

South West ENGLAND

Unlocking the region's business potential

Here in South West England we are privileged to live and work in one of the most beautiful - and most interesting - parts of Europe. The South West is a region of innovation and enterprise, proud of its past and looking forward positively to a future where we can work with partners to create a sustainable economy for our long term future.

Five million people live in the region and over 15 million visitors are drawn here annually by our natural, built and cultural heritage. So our environment is vital not just for its own sake, but because of the contribution it makes to the economy and overall quality of life.

Since we were established in 1999, we've invested nearly £1.2bn in the region's economy helping to create or safeguard over 30,000 jobs; nearly 70,000 learning opportunities; attract £494m of private sector investment; support 1437 business start ups and helped reclaim over 600 hectares of brownfield land.

So what of the future? What kind of economy do we want to see in the South West in twenty or so years' time, and how can the South West RDA contribute to making this happen?

At the heart of our role is a simple vision: to lead the

development of a sustainable economy in South West England, investing to unlock the region's business potential.

Firstly, we want to drive up productivity by focusing on people's skills, innovation, the environment, enterprise and transport, and communications infrastructure.

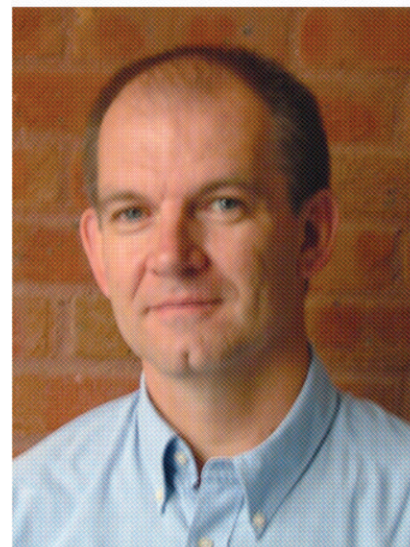
Secondly, it is vital that we achieve economic growth whilst maintaining the quality of our environment. To help achieve this we want to reduce our own and the region's carbon footprint by working to make our overall annual interventions zero carbon by 2013.

And lastly, but by no means least, we are looking at focusing our

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efforts in a number of priority places. These include Bristol, Plymouth, Swindon, Exeter and Camborne-Pool-Redruth in Cornwall.

The latest Government figures suggest that we are on the right track, with the South West's productivity on the rise and closing the gap on its counterparts in other regions, edging closer to Scotland



and the East of England. Taking into account figures from previous years, the South West's economy is tending to grow faster than the UK average, meaning that the region has improved its income per person - all of which is good news for the future of the region and everyone who lives here. IAN PIPER, SOUTH WEST RDA DIRECTOR OF SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

**INTRODUCTION
SOUTH WEST RDA**