemployed 19+ and within our deprivation 'hotspots'.
- Engaging employers in the value that diversity brings as part of their ownership of skills.

These strategic activities within the arena of Equality & Diversity development, complement our plans for the development of a well-motivated, educated workforce with the right skills which address both the current and future needs of business whilst focussing on our aspirations for growth.

2.2 Lever of Growth: “Place & Infrastructure”

The SEP is clear that place-making is a key enabler of growth. In order to maximise the potential that our region’s diversity brings to accelerating and enhancing growth in our region, the SEP clearly recognises the importance of ‘place and infrastructure’ as a determinant of both economic growth and individual well-being.

The West of England has deprivation ‘hot spots’ and we know that nationally, minority ethnic groups, religious minority groups and disabled people are over-represented in deprived areas relative to the national average. There are also higher levels of mental health claims in the 10% most deprived areas. Those that live in poor housing face multiple knock on effects to their health and wellbeing.

Persistent barriers to working for various disabled groups include a lack of access to appropriate transport and a lack of access to information. 17.9% of people living in the WE and 10.2% of 16 – 64 years olds say they have a long-term illness or disability and their day-to-day activities are limited ‘a lot’ or ‘a little’. As such, the issue of accessibility is a fundamental principle that is inextricably linked with the region’s infrastructure.

Strategic Focus

The Local Enterprise Partnership has clear opportunities to play a significant role in place-making through:

- The removal of particular local barriers to work through our People and Skills Lever of Growth.
- The use of inclusive design principles to meet the key components of successful neighbourhoods which include: Resident empowerment, Access and connectivity, Services and amenities, Built and natural environments, Social networks/well-being, Housing.
- Work with housing associations and other agents to deliver affordable housing in the right locations.
- Delivery of our Joint Local Transport Plan 3 (JLTP3) which includes the promotion of accessibility as a strategic goal.
- Delivery of the roll out of superfast broadband across the WE region.
- Supporting the diversity of employment opportunities which is a critical component of success in other sectors of our economy such as tourism, rural enterprise, sustainable food economy and health, whilst also driving social enterprise.

2.3 Lever of Growth: “Investment and Promotion”

Our SEP is clear that effective investment promotion marketing is vital to our local economy and important to the national economy. A core component of this activity is the inclusion of our diversity message which enhances our proposition in respect of direct inward investment, capital investment and indigenous business investment.

We are clear that principles behind excellence in Equality & Diversity have been woven into the fabric of our Levers of Growth and that supporting our rich diversity is beneficial, leading to economic growth. Real progress can be made by communicating to businesses that innovation stems from diversity and through communicating our activity to support economic growth through delivering excellence in Equality & Diversity.

Strategic Focus

The Local Enterprise Partnership has clear opportunities enhance investment promotion marketing through:

- Developing the delivery of our marketing strategy through the inclusion of our diversity message as a clear lever of growth and sustainable, long-term success.

2.4 Lever of Growth: “SME Business Support”

Small and Medium sized Enterprises play a vital role in our economy, accounting for 99.9% of all enterprises, 59% of private sector employment and 49% of the UK's economic output.

It is estimated that 18.0% of SMEs in the UK are women-led, equating to around 860 thousand SMEs. It is estimated that in the UK women-led SME businesses contribute about £75 billion to Gross Value Added.

So rapidly have ethnic minority businesses multiplied in the United Kingdom over the past four decades that they now number well over a quarter of a million, accounting for 6.2% of all SME employers and are regarded as significant contributors to the nation's small business population. More people from minority ethnic than white backgrounds are starting their own businesses, with the most entrepreneurial groups in the UK being black Africans at more than three times more likely to start a business than their white counterparts.

In the WE, 50.6% of the population are female; 9.1% of the population classify as being from minority ethnic backgrounds, rising to 16% in Bristol.

Women and minority ethnic led businesses play an important and significant role in the success of the local economy.

