

West of England LEP Equality and Diversity Report

Overview: April 2016

The West of England LEP is committed to ensuring that all communities share in the prosperity, health and wellbeing of the area.

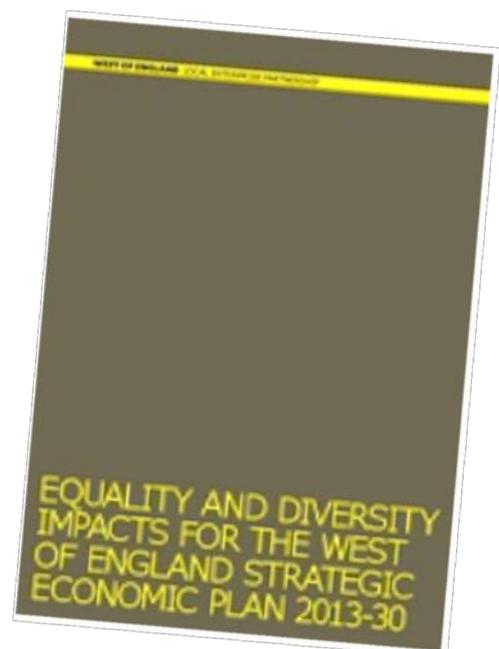
In March 2014 our Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) was submitted to government. Developed in collaboration with over 800 businesses, the four West of England unitary authorities, five further education colleges and four universities, it sets out our plan to develop the local economy by stimulating sustainable economic growth and creating additional jobs.

We also included a detailed analysis of the role which equality and diversity plays in meeting the West of England 2030 Vision. This sets out our strategic objectives for equality and diversity across all aspects of Local Enterprise Partnership activity.

We have undertaken a review of the activities delivered and progress to date against these strategic objectives in relation to each of our four drivers of growth. As a result, we have been able to set out future actions which will further embed equality and diversity practices in all that we do. As an immediate action, we have refreshed the SEP equalities and diversity objectives to more closely align with the current LEP activities.

We are committing to an annual update on our impact on equalities and diversity, and so ensuring that by 2030 we will have achieved our vision to have “closed the gap between disadvantaged and other communities [and ensured] all our communities share in the prosperity, health and well-being and reduce the inequality gap”.

The publication of this document is not the end of a process but rather the beginning.



Equality and diversity and our drivers of growth

Our role, as the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership, is to provide the framework for economic growth - both for those businesses already here and those looking to move to the area.

We do this by ensuring the individual LEP funded projects include in their business cases an assessment of how they remove particular local barriers to work and support the diversity of employment opportunities.

We do this in a number of ways, by:

- supporting the growth of key industry sectors;
- driving innovation and the development of new technologies;
- working with our local universities, colleges and schools to ensure our region has the skills we need for the future;
- supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) business growth; and
- making our region attractive to investors and existing businesses.

Key Activities

Place and Infrastructure

Progress includes:

- All schemes coming through for funding are required to produce an Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment and draw up a plan that addresses issues relevant to the scheme.
- Each project has a clear objective to use its influence to encourage good practice in equality and diversity amongst partners including the supply chain through procurement.

Future actions include:

- We will assess the equality and diversity impacts produced by infrastructure projects delivered by partners and their contribution to the West of England 2030 Vision as set out in the SEP.
- We will monitor progress and delivery of the Equality & Diversity related objectives and actions as set out by individual LEP funded projects.

Business Support

Progress includes:

- We understand from national research that women have specific business support requirements and access to finance is a key issue for minority ethnic led businesses.
- Improved business capability across the full SME sector by delivering clearly defined guidance on the value of integrating equality and diversity practices in enhancing success and growth.

Future actions include:

- Conduct local research to understand the extent of and specific support required by women and minority ethnic led businesses in the region.



- As a result of this mapping of women and minority ethnic led businesses in the area, we will develop a clear schedule of positive actions aimed at enhancing the success and growth of women and minority ethnic led businesses.

