



Just Connect

**An Integrated Regional Strategy for
the South West
2004-2026**

Final Text
October 2004

Supporting The Future of the South West

“The spirit of collaboration has been present at all stages in the preparation of *Just Connect*, an Integrated Regional Strategy for the South West, and I would like to thank the large number of stakeholders who have worked in partnership with the Assembly in its development.

For the first time the South West has a clear set of aims and objectives for joining up and integrating all the region’s strategies. The publication of this document is an important milestone for the region, representing the desire of agencies across a wide variety of sectors to work together to achieve a better future for all in the South West.

Critical to the delivery of *Just Connect* is the endorsement of the agencies responsible for regional strategy and delivery in the South West. The quotes (below) show the real and positive commitment to the benefits of taking an integrated approach to tackling the South West’s priorities.

The publication of *Just Connect* represents the beginning of a process, a process by which only together we can deliver a better future. The Regional Assembly looks forward to demonstrating how *Just Connect* is influencing and shaping its own work and working with partners across all sectors to further the aims of the South West.”

Jackie Longworth, Chair of the South West Regional Assembly

“The Government Office for the South West welcomes *Just Connect*. The development of *Just Connect* has helped to bring a range of organisations together to think hard about how their work and strategies need to interconnect to realise our common aims. We hope that people will use *Just Connect* when discussing the future, and in preparing plans and strategies for use right across the South West. For our part, we intend to use the strategy to help and shape our work in GOSW. We look forward to the publication of *Now Connecting* focussing on delivery.”

Jane Henderson, Regional Director, Government Office for the South West

“The Integrated Regional Strategy is a bold attempt to set out the South West region’s key economic, social and environmental aims and objectives. It provides a context for the work of a wide range of organisations, and will help to improve the integration and coordination of policy and delivery across the region. The South West Regional Development Agency will use it to inform its ongoing work to enhance economic prosperity in the region.”

Geoff Wilkinson, Chief Executive, South West Regional Development Agency

“Culture - in the broadest sense - makes a vital contribution to our quality of life and sense of identity, and has a major role to play in ensuring that here in the South West we make the most of a growing region, population and economy to achieve an exciting, sustainable and inclusive future. The Integrated Regional Strategy moves culture up the social, political, economic and environmental agendas. It demonstrates the value of a joined up approach that takes us beyond rhetoric to address the real needs and aspirations of all who live, work and spend time in the South West. Culture South West looks forward to joining with a range of partners to turn the important shared aims of *Just Connect* into a vibrant and distinctive reality.”

Adrian Vinken, Chair, Culture South West on behalf of:
Arts Council England, South West
English Heritage (South West)
Lottery Funders South West*
National Trust (Western England and Wales)
South West Museums Libraries and Archives Council
South West Screen
South West Tourism
Sport England South West

*Including Awards for All; Big Lottery Fund and Heritage Lottery Fund

“The recently published rural strategy presents a challenging but exciting opportunity for a renewed focus for rural delivery in the South West. The Countryside Agency is pleased to support the Integrated Regional Strategy as a step forward in achieving this new agenda. We look forward to working with partners to build on this foundation towards a sustainable future for the region.”

Louise Thornhill, Regional Director, Countryside Agency South West Region

“This is an exciting time for Public Health as we are awaiting a White Paper on Public Health, which will strengthen the emphasis on improving health. Many of the factors that affect health can only be influenced outside the NHS. Poverty, transport, housing and other quality of life issues require an integrated approach especially in areas where there are major health inequalities. While it is important for the NHS to make its contribution to improving the Public's Health the opportunities for integrated strategies which tackle the underlying determinants of health are essential.”

Maggie Rae, Regional Associate Director of the Health Development Agency, South West on behalf of the South West Region Public Health Group

“There is widespread and welcome recognition of the importance of the environment to the South West. It is the job of the Environment Agency to champion this and work with others to achieve progress. The Integrated Regional Strategy will help us all understand the context we are working in. Above all it puts the challenge of sustainable - social, economic as well as environmental - development at the heart of decision making in the region.”

Martin Booth, Regional Director, Environment Agency South West Region

“The development of the IRS is an exciting opportunity to contribute to the sustainability of the South West through the promotion of integrated regional working. The key to the Strategy's long term success will be the degree to which its aims are delivered in a mutually-supportive way.”

