

Annual Equality and Diversity Report (April 2017)

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Introduction | 3 |
| Drivers of Growth - Review of Progress: | |
| People – Knowledge Economy, Skills and Social Inclusion | 5 |
| Place & Infrastructure | 14 |
| Investment and Promotion | 18 |
| SME Business Support | 22 |
| Conclusions | 25 |
| Future Direction | 26 |

Introduction

The West of England is an economic powerhouse for the UK. With a £30.8 billion a year economy we are the only Core City LEP area to be a net contributor to the Treasury.

The West of England Vision is explicit that by 2030 we will have “closed the gap between disadvantaged and other communities” and will “ensure all our communities share in the prosperity, health and well-being and reduce the inequality gap”.

The [detailed analysis of the role which equality and diversity plays in meeting the West of England 2030 Vision](#) sets out the key principles which guide our approach, and in doing so, identifies a number of strategic objectives.

Through our knowledge of the value that diversity brings and its abundance within the West of England area, our approaches are

intended to ensure that the opportunities which equality and diversity bring are maximised to support economic growth and increase prosperity for all.

This conscious planning from the outset seeks to ensure that the principles of excellence in equality and diversity are woven into the fabric of the four ‘Drivers of Growth’ – ‘Place and Infrastructure’, ‘Business Support’, ‘People & Skills’ and ‘Inward Investment’.

Our 2015/16 Annual Equality and Diversity Report set out our refreshed objectives for equality and diversity and the purpose of this annual report is to review the progress made towards achieving both them and the actions set out within the 2015/16 Annual Equality and Diversity Report.

LEP Strategic Objectives for Equality and Diversity

| People – Knowledge Economic, Skills and Social Inclusion | Place & 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 activity 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"> ○ Sustainable access and connectivity, ○ Provision of services and amenities, ○ Balance between built and natural environments, and ○ 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> |

As the WE LEP works toward achieving its goal of 'closing the gap between disadvantaged and other communities' and 'ensuring all our communities share in the prosperity, health, and well-being and reduce the equality gap', there is unprecedented opportunity in the recent changes taking place.

The newly established West of England Combined Authority (WECA) will manage new powers, funding and responsibilities handed from central government to the region as part of the West of England Devolution Deal. As a result, more decisions will be made locally rather than nationally, including about spending on regional transport, housing, adult education and skills.

Going forward, both WECA and the WE LEP will work closely together and will share a joint vision for the region. Whilst this work is in the development stage, there is a real opportunity for further embedding the delivery of equality and diversity related goals based upon inclusive growth. As such, the progress made to date, as set out in this report, should be continued by the reformed organisation.

Drivers of Growth Review of 2016-17

People – Knowledge Economy, Skills and Social Inclusion

The LEP has a small, strategically focussed Skills Team, co-funded by our education partners, working towards the LEP's key objective of developing a local workforce with the right skills, at the right levels, to meet the needs of business now and in the future.

The West of England Skills Team exists to bring business and education closer together by driving economic growth through skills.

The [LEP Vision](#) to develop a knowledge-based economy in particular will require a workforce with the skills to match.

Specifically, the West of England LEP will look to address the future skills needs for the area; current skills needs and gaps (particularly in the key sectors identified by the LEP); ensuring that individuals are not 'left behind' (i.e. improving the employability of local people – especially young people); and better matching local skills provision in these areas.

Key tasks in the short-medium term

Shape and direct the college offer to employers

We aim to improve the quality, relevance and impact of the most significant providers of initial training and up-skilling in our area through the four FE colleges.

Share labour market intelligence

We aim to improve the extent to which we present a single coherent and usable assessment of business demand to enable providers to respond effectively.

Improve employability

We aim to focus in particular on ensuring that young people aged 16-24 have the best opportunity to get a job locally and are not hampered by lack of work-readiness skills.

Supporting business-provider collaboration

The LEP is a business-led body and our aim is to make it easier for businesses to locate, access and invest in training for their business. More specifically, our aim is to create, through the sector groups, the opportunity for business to work alongside providers in developing the provision they need.

The team works in partnership with schools, colleges, universities and other training providers as well as local authorities, national government departments and other agencies to coordinate delivery at a sub-regional level, provide the latest economic intelligence and engage partners in promoting local economic growth.

The team is employer-led, working with industry through LEP Sector Groups, industry bodies and business associations, and other key influencers to help shape skills provision locally.

We have a suite of Local Sector Skills Statements, outlining priorities for action to help tackle skills gaps and future skills needs locally.

Approved by LEP sector chairs and developed in partnership with sector group representatives these Sector Skills Statements are being used by colleges and universities to inform their curriculum planning and careers advice as a benchmark for what the sectors want to achieve.

By linking business needs to education our aims are to improve careers information, advice and guidance and raise the quality and local responsiveness of education and training. We will work to ensure this leads to an increase in apprenticeship starts and improves access to higher and degree apprenticeships, boosting productivity, building capacity for growth and enhancing equality and diversity in the workforce.

