

# West of England Economic Growth Conference

# Conference Report

Thursday, 11th October 2018
Old Brunel's Station,
Bristol

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# **Foreword**



**Keith Griffiths.** Managing Director, **Built Environment** Networking

This was our second version of the West of England Economic Growth Conference and we again returned to Brunel's Old Station in Bristol- a building filled with character and heritage; a worthy destination for hosting a forum to celebrate the billions of pounds of investment that is going into the South West at present.

Over £3bn worth of developments were showcased in an agenda entirely lead by some fantastic private sector companies who are forging ahead with a series of high spec, state of the art developments aimed at improving the lifestyles of everyone in Bristol, Bath and South Gloucestershire. We are appreciative of Willmott Dixon, Pegasus, Womble Bond Dickinson and Mott MacDonald for lending their support and agreeing to partner with us on various conference sessions.

Bristol was recently placed number one on the UK Smart City index and in the spirit of our organisation being at the forefront of topical conversation we were delighted to set the tone for the day with a keynote from Julie Snell, the

driving force behind Bristol is Open. We also heard the inspirational story of Zlylo from Dr Harry Destecroix, proof if needed of how to maximise the potential of the West of England when starting your own business. The political hot-potato of Brexit was superbly analysed by the Provelio team who were able to signpost key measures that businesses should be taking in the run up to 29th March 2019.

Several of the region's biggest players took up the opportunity to exhibit their business to over 400 delegates. This is a unique opportunity to do business with willing investors in an entrepreneurial environment having collected real time business intelligence through listening to our various speakers. If you want your company to benefit from such opportunities at our future conferences please do not hesitate to get in touch with me directly and start reaping the benefits.

Best wishes,

keith.griffiths@built-environment-networking.com



# **Devolution** & Economic Growth

### **Panel Members:**



Stan Hornagold (Chair)

Director, Provelio



**Deborah Fraser** 

Director - South West, CBI



Nick Sturge

West of England Economic Growth Conference

Regional Chair, IoD

@The\_loD



Mel Karam

Chief Executive, **Bristol Water** 



**Tom Gorringe** 

Bristol Rovers FC



**Prof Steve Egan** 

Programme Director for IAAPS, University of Bath

## **CBI WARNS OVER BREXIT 'PANIC'**

The uncertainty surrounding the UK's withdrawal from the EU is spreading 'panic' in boardrooms, the south west regional director of the CBI has warned.

Speaking on the Industrial Strategy panel Debora Fraser said that firms must be planning for the consequences of a hard

She said: "The biggest concern is panic in boardroom about the level of uncertainty."

IF YOU HAVEN'T STARTED **PLANNING, START TALKING TO** YOUR MAIN SUPPLIERS: BIG **SUPPLIERS WILL HAVE DONE A HUGE AMOUNT OF BREXIT** PLANNING AND WHETHER THEY **NEED TO THINK ABOUT** STOCKPILING. DON'T DO **NOTHING, DON'T JUST SIT AND PANIC: THERE ARE THINGS WE** CAN DO.

And Fraser urged south west firms to lobby their local MPs about the consequences of Brexit on their businesses.

"The level of understanding of Brexit isn't really understood, you need to be talking to your MPs about the knock-on impact on growth and prosperity.

"Please don't assume that the level of understanding of our elected members is what it should be in terms of the business

She said that the region had to work harder to get its voice heard in the corridors of power at Westminster.

"It's frustrating that the south west is not as articulate as we need to be. Whether on infrastructure or spending on a whole range of areas we don't get our fair share."

By contrast, the authorities in the Northern Powerhouse area are more co-ordinated. Fraser said:

### THEY DON'T WASH THEIR DIRTY **LINEN IN PUBLIC AND THEY TALK** TO WHITEHALL WITH ONE **UNIQUE VOICE.**

And she said that the region had to work harder to get its priorities on the agenda given its relatively limited clout compared to other regions with the four per cent of UK GVA it contributes dwarfed by the Northern Powerhouse area's one-fifth share.

But Fraser said there are areas where the region is clear about how it can work together, such as transport, identifying the M5, access to airports, and the A303 as priorities.



