

#### About the Thames Valley and Reading & Wokingham Local Chamber Advisory Group (LCAG)

Thames Valley is a true turbo-economy - the 'Silicon Valley' of Europe and one of the UK's most productive regions. Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce Group (TVCC) is the independent voice of business in the region.

The Greater Reading area is consistently one of the most productive, top-performing locations in the UK, continually attracting high volumes of foreign direct investment. The Reading and Wokingham Chamber represents businesses of all sizes across an array of sectors, including financial & professional services, life sciences and technology.



#### Aim and Objective

This policy statement summarises the core local policy priorities this Chamber will support throughout 2021. Like the strategic priorities, set out in the Business Manifesto 2021, they reflect the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and our transition out of the EU. The objective is to help ensure that our region's decision makers and key stakeholders hear a clear voice from businesses as to what we consider important and decision makers understand what to focus on delivering. It is also an invitation to those partners to engage with businesses and the LCAG to help shape, frame and deliver solutions that will secure the economic prosperity of the local area and wider Thames Valley region.

#### Local Policy Priorities

The Reading & Wokingham LCAG has identified the following local policy priorities:

- As appropriate and relevant to our business community, support proposals that deliver Thames Valley Berkshire LEP's Local Economic Recovery Plan.
- Back proposals for the development of 'Innovation Valleys' and the preparation of a comprehensive master plan for the Thames Valley Science Park site.
- Champion local initiatives that support the recovery of the transport sector and rebuild confidence in travelling on public transport. Maintain our support for the third River Thames crossing.
- Foster stronger business-focused relationships with all levels of education, to build a greater understanding of the world of work and the skills and knowledge required of business for its future workforce. Promote initiatives that encourage business and academic institutions to focus on skills transfer and diversification.
- Maintain support to existing exporters and help new businesses grow their trade activity.
- Preserve our active partnerships with significant local groups and anchor institutions and key commercial landowners, to achieve our wider policy aims and objectives.
- Promote initiatives that support a green recovery, and proposals that are helping to build a local economy centred around climate change, sustainability principles and social purpose. Promote the sectors where Reading and Wokingham (and Berkshire as a whole) have evidential strengths to support foreign direct investment into the area.
- Support initiatives that re-imagine Reading and Wokingham town centres, encourage appropriate levels of investment and active town centre management that will help secure its future vitality and vibrancy and employment opportunities.

- Support the plans of the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust to re-imagine healthcare provision across Berkshire and deliver one of the most significant developments in health service provision since 1839.
- Support proposals that can help secure the appropriate mix of development and the highest standard of urban design, planning and infrastructure provision.

## Strategic Policy Background

Our LCAG priorities form an integral part to the wider TVCC regional programme detailed in the four main priorities set out in the Business Manifesto 2021. Together, they form policies and actions behind which the whole Chamber network will focus:

- **Resilient Infrastructure Networks:** Promote the need for investment in a resilient infrastructure network for the Thames Valley, strengthening provision of physical and digital networks that will support the region's future sustainable economic growth and innovation.
- **Low-Carbon, Green Economy:** Be an advocate for in-region excellence and thought leadership, supporting the greater awareness and understanding of the steps we all need to take for a more sustainable, low carbon, 'green' future for the Thames Valley.
- **EU Exit Transition:** Use the Chamber's experience to provide our businesses community with relevant support and practical information as Britain transitions out of the EU and to lobby Government to ensure frictionless trade, investment and freedom of movement for the workforce.
- **Restart, Rebuild, Renew:** Continue to support initiatives that will 'Invest in the Success' of the region, its productivity and the wider levelling-up agenda, and the "Restart, Rebuild, Renew" of the UK and Thames Valley economy, post COVID-19.



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[www.thamesvalleychamber.co.uk](http://www.thamesvalleychamber.co.uk)

