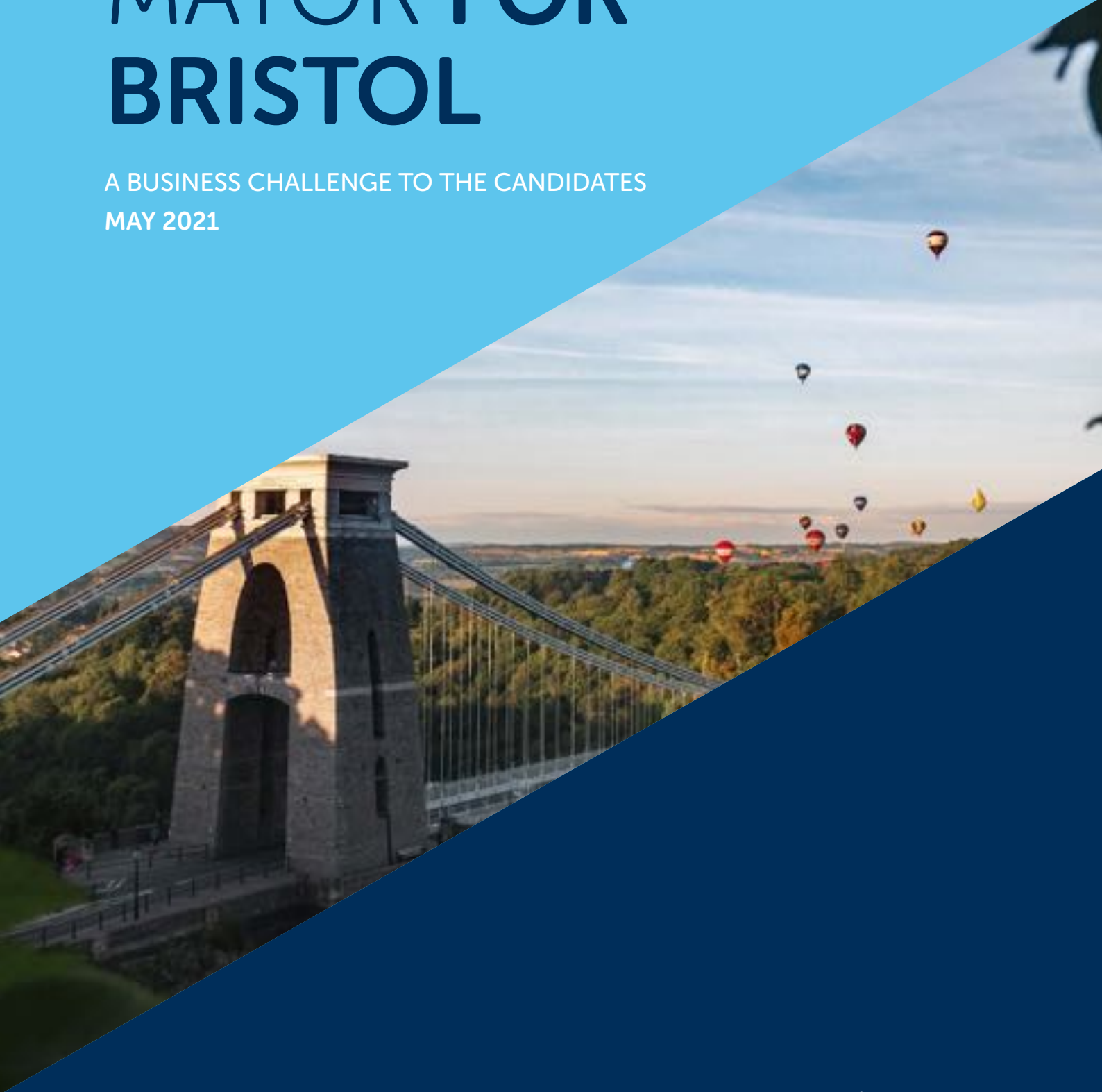


# AN ELECTED MAYOR **FOR** **BRISTOL**

A BUSINESS CHALLENGE TO THE CANDIDATES  
MAY 2021



# AN ELECTED MAYOR FOR BRISTOL

## A BUSINESS CHALLENGE TO THE CANDIDATES

Those of us who live and work here know that Bristol is special. A city whose people are innovative, creative, energetic, ambitious but also unorthodox. We went into the Covid-19 crisis in an economically strong position, having performed well on most measures of business and economic health over the last decades. Bristolians are resilient and adaptable, but this last year has tested and challenged them like no other.