Businesses must also think on a bigger scale than the west of England devolved authority, she said: "Business don't think of geographical boundaries. Lot of businesses in the west of England don't think west of England, they think nationally or internationally. When thinking of devolution, don't think small. The bigger you can be in terms of economic power greater your

Nick Sturge, regional chair of Institute of Directors, backed up Fraser, describing the west of England's million-strong population a 'really very small' economic unit.

He agreed with Fraser that the sub-region must think bigger, pointing out that the district from Bristol to Cardiff is 50 miles, which is also the length of Silicon Valley.

Local and regional governments have to work out how not to stoke needless competition between different areas, Sturge

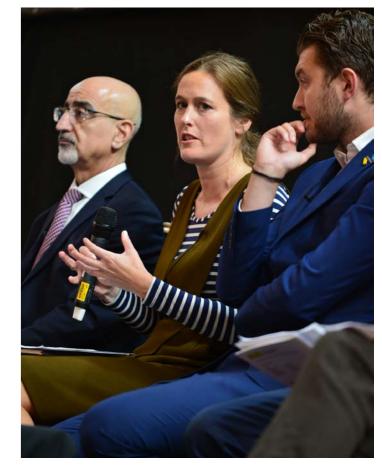
### THERE ARE GREAT SCHEMES TO **INCENTIVISE COMPANIES TO MOVE TO WALES, WHICH IS** UNHELPFUL WHEN YOU LOOK AT THE UK ON A GLOBAL SCALE. **LOCAL AUTHORITIES NEED TO** LOOK AT THEIR ROLE IN A **BIGGER PICTURE.**

But he said the west of England benefits from a diversity of economic activity.

Mel Karam, chief executive of Bristol Water, said that while the short and medium term impact of Brexit are uncertain, his company is gearing up to cope with the growth that it expects to see across the region over the next 25 years.

He said: "We are trying to make sure that the infrastructure is ready and we are not reactive so we can support growth."

Karam also highlighted challenges that the consequences of



climate changes pose to those planning the region's infrastructure needs.

"In the past nine months, we have seen one of the harshest winters on record and we've just come out of one of the hottest, driest summers on record. These have a massive impact on infrastructure, but it's very difficult to plan for those things."

Tom Gorringe, a director of Bristol Rovers FC, said that economic growth would support the club's ambition to reach win promotion to the Premiership.

"A more stable economy in the city means more people will spend on football tickets and more corporate spending."

# **Developers**

### **Panel Members:**



John Boughton (Chair) Deputy Managing Director, Willmott Dixon WillmottDixon



**Robin Squire** Regional Managing Director, Acorn Property Group @AcornPG



Director, Retail Development, 

### **Robin Dobson**

West of England Economic Growth Conference



**Paul Hanegraaf** Creative Navigator



Officer, Bath Rugby



Planning & Development, YTL Developments

**YTLDevelopments** 

### Technical Director of Development, YTL Developments @YTLDevelopments

**Sebastian Loyn** 

# **GOVERNMENT BROADMEAD OK** IS SHOT IN THE ARM FOR **BRISTOL CITY CENTRE**

Secretary of state James Brokenshire's approval of Hammerson's plans for a 1m sq ft redevelopment of Bristol's Broadmead shopping centre has been hailed as a vote of confidence in the city centre,

Robin Dobson, director of retail development at Hammerson, welcomed the decision during his presentation on the Developers session.

The development giant won consent for the scheme, which includes hotel, leisure and additional retail space in October 2018. He said:

### THE FUTURE IS VERY BRIGHT, PARTICULARLY WITH THE **FANTASTIC DECISION BY THE** SECRETARY OF STATE TO BACK INVESTMENT IN THE CITY AS OPPOSED TO OUT OF TOWN. WE LOOK FORWARD TO CONTINUING INVESTMENT IN BRISTOL.

Highlighting figures showing leisure and entertainment accounts for eight per cent of floor space in Bristol, while in the most successful centres that share can reach 15 to 20%, Dobson said: "There is a huge opportunity for us in the next phase of the regeneration of the city centre."

Schemes with a major leisure element benefited from substantially higher returns and dwell time, he said: "If you can get it right, complementary mixes work."



But there is still a role for retail space in good locations, Dobson said, pointing to the desire of e-retailers like Amazon to open physical stores and figures showing that 12% more multiple brands are looking for physical space than five years ago.

