

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

The 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 (TVCC) is the independent voice of business in the region.

The Greater Reading area is one of high growth and high productivity, consistently securing increasing levels of foreign direct investment.



The Reading & Wokingham Chamber represents businesses of all sizes across an array of sectors, including advanced engineering, creative industries, life sciences, robotics, space, and technology.

## Aim and Objective

This policy statement summarises the core local policy priorities this Chamber will support throughout 2022. Like the strategic priorities set out in the [Business Manifesto 2022](#), they reflect the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and how we deal with the continued challenges of the EU transition.

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:

- Be the independent voice of local business, providing decision makers and key stakeholders with informed input that promotes the value of community engagement and business reputation.
- Preserve our active partnerships with relevant key stakeholders, anchor institutions, including the University of Reading and Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust (RBfT) and key commercial landowners, to achieve our wider policy aims and objectives.

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- Encourage proposals that can help secure the appropriate mix of development and the highest standard of urban design, planning, and infrastructure provision.
- Work with industry and key stakeholders in the education and training sector to support initiatives that will help secure skills development and training.
- Support appropriate local transport initiatives that strengthen confidence in travelling by public transport and lead to its sustained recovery.
- Monitor progress in the preparation of the revised Local Plan Update: [Revised Growth Strategy](#) for Wokingham Borough and contribute accordingly.
- Support proposals that strength public transport connections to Heathrow airport.
- Maintain our long-term commitment 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.
- Promote initiatives that support a green recovery, and proposals that are helping to build a local economy centred around net-zero, sustainability principles and social purpose.
- Support initiatives that re-imagine Reading and Wokingham town centres, encourage appropriate levels of investment and active town centre management that will help secure their future vitality, vibrancy, and employment opportunities.
- Maintain our efforts to promote the sectors where Reading and Wokingham are evidentially strong and support new investors to deliver sustained levels of activity that secures higher volumes and value FDI projects.
- Support plans for the redevelopment of the RBfT, helping re-imagine healthcare provision across Berkshire.

## Strategic Policy Background

Our LCAG priorities form an integral part of the wider TVCC regional programme detailed in the three main priorities set out in the Business Manifesto 2022. Together, they form policies and actions behind which the whole Chamber network will focus:

- 1. Helping secure investment in resilient infrastructure, utility, and sustainable networks:** promoting the need for investment to deliver resilient digital and transportation networks across the Thames Valley that will support the region's future sustainable economic growth, showcase innovation and green technologies, and which support our move to a net-zero economy.
- 2. Ensuring trade and inward investment continues to flow in a post-EU transition environment:** providing Thames Valley businesses with the relevant, direct, and practical information and support they require to 'build back better', trade overseas more efficiently and improve UK plc's inward investment and trade figures; Lobby Government to ensure we have frictionless trade, freedom of movement for the workforce and investment in appropriate skills.
- 3. Regional leadership and showcasing the region as a key contributor to levelling-up:** supporting initiatives that invest in the success of the region's sustainable economic growth and productivity; Showcase the contributions investing in the Thames Valley can make to the levelling-up agenda.



**Marcus Johnson**  
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Chamber of Commerce



**Paul Britton**  
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