Leslie Watson, Director of Development, Sustainability South West

“The South West contains a richness of nature. This spectacular natural resource underpins the environmental, social and economic health of the region. It provides pleasure and happiness for the people of the South West as well as for our many visitors. The Integrated Regional Strategy can help to safeguard this for us and future generations by promoting shared and co-ordinated working between agencies, bodies and individuals for action on the ground.”

Janette Ward, Regional Director, English Nature South West

THE SOUTH WEST REGION – ITS CHALLENGES, ITS ASPIRATIONS

It is an exciting time to live in, work in and visit the South West region. We are a growing region, with a growing economy and a growing population. The South West has a wealth of attributes that support the perception of the South West as offering a high quality of life and help explain why people want to live and work in the region.

Our population is more dispersed than other English regions, with around 35% of people living in settlements of fewer than 10,000 people. Our natural landscapes and built heritage are second to none: we have three world heritage sites; national parks and areas of outstanding natural beauty cover over a third of the region; and our extensive coastline is internationally renowned. The cultural opportunities we offer are crucial to the identity and attractiveness of the South West; they are also one of the key reasons why we attract 26 million visitors a year. We are a large region, and the most peripheral in England. Tewkesbury in Gloucestershire is closer to Scotland than it is to Penzance in Cornwall. We have some real strengths within our economy that build on the characteristics of the region – aerospace, marine, creative industries, environmental technologies, tourism and the food and drink sectors are all important. The South West also has a unique age structure, with the largest proportion of older people of any English region.

We value the assets of the region – its diversity, its environments, its cultural opportunities, and the balance between its rural and urban parts – and consider them to be key to our identity and the attractions of the region. But we recognise that the South West faces some real challenges now and in the future and many of them relate to, or are worsened by, the particular characteristics of the region. Many of these challenges apply to all parts of the region, but there are also differences in the ways in which they manifest themselves in different parts of the region.

- The region is growing and we anticipate nearly an extra half a million people in the region by 2016
- climate change is a serious global issue already affecting the South West
- we have a significant problem with housing affordability resulting from high demand and relatively low wages
- we have high employment rates but relatively low productivity
- we have a dispersed population, which is a challenge for the effective delivery of services
- we are losing our young people and university graduates, the latter because of the relatively poor career prospects in management and high value added sectors
- we are producing waste at a rate disproportionate to our population
- the environment is under pressure, exemplified by loss of and damage to natural and historic assets, increasing demands for natural resources and poor local environmental quality
- we often find it difficult to get around, because there are large distances between places, and the transport infrastructure is often inadequate
- we have marked contrasts in economic performance within the region with the widest variations in GVA/per head of any English region; and
- in stark contrast to the perceived high quality of life offered by the South West, we have significant and persistent pockets of deprivation and inequality

People in the South West want these challenges to be addressed and ensure that all people in the region can enjoy a high quality of life. Yet at the same time, they want to maintain the unique strengths and characteristics of the region. This means putting sustainable development at the heart of decision making about the region's future. This is an exciting challenge for the South West and one that we need collectively and positively to embrace.

The Regional Sustainable Development Framework for the South West of England clearly expresses this aspiration for the South West.

“The South West must remain a region with a beautiful and diverse environment. By working together, applying the principles of sustainability, we can achieve lasting economic prosperity and social justice, whilst protecting the environment. This approach will secure a higher quality of life now and for future generations”¹.

This is a vision for the long term.

In seeking to deliver this long-term vision, it is important to recognise the many potential factors that could influence the region in the future from all levels; international, national and local.

Some of these factors we can be reasonably certain about, such as the region's growing population, changing demographics and household structures, continued technological advancements, climate change, and the expansion of information and knowledge availability.

Other factors we can be less certain about, such as the on-going strength of the global economy and the South West's role

¹ South West Regional Assembly and Sustainability South West (2000). *A Sustainable Future for the South West – The Regional Sustainable Development Framework for the South West of England.*

within it, the future availability of energy and power, levels of risk faced, and the kinds of values that people will hold.

All of these could influence the future of the region and it is important that the region is prepared to positively respond to the opportunities and challenges they may present.

The aims and objectives expressed in this Integrated Regional Strategy for the South West seek to steer a path that both addresses the challenges that the region currently faces and take the South West towards achieving its long term vision in the context of the issues likely to affect the region in the longer term. Critically, the aims and objectives identify those areas where integrated working will deliver the best outcomes for the region, and those areas the region feels it needs to work at in order to deliver its vision.