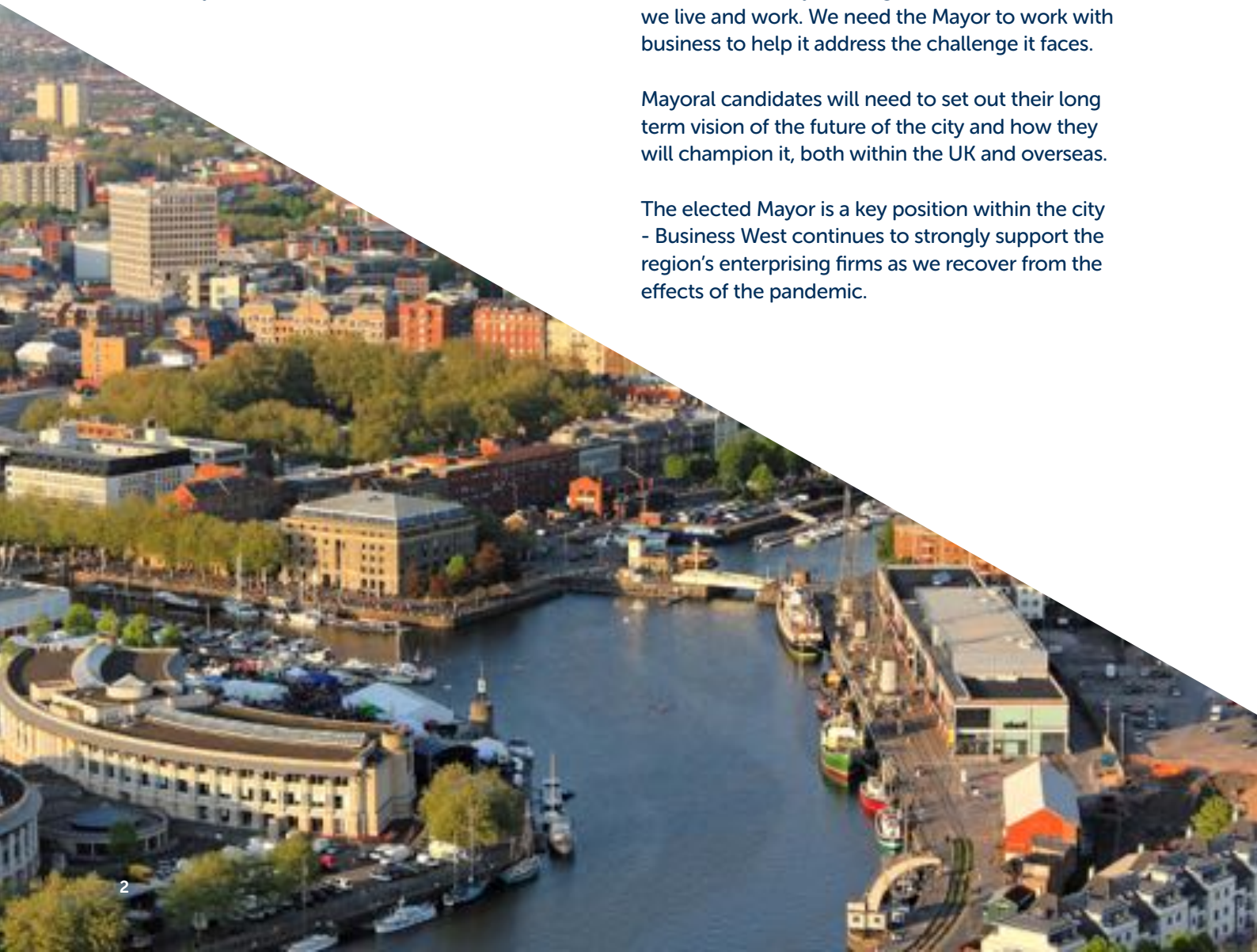
People and businesses come to our city because it is a great place to live. But we are also a city scarred by deep inequalities. Too many of our citizens are excluded from participating in the wealth our city creates, and disparities in health, education and housing damage lives and threaten the prosperity of the city.

The importance of social cohesion cannot be overstated, nor can the reputational damage for the whole city where disorder is seen in national and international media coverage. We urge the successful Mayoral candidate, working closely with the police and city partners, to ensure protests remain peaceful and the safety of residents and visitors to our city is secured.

The 2021 Mayoral election will set the city's objectives for the next four years when we face very significant challenges that have shifted priorities at a local and national level. Strong engagement and working with the business community is vital to enable the private sector to deliver sustainable and inclusive economic growth, which will benefit the whole community and begin to de-carbonise how we live and work. We need the Mayor to work with business to help it address the challenge it faces.

Mayoral candidates will need to set out their long term vision of the future of the city and how they will champion it, both within the UK and overseas.

The elected Mayor is a key position within the city - Business West continues to strongly support the region's enterprising firms as we recover from the effects of the pandemic.



## CHALLENGE #1

### ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND GROWTH

In the wake of the pandemic, the Mayor must continue to work in partnership with businesses and communities, through platforms such as the One City Economy Board, to address the many challenges our city faces. The recovery vision ought to be an ambitious one, which embraces these challenges and sets out a concrete agenda for dealing with them.

#### We call on the Mayor to:

- Channel extensive business support and sizeable investment to ensure a rapid recovery of the city's worst hit businesses, and prioritise support for young people.
- Set out a plan to encourage visitors back into the city through events and campaigns.
- Set out a plan for city centre regeneration, giving empty retail space a more diverse use and providing spaces for local businesses to grow.
- Focus on social inclusion, working with businesses as corporate citizens to bring our communities together to improve access to education and employment.
- Support start-ups and smaller businesses in their growth challenges.