Our ultimate aim is to bring business and education closer together; the division between education and industry is one that impacts not only at the individual level, but also economic regions as a whole.

Equality and Diversity Actions – Progress

The following diagram sets out the strategic objectives for equality and diversity which are aligned to the People – Knowledge Economy, Skills and Social Inclusion Driver of Growth. It also sets out the actions for delivery that were defined within the 2015/16 Annual Equality and Diversity Report.

| Strategic objectives | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|---|
| 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. | Engage with diverse social groups to promote opportunities arising from the priority growth sectors. | Ensure the needs of all social groups are met through our wide-ranging activity to improve employability. | 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'. | Engage employers in the value that diversity brings as part of their ownership of skills. |



| Actions - 2015/16 Annual Report | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Continue to ensure that skills objectives relating to equality and diversity are integral to the strategic framework for developing a local workforce with the skills to support economic growth. | Refreshed Local Sector Skills Statements for 2016 and 2017 will continue to highlight skills priorities relating to equality and diversity, promoting pathways to training and employment amongst under-represented groups. | Equality and diversity will continue to have a voice on key strategic groups including the LEP Skills Group and stronger links will be made with underrepresented groups including Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME). | The LEP will embed apprenticeship targets linked to government vision of 20% increase in people from BAME backgrounds starting apprenticeships to deliver impact locally. |

The following provides a review of progress and impact against each of the actions for equality and diversity:

Action

Continue to ensure that skills objectives relating to equality and diversity are integral to the strategic framework for developing a local workforce with the skills to support economic growth.

How success will be measured

Expansion of equalities and diversity research with local employers and embedding in current strategic developments across the city region.

The West of England LEP Skills Survey was conducted during 2016/17 and allowed for workforce demographics to be collated as well as the identification of businesses having equality and diversity in recruitment policies in place.

The Skills Survey provides a significant resource of high quality qualitative and quantitative data which are being analysed on a sector by sector basis, with further findings used as a catalyst for further developments e.g. Growth Hub promotion and apprenticeship marketing.

Our main conclusions from the survey

Hard to fill vacancies continue to define the business landscape and provide challenges to employers; those hard to fill vacancies create significant drag on economic development and business growth opportunities.

Young people face significant recruitment challenges, as employers tend to look for those who already have skills and/or workforce experience.

Technology, social media and marketing, and changes in legislation are recurrent themes in business concerns about future skills needs.

There is a clear demand for workforce training and a recognition on the part of employers of the need to provide workforce development opportunities and on the job training.

Many businesses point to resource limitations as being a major barrier to more and more effective on the job training.

Employers are engaging with education (FE and HE) establishments where they can; however, they identify particular challenges in doing so, and often cite lack of interest on the part of FE and HE, or resource issues as preventing them from doing more.

Those who do benefit from training programmes through external training providers are generally very satisfied with the provision.

The core businesses who engage with apprenticeships echo national surveys in identifying clear benefits of doing so; however, the take up rate of apprenticeships, particularly among SMEs, is low.

To promote pathways for employment to enhance equality and diversity in the workforce we have shared our survey findings with:

High Tech and Creative & Digital sector groups, highlighting the low rates of Equality and Diversity Policies held within these companies.

Business West through their Skills West ESF contract are also following up on this information directly with businesses through sector business advisors.

Key Skills Survey findings were also shared with **all four Unitary Authorities, National Careers Service, DWP & JobCentrePlus School leads** to ensure dissemination to all schools careers advisors and Governors, with

the particular highlight on Employability and technical skills development.

Findings also used as elements within this year's **Skills Prospectus** to promote equality and diversity.

The **Careers Enterprise Company Enterprise Coordinators** are sharing intelligence through their advisor network, to ensure a two prong approach to reaching schools.

European Social Fund contract holders have been fully informed of the findings to align delivery of their contracts.

To ensure strategic alignment the LEP 'opted in' to work with the Skills Funding Agency on procurement implementation documents. By using our local knowledge, networks and partners, the contracts will be used to create an all-inclusive, overarching approach that tackles the barriers to work locally, bringing education and business closer together and addressing social inclusion and diversity.

The SFA awarded £10.6m to organisations in the West of England to help young people, the long term unemployed and those facing barriers to work develop new skills and find local, sustainable employment. The funding was secured through local programmes running over the next 18 months, will support over 5,000 local people and reach over 6,000 local small businesses through a range of activities delivered by a number of local service providers:

Learndirect will deliver a programme supporting those aged 25 and over into sustainable employment, education and apprenticeships, as well as the Your Time initiative supporting 15-24 year old who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)) into work or back into learning.

A programme of skills support, advice & guidance for the people in and out of work will be delivered by **N-Gaged Training**.

West of England Works programme will support NEET young people and adults is being delivered by **Weston College and a range of partners from the education, training and voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector**.

Skills West is a programme being delivered by **Business West and Western Training Provider Network** which will help align training and employment opportunities to for our economy to thrive, with employers, education and training providers working together to equip local people with the right skills at all levels.