What we can be certain of in both the short and long term, is that this Integrated Regional Strategy is striving towards a South West that aspires to:

- have its voice heard on a national and international stage
- positively and proactively shape and plan for the future
- be proud of its achievements and publicly celebrate its successes
- support all its people
- promote and achieve high quality
- be innovative, creative and forward thinking

WORKING TOGETHER IN THE SOUTH WEST: THE BENEFITS OF INTEGRATION

It is an exciting time for the region, but the challenges facing the South West are considerable. We believe that in responding to these challenges, we need to work closely together across organisations to better integrate and co-ordinate our activities.

Integration is about having a thorough understanding of how things inter-relate and affect one another and commitment to achieving “win-win” solutions and outcomes.

Integrated regional strategy making is about ensuring that policies, actions and initiatives in the region are mutually supportive, so that one strategy has a positive affect on another. This means having a thorough understanding of the inter-dependencies between areas of public policy, so that, for example, the region’s economic strategy positively supports objectives around public health in the region, the transport strategy supports social inclusion in the South West, or the cultural strategy supports environmental outcomes.

But better strategy integration is not an end in itself. Focusing on integration is an opportunity to explore and review how we deliver things in the region and to identify how to do things differently to support the delivery of each other’s objectives. Ultimately, we are committed to ensuring that the better integration of our regional strategies will lead to:

- clear expression of the South West’s needs and aspirations to audiences within and beyond the region
- improved regional decision-making through shared understanding of regional issues

- the potential to maximise resources to the region by providing a coherent message about the region's needs and aspirations, and avoiding duplication of effort by regional bodies
- more mutual support and greater trust between organisations through sharing of ideas and responsibilities
- strength of purpose in the South West

WHAT IS ‘*JUST CONNECT*’?

There are many important strategies in the South West dealing with particular topic based issues, and these are listed in the diagram at the end of this document, but there has been no overarching strategy setting the context for these strategies or expressing the overall needs of the region. This integrated regional strategy, '*Just Connect*', addresses that gap by setting out the region's key aims and objectives that we can all do more to collectively deliver. We believe that this will be an important aid to better strategy integration.

Just Connect is the South West's first Integrated Regional Strategy and covers the period 2004-2026. It is intentionally a strategy for the long term, to enable the region to focus its thinking and action on achieving long term as well as short term goals.

It is the culmination of a number of pieces of work to identify and agree the region's key issues and priorities, including:

- an analysis of existing regional strategies in the South West, which identified a number of gaps within regional strategies, when assessed against the region's key issues

- consultation on key regional issues and trends with the publication of the report “Trends and Challenges for The South West: Key Issues for The Future of The Region”
- an analysis of community strategies across the region
- a benchmark analysis of the performance of the South West relative to other English regions against a range of economic, social and environmental indicators
- a public opinion survey of residents in the South West; and
- the development of a series of future scenarios for what the South West could be like in 2026

Nevertheless, *Just Connect* still represents the beginning of a process not the end: a process that is intended to inspire and encourage cross-sector dialogue and action and promote better regional working.

Just Connect will be used straight away, but it will also be followed by the publication of ***Now Connecting***. This document will look in more detail at how *Just Connect* will be taken forward in strategy and delivery. It will set out how each regional organisation involved in regional strategy preparation intends to use it in the context of their work and provide a series of examples from within the region of where integrated regional working is already producing positive outcomes. ***Now Connecting*** will also refer to the role of futures work and scenario development in developing and testing regional policy.

The aims and objectives set out here will also be regularly reviewed to ensure that they still reflect the region's aspirations and are based upon up to date evidence about the South West's performance.

HOW WILL '*JUST CONNECT*' BE USED?

We intend that *Just Connect* be used in the following ways:

Regional strategy making

Just Connect does not replace existing topic based strategies for the South West. Instead, it sets out the region's key aims, and identifies those objectives where integration across our regional strategies is critical to the future of the region, many of which are already contained within regional strategies. Every strategy that is prepared and reviewed in the region must now be set within the context of *Just Connect* and demonstrate how it is actively taking forward the region's objectives. *Just Connect* also provides the basis for engaging in cross-sector dialogue in the review of priorities, strategies and delivery.

Just Connect is mutually supportive of the Region's Sustainable Development Framework (RSDF), which is an extremely important document for the region. The aims and objectives of *Just Connect* are set within the context of the long-term vision for the South West expressed in the RSDF and seek to deliver it.