He said retailers are becoming more selective in the number of locations and store size required and that Bristol is a strong location with many companies citing it as the first destination they want to locate in outside of London. Plus points were the 2m sq ft of offices in pipeline, of which a quarter is already on site, and the 100,000 new homes planned in the sub region over the next 15 years.

Paul Hanegraaf, creative navigator at Camden Lock owner Milligan Retail, agreed with Dobson that mixed use could generate the best returns. He said:

### WHERE YOU GET AN OPTIMAL MIX OF RETAIL, LEISURE AND **CATERING YOU SEE THE VERY BEST PERFORMANCE.**

Hanegraaf, said that the growth of 'olderpreneurs' is one of the biggest factors spurring growth in commercial property.

He pointed to Barclays figures showing a 63 % increase in businesses run by the 55-plus age over the last decade. And the fastest-growing age group of business owners were the over-65s which hd expanded by 140%.

He said, "These guys are far less likely to fail, and are more likely to be led by a serial entrepreneurs who are less likely to

By contrast, he said the number of business started by the 25-34 age group had grown by a relatively modest 23%.

However, many of these start up entrepreneur feel un-catered for by the existing commercial property offer, he said: "They would like retail space but not what is being offered historically."

Ben Wells, chief commercial officer at Bath Rugby, outlined the club's plans to redevelop its ground, plans for which have yet to be submitted to the council.

He said that while the current ground backs onto the River Avon, the new stadium aims to open up the town's riverside.

The ground would feature Bath's only restaurant with riverside views and a sky bar, Wells said:

THIS WILL CREATE A PUBLIC **REALM TO BE USED ROUND THE** YEAR, OPENING UP THE ENTIRE RIVERSIDE WITH FOOD HALLS AND MARKET TRADERS.

Wells said the club hoped to attract traders who are nervous about taking on a year long lease with all overheads attached.

By creating a wider range of facilities, the club aimed to turn more of those taking a day trips to Bath into overnight visitors. Out of the Bath's 6m visitors per annum, 4.8m are only stay

The development would feature a sizeable car park underneath the stadium and aim to divert coaches from the congested, historic city centre, Wells said: "This helps us to create a city with cleaner air and less pollution."

Sebastian Loyn, technical director of development at YTL, said the Malaysian owned company had secured planning approval for phase one of the Filton airfield redevelopment, unlocking 600 homes, the site's railway station and 200,000 sq ft of offices.

He said initial remediation works for the first residential phase are also complete on the scheme, which aims to deliver 5,800 homes at the former airfield, dwarfing big ticket developments like King's Cross in London.

He said that buildings of up to 10 storeys will be allowed in the town centre of the development, where housing densities will be around 70 dwellings per ha.



# Housing

### **Panel Members:**



Dan Weaver (Chair)

Executive Director - Planning, Pegasus

@pegasusgroup



**Louise Swain** 

Chief Executive, Alliance Homes Group





**Andrew Dobson** 

Managing Director, Crest Nicholson

**● ② CrestNicholson**

# MATERIALS SUPPLY PROBLEMS PROMPT TAYLOR WIMPEY STOCKPILES

Taylor Wimpey is stockpiling bricks and other building materials on its construction sites in order to ensure that it can keep on building the company's south west boss has revealed.

Ralph Hawkins, managing director of Taylor Wimpey, told the events Housing session that the volume housebuilder faced a number of challenges, including access to material and labour supplies. He said that in order to ensure an adequate supply of building materials, the company has been scheduling deliveries 18 months ahead of when they will be required:

SOME SITES LOOK LIKE A
BUILDERS MERCHANT BECAUSE
WHEN WE CAN GET BRICKS AND
BLOCKS WE WILL BRING THEM
TO OUR LARGE SITES AND THEN
DISTRIBUTE THEM OUT
OURSELVES ACROSS THE
DEVELOPMENTS TO ENSURE WE
CAN KEEP DELIVERING HOUSING.

Hawkins said that skills shortages vary across the country but the biggest shortfall in the west of England is roofers, scaffolders and some skilled ground workers. He said his own division has doubled its recruitment of apprentices.

