

South Gloucestershire  
“A great place to live and work”

South Gloucestershire  
Economic Development Strategy 2012-16

Developed by the South Gloucestershire  
Economy and Skills Partnership

## 1 Introduction

Despite the challenges brought by the economic downturn, South Gloucestershire has retained a relatively high level of economic prosperity. Job seekers allowance claimants have increased but we have maintained one of the highest levels of employment in the country at nearly 10% higher than the national rate.

South Gloucestershire has a diverse economy ranging from rural and home grown small and medium enterprises to world leading companies in key high growth sectors vital to the national economic recovery. These include aerospace, advanced engineering, defence, micro-electronics and silicon design. We host the new Science Park a world class environment for businesses in science and advanced technology which incorporates the new National Composite Centre, the national leader on research and design. We are also a centre of excellence for green and environmental technologies, animation and IT solutions.

South Gloucestershire is home to the University of the West of England which plays a key part in supporting high standards of education and training for these cutting edge industries. The Mall at Cribbs Causeway, another major employer, provides extensive retail and commercial services. Both of these attract investment and help create a vibrant economic environment which benefits both businesses and communities.

Working with partners across the West of England (WoE) and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), we continue to be part of successful partnerships delivering infrastructure and economic development. We support the LEP ambitions to deliver new jobs into the area by 2030, attract substantial private sector investment over the next 5 years, create a well motivated workforce with the skills to meet business need, and to build the foundations for a long term, sustainable economy.

It is important that high level carbon emissions are reduced and that the local economy benefits from the opportunities associated with the transition to a low carbon economy. Local production and consumption and services close to where people live are an important part of this. The area continues to develop and grow but pockets of social and economic deprivation still exist. Helping people back into work as well as raising young people's aspirations through top class educational and vocational experiences will improve personal achievement, social and economic well-being and reduce the gap between prosperity and deprivation. Excellent educational provision underpins a healthy economy which is the bedrock of future success.

## 2 Our Strategy

The South Gloucestershire Local Strategic Partnership has outlined the areas of focus for maintaining and developing Our Economy within the Sustainable Community Strategy ([add link](#)). The over-arching ambition is

- ***to maximise opportunities to access first class education and prosper through a balanced economy, a well-trained workforce and sustainable jobs for all.***

To do this the South Gloucestershire Economy and Skills partnership will focus on delivering on seven key strategic objectives:

1. ***Business competitiveness and economic growth*** - to improve productivity and competitiveness, and safeguard and increase jobs in key sectors
2. ***Business development and support*** – to increase the number, survival rates and growth rates of starter and small enterprises including social enterprises to maintain a diverse, vibrant, sustainable economy

3. ***Training, skills and workforce development*** – to raise aspirations and skill levels through our schools, colleges and universities and meet the skill and workforce needs of local employers
4. ***Education in our schools*** – to improve standards in our schools so young people realise their aspirations and are well prepared for the future
5. ***Sharing the benefits of economic growth*** – to ensure that all parts of South Gloucestershire and all groups share the benefits of economic development, in particular priority neighbourhood areas, rural areas and disadvantaged groups including young people and families
6. ***Employment land and premises*** – to meet land, premises and infrastructure requirements of businesses where that is sustainable and consistent with strategic employment and regeneration objectives
7. ***Town and district centres*** – to sustain and improve the vibrancy and vitality of town and district centres

### 3 The wider economic context

#### 3.1 The West of England

As part of the West of England functional economic market area, our economic plans need to fit the broader ambitions set out by the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

The West of England vision is that by 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 these achievements.

The LEP have undertaken to deliver a number of very ambitious objectives:

- 95,000 new jobs by 2030
- 3.4% cumulative annual growth in total Gross Value Added (GVA) by 2026
- Over £1 billion of private sector investment over 5 years
- A well motivated workforce with the skills to meet business need
- The foundation for a long term sustainable economy

Our strategic ambitions for South Gloucestershire support these objectives and our action plan will help towards achieving these very ambitious targets.