In order to demonstrate this connectivity a Sustainability Appraisal of *Just Connect* was carried out prior to its publication. This appraisal concluded that:

“the sustainability challenges and opportunities for the South West are very real and not just a distant concern. The appraisal has shown that aims two, four and five of the Integrated Regional Strategy should contribute to the delivery of the Region's Sustainable Development Strategy and that importantly, the approach taken to the delivery of these aims will determine to what degree their contribution can be maximised. Aims one and three will only significantly contribute to the delivery of the Region's Sustainable Development agenda if they are approached in

a way that supports the other three aims. Certain kinds of population growth and economic growth, i.e. if they deplete our environmental assets, increase social exclusion and climate change, are clearly incompatible with sustainable development. With these two aims, the approach taken will determine whether they are contributing to sustainable development.”

The RSDF is also a critical tool for making good decisions, and ensuring that sustainable development takes place in the region, so that the South West progresses in a way that supports economic, environmental and social aspirations together. Without applying the principles of sustainability set out in the RSDF the aims and objectives of *Just Connect* cannot be achieved.

The case for the region

It is the responsibility of all regional bodies in the South West, involved in regional strategy and delivery, to demonstrate how their work is supporting the region's aims set out in *Just Connect*. But there is also a wider audience for and purpose of *Just Connect*. *Just Connect* provides a unique opportunity to:

1. inform organisations across both the public and private sectors, from national, regional to the local level, about the South West's aims and objectives for the future
2. to promote the benefits of integrated working; and
3. to assist them in supporting the delivery of a wider regional agenda

Just Connect is, therefore, an important basis for talking to partners from both inside and outside of the region about the region's needs and aspirations and ensuring that plans and policies affecting the region are supporting its aims.

Dialogue

The production of the Integrated Regional Strategy for the South West has been an important stimulus for engaging in cross-sector discussion on the issues facing the South West. This has been a valuable opportunity and it is intended that this document be used as a basis for continuing that dialogue.

Evidence and Research

Just Connect is the first Integrated Regional Strategy for the South West and as such is part of an ongoing process to better understand and articulate the needs of the region.

The region has the potential to change fast. We need to know what is changing, what is influencing change, and what is not changing despite our efforts to deliver change. We will use *Just Connect* to:

- review and update the region's evidence base so that we are certain that the aims and objectives set out are still right for the region
- encourage increased sharing of research and information
- undertake more research in the region to better understand how different areas of public policy relate to one another

Action

Strategy making, dialogue and research, are all about seeking to deliver better outcomes for the region. Outcomes are the result of action. Ultimately, *Just Connect* is about actions that deliver better outcomes for the South West region and its people.

THE SOUTH WEST'S KEY AIMS

Just Connect identifies five headline aims for the region.

These aims need to be reflected across the work of all our regional organisations and partners as we all have a responsibility for considering how our work can seek to deliver them. We also need to ensure that policy that affects the South West, but may be developed outside of the region, is supporting the delivery of these aims.

It is critical that we focus our effort on considering how we will deliver these aims in harmony.

In the South West our aims are:

	to harness the benefits of population growth and manage the implications of population change
to enhance our distinctive environments and the quality and diversity of our cultural life	
	to enhance our economic prosperity and quality of employment opportunity
to address deprivation and disadvantage to reduce significant intra-regional inequalities	
	to make sure that people are treated fairly and can participate fully in society

Each of the headline aims is considered in more detail in the following pages. It is important to the understanding of each of the aims that each section is read in full.

Taking each headline aim in turn we:

- consider the opportunities and challenges that arise for the region in seeking to achieve it
- identify the outcomes we want to deliver for the region; and
- set out a series of key integrated objectives for the region to enable us to achieve those outcomes

These objectives are not intended to cover every key regional issue as detailed objectives are the responsibility of particular strategies. Rather, they respond to those challenges where integrated action across strategies is particularly critical to the successful achievement of our aims for the region.

AIM To harness the benefits of population growth and manage the implications of population change

The population of the region is growing. We anticipate that the region will grow by nearly half a million people by 2016. The demographic structure of the region is also changing. The South West currently has the oldest age profile of the English regions and this is set to continue. At the same time we are losing our young people from many parts of the region, altering the social structure and vibrancy of communities.

A growing population and a changing demographic structure bring many opportunities for the region that can be harnessed for positive benefit:

- people with skills, experiences, talents and creativity
- wealth and resources to be spent in the South West
- increased demand to stimulate investment in the region
- housing growth to promote sustainable construction and the use of local labour

... and a growing and changing population also brings many challenges:

- increased demand for and pressures on infrastructure and services, including transport, health, education, and leisure and cultural facilities
- the need to ensure that services and facilities meet the needs of older people and that the right opportunities are available to encourage young people to stay
- increased consumption of natural resources and pressure on the environment
- increased demand for and pressures on housing supply and affordability
- the possible further polarisation of communities – with the inward movement of people and wealth altering markets and social structures

The challenges and opportunities that population growth and change present to the region are potentially significant. It is therefore important that we acknowledge them and respond positively to the opportunities presented to create active and sustainable communities across the region.