But one of the hurdles is persuading sub-contractors to take on apprentices' Hawkins said: "The lifetimes of these businesses are much shorter than Taylor Wimpey plc so we have to encourage them to invest in apprentices. It will cost



them and they won't necessarily see the fruits." He said that Taylor Wimpey is now looking to directly employ 20 to 30% of the apprentices employed on its sites.

As a longer term answer to its skills shortages headaches, Hawkins said the volume housebuilder's chief executive has set a target that 20% of the company's output should use timber frames:

"We can't go on doing what we are doing."

The company's other big headache is securing implementable planning permissions.

Dealing with reserved matters could add seven months onto securing a planning consent, while pre-application discussions lasting three to four months also had to be factored into the timetable, he said: "We have to find a way of shortening this" He said his division currently has seven outlets which are on track to deliver nearly 700 units this year.

And after a dip next year due to sequencing of sites, its output will grow to 800 units on land under its control, including Berwick Green, near Cribbs Causeway, where Taylor Wimpey



Gavin Bridge

Director, Cubex Land

©CubexLand



### **Ralph Hawkins**

Managing Director, Taylor Wimpey

@TaylorWimpey



hopes to start construction next year on its 450 new home share of a 1,000 home joint venture.

Andrew Dobson, Managing Director of Crest Nicholson, said the volume builder has been examining advanced panel systems, incorporating windows and insulation, which can be fabricated in a factory offsite and delivered to site. The homes can be wind and water tight within seven days of delivery, he said.

He said the system has been trialled for 12 months at one of the company's sites, where 500 people had been invited to see it in action.

The system has also been used to build 50 units had been Bath Riverside, where the company has outline planning permission for up to 2,281 residential units. Of these more than 700 homes have been delivered to date, including 205 affordable units.

Dobson said that across the south west, the company has 13 outlets and is currently building abot 650 units per annum.

The biggest of these is at Harry Stoke, north of Bristol, where Crest has secured resolution to grant consent from South Gloucestershire council for 2700 homes. He said the company will be rolling out its new housing range on the site and at Keynsham in Somerset where Crest is building 272 homes on a greenfield site comprising five land parcels.

Louise Swain, chief executive of Alliance Homes Group, told

delegates that the north Somerset-based social landlord has plans to deliver 1000 new homes, three quarters of which will be sub market and the balance for market sale with a total build cost of £176m. She also welcomed prime minister Theresa May's recent announcement of £2bn extra for housing association development:

# THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT HOUSING IS ON THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE. THE MORE PUBLIC MONEY WE CAN GET TO THE MORE WE CAN SCALE THINGS UP.

Swain said that Alliance is keen to collaborate with local authorities, pointing as an example to a development at Shirehampton where a grant from Bristol council had enabled an increased affordable element in what had initially been a predominantly market housing scheme.

Gavin Bridge, director of Cubex Land, told delegates that tall buildings have a place in Bristol but should not be regarded as a panacea for the city's housing shortages. "We should think about using the term taller rather than tall: nothing proposed in Brexit is a tall building."

And he said that Cubex has another 1,000 to 1,200 plots in its development pipeline indicates over the next 30 months. He said that build to rent could help to derisk developments by ensuring that cash can be generated when the scheme is completed rather than having to wait for sales receipts to flow in. He said:

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH BUILD TO RENT OPERATORS CAN DE-RISK DEVELOPMENTS AND WORKS WELL IN MIXED USE SCHEMES ALONG WITH HOTELS, OFFICES AND OPEN MARKET.

# Universities and Colleges

### **Panel Members:**



Saud Muhsinovic (Chair)

Global Practice Leader for Higher Education, Mott MacDonald

@MottMacDonald



**Sue Rigby** 

Vice Chancellor, Bath Spa University ● @BathSpaUni



Tom Britten

West of England Economic Growth Conference

Commercial Director, University of Bath

@UniofBath

# **DON'T OVERLOOK FURTHER EDUCATION, WARNS COLLEGE BOSS**

The west of England's development plans must cater for further education alongside primary and secondary schooling in order to provide career avenue for young people who do not pursue A-levels, the events Universities and Colleges session heard.

Keith Hamblin, executive principal of South Gloucestershire and Stroud College, said: "4,000 houses are being built within four miles of my campus which is 60 years old and has to be replaced but I can't replace it.