The LEP Board is underpinned by business sector sub-groups. Wherever possible a representative of the South Gloucestershire Economy and Skills Partnership is represented on each of these groups. The groups include:

- Aerospace and advanced engineering
- Construction and development
- Creative
- Distribution
- Finance, insurance and professional services
- Low carbon industries
- Micro-electronics
- Retail
- Rural Economy
- Social Enterprise
- Tourism

Each of these groups is tasked with understanding how their sector can overcome barriers to growth in order to help meet the ambitious WoE growth targets. As activity to identify and overcome barriers are brought forward the South Gloucestershire representatives and the South Gloucestershire Economy and Skills Partnership SOG will need to assess how we can contribute and support sector led activity through our partnership action plan

There are also a number of groups which have a cross cutting theme:

- Skills
- Promotion, inward investment and trade
- SME business support
- Infrastructure and place

These cross cutting themes have a direct impact on our South Gloucestershire action plan.

Activity and action identified in the LEP business plan is, where relevant, also in our local partnership action plan. The LEP business plan is focused on:

1. Improving transport infrastructure
2. Tackling skill mismatches and/or gaps in the workforce
3. Putting the West of England on the map: Inward investment
4. Create a clear case for investment from the LEP to national government
5. Growing the green economy
6. Creating a successful Enterprise zone/Enterprise areas

### 3.2 City Deal

The City Deal between Central Government, Bristol City Council and West of England LEP will unlock significant economic growth for the Bristol city region. It is a proposition built on:

- Underlying economic strength in Bristol and the West of England, unmatched by any other core city region
- An ambitious vision for the local economy and a growth strategy to unlock future potential
- Clear and well-established partnership arrangements providing confident leadership and robust governance.

The City Deal is made up of five main elements of which the following four have a direct impact on South Gloucestershire:

- **Growth Incentive Proposition**, the headline proposition in the Deal, creates a genuine incentive for the city region to invest in economic growth and job creation. The West of England authorities will be allowed to keep 100% of the growth in business rates raised in the city region's network of

Enterprise Areas, over a 25 year period. This income will be used, in combination with other funding sources, to create an Economic Development Fund for the West of England worth £1 billion over 25 years. Income will also be used to manage local demographic and service pressures arising from economic growth. The Fund will deliver an investment programme designed to maximise economic returns in all the Enterprise Areas including the Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone. In addition, the Government will commit to a review of the scope for rolling out a growth incentive scheme across the West of England at the next Spending Review.

- The **Transport Devolution Agreement** will ensure the necessary powers are devolved alongside the investment in major transport schemes and the Greater Bristol Metro. This includes: a 10 year transport funding allocation from the post 2014 national Major Transport Scheme Budget to enable delivery of the Greater Bristol Metro; programme flexibility for the delivery of the Bus Rapid Transit network enabling the West of England to recycle savings locally; and new powers over rail planning and delivery.
- The **People & Skills Programme** is focussed firmly on giving the business community real influence over skills provision in the city region, particularly over the £114 million of Skills Funding Agency funding for Further Education colleges for post-16 provision, with governance provided by the LEP Skills Group. In addition, an investment programme initially worth £5 million for employability and employee-ownership of skills pilots will be closely aligned with our spatial priorities in the form of the Economic Development Fund.
- The **City Growth Hub** will provide an enhanced inward investment service that will pool expertise and capacity across the West of England and provide additional support for inward investors to help grow their businesses and find the right skills locally to match their needs. The Hub will be located in the Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone, a shop-front location for the investment opportunities in the West of England. UKTI will work closely with the inward investment service to enhance the capability of the West of England to attract investment and boost trade. Similarly, DWP will work closely with the West of England to deliver an effective employment and skills pilot in the Enterprise Zone.