If population growth and change are successfully harnessed and managed, what will we have achieved?

- vibrant and attractive cities and towns with more people wanting to live in them
- significant investment in the region's infrastructure
- services that meet the needs of the population as a whole
- more housing that people can afford and that meets their needs
- thriving and sustainable communities in both rural and urban parts of the region
- an enhanced quality of life without a reduction in our environmental capital

Our crunch objectives, requiring integrated approaches, are:

- to provide sufficient housing to meet identified future needs, including housing that is affordable
- to ensure that the long term effects of population growth and change are anticipated in the planning of the full range of public services
- to ensure that growth and development is sustainable – supporting environmental quality, managing resource consumption and waste generation, promoting sustainable communities, and supporting economic prosperity
- to use growth as an opportunity to provide adequate transport infrastructure and make the best use of existing and proposed investment
- to adapt to unavoidable climate change impacts and minimise any further impacts on a growing region

Key South West Facts

<p>1. The population is projected to grow by an extra 470,000 people by 2016 and another 350,000 by 2026¹.</p>	<p>2. The population grew faster than any other region between June 1981 and June 2003².</p>	<p>3. The South West is the only English region to grow solely from migration between mid-1992 to mid- 2002³.</p>
<p>4. People aged 45 and over are more likely than younger age groups to spend their free time volunteering and helping others⁴.</p>	<p>5. With the exception of London, in 2003 access to affordable housing was more difficult in the South West region than in any of the other regions in England. 68% of households in the region were unable to afford the average price of even the cheapest 25% of houses⁵.</p>	<p>6. The region produced 529kg of household waste per head in 2002-3, an increase of 7% since 1998-9⁶.</p>
<p>7. Climate change is already affecting the South West. Rainfall patterns will change – winters may be up to 15% wetter, summers 30% drier and heavy rainfall more common by 2050⁷.</p>	<p>8. The South West has the highest proportion in Britain of its population aged 65 plus at 18.65%. Conversely, the region has the lowest proportion of its population aged 0-15 and 16-24, at 19.04% and 10.08% respectively⁸.</p>	

AIM To enhance our distinctive environments and the quality and diversity of our cultural life

People in the South West identify the region's high quality environment, both rural and urban, natural and built, and the variety and diversity of its cultural life as being important to them and fundamental to the experience of living in, working in and visiting the South West. Culture and environment in the South West help improve the quality of our lives and the way we feel about the places and communities we live within; they create work and impact increasingly on our economy; they celebrate diversity; they attract our visitors and add a sense of belonging to all of us living here. The cultural and environmental assets of the region have intrinsic value, and as such need active management both for their own sake as well as for the benefit of our residents and visitors.

There are some real opportunities for the region around enhancing the environment and cultural life:

- to demonstrate that we can achieve sustainable growth that generates economic prosperity and social and cultural benefits without damaging the environment and cultural life
- to use the environment as a "driver" of the economy by, for example, developing and building on our expertise in environmental protection and management
- to build on the region's environmental and cultural strengths to support the achievement of other regional objectives, for example around social inclusion, health or economic development
- to enhance access to and enjoyment of environmental and cultural assets

- to promote the region as a culturally vibrant place to live and work.

... and there are also some real challenges for the region:

- pressure on resources arising from population and employment growth and societal trends to consume more resources and travel longer distances
- to increase the amenity and environmental quality of urban areas
- to shift production and consumption patterns towards more sustainable outcomes via both policy and market measures
- to minimise loss of, or damage to, our valued landscapes, habitats and historic environment from development, poor management and pollution
- to maximise the resources to support and invest in cultural activity and the maintenance of environmental quality
- to encourage broader based access and entitlement to cultural activity for all communities in the region

If the region's environment and cultural life are successfully enhanced what will we have achieved?

- recognition as an exemplar region around managing growth to the benefit of the environment
- recognition of the cultural dimension to the social, economic, and spatial development of the region
- decision making in the region (both in the public and private sectors) explicitly and deliberately favouring good environmental outcomes

- growth in the number of people who take part in, enjoy and value a range of enhanced cultural activities and assets across the region
- better quality environments (urban and rural, built and natural) that enhance people's quality of life across the region.