Local people are set to benefit from this programme through a range of new opportunities from greater availability of face to face careers advice to advice on CV writing and interview techniques.

By sharing insights in to the nature and location of future jobs across the region, residents will be helped to make better informed choices relating to potential learning, training and employment opportunities. In particular, activities are seeking to support disadvantaged individuals and communities, underrepresented groups and those facing complex multiple barriers by supporting them to re-engage with education, training, or gaining employment.

Priority groups include:

- **Women**
- **Over 50's**
- **Disabled People (including mental health)**
- **People from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds**
- **Lone parents**
- **Ex-offenders**
- **Carers**
- **Homeless/housing need**

A LEP skills representative also attends the Building Better Opportunities; West of England Works/Weston College Advisory Board and Skills West/Business West's Steering Group and are Strategic advisors for Learndirect and N-Gaged Training

Action

Refreshed Local Sector Skills Statements for 2016 and 2017 will continue to highlight skills priorities relating to equality and diversity, promoting pathways to training and employment amongst under-represented groups.

How success will be measured

Equalities and diversity will continue to feature within Local Sector Skills Statements and emerging local outcome agreements.

Build data-driven, evidence-based approaches to improve provider responses to local skills needs.

Significant progress has been made in respect of Local Sector Skills Statements (LSSS), with an expected publication date being May 2017. All LSSS will incorporate the theme, *'Promote pathways for employment to enhance equality and diversity in the workforce'* with each sector having different priorities for action.

LSSS were used with Department of Work & Pensions (DWP) & National Careers Service in Pathways to Professions events for careers advisors in schools and colleges as well as individuals accessing employment. In sector groups the findings were discussed to challenge recruitment policies in regards to inclusive, open recruitment.

DWP's Fuller Working Lives agenda combined with local evidence, suggests that underrepresented groups lack access to employment opportunities and business not maximising their potential from diverse workforces to assist in future-proofing their businesses.

Over the next decade there will be a huge increase in the number of people aged over 50 while the numbers aged 16-49 will reduce. There is a need for employers to recruit and retain the skills and experience of older workers for longer in order to remain competitive and avoid skills shortages in the future.

Creating greater employment opportunities for local people, supporting business to build capacity to meet future needs, and connecting local stakeholders to support one another and decrease the skills gaps whilst creating better opportunities for workers aged over 50 will be key.

By challenging businesses to engage in open recruitment, not only for those aged over 50, but addressing conscious and unconscious bias in respect of people from BAME backgrounds, women returners, disabled people and ex-offenders will assist in addressing social inclusion and decrease skills gaps within the workforce.

Action

Equality and diversity will continue to have a voice on key strategic groups including the LEP Skills Group and stronger links will be made with underrepresented groups including Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME)

How success will be measured

Review and refresh membership of LEP skills-related groups, ensuring equalities and diversity representation, supported by ongoing strategic engagement with partners.

WE LEP have been liaising with Government during 2016/17 on the review being conducted by Baroness McGregor-Smith on the issues faced by businesses in developing black and minority ethnic talent in the workplace. An employer facing event will be scheduled to align with Government priorities and the release of the [McGregor-Smith Review findings](#).

We promoted the Review to West of England region, and LEP Skills representatives participated in Bristol Mayoral round table discussion which fed into the review.

Sample findings from the review show that individual respondents feel ethnicity has impacted upon their progression at work, accessing jobs that match their skills and has impacted on opportunities to progress.

Areas identified where the LEP may be able to work strategically with partners across the region in response to the report are to enhance connections to the 'right people', raise awareness of perceptions of discrimination, improve the number role models to young people from BAME backgrounds and number of social or professional networks available for BAME groups.

Action

The LEP will embed apprenticeship targets linked to government vision of 20% increase in people from BAME backgrounds starting apprenticeships to deliver impact locally.

How success will be measured

Embedded within Apprenticeship Ambition 2020 and monitored annually by Apprenticeship Business Advisory Group.

Increasing the number of apprenticeships taken up by people from BAME backgrounds is directly linked to the Apprenticeship Grant for Employers (AGE) Incentive element for businesses. This is a significant opportunity to promote apprenticeships leading to sustainable employment to young people across the West of England and builds on successful models in areas such as Manchester, Sheffield and Leeds.

The programme is currently underway and a full analysis on cohort demographics and businesses response to AGE will be undertaken at the end of the programme which is October 2017.

Further Progress

Promote pathways for employment to enhance equality and diversity in the workforce

Task & finish group set up with DWP and partners to coordinate business-facing events around their Fuller Working Lives agenda. This forms part of the 'open recruitment' events to challenge health conditions/disability/50+ workers/women returners.

By sharing our findings of the Skills Survey, we are informing HEI's Widening Participation Teams in particular, to engage more diverse groups/demographics who wouldn't usually consider HE.

Partnership working with Business West & The Initiative on co-producing a series of BAME focused events for business to enhance pathways.