The remaining city deal element relates solely to Bristol:

- The **Bristol Public Property Board** comprising all relevant Government departments and Bristol City Council will manage up to £1 billion of Bristol City Council assets and an estimated 180 land and property assets in the ownership of a range of other public sector partners. Integrated management of the portfolio will help to unlock more land for economic growth or housing, use assets to lever in other public and private sector investment and generate operational efficiencies by co-locating services.

### 3.3 Enterprise Zone/Areas

The LEP have designated a number of strategically important employment sites as an Enterprise Zone (EZ) and five Enterprise Areas (EAs) that will act as magnets for inward investment and boost the local economy by creating thousands of new jobs. Three of those EAs are located in South Gloucestershire at Severnside (together with Avonmouth in Bristol), Emersons Green (incorporating the Bristol and Bath Science Park), and Filton / A38 (including the Filton Airfield).

Unlike EZ status the designation of an area as an EA is local and non-statutory and does not automatically bring with it the planning and taxation elements which are a feature of the nationally designated Enterprise Zones. Designation as an EA does however elevate a site to a sub-regional level, giving recognition of the potential of the area to make a significant contribution to the achievement of the LEP's employment led growth aspirations.

In parallel with the Enterprise Zone/Areas initiative the partners of the LEP (including South Gloucestershire Council) are developing a unified inward investment service for the West of England, recognised and fully supported by all public and private sector stakeholders. The ability to jointly promote the range and depth of the economic development opportunities in the West of England as a single offer to business across the EZ and range of EAs will strengthen the ability of the West of England to compete nationally and internationally against other recognised and emerging investment locations. Our commitment to this approach also forms a key component of the offer to UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) through the LEP-UKTI Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

A broad strategic approach has been adopted for the South Gloucestershire Enterprise Areas in order to capitalise on the designations and help achieve the full potential of these areas as significant drivers of growth for our area and the sub-region.

The following are the key strategic principles that will underpin the establishment of a vision for each area:

- Safeguarding future economic prosperity - Developing and taking forward a set of initiatives within the South Gloucestershire EAs to safeguard the future economic prosperity of our district. By acting as focal points for the nurturing and expansion of existing businesses and the inward investment of appropriate new enterprises, these areas have the potential to help drive a strong economic recovery, with South Gloucestershire remaining a growth leader for the west of England.
- Integrated development to share benefits of economic growth - EAs have the potential to support our communities with the direct and knock-on employment opportunities investment and growth in businesses will provide. The continued commitment of major employers to the area, and the diversification of the employment base are essential if South Gloucestershire's communities are to continue to flourish. We need to ensure we plan the development of the South Gloucestershire EAs in such a way that they become integral to the surrounding area, and the benefits of investment in infrastructure and job creation are shared.
- Aligned education, skills and training - The focus provided by the EAs also offers the potential to ensure that the education, skills and training offers are aligned. The choices that school and college students and those re-skilling make need to be matched to the existing and future employment opportunities being developed in the EAs. We want to ensure that our communities are in a position to benefit first from the new job opportunities which will be created.
- Targeted infrastructure investment opportunities - EAs offer the potential for targeted investment in infrastructure, through contributions from developers, combined with national and regional grant awards. The development of an improved strategic infrastructure will not only unlock the potential of each EA, but will have wider benefits for the surrounding areas.
- To ensure sustainable development is in line with the National Policy and Planning Framework (NPPF) and the council's policies