Our crunch objectives, requiring integrated approaches, are:

- to maintain and enhance our high quality environments and cultural activity, and access to them
- to ensure our natural resources are used much more sustainably by using land wisely, minimising waste and increasing recycling, using renewables, and promoting sustainable construction and good design
- to fully understand and recognise the significance of, and make much better use of the social and economic benefits of, the region's high quality environment and the cultural distinctiveness of the South West

Key South West Facts

<p>1. 60% of England's protected coastline, and 1/3 nationally designated landscapes are found in the region. It has 39% of the country's scheduled ancient monuments, 26% of all English heritage properties in care, 24% of all listed buildings and 285 registered historic parks and gardens, representing 20% of the English total⁹.</p>	<p>2. There are 2,000 companies in the cultural sector employing 117,000 and turning over in excess of £5.6 bn¹⁰.</p>	<p>3. Over 12% of the region's economy relies on the land, landscape and sea¹¹.</p>
<p>4. In 2001 10% of visitor related expenditure (£880 million) was on attractions and entertainment¹².</p>	<p>5. In 2001/2, 82% of people attended artistic and performance events. Only 5% participated in dance, drama and voluntary arts activities¹³.</p>	<p>6. Water abstraction increased by 10% between 1990 and 1998 due to increased demands by business and domestic users¹⁴.</p>
<p>7. Almost 19% of people in the region are classed as obese. 67% of men and 79% of women do not participate in the recommended 30 minutes of activity at least 5 days a week¹⁵.</p>	<p>8. The farmland wild bird population index for the region shows a 44% decline over the 30 year period from 1970-2000¹⁶.</p>	<p>9. If everyone on the planet consumed as much as an average resident in the South West, an additional 2.9 Earths would be needed to sustainably support global resource consumption¹⁷.</p>

AIM To enhance our economic prosperity and quality of employment opportunity

Enhancing the region's economic prosperity is a key factor in achieving and maintaining a high quality of life for the region's people. The determinants of prosperity are wide ranging. They include the skills of the region's people, the innovation, enterprise and competitiveness of the region's businesses, and the levels of investment in the region's infrastructure. Improved performance in these areas will drive increases in the region's productivity, which in turn will drive improvements in prosperity. Regional economic prosperity is important to the performance of the UK economy as a whole. In the South West however, we want the focus on increasing economic prosperity to be seen in the context of the broader quality of life of the region. We want the benefits of economic prosperity to reach all communities through better job opportunities and wages, in turn leading to higher self-esteem and good health.

There are some real opportunities in seeking to address the performance of the region's economy:

- to build an economy that responds to the particular characteristics, strengths and values of the region, particularly around its environment and the skills, creativity and cultural assets of its people
- to respond to the fact people want to live in the South West – with people moving to the region bringing skills and experience
- to embrace the knowledge economy, innovation and creativity as drivers to develop new economic opportunities, create high value jobs and to make existing businesses more competitive

... and there are also real challenges:

- to address the fact that the region has below average levels of productivity and innovation
- to respond to significant intra-regional disparities in the economy
- to develop an economy that recognises the role of urban areas as the key drivers of regional prosperity, but also respects and supports the contribution of the rural economy to prosperity in the South West
- to address areas where basic skills achievement levels are low

If we successfully increase prosperity in the region, what will we have achieved?

- A vibrant and entrepreneurial economy where people from both within and outside the region want to do business
- Men and women receiving a decent living wage
- A significant reduction in the house price to income gap
- A better range of employment opportunities that help people across the region fulfil their potential
- A high proportion of university graduates from the South West and elsewhere finding suitable work in the region
- An economy that is both environmentally efficient and socially inclusive

Our crunch objectives, requiring integrated approaches, are:

- to ensure that housing development and the needs of the economy are planned for together
- to improve intra and inter-regional communications and embrace new technological developments to enhance access to labour and product markets, whilst shifting towards a more sustainable transport policy which protects the environment and manages 'greenhouse' gas emissions
- to ensure that the competitive position of the South West's economy is improved and that differences in economic performance within the region are addressed
- to increase investment in the region's research base and develop the connections between universities and research establishments, businesses and the economy of the South West
- to focus on raising the attainment of skills at all levels, and at all ages to improve the life chances of individuals and the long term economic prosperity of the region