Engagement with South West In Custody Board, Avon & Somerset Constabulary's Reducing Re-offending Board, National Careers Service In Custody Manager and See Potential, a Central Government campaign; we are challenging businesses 'open recruitment' and 'banning the box' on applications. A task & Finish Group has been set up to ensure a multi-agency approach to business facing events, which the LEP Skills Team is coordinating.

Skills West sector business advisors will also communicate on all elements of open recruitment and the access to flexible working.

Working with Black SW Network (BSWN) Addressing BAME Economic Inequality, working in partnership to host and promote an event to promote social investment deadlines to BAME businesses, for harnessing economic growth.

Working with Bristol Women's Commission highlighted two key issues which centre around the gender pay gap and enabling women returners having access to childcare. As a result, access to childcare fed back into ESF contracts, with women returners and single parents ring-fenced as a percentage of outputs in contracts.

Avon & Somerset Reducing Re-offending Board guest attendee, followed up by John Smith, Chief Executive of Avon & Somerset Police & Crime Commissioner to promote accessible provision in the West of England for ex-offenders.

Shaw Trust now an attendee of the Employability Group to align NOMS/ESF provision with other ESF contracts in the region for ex-offenders.

Key4Life charity engaged with LEP to align their Employability and sector training provision to West of England priorities for offenders being released into the area, influencing more opportunities for employment.

LEP Skills Team members sit on Bristol Learning City and Future Quest Boards & Learning for Work Challenge Group.

Careers Enterprise Company Mentoring and Fund streams – on selection panels to ensure a pan West of England approach to delivery, prioritising areas of highest need and cohorts. Ensuring value for money and a partnership approach.

Equality Impact Assessment completed for the Careers Enterprise Company Enterprise Adviser recruitment, to ensure our advisors are as diverse as possible.

Director of Skills sat on a panel at Ashley Housing refugee event in Bristol, the key outcome to better understand the refugee community. Data will be shared to support strategic planning and monitor impact.

Place & Infrastructure

The SEP highlights the importance of place-making as a key enabler of growth. It aids the flow of everyday life, opens spaces for living, business, recreation and cultural activity, creates a sense of community and promotes well-being and social inclusion.

The timely provision of physical infrastructure is an important aspect of place-making and is necessary to unlock and accelerate growth.

Major programmes of investment are taking place including the Bath Package, the MetroBus programme, electrification of the Great Western mainline, and expansion or improvements at the Port of Bristol and the Airport.

The activities of the Place & Infrastructure function, contribute specifically to the following objectives of the Strategic Objectives for Equality and Diversity, namely:

- Enhance and protect our natural & built environmental assets to build our resilience to climate change.
- Create places where people want to live and work, through delivery of essential infrastructure including transport and housing to unlock suitable locations for economic growth.
- Ensure all our communities share in the prosperity, health and well-being and reduce the inequality gap.

Equality and Diversity Objectives – Progress

The following diagram sets out the strategic objectives for equality and diversity which are aligned to the Place & Infrastructure Driver of Growth. It also sets out the actions for delivery that were defined within the 2015/16 Annual Equality and Diversity Report.

| Strategic objectives | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|---|
| Remove local barriers to access to work, education and services. | Ensure use of inclusive design principles and community engagement, to meet the key components of successful place making which include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Sustainable access and connectivity, –Provision of services and amenities, –Balance between built and natural environments, –Provision of housing mix | Work with housing associations and delivery partners to provide affordable, well-designed, well-located and well-connected housing. | Implement the policies and programme of the Joint Local Transport Plan 3 (JLTP3) which promote accessibility as a strategic goal. | Deliver the roll out of superfast broadband across the West of England. |



| Actions - 2015/16 Annual Report | |
|--|--|
| 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. | Monitor progress and delivery of the equality and diversity related objectives and actions as set out by individual LEP funded projects. |

The following provides a review of progress and impact against each of the actions for equality and diversity:

Action

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.

How success will be measured

Approve and publish Equality and Diversity Action Plans for Local Growth Fund schemes and all other schemes coming through the One Front Door.

Action

Monitor progress and delivery of the equality and diversity related objectives and actions as set out by individual LEP funded projects.

How success will be measured:

Review progress with delivery of scheme Equality and Diversity Plans and report positive impacts at scheme and programme level.

The LEP has developed a consistent approach for schemes coming forward for funding termed the 'One Front Door'.