Strategic Focus

The Local Enterprise Partnership has clear opportunities to play a significant role in delivering SME business support by:

- Supporting, encouraging and developing women and minority ethnic led businesses, tackling barriers which can often be particular to these groups.
- Broadening the supply chain to make procurement processes accessible to West of England SMEs and proactively engaging women and minority ethnic led SMEs in this in order to maximise the value that supplier diversity can bring.
- Improve business capability across the full SME sector by delivering clearly defined guidance on the value of integrating Equality & Diversity practices in enhancing success and growth.

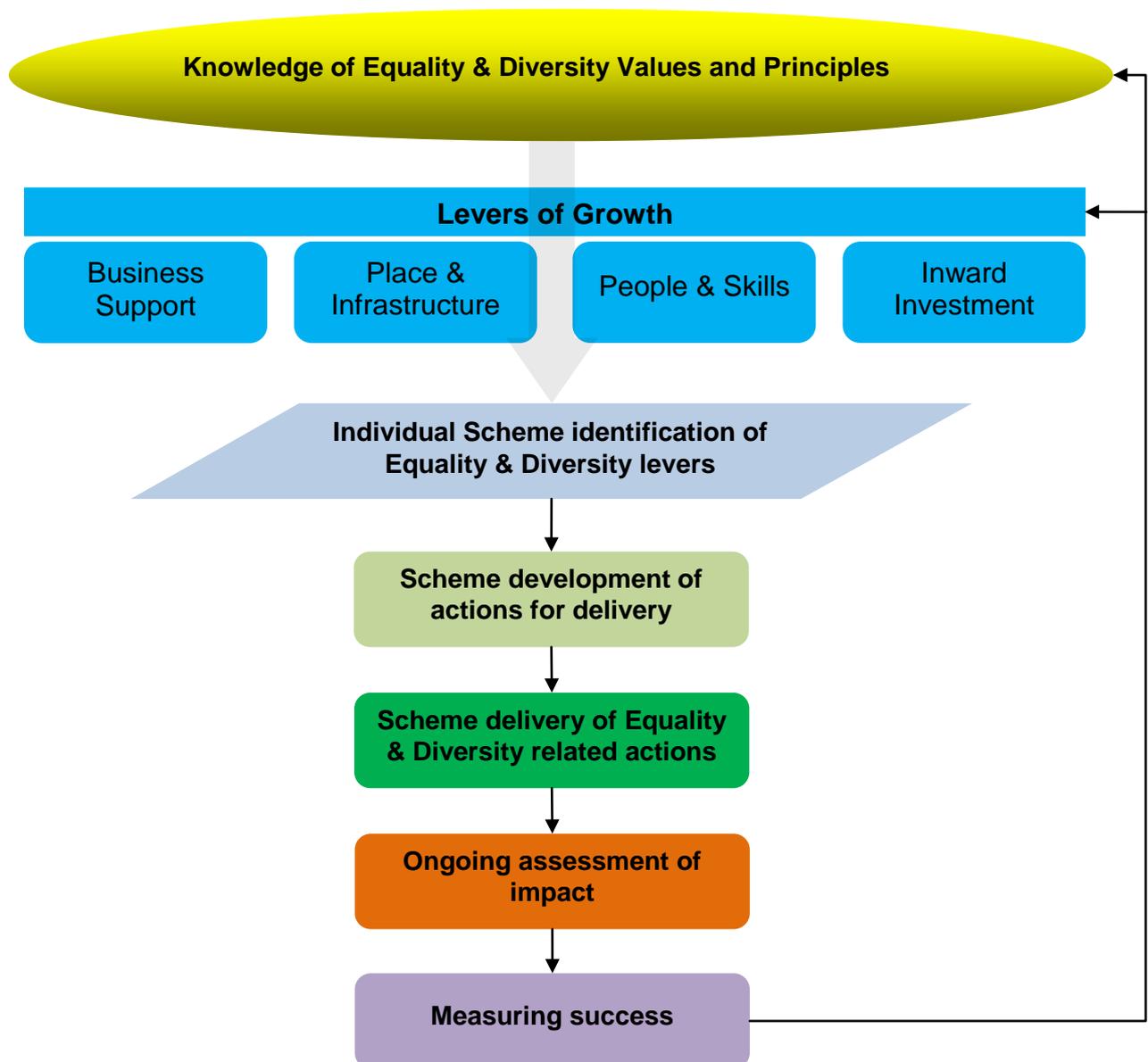
These strategic activities within the arena of Equality & Diversity development, complement our plan for supporting SMEs and add critical enhanced value to the achievement of our 4 identified areas of increasing the local business stock, improving existing business capability, encouraging more companies to trade overseas and stimulating and assisting local procurement.