Key South West Facts

<p>1. Productivity is below the UK average (£13,945 gross value added per head, compared to £15,629 per head respectively)¹⁸.</p>	<p>2. With 109,884 rural businesses and 88,670 urban businesses, the South West is the only English region to have more rural than urban businesses¹⁹.</p>	<p>3. 30% of the South West's economically active, working age residents have qualifications at degree level or above. This is the highest level in England outside London and the South East²⁰.</p>
<p>4. 22.5% of adults across the region have low levels of basic skills which rises above 35% in Bristol, Plymouth and Penwith. The South West has the lowest level of basic skills achievement measured against national targets²¹.</p>	<p>5. Productivity varies significantly across the region from 153% of UK productivity (GVA per head) in Swindon to 57% in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly²².</p>	<p>6. In 2002, the north of the region (comprising Gloucestershire, Bristol, Wiltshire and North Somerset) had the seventh fastest growth in patenting in the EU between 1997 and 2002, as well as being the second highest high tech patenting sub-region in the UK (eleventh highest in the EU)²³.</p>

<p>7. Environment-related economic activity in the region contributes at least 100,000 jobs and 1.6 billion to GDP, accounting for 4% of employment and 3% of regional GDP²⁴.</p>	<p>8. People of working age (30 to 44 years) account for the biggest share of inward migrants to the South West. Moreover, two thirds of new firms are started by incomers who move either at the early family stage or near retirement²⁵.</p>	
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AIM To address deprivation and disadvantage to reduce significant intra-regional inequalities

The South West region is perceived as offering a high quality of life. But a high quality of life is not a reality for everyone. The existence of deprivation in many parts of the South West, in our cities, towns and rural areas, is a clear measure of the inequalities that exist.

The extent of deprivation is measured on a combination of factors from housing quality, unemployment and income levels, to health attainment, access to services and quality of the living environment. Yet each of these measures alone tells a story about the considerable differences between parts of the South West and the complex patterns of inequality that exist in the region at many different spatial scales. Examples at the regional scale include the significant east-west variations in wage levels, in prosperity and in the reporting of health. Examples at the local level include the stark contrasts between the wealth and poverty in many of the region's cities, and many persistent, although often hidden, pockets of rural deprivation.

There are real opportunities for the South West in seeking to tackle intra-regional inequality:

- to proactively use growth in the region, both economic and population growth, to tackle inequality
- to raise the profile of those areas most at need
- to recognise the potential role of environmental and cultural assets in regeneration

... and there are also some real challenges for the region:

- deprivation within the South West is long standing - with few indications that past strategy has had a significant influence
- recent trends have tended to further polarise rather than reduce intra-regional inequalities
- structural issues, such as the dispersed settlement pattern and peripheral nature of the region, can influence inequalities experienced, but are hard to overcome
- to ensure that resources are available to the region, given that deprivation and disadvantage in the South West do not have a high profile

If we successfully address deprivation and disadvantage, what will we have achieved?

- recognition of the inequality within the South West and resources to tackle deprivation
- fewer wards within the South West included within the national index of deprivation
- fewer children considered to be living in poverty
- decent homes for all

- significant reductions in crime levels in high crime areas
- narrowing of the variations in wage levels across the region
- improved health status overall and a reduction in the gap that currently exists between the health status of the most advantaged and disadvantaged individuals and populations
- narrowing of east-west and north-south variations in prosperity

Our crunch objectives, requiring integrated approaches, are:

- to support those parts of the region that are in need; and
- to ensure that resources are targeting those areas
- to ensure that policy and delivery actively seek to reduce inequality in the region on a variety of different measures integrating social economic and environmental factors

Key South West Facts

<p>1. Around 147,000 residents live in an areas ranked amongst the 10% most deprived nationally²⁶.</p>	<p>2. GDP per head varies from 144% of the national average in Swindon to 65% in Cornwall²⁷.</p>	<p>3. Average incomes in the region vary. North Wiltshire has an average income of £29,905, whilst Penwith averages £19,685²⁸.</p>
<p>4. 9.8% of households in the South West experience fuel poverty²⁹.</p>	<p>5. 25% of children live in households with relatively low incomes after housing costs, and 151,000 children live in poverty, as measured by the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index³⁰.</p>	<p>6. 3.9% of homes in the failed to meet the 'decent homes' standard³¹.</p>
<p>7. In a recent public opinion survey, residents in the region identified health, tackling crime, and education as the top priorities for investment in the South West³².</p>	<p>8. At the end of 2002 the average property price in the region was £124,508³³.</p>	

AIM To make sure that people are treated fairly and can participate fully in society

It is crucial that different groups in the South West are treated fairly and are fully able to participate in society regardless of their age, gender, religion, race, sexuality or physical and mental ability. Our society is multi-cultural, and this needs celebrating. However, different groups in society have different needs. For example, older people have particular needs around access to services – particularly in rural areas; black and ethnic minority groups may require services that respect their particular cultures or may face unacceptable discrimination; there is still a wage gap between men and women in the South West, and disabled people often face difficulties in accessing services and facilities.