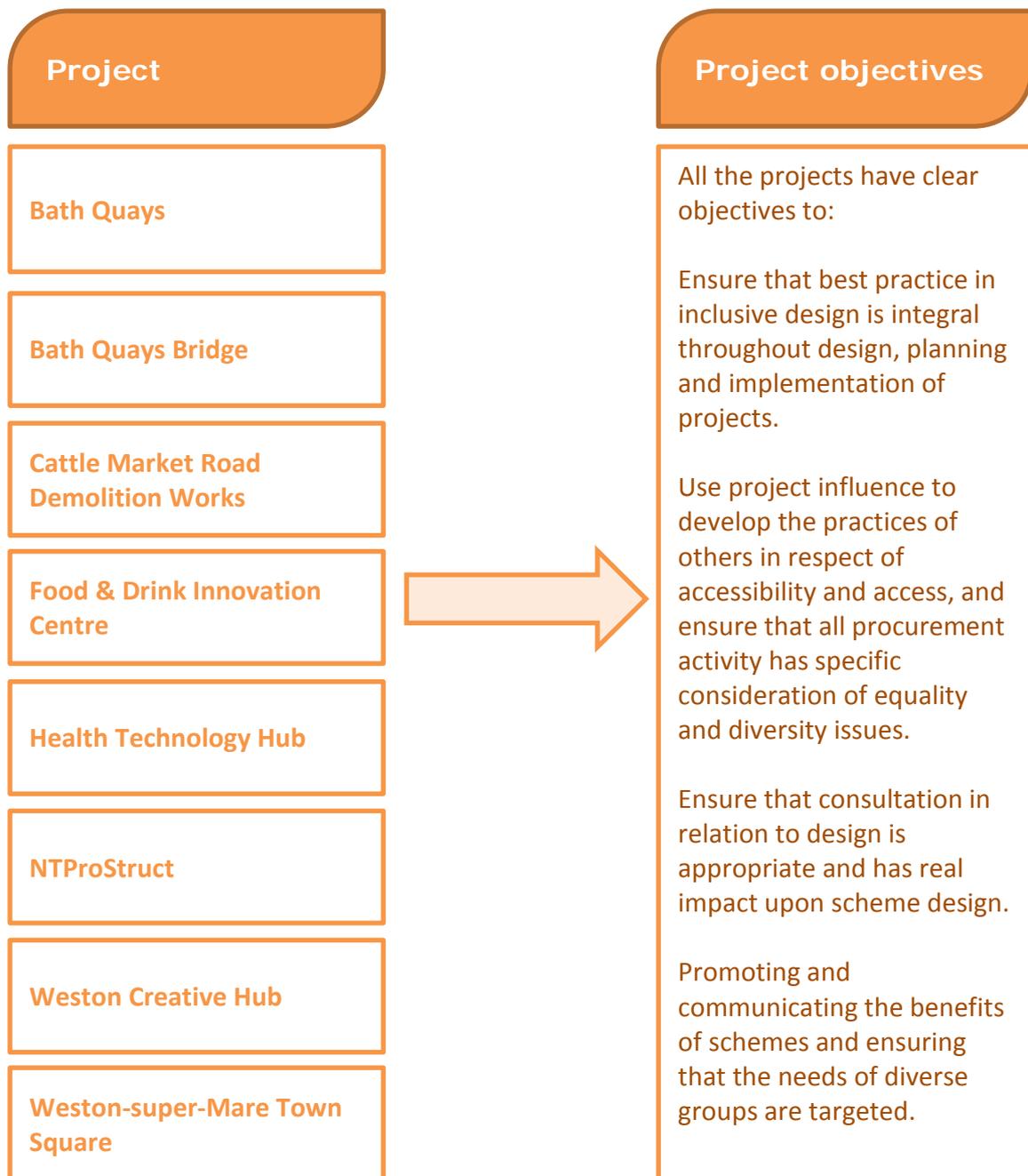
A large proportion of schemes coming forward for funding through this process are infrastructure related and involve building projects, broadband provision, transport improvements (new highway schemes and highway improvement works, MetroWest rail and sustainable transport projects) and other infrastructure works such as flood defences and public realm. This presents opportunities to deliver excellence in equality and diversity linked to the specific activities of each of these schemes.

All schemes coming through for funding are required to produce an Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment and draw up a plan of action to address issues relevant to the scheme.

Shown below are the schemes coming through for funding over the past 12 months for which such assessments and plans have been produced and [published on the LEP website](#).

Outcomes against these plans are reviewed as part of scheme evaluation.

An overview of the schemes during 2016/17



Investment and promotion

Invest Bristol & Bath (IBB) is the inward investment agency for the West of England area. IBB's role is to attract investment to the area that will generate jobs or secure capital investment. A five year programme up to 2020 is in place during which time 5,300 jobs will be generated.

IBB work in partnership with the four Unitary Authorities (UAs) through their economic development teams.

The principle activities of the core team cover three primary areas.

Product development – working with sector specialists in the area's top performing sectors to identify business and investment opportunities.

Understanding the extent of talent in the area is critical to the quality of the products that are taken to market. This means embracing any initiative that generates greater levels of talent e.g. Women in technology and informal technology skills of young unemployed in the region.

Marketing – developing the messages and channels to our target markets and maintaining a strong reputation for the West of England in the areas needed.

As appropriate, our marketing needs to show how the area works with communities to generate greater flow of talent to the benefit of investors e.g. showing financial and professional service employers the extent of employment pool of back office staff and training programmes for unemployed young people.

Account management – supporting investors as they decide on where to invest and supporting them once they have decided to invest in the region.