3.0 Delivery

Throughout our SEP development process, Equality & Diversity have been core principles integrated within our Vision and strategic objectives. We are clear that Equality & Diversity are key levers of economic prosperity and as such we have identified not only a clear capacity, but also a clear desire to maximise our potential through excellence in this arena.

Our delivery mechanism integrates Equality & Diversity with our programme of interventions, where all schemes will put in place drivers and actions to ensure maximisation and sustainability of growth, business success and the economic prosperity of the West of England.

Diagram 2: Integrating the analysis of Equality & Diversity issues within Scheme development and delivery



4.0 An Overview of Key Points - the relationship between Equality & Diversity and the Achievement of the WE 2030 Vision

- The West of England Vision is explicit that by 2030 we will have “*closed the gap between disadvantaged and other communities*” and our strategic objectives are likewise explicit that we will “*ensure all our communities share in the prosperity, health and well-being and reduce the inequality gap*”.
- Diversity is to be seen from two points of view that are complementary: the economic and profitability aspects on one hand and fundamental rights and non-discrimination aspects on the other. Diversity is economically beneficial and worth investing in, and at the same time, note that investors will not invest in a region where discrimination exists.
- Supporting diversity can be beneficial for all parties involved - for companies, governments and citizens. This involves changing mindsets, investing in talent, and tapping into our resources.
- Maximising our potential for growth means raising the number of people entering the workforce. The WE is an attractive place for qualified employees, no matter their ethnic origin, sexual orientation, age, etc. Improved proactivity in social inclusion are key to the maximisation of growth.
- Diversity is a catalyst for innovation, and thus economic growth. Real progress can be made by communicating to businesses that innovation stems from diversity.
- Creating a skills and employment offer which supports the WE five priority sectors and delivers excellence in education with line of sight to employment brings with it a major opportunity to ensure that the potential which our region’s rich diversity brings is a core element of our innovation, creativity and performance; and thus economic growth.
- The SEP is clear that place-making is a key enabler of growth. In order to maximise the potential that our region’s diversity brings to accelerating and enhancing growth in our region, we clearly recognise the importance of ‘place and infrastructure’ as a determinant of both economic growth and individual well-being.
- Real progress can be made by communicating to businesses that innovation stems from diversity and through communicating our activity to support economic growth through delivering excellence in Equality & Diversity.
- Small and Medium sized Enterprises play a vital role in our economy, with nearly 25% of SMEs in the UK being women and minority ethnic led. Women and minority ethnic led businesses play an important and significant role in the success of our local economy.

Additional Note: Recommended Actions for LEP Consideration

The following section provides a range of recommended actions which the LEP may wish to consider including within delivery plans.

The key message which Equality & Diversity brings to our SEP is that of being a catalyst for economic growth. As such, the proactive delivery and review of specifically planned actions will allow us to maximise and accelerate the achievement of the West of England Vision.

The following actions are intended to provide a basis for discussion and the development of further delivery actions.

