

*'The Western Gateway provides a unique opportunity to level up communities on both sides of the Severn. Already a powerhouse for cyber and tech, research, engineering and the creative industries, the area has huge potential to create sustainable growth and help power the UK's ambition to reach net zero. This pan-regional partnership between south Wales and western England is a key part of this government's plans to level up communities across the union. I look forward to working with them to create new opportunities and boost growth across the whole of our nation.'*

**The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities**

## **Introduction**

The Western Gateway partnership is the UK's first pan-regional powerhouse to span the border of two countries from its inception. Stretching across South Wales and Western England, our powerhouse connects the Union and has the Core Cities of Bristol and Cardiff at its heart.

In January 2022 we published our prospectus which set out our aspiration to 'power a greener fairer future for all' and in doing so support the UK to reach its Net Zero ambition whilst also providing opportunities to those in our area who are at risk of being left behind. In order to deliver this purpose we have set out five missions to deliver by 2030:

1. Contribute £34bn to the economy in order to close the productivity gap with the UK average by 50%;
2. Attract investment and grow exports by £4bn to meet the UK average;
3. Decarbonise our economy and position our area as a leader in green energy;
4. Connect communities through integrated transport systems and connectivity to support levelling up in terms of access to jobs, education and opportunity; and
5. Unlock innovation through the creation of a digital super cluster building on the strengths of our priority sectors.

We believe the Western Gateway will be the UK's Green Energy Powerhouse, with the innovation and creativity to drive the UK's net zero ambitions. This is not a short term-fix but is instead requires long-term transformation. We work in partnership with government, business, and universities to unleash our untapped potential and reach net zero and by working together to overcome barriers and create new opportunities, we want to ensure we can level up communities across the union.

Our work is grounded in a core set of principles. We:

- **Lead** when our size will achieve more for our people and the wider economies of our countries than our constituent parts could achieve alone.
- **Collaborate** on partner-led opportunities to increase their visibility, impact, and reach.
- **Convene** the talent and expertise from across our area to ensure we are being led by the best possible evidence.
- **Advocate** for and amplify the work of others.

The Western Gateway area is home to 4.4 million people and over 2 million jobs. We include 8 Cities, and 3 City Regions and with our more rural areas boasts an economy of approximately £110 billion (bigger than the economy of Estonia).

The region come together as an active All Party Parliamentary Group co-chaired by Sir Robert Buckland KC and Jessica Morden.

The Western Gateway economy has many opportunities. For example, the area outranks the UK and the EU average in the EU Innovation Index, we have the capability to lead the way on the generation of low carbon energy and we have UK leading clusters with:

- 55% of the world's mobile phone semiconductors manufactured in the Western Gateway.
- 14 of the 15 largest aerospace companies based here
- The largest and most developed cyber cluster in Europe
- 2 of the 10 UK wide fintech clusters in our area.
- World leading collaborative creative clusters

However, we face significant challenges, which we are seeking to overcome. For example:

- We are home to some of the UK's most deprived communities, but don't always feature on the priority lists for Levelling Up
- We have some of the least well connected major cities
- We have a net zero infrastructure deficit, especially grid capacity
- We lag behind the UK average on R&D spend
- Some areas still have very poor digital connectivity

Our annual business plan sets out how our work programme seeks to overcome these challenges and deliver our vision of a greener and fairer future. We are delivering 4 programmes:

1. Innovation and Investment, which aims to unlock digital innovation in some of our highest value add sectors
2. Communications and marketing, which aims to position the Western Gateway as a major powerhouse of national significance
3. Low carbon energy, which supports the decarbonisation of the Western Gateway economy through the production and use of new low carbon energy sources
4. Strategic rail, which aims to connect communities to level up access to jobs, education and opportunity

See [www.western-gateway.co.uk](http://www.western-gateway.co.uk) for more information

## **Governance**

The Western Gateway Partnership Board is established as an independent voluntary partnership, without formal legal status. South Gloucestershire Council is its Accountable Body. This relationship is governed by an Accountable Body Agreement. The Board conducts its activities in the interests of the region it serves and secures its long-term objectives without giving undue favour to any organisation or member.

The Partnership Board Membership (22/23) is as follows:

- Independent Chair (1)
- Chairs of the Local Enterprise Partnerships (3)
- Leaders/Mayors of the Upper-tier Local Authorities and City Regions and a representative from a District Authority in Gloucestershire (13)
- Up to three independent representatives for businesses in the Western Gateway (3)
- Two independent representatives for higher education (2)

## **Role of the chair and vice-chairs**

The Chair has a strategic role to play in ensuring the Board suitably defines the vision and purpose of the Western Gateway and represents these in their interactions with external stakeholders and more widely. The Chair ensures that there is full participation at meetings, all relevant matters are discussed and within reason, within the time allocated, and that effective decisions are made and carried out.

There are two vice-chairs, current Cllr Jane Mudd, Leader of Newport City Council and x, who support the Chair in their leadership of the Western Gateway and, when necessary, deputise for them in their absence.

## **The primary duties of the Chair of the Partnership Board will be to:**

- Be a strong voice and passionate advocate for the area nationally and internationally.
- Provide clear leadership in the delivery of the vision, purpose and key milestones set out in the partnership's prospectus and business plan and in line with the Assurance Framework.
- Chair meetings of the Partnership Board and ensure their smooth and effective running.
- Further cement cohesion within the Western Gateway Partnership, ensuring that all partners continue to work together for the best outcomes for the region.
- Represent the Western Gateway Partnership at high-profile events, engaging in national and local discussions and public relations opportunities.
- Undertake advocacy activity and pursue opportunities to influence the UK and Welsh Governments and wider policy makers.
- Hold the Director and the Western Gateway secretariat to account for delivering the business plan.
- Ensure that there is an Accountable Body agreement in place with South Gloucestershire Council which manages all financial matters on behalf of the Partnership.