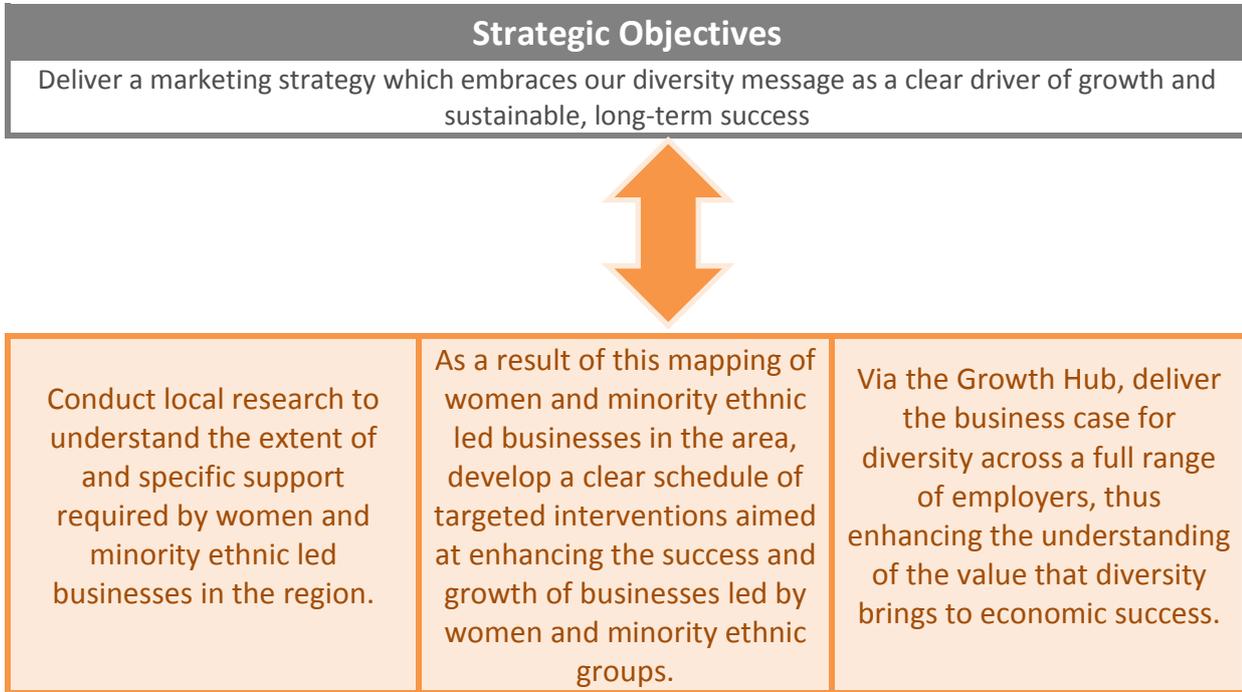
International investors frequently want data on languages spoken and the ethnicities of communities in the area, which we supply and where appropriate make introductions.

Other investors want help in accessing difficult to reach pools of talent (such as low level skilled labour). IBB works with those investors to engage communities that they can recruit from.

Equality and diversity is inherent in the work of IBB attracting foreign direct investment from around the world where demonstrating diversity in the economy is an important factor. Similarly businesses from international communities will be drawn to their communities and recruit from them.

Equality and Diversity Objectives – Progress

The following diagram sets out the strategic objectives for equality and diversity which are aligned to the Investment & Promotion Driver of Growth. It also sets out the actions for delivery that were defined within the 2015/16 Annual Equality and Diversity Report.



The following provides a review of progress and impact against each of the actions for equality and diversity:

Action

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.

How success will be measured

Offer products to incentivise investors accessing the talent pool within disadvantaged communities.

A skills offer analysis and report have been completed. Following recommendations from the report, an IBB Skills Advisor has been appointed to add value to incentives for Inward Investment via a comprehensive skills service offer.

The IBB skills advisor has developed skills proposals to support local growth businesses and respond to business requests for information. The skills proposals provide evidence based information to support the development of bespoke business recruitment and training plans.

These plans ensure we drive equality and diversity via the options to business through the provision of pre-employment training, apprenticeships, sector based academies, graduate recruitment & widening participation and community engagement, especially with Local Authorities and Enterprise Zone/Areas.

IBB will continue to build a comprehensive evidence base to showcase our education provision, attainment levels and apprenticeship programme to further engage business. As part of this work, a strong partnership with Department of Work and Pensions will be developed to deliver pre-employment training in support of priority sectors and will provide quality CEaIG to underrepresented groups (e.g. care leavers, NEET, people from BAME backgrounds, disabled people, over 50s) to support recruitment and learning. Case studies of equality and diversity successes will be developed to demonstrate progress.

Action

Review the equality and diversity impacts to date over the three years of IBB operation.

How success will be measured

Demonstrate and report the positive impact of foreign direct investment on the equality and diversity of the workforce.

Analysis of the data dating back to April 2013 indicates that Foreign Direct Investment makes up 60% of all successful investment projects into the region, with successes from 21 different countries locating and/or expanding in the region. Of this FDI percentage, 68% of that investment originates from non-EU companies. IBB supported a number of investors with language skills requirements and introductions to local schools and colleges to promote skills development in priority areas.