"The plans for the new homes suggests new primary and secondary schools but no provision is made for people not going onto A-level. If this is not sorted those young people will have nowhere to go when they reach 16 and they will be in trouble."

### WE HAVE TO DO A LOT BETTER TO ENSURE THAT WHEN PEOPLE LEAVE SCHOOL THERE IS A



PLACE FOR THEM TO GO AT 16. IF WE DON'T DO THIS, WE ARE **GOING TO HIT A WALL. WE HAVE** TO HAVE THE CAPACITY TO **RESPOND TO GROWING DEMAND** IN THE FUTURE.

There must be greater efforts to provide for young people who leave school to enter the workplace, like he did before reentering education later, said Hamblin; "Unless you don't engage that young person, that individual won't contribute to society."

And improving post-16 training had to be a collective effort, he said: "We cannot do this on our own: this is not an issue that can be solved by educational institutions, or by business or by local government. We all have to work together to make sure that there are the right people with the right skills in the market at the right time.

"Unless they are ready for work, we will have failed as an

And Hamblin understood why it is often not in smaller businesses' interest to train apprentices:

**SMES NEED TO SURVIVE DAY TO** DAY, THEY DON'T WANT TO PLAN FOR FIVE TO SEVEN YEARS **BECAUSE THEY MAY NOT BE** HERE.



Nigel Benton

Director of Apprenticeships & Employer Based Training. City of Bristol College

@CoBCollege



#### **Kevin Hamblin**

Executive Principal & Group Chief Executive, South Gloucestershire & Stroud College

@sas college



Policy makers meanwhile have to ensure there is provision for society's 'unsexy but essential roles', like social care and not just the perceived growth sectors, he said: "It's quite sexy to talk about these hi-tech tings but we should be supplying jobs at the base of the pyramid."

Tom Britten, commercial director at the University of Bath, said its proposed Institute for Advanced Automotive Propulsion Systems (IAAPS) will become one of the top three centres in the world for advanced propulsion systems research.

Relationships with manufacturers like Ford, McLaren and JLR could tap Bath's 'amazing' research.

Based at the Bristol and Bath Science Park, IAAPS will deliver 12,000 sg m of new research and office space. The £61m capital investment has been bankrolled by the university, HEFCE and the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership.

Professor Susan Rigby, vice chancellor, Bath Spa University, told delegates that its arts school is moving into new premises. Its old building could become a business school, including events space, which is in short supply in Bath, she added.

Rigby said that there is ample potential but limited resources to redevelop the Newton Park campus, which Bath Spa is keen to re-orientate so that the currently mixed up learning and residential facilities can be separated.

Nigel Benton, director of apprenticeships & employer-based training at City of Bristol College, used his presentation to give an overview of its Advanced Construction Skills Centre (ACSC).

He said the proposed development at South Bristol Skills Academy, boasts 2,500 sq m of new build and 700 sq m of refurbished space.

Benton said construction trades would mainly be relocated from college's Ashley Down campus to South Bristol. Two-thirds of the £9m cost has been provided by the West of England LEP:

IN ADDITION TO MAIN STUDIES, THEY WILL BE GAINING ADDITIONAL LIFE SKILLS SO THEY HAVE TANGIBLE EVIDENCE THAT DEMONSTRATES THEY HAVE NOT JUST TECHNICAL AND **ACADEMIC SKILLS BUT A WIDER** SKILL SET.



# Infrastructure

### **Panel Members:**



Vicki Redman (Chair) Partner, Womble Bond





**Andrew Page-Dove** 

South West Regional Director, Highways England @HighwaysEngland



**Dave Lees** 

Chief Executive Bristol Airport

**೨ ♥** @BristolAirport

### **BRISTOL AIRPORT BOSS BACKS** RAPID TRANSPORT PLANS

Bristol airport's long-term expansion rely on the delivery of plans for a rapid transit system in the West of England, its chief executive has warned.

Dave Lees told the Infrastructure session that rapid transit. whether it turns out to be light rail or tram, could be a 'game changer' in terms of the sub-region's infrastructure.