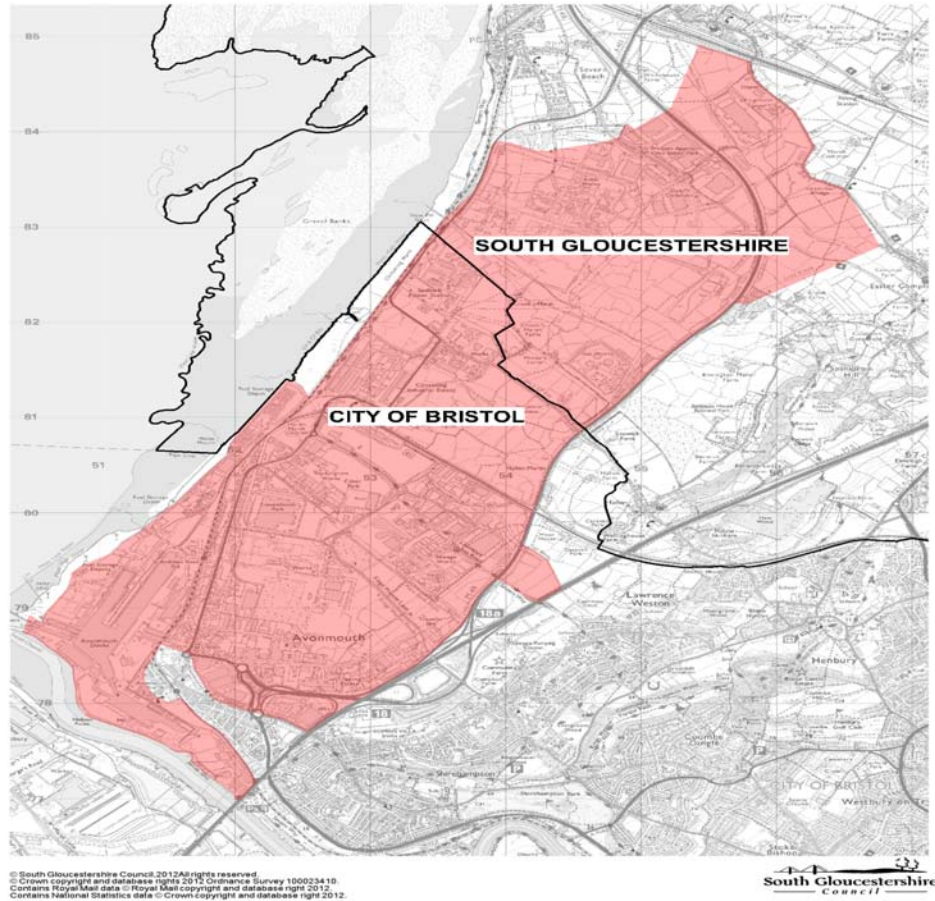
### **3.4 Avonmouth / Severnside Enterprise Area**

The Avonmouth/Severnside Enterprise Area is an industrial location of internationally significant scale, extending for 5 miles along the Severn Estuary and covering some 1,800ha. The area is located between Bristol and the River Severn, immediately adjacent to the M5 and M49 motorways. It consists of two main areas of economic activity – Avonmouth in the south and Severnside in the north. Avonmouth is the closest port to the main centres of UK population with 45 million people living within a radius of 300 kilometres.

In 2010, there were some 14,200 people employed within Avonmouth Severnside. The three largest sectors in terms of employment were transport and storage (23%), wholesale (22%) and manufacturing (18%). These key components of employment in Avonmouth Severnside reflect its attractiveness as an area for large-scale, industrial warehousing and distribution, energy and waste processing uses in

addition to the activities of the Port and its associated storage and distribution facilities and related industries.

The EA will benefit from significant forthcoming infrastructure investment including an already approved deep-water container terminal at the port and improvements to provide direct access to strategic road and rail networks.



The Avonmouth Severnside Enterprise area predominantly services the following activities:

- Storage and distribution centres
- Energy and waste schemes (including biomass power plants)
- General industrial development