There are some real opportunities in seeking to ensure that all people are treated fairly and have equal opportunity to participate in society:

- to show how social inclusion can be effectively integrated into strategy making in the South West
- to build on existing partnerships in the region that promote social inclusion and equality
- to realise economic gains for the region by helping to ensure that disadvantaged groups are able to fulfil their economic potential

... and there are also real challenges for the region:

- some people in the South West do not have good access to facilities and services to enable their full participation in the life of the region – this is exacerbated by the dispersed nature of people and settlements in rural areas

- ensuring that all people are treated fairly requires recognition of the diversity of the population and acknowledgement of people's differing needs
- the tailoring of services to meet the needs of particular groups of the population, and ensuring that minority voices are heard, requires creativity, flexibility and commitment

If people are treated fairly and can participate fully in society, what will we have achieved?

- recognition as an exemplar region in tackling discrimination where people live free from prejudice
- accommodation of population growth without the polarisation of communities
- satisfaction that services are accessible, affordable and meeting people's needs
- safe communities with low rates of crime and low fear of crime
- a reduction in health inequalities caused by social exclusion
- active engagement and participation in civic and cultural life, and high participation in the voluntary and community sector
- high voting rates

Our crunch objectives, requiring integrated approaches, are:

- to ensure that in tackling intolerance and discrimination, the particular needs of individual people and communities are not overlooked in favour of a 'group' solution
- to work alongside one another to ensure that co-ordinated, consistent education and communication are given about tackling discrimination and exclusion in the region

- to ensure that everyone is able to access jobs, services, cultural facilities and activities and quality environments to enable them to participate in society
- to ensure an active, inclusive and creative approach to consultation on policy and delivery in the region

Key South West Facts

<p>1. Use of community facilities is relatively low with 46% of people using libraries and 34% using museums³⁴.</p>	<p>2. In the 2004 European elections turnout in the region was low at 37.6%³⁵.</p>	<p>3. Rural transport services are variable with only 63% of rural parishes having a bus service that runs 6 or 7 days a week³⁶.</p>
<p>4. The South West has the least racially diverse population of any English region (2.3% from ethnic minorities)³⁷.</p>	<p>5. On average, women earn substantially less than men. Average earnings for full-time female workers are only around 75% of those for men on a weekly basis, and 83% on an hourly basis³⁸.</p>	<p>6. Participation is particularly high in the region for formal volunteering (giving unpaid help to others through organisations); at 44% this is higher than in any other English region³⁹.</p>
<p>7. According to the 2001 Census almost 1/2 million people in the South West were helping or supporting family members, friends, neighbours or others cope with long-term physical or mental health problems or disability, or problems related to old age. This is equivalent to 10% of the total population⁴⁰.</p>	<p>8. The proportion of small (200-5,000 people) settlements with limited availability of key services such as primary schools, village halls, pubs etc is significantly above the national average. The distance travelled to primary and secondary schools, supermarkets and post offices is generally above the national average⁴¹.</p>	

Just Connect

The diagram draws together all the aims and objectives set out in *Just Connect*. It is intended to illustrate that all of the objectives set out in the strategy are interconnected. The effective delivery of the region's aims is dependent on ensuring the positive impact of one objective on another.

It is not possible to show all the infinite number of connections between the aims and objectives. The diagram illustrates those connections that are particularly significant.

Please note that the diagram has been omitted from the large text version.

Supporting Documents

A number of documents, pieces of research and evidence have been critical to the development of *Just Connect*. These are set out below and are all available from the South West Regional Assembly.

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¹⁷ Best Foot Forward (2004). *Interim Results Report to the Stepping Forward Project Advisory Group October 2004*. www.stepsforward.org.uk.

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¹⁹ Countryside Agency (2004). *State of the Countryside Report 2004*. www.countryside.gov.uk

²⁰ Department of Trade and Industry (2004). *Regional Competitiveness and State of the Regions*. Stationery Office.

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²³ www.eudatashop.gov.uk

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