Case Study The Range/DHL

A Recruitment and Skills Plan was developed by IBB to support the recruitment of 500+ employees during 2017/18 for a warehouse and distribution site at Severnside.

Work has been conducted with DHL, South Gloucestershire Council, DWP and training providers to engage local communities and disadvantaged individuals to access pre-employment training and job opportunities.

In addition, recruitment from Bristol and South Gloucestershire has been supported through the development of a bus travel plan to help individuals to access the site.

Action

Continue to land projects that generate positive outcomes for equality and diversity in the area. Examples could include Mulberry (targeting NEETs), Coutts (targeting disadvantaged communities in central Bristol).

How success will be measured

Number of projects landed that generate positive outcomes for equality and diversity in the area.

IBB continues to work on a number of qualified leads and projects that will generate positive outcomes in the area, including high tech businesses working with the IBB skills advisor to support the women into tech agenda, companies requiring support to engage with disadvantaged communities in large scale recruitment, and a number of potential investors with language skills requirements.

Example IBB is set to support Versari (a learning technology company) who are opening a new hub in Bristol. IBB, through supporting has the opportunity to promote women in Edutech positions.

Example Our digital development team has worked with Dyson's new Bristol Tech Centre and as a result has recruited female tech graduates for new positions. IBB will continue supporting recruitment and expansion plans as well as the women into tech agenda.

SME Business Support

90% of all businesses in the West of England are SMEs and they account for a significant proportion of private sector employment. Their success and growth is a key element of the local economy which in turn is one of the drivers in the UK economy.

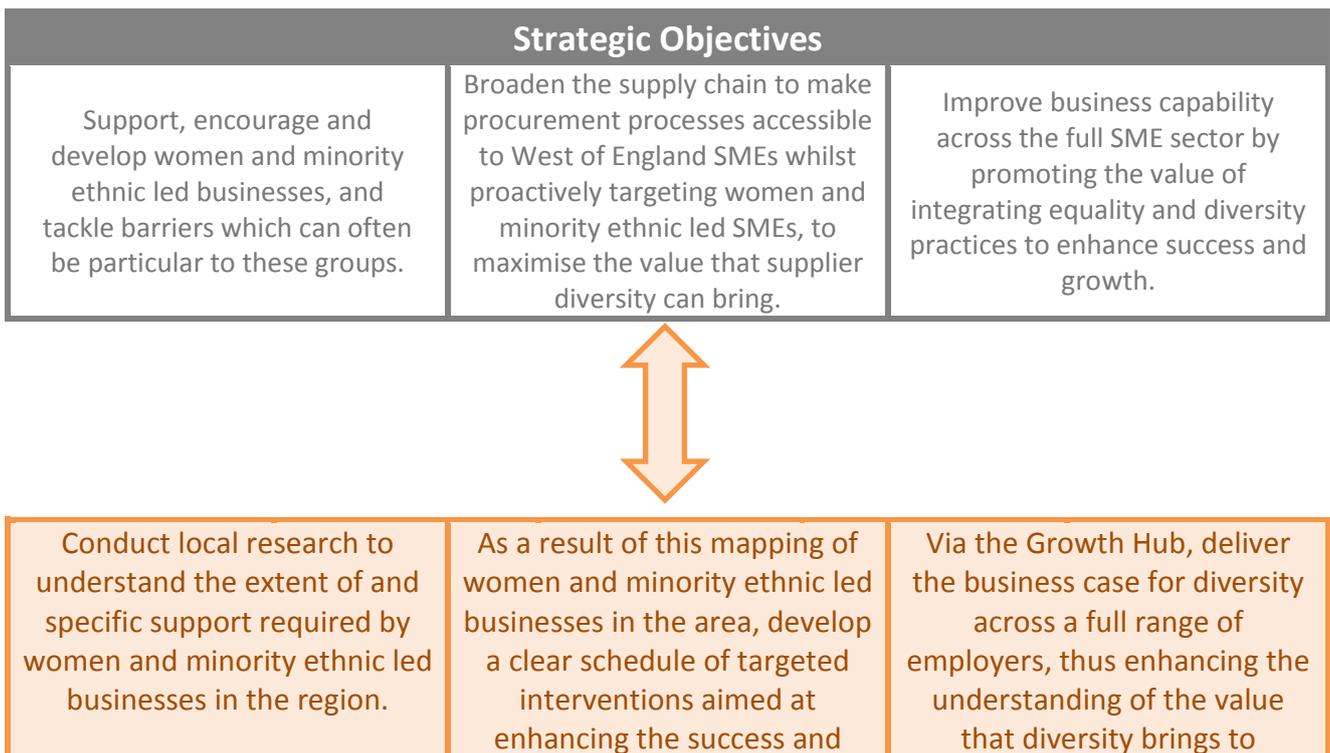
Ensuring that these companies and businesses have all the factors in place to allow them to grow is what the LEP is about. The focus of this driver of growth is business support provision particularly to SMEs relating to access to finance, innovation support addressing skills mismatches and work with the financial services (e.g. banks) to find localised solutions to some of the nationwide access to finance issues.