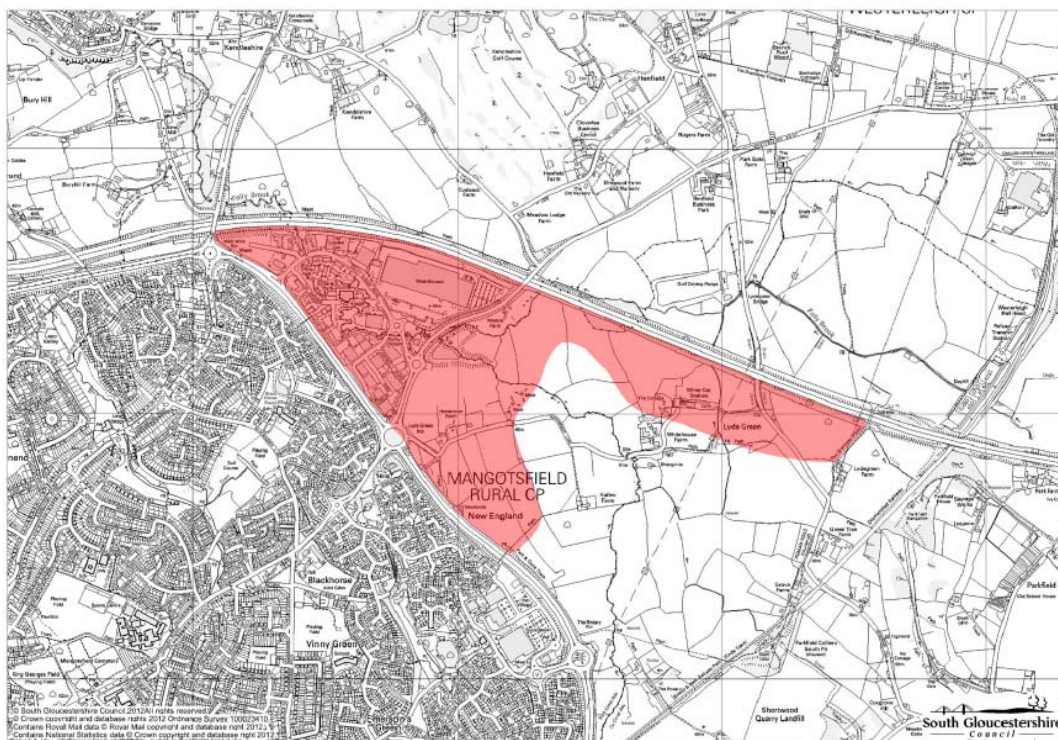
### 3.5 Emersons Green (including Bristol and Bath Science Park) Enterprise Area Profile

Emersons Green lies alongside the A4174 ring road providing excellent transport access around the eastern edge of the city and directly to the M32 and M4/M5 motorway corridors. Parkway rail station is close by and the London-Cardiff line is currently undergoing electrification which will further improve accessibility. It is home to the Bristol and Bath Science Park which includes the already highly acclaimed National Composite Centre, and which provides a focal point for the coming together of science, innovation, technology, creative and digital media.

With the potential for 45ha of employment development the area is a flagship employment site for the West of England, set within a wider new residential community. Within a few miles of the Bristol and Bath Science Park are a number of world class research based companies, making for a strong, rooted business community. The West of England provides the highest concentration of PhD graduates in the UK, coming from the four Universities in the West of England.

The Emersons Green Enterprise Area lies within equal distance of the cities of Bath and Bristol with their diverse and complimentary business and cultural opportunities, and is surrounded by high quality countryside including the Cotswolds area of outstanding natural beauty.

The Bristol and Bath Science Park is the central focus of the EA which also includes well established businesses based at the Harlequin and Emerald Business Parks. The remaining extent of this EA is the emerging employment land associated with the adjoining new residential community.



The Science Park at the Emersons Green Enterprise Area provides a focus for science and technology based companies engaged in research and development and advanced manufacturing. It offers innovative flexible space for growing businesses with different needs. The park is designed to support businesses through each stage of their development from early stage companies to established operations and from hot desk facilities though to laboratories and bespoke buildings.

The surrounding employment land within the EA offers a broader range of opportunities building on the existing mix of small and medium office developments, light industrial, warehousing and logistics.