- As part of our sector work in skills development we support specific initiatives such as Women in Technology and supporting more young people into apprenticeships for financial services.

People and Skills

Progress includes:

- **Employability Chartermark (ECM)**
A LEP initiative awarded to education institutions in recognition of their commitment to, investment in, and delivery of work-readiness in young people. Two indicators specifically support equality and diversity focussed objectives: ensuring that “Wider global and cultural awareness is promoted to all learners” and that “Stereotypical perceptions are actively challenged.”
- **Pathways to Professions (P2P)**
Our P2P events have engaged over 300 careers professionals. These are events where employers directly engage with careers advisers and employability professionals to articulate the different training/skills routes to various occupations/professions within their business. P2P made significant efforts to ensure participation from under-represented groups.

Future actions include:

- We will embed apprenticeship targets linked to government vision of 20% increase in people from BAME backgrounds starting apprenticeships to deliver impact locally.
- Strengthen the information gathered at application stage and subsequent monitoring approach relating to the ethnicity of cohorts engaging and benefitting from projects in the Skills Capital (Growth Deal) funding programme.

Inward Investment

Progress includes:

- We have translated material for specific markets, recent examples include producing brochures in Chinese and briefing sheets in Japanese.

Future actions include:

- We will complete the analysis relating to the integration of skills development work in the area (at LEP, UA and local levels) to produce a stronger asset for inward investment and for this to generate more positive outcomes in terms of widening the talent pool and improve competitiveness.
- We will review the equality and diversity impacts to date over the three years of Invest Bristol and Bath operation.

For more examples and detailed case studies refer to the Full Annual Equality and Diversity Report (April 2016).



Refreshed equality and diversity objectives

This report is the start of a process. A key action arising from this report has been a review of the SEP's equality and diversity objectives, to better align with the current/proposed programme of activities. The refreshed equality and diversity objectives are shown below and will provide the framework for activities for each driver of growth.

We will produce a future report on progress against these strategic objectives for 2016/17.

People – Knowledge Economic, Skills and Social Inclusion	Place and Infrastructure	Investment and Promotion	SME Business Support
<p>Continue to proactively build on the skills provision to meet the requirements of employers in the West of England, by tapping into the skills, knowledge and talents of diverse social groups.</p> <p>Engage with diverse social groups to promote opportunities arising from the priority growth sectors.</p> <p>Ensure the needs of all social groups are met through our wide-ranging activities to improve employability.</p> <p>Develop skills programmes and activities based on informed understanding of the needs of disadvantaged groups, including, but not limited to, NEET/Risk of NEET, unemployed 19+ and within our deprivation hotspots.</p> <p>Engage employers in the value that diversity brings as part of their ownership of skills.</p>	<p>Remove local barriers to access to work, education and services.</p> <p>Ensure use of inclusive design principles and community engagement, to meet the key components of successful place making which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Sustainable access and connectivity, o Provision of services and amenities, o Balance between built and natural environments, and o Provision of housing mix <p>Work with housing associations and delivery partners to provide affordable, well-designed, well-located and well-connected housing.</p> <p>Implement the policies and programme of the Joint Local Transport Plan 3 (JLTP3) which promote accessibility as a strategic goal.</p> <p>Deliver the roll out of superfast broadband across the West of England.</p>	<p>Deliver a marketing strategy which embraces our diversity message as a clear driver of growth and sustainable, long-term success.</p>	<p>Support, encourage and develop women and minority ethnic led businesses, and tackle barriers which can often be particular to these groups.</p> <p>Broaden the supply chain to make procurement processes accessible to West of England SMEs whilst proactively targeting women and minority ethnic led SMEs, to maximise the value that supplier diversity can bring.</p> <p>Improve business capability across the full SME sector by promoting the value of integrating equality and diversity practices to enhance success and growth.</p>