

# BERKSHIRE

## Local Area Assembly

### Local Policy Priorities Statement 2023



#### ABOUT THE THAMES VALLEY AND BERKSHIRE LOCAL AREA ASSEMBLY

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) provides the regional leadership that is helping secure the future economic prosperity of the Thames Valley.

Berkshire has long been associated with being the home of international global brands and having a strong concentration of technology-related businesses. It is also home to numerous high-growth start-ups and spinouts, whose IP-rich, innovation driven business models are contributing to the creation of a uniquely strong and vibrant local economy across many sectors. These include strength in creative industries, health and life sciences and advanced engineering alongside evolving technology sub-sectors, including AI, cyber-security, and data centres.



Berkshire's proximity to Heathrow airport, the UK's only hub airport, continues to drive extraordinary levels of foreign direct investment and international trading companies choosing to locate here, helping to shape one of UK's most dynamic and productive economies.

#### AIM AND OBJECTIVE

As the independent voice of local business in Berkshire, our LPPS outlines the core policy priorities our members will be mobilised to support this year. In 2023 we have drawn together a single LPPS for the whole of Berkshire to help ensure effective representation on behalf of our members and the wider business community.



We aim to maintain the momentum from past LPPSs to ensure we remain focused on helping decision makers, and key stakeholders, listen to and understand what Berkshire's business wants, enabling them to succeed and prosper.

Our objective is to present a clear and coherent message on the right local conditions to enable business to invest, plan for the long-term, work towards meeting net zero targets and secure Berkshire's future economic, social, and environmental well-being.

It is also an invitation to engage with the Local Area Assembly, and our wider membership, who are keen to represent the voice of business and to work alongside you to help shape, frame and deliver solutions that will secure the future well-being of Berkshire and the wider Thames Valley region.

## LOCAL POLICY PRIORITIES

The Berkshire Local Area Assembly has identified the following local policy priorities:

- Engage our key stakeholders and anchor institutions to help deliver the wider aims of our collective policy, economic and investment aims and objectives.
- Showcase the good practice and promote the initiatives being developed by TVCC's Sustainability Working Group (SWG) to help business on their pathway to net-zero, help SMEs navigate the ESG landscape.
- Preserve our active partnerships with relevant partners to achieve our wider policy aims and objectives across the economic geography of the County and wider Thames Valley.
- Support key infrastructure proposals that (i) are crucial to stimulating investment and boosting growth in the Berkshire economy, such as the [WRLtH](#); (ii) promote wider use and availability of public transport to key nodes, such as Heathrow; (iii) provide smart multi-modal mobility & simple ticketing; (iv) optimise the provision of low carbon alternatives.
- On specific local issues (i.e., at Unitary Authority level) maintain our direct engagement the leaders and key stakeholders.
- Through TVCC's role as designated Employer Representative Body for Berkshire, lead work to pioneer a new approach to skills, bringing together business and education providers to tackle skills shortages in priority areas (see [LSIP](#)).
- Maintain support to existing exporters and help other businesses grow their trade activity, by identifying and addressing the inherent trade challenges facing our business community.

- Support initiatives that re-imagine Berkshire main town centres, encourage appropriate levels of investment and active town centre management that will help secure their future vitality, vibrancy, and employment opportunities.
- Work to help promote the County's key commercial assets (e.g., Slough Industrial Estate, Green Park, Thames Valley Science Park, and Jealott's Hill) and centres of excellence as key drivers for higher volumes and value of investment.
- Foster a greater awareness of the mental health, well-being and corporate benefits of employee and community engagement.

## A LOCAL ENGAGEMENT, REGIONAL REPRESENTATION AND GLOBAL OPPORTUNITY

The LAA priorities form an integral part of our wider work programme and commitment to regional leadership detailed in our Business Manifesto 2023. This includes a focus on four main priorities. Together, they form policies and actions on which the whole Chamber network will focus:

1

**Secure investment in resilient infrastructure and utility networks:** promote the continued investment in key digital and transportation networks to ensure they remain resilient to the future needs of business.

2

**Expand the depth of our support and services to enable trade and inward investment flows to continue:** provide our members with the relevant, direct, practical support and policy information required to operate efficiently and effectively.

3

**Deliver regional leadership:** support initiatives and promote the contribution our members are making to deliver the region's future sustainable economic well-being, productivity growth and pathway towards net zero.

4

**Put employers at the centre of the skills system and build a stronger and more dynamic partnership between employers and further education providers:** through our leadership of two Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs).



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