In the short term, the airport's expansion could be facilitated by improvements to the road network but more ambitious growth relied on rapid transit, he said:

### WE WON'T BE ABLE TO RELY ON THE ROADS IN THE FUTURE, WE **NEED TO SEE ALTERNATIVES** FROM A RESILIENCE AND AN **ENVIRONMENTAL PERSPECTIVE.**



Lees said Bristol Airport is seeking to double its annual passenger numbers from the 9m per annum that it currently handles to up to 20m by mid 40s.

The airport's current development plans are based on upgrading the existing terminal with a new canopy and improved public spaces, incorporating a premium lounge and a wider range of food, drink and shopping.

Lees said a purpose-built public transport interchange. comprising a coach and bus station as well as drop off points and taxi ranks, is central to these plans. The interchange will be connected to the terminal by a new enclosed walkway.

But growing annual passenger numbers to 15m by the mid-2030s would require extending the airport's operational area to the north of the runway to create more aircraft parking and a bigger terminal, he said.

Bristol Airport's plans have the government's backing,

### THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN VERY CLEAR THAT WE NEED TO **OPTIMISE USE OF THE REGIONAL AIRPORTS OF WHICH BRISTOL IS** THE FIFTH BIGGEST OUTSIDE OF LONDON'S AIRPORT SYSTEM.

And the area's combined authority provided the west of England with an opportunity to speak with a common voice to national decision makers in Westminster, he said: "They are listening but we need to articulate a very clear concise and powerful message."



John Chaplin

Director of External Affairs & Special Projects, Bristol Ports



#### Matt Wheeldon

Director of Assets and Compliance, Wessex Water

Andrew Page-Dove, regional director south west at Highways England, said that the agency is conducting work on remedying Bristol airport's position as the only regional airport without access to the strategic road network.

In terms of broader highways strategy, the region had to make more use of the existing capacity on its road network, he said: "Around Bristol we lose about 40% of capacity because of the way we use the infrastructure." And Page-Dove said the major road network of routes will have to play a much bigger role in

He also said the south west has been 'fantastically successful' at attracting cash from Highways England's £100m housing fund. He said the biggest prize on offer for the west of England from Homes England's Housing Infrastructure Fund is a bid being worked up to upgrade the M5.

John Chaplin, director of external affairs and special projects at Bristol Ports, used his presentation to showcase the key role the facility is playing in the construction of the new nuclear plant at nearby Hinkley Point in Somerset. He said that 2.5m tonnes of aggregates is due to be shipped into Bristol Port. It will then be taken down to nearby Hinkley where it will be unloaded using a temporary jetty managed from Bristol.

Chaplin said the port will also receive and transfer to the power station site abnormally large items of plant that are too wide, heavy or long to be transported on the highways network. He also said there is capacity on land north of Bristol port, the connectivity of which is due soon to be improved by an upgrade to its nearest junction on the M49, for more than 16m sq ft of light industrial and warehousing units.



Increased demand for supplies that will be created by growth in the south of England will create the need for better connections to ship water between regional water companies. said MW:

THE SOUTH OF ENGLAND HAS A **HUGE WATER DEFICIT: THE NEED** FOR GREATER INTERCONNECTIVITY **BETWEEN WATER COMPANIES IS** CRITICAL TO ENABLE GROWTH TO HAPPEN NOT JUST IN THE WEST OF ENGLAND BUT THROUGHOUT THE SOUTH OF THE COUNTRY.

And he warned that the opposition Labour party's plans to renationalise the water industry would put investment in the water industry at risk.

"The model for funding water and sewerage companies is working. We were privatised because there wasn't enough money. Private investors bring in the additional money needed to meet EU environmental standards: the privatised model is good for attracting investment." He added that the utility's five year investment plan, which was published in early September earmarks £180m improving service levels, reducing flooding, leaks and interruptions to supply.

But he said that Wessex would be spending more money working with farmers to improve the quality of water at source, such as by reducing nutrient pollution, rather than building new hard infrastructure.

Vicky Redman, the session's chair and partner at solicitors Womble Bond Dickinson, said that the combined authority's ioint spatial plan had been submitted for examination. identifying key locations for strategic housing growth,

And she said the joint local transport plan is scheduled for early adoption next year, while the west of England is working towards the formation of a western gateway transport authority to co-ordinate infrastructure in the area.

# Conference **Photos**















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