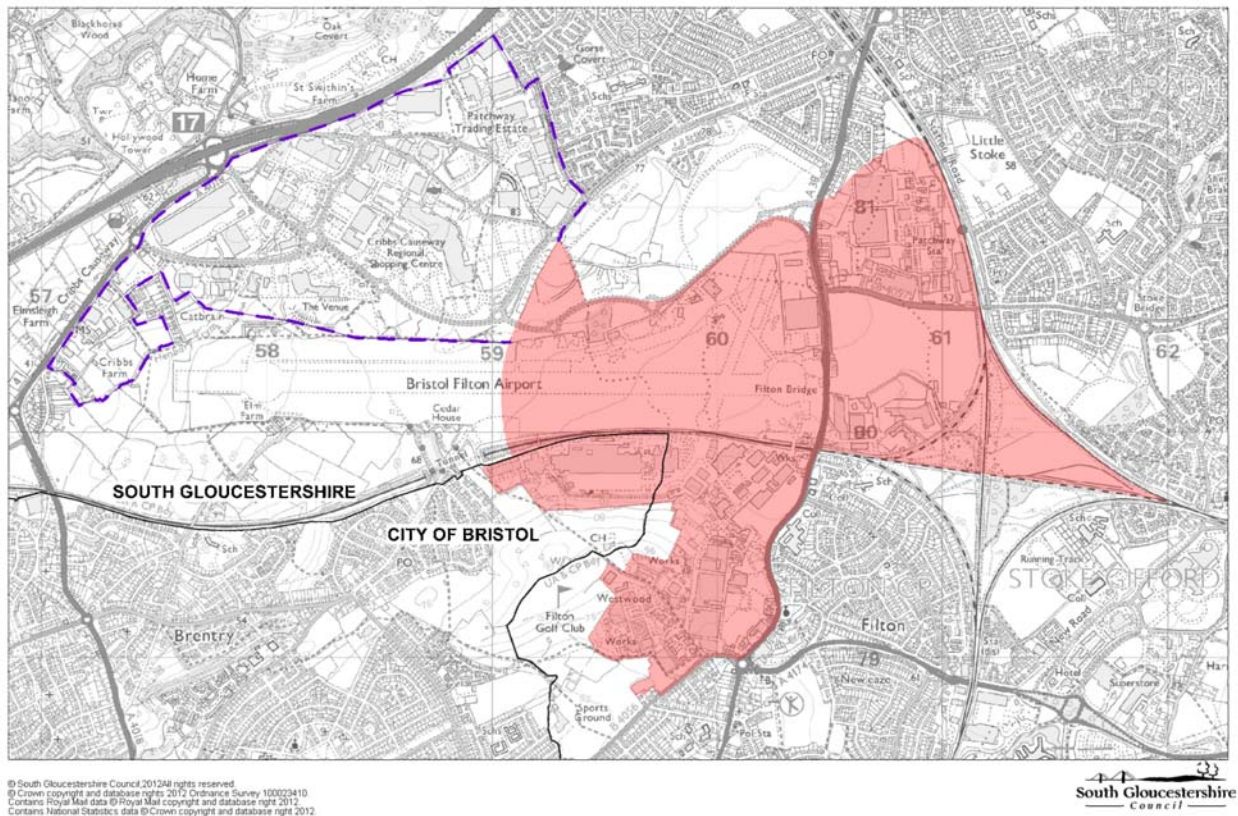
### 3.6 Filton Enterprise Area Profile

The Filton Enterprise Area is located on the north fringe of Bristol alongside the A38 in very close proximity to the M4/M5 motorway interchange providing direct East- West access to London and Cardiff and North-South access to the Midlands and South West. Parkway rail station is close by and the London-Cardiff line is currently undergoing electrification which will further improve accessibility. The Filton EA has at is hear a strategic new allocation of 50ha of essentially greenfield employment land located within the Cribbs/Patchway new neighbourhood with further capacity for development of around another 50ha on surrounding sites.

Filton has a long and successful history in advanced engineering, aerospace and defence driven by knowledge innovation, enterprise and excellence which today confirms the position of Filton as a world leader in cutting-edge aerospace and aviation technology. The area is already the established home for a number of world class aerospace, advanced engineering and manufacturing businesses including



Airbus, Rolls-Royce, and GKN who already benefit from the unrivalled location, profile, access and highly skilled workforce.