In the West of England, 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.

The West of England Growth Hub provides the first port of call for all businesses looking to engage with any publicly funded business support project, providing instant access to an extensive, connected network of business knowledge and skills partners. Based on a fundamental ethos of community and relationships, the West of England Growth Hub offers benefits to both support providers and businesses looking to grow, establishing a stronger local economic region.

Equality and Diversity Objectives – Progress

The following diagram sets out the strategic objectives for equality and diversity which are aligned to the SME Business Support Driver of Growth. It also sets out the actions for delivery that were defined within the 2015/16 Annual Equality and Diversity Report.



| | | |
|--|---|-------------------|
| | growth of businesses led by women and minority ethnic groups. | economic success. |
|--|---|-------------------|

The following provides a review of progress and impact against each of the actions for equality and diversity:

Action

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

How success will be measured

Completion of research and specific support requirements defined.

Action

As a result of this mapping of women and minority ethnic led businesses in the area, develop a clear schedule of targeted interventions aimed at enhancing the success and growth of businesses led by women and minority ethnic groups.

How success will be measured

A framework of targeted actions in place.

A specific research project into Women-led and BAME-led businesses across the West of England has been completed during 2016/17. The research has shown that BAME and Women-led businesses contribute an estimated average of £2bn to the regional economy.

A set of recommendations has formed part of the research report and the next step will be to develop a focussed action plan which will support and contribute to the success of BAME and Women-led businesses across the region.

Action

Via the Growth Hub, deliver the business case for diversity across a full range of employers, thus enhancing the understanding of the value that diversity brings to economic success.

How success will be measured

Equality and diversity practices widely communicated via the Growth Hub.
Surveys conducted demonstrate wider understanding of the benefits of diversity amongst Growth Hub users.

From April 2017 development of the Hub will be led by KPMG working closely with LEP management. Equality and diversity issues, along with other cross-cutting topics (such as access to finance, procurement and innovation) will be newly featured on the Hub.

The Hub will also be further developed as a communication and consultation tool and we will ensure that equality and diversity issues are included in these communications and consultations. The accessibility of the Hub website (in respect of languages, translation and improvements for the visually impaired) will also be a focus for work in 2017.

Conclusions

As evidenced in the sections above, equality and diversity considerations have been proactively embedded into the activities and ambitions of the West of England LEP. Across all equality and diversity objectives aligned to each of the drivers of growth, key progress has been made over the last year. Examples include:

Delivery of the **Employability Chartermark** which supports equality and diversity focussed objectives.

Delivery of **Pathways to Professions** events engaging over 300 careers professionals.
Publication of 12 packages of LMI for use by Careers Advisers and Employability Professionals.

Delivery of the **Creative Employment Programme** supporting over 80 internships for unemployed young people aged 16-24.

Delivery of a series of **Skills Show Experience** events in 2014/15 benefitting over 13,000 young people, with specific KPI's around NEET's and 19+ unemployed.

The successful application to Cabinet Office for the **HYPE West Programme** which targets and works with individuals who have been unemployed for over six months across the West of England.

Work on the **European Social Fund Programme 2014-2020** which will result in organisations working directly with NEET/at Risk of NEET young people, unemployed 19+, Care Leavers, people aged 50+ and underrepresented groups gaining contracts.

Delivery of the **FE Skills Capital Programme** which requires schemes to produce an Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment and draw up a plan of action to address equality and diversity issues. Those positively impacted upon include: young people who

are NEET/at Risk of NEET, unemployed adults, learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, individuals affected by deprivation, individuals affected by addiction and older workers/learners.

Delivery of the **annual business skills survey** (648 business responses in 2015) providing intelligence on how the business community will address issues relating to equality and diversity.

The **One Front Door** programme has required all schemes coming through for funding are required to produce an Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment and draw up a plan of action to address issues identified.

Completion of a **review of marketing materials** through IBB resulting in the promotion of an economy that is underpinned by a richly diverse workforce.

Production of a series of **case studies** with international investors providing insight into recruiting talent from diverse groups.

Delivery of **sector work** through which supports specific initiatives including as Women in Technology and supporting more young people into apprenticeships for financial services.

Research has been conducted concerning issues pertaining to the success of women and minority ethnic led businesses resulting in a series of actions to proactively deliver targeted interventions.

Future direction

Both WECA and the WE LEP will work closely together and will share a joint vision for the region. Whilst this work is in the development stage, there is a real opportunity for further embedding the delivery of equality and diversity related strategy and objectives.

To ensure continuous momentum in driving excellence in equality and diversity, the WECA and WE LEPs activities can assess and build upon the stated Equality & Diversity Objectives which have been developed as part of robust analysis:

| People – Knowledge Economic, Skills and Social Inclusion | Place & 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 activity 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"> ○ Sustainable access and connectivity, ○ Provision of services and amenities, ○ Balance between built and natural environments, and ○ 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> |