People – Knowledge Economy, Skills and Social Inclusion

Strategic Focus	Delivery Actions
Proactively building on our providers' experience of meeting the skills needs of the WE through clear and well-defined engagement with all diverse groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Mapping the achievement rates and quality of experiences with our providers across diverse communities in the region. This will allow for an enhanced understanding of needs and the development of proactive actions to address needs and accelerate the contribution that diversity brings to economic growth.
Celebrating and engaging all in the opportunities which emanate from our priority sectors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Conducting activity to understand the influencers of career choices, particularly amongst young people within a full range of diverse communities. This will allow targeted advice to be delivered and previously untapped diversity to be engaged with skills and employment, particularly in respect of our priority sectors.
Ensuring the needs of all are met through our wide-ranging activity to improve employability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Conducting activity to understand and address the challenges that female and male educational and career choices bring for our priority sectors. This will allow targeted activity to be designed impacting on the enhancement of sustainability for our priority sectors.
Ensuring flexibility and an accurate understanding of needs in our support for identified groups, including, but not limited to, NEET/Risk of NEET, unemployed 19+ and within our deprivation 'hotspots'.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Conducting targeted engagement activity with diverse communities which meets their needs in attaining skills and advice. This will ensure that we maximise the value which diversity brings to our growth. ➤ Targeting deprivation 'hotspots' with engagement activity and advice in order to engage with untapped diversity. ➤ Delivering promotion activity in conjunction with our Investment and Promotion Driver to deliver the business case for diversity across employers. This will enhance understanding of the value that diversity brings to economic success.
Engaging employers in the value that diversity brings as part of their ownership of skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Conducting targeted engagement activity with diverse communities which meets their needs in attaining skills and advice. This will ensure that we maximise the value which diversity brings to our growth. ➤ Targeting deprivation 'hotspots' with engagement activity and advice in order to engage with untapped diversity. ➤ Delivering promotion activity in conjunction with our Investment and Promotion Driver to deliver the business case for diversity across employers. This will enhance understanding of the value that diversity brings to economic success.

Place & Infrastructure

Strategic Focus	Delivery Actions
Removal of particular local barriers to work through our People and Skills Lever of Growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ We know that disabled people, people from a BME background and older people are proportionately more likely to have lower levels of income. This results in a need to ensure engagement with these groups in the formulation of policy to guide the delivery of affordable housing in the right locations. ➤ Assess all schemes in relation to both the built environment and travel in order to ensure the integration of inclusive design principles. ➤ Ensure integrated activity with each of our other 3 Levers of Growth to ensure that Equality & Diversity practices are supported within the diversity of employment opportunities in other sectors of our economy.
The use of inclusive design principles to meet the key components of successful neighbourhoods which include: Resident empowerment, Access, Services and amenities, Built and natural environments, Social networks/well-being, Housing.	
Work with housing associations and other delivery agents to deliver affordable housing in the right locations.	
Deliver our Joint Local Transport Plan 3 (JLTP3) which includes the promotion of accessibility as a strategic goal.	
Deliver the roll out of superfast broadband across the WE region.	
Support the diversity of employment opportunities which is a critical component of success in other sectors of our economy such as tourism, rural enterprise, sustainable food economy and health, whilst also driving social enterprise.	

Investment and Promotion

Strategic Focus	Delivery Actions
Developing the delivery of our marketing strategy through the inclusion of our diversity message as a clear driver of growth and sustainable, long-term success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Review and where appropriate augment specific research within the WE to build our own West of England business case for diversity with clear links to and evidence of economic success.

SME Business Support

Strategic Focus	Delivery Actions
Supporting, encouraging and developing women and minority ethnic led businesses, tackling barriers which can often be particular to these groups.	➤ Review and where appropriate augment information on women and minority ethnic led businesses in the region and conducting research to understand specific support mechanisms required. This will allow for the delivery of actions which will result in an acceleration of contribution which these businesses bring to growth.
Broadening the supply chain to make procurement processes accessible to West of England SMEs and proactively engaging women and minority ethnic led SMEs in this in order to maximise the value that supplier diversity can bring.	➤ As a result of our mapping of women and minority ethnic led businesses in the region, develop a clear schedule of targeted interventions aimed at accessing procurement processes.
Improve business capability across the full SME sector by delivering clearly defined guidance on the value of integrating Equality & Diversity practices in enhancing success and growth.	➤ In conjunction with our Investment and Promotion and our People – Knowledge Economy, Skills and Social Inclusion Drivers, deliver the business case for diversity across a full diversity of employers. This will enhance understanding of the value that diversity brings to economic success.

Full details of the WE LEP Strategic
Economic Plan can be found at
**[www.westofenglandlep.co.uk/
strategicplan](http://www.westofenglandlep.co.uk/strategicplan)**

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