Filton Enterprise area has the potential to be promoted as an internationally important opportunity for businesses to locate directly alongside existing successful enterprises, with a focus on the following activities:

- Aerospace design, research and manufacture
- Defence
- Advanced manufacturing
- Emerging materials technologies (working closely with the National Composite Centre located at the Bristol and Bath Science Park)
- Information Technology, maximising the potential of superfast broadband
- Micro electronics research and design

In addition to the core business activities detailed above the EA could also support:

- Supply chain businesses supporting the core business activities
- Financial and Business services sector
- Data Services
- Sustainable and Low Carbon energy research, development and manufacturing
- Environmental technology

## 4 Delivering our ambitions

### 4.1 Action and activity

Our strategic ambitions will be delivered through a rolling action plan setting out detailed operational objectives, actions and indicators/targets against which performance can be monitored and evaluated.

Responsibility for delivering the Strategy will rest largely with:-

- Public sector organisations including South Gloucestershire Council, the West of England LEP, the University of the West of England, City of Bristol College, South Gloucestershire and Stroud College, Job Centre Plus, Kingswood and Concorde Schools Partnerships and other nationally represented organisations such as the Skills Funding Agency, Department for Business, Investment and Skills (BIS), the Local and the National Apprenticeship Service
- The private sector – businesses, financial intermediaries, training providers, developers, etc.
- Voluntary sector organisations including CVS South Gloucestershire, Town Centre and Regeneration Partnerships, Local Chambers of Trade and Business Associations and specialist training and employment support organisations.

The action plan will be maintained and coordinated by a Senior Officer Group (SOG) comprising of members of the Economy & Skills partnership, council officers and representatives from partner organisations. With such a broad topic area the SOG will convene around three activity areas:

Business – to focus on strategic objectives related to business development;

- Objective 1. Business competitiveness and economic growth
- Objective 2. Business development

People – to focus on strategic objectives related to skills and opportunities;

- Objective 3. Skills and workforce development
- Objective 4. Sharing the benefits of economic growth
- Objective 5. Education in our schools

Place – to focus on strategic objectives related to land, premises, transport and building;

- Objective 6. Employment land and premises
- Objective 7. Town and district centres

## **4.2 Governance**

The South Gloucestershire Economy and Skills Partnership will own this action plan and will monitor progress against identified actions at its quarterly partnership meetings. Representatives of the member organisations leading on actions within the plan will be required to provide feedback and progress updates at the meetings.

Summary updates on progress and issues in relation to the Economic Development Strategy Delivery Plan will be reported to the South Gloucestershire LSP by the Chair-person of the South Gloucestershire Economy and Skills Partnership.

## 5. Key measures of success

- Increase in headline GVA (Gross Value Added) – per head and per filled job
- Increased employment rate, reduced unemployment rate and Job Seekers Allowance claimants
- Higher level of business registrations and business survival rates
- New enterprise – sustained level of start up businesses by type and location
- Employment growth in enterprise areas
- Sustained diversity of employment (by occupation and business type)
- Sustained diversity in scale and type of business
- Qualifications and skills attainment
  - Key stage 4 and 5 attainment
  - % 16-18 year olds in education, employment or training
  - Resident workforce skills (level 2+, level 3+, level 4+)
  - % achieving a level 3 qualification
  - Number of people below level 2 who take part in community learning courses
- A reduction in the skills gap reported by business
- Number and range of apprenticeships
- Ratio of JCP vacancies to JSA claimants
- Ratio of vacant non domestic rateable premises by use, class and geography

## 6. Key activities

The key activities for each strategic objective as outlined in Section 2 (pages 2 and 3) along with lead organisations and timescales where applicable can be found in the Action Plan 2012-2016

For further information on the Economy and Skills Strategic Partnership, its development strategy or action plan please contact

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