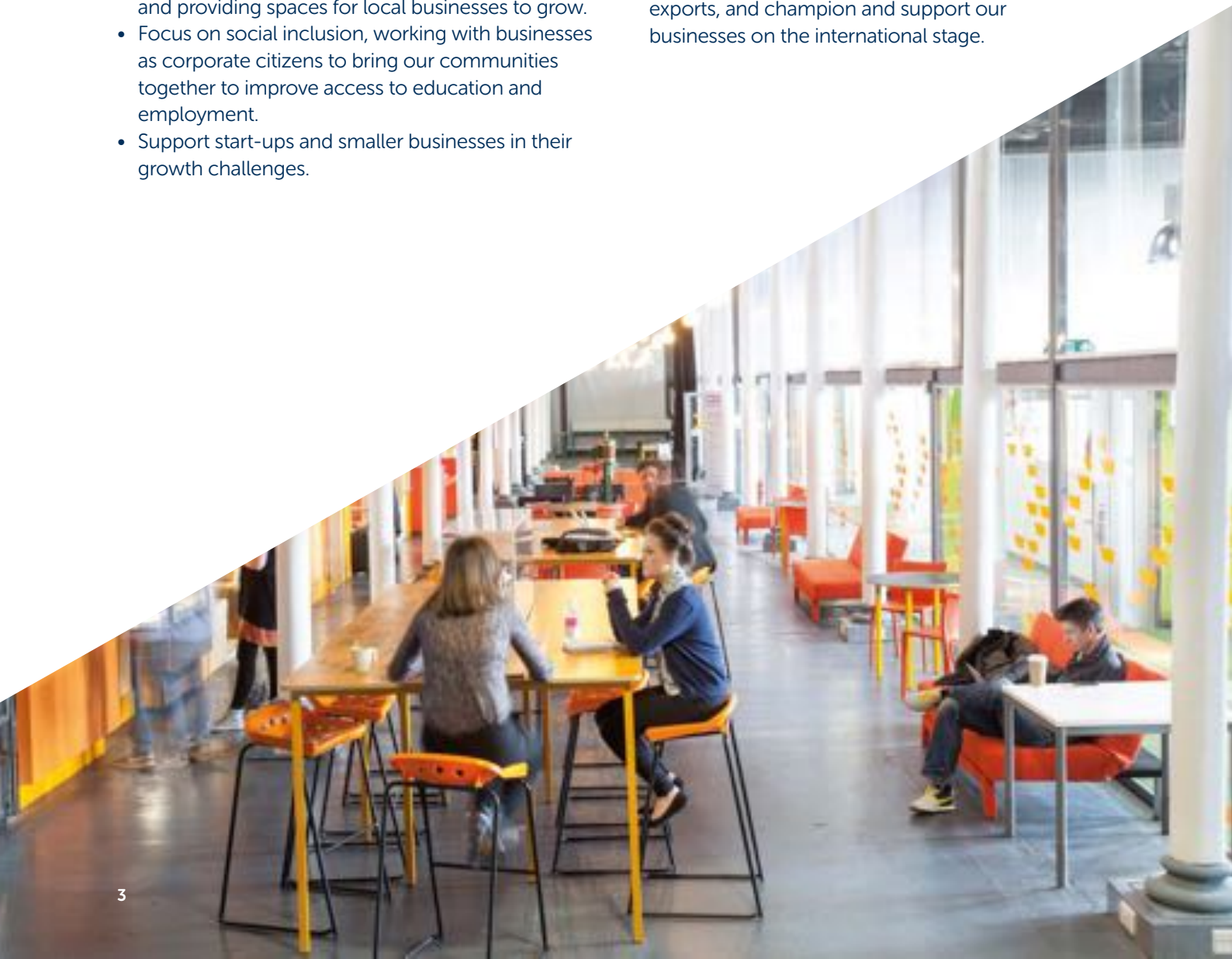
## CHALLENGE #2

### REGIONAL, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Bristol is a major regional and national economic centre and an international leader in a number of economic growth clusters. It is vital to maintain our links to established trade markets and forge new ones. Bristol needs an outstanding and outward looking leader to achieve this.

#### We call on the Mayor to:

- Be a national and international figurehead, promoting our city to win local and international investment.
- Work closely with neighbouring authorities via the West of England Combined Authority for ambitious regional transport and infrastructure investment.
- Work in partnership with the Bristol business community.
- Promote investment opportunities, encourage exports, and champion and support our businesses on the international stage.





## CHALLENGE #3

### CLIMATE CHANGE

In recent years Bristol has led efforts to fight climate change. From the first European Climate Emergency declaration in 2018 to the 2030 carbon neutrality target, the city of Bristol has set an ambitious climate agenda.

#### We call on the Mayor to:

- Fulfill its climate commitments without leaving anyone behind, offering enough support to businesses in the sectors facing the biggest barriers to change.
- Deliver the CityLeap project with affordable energy rates for residents, and attract talent and capital to further develop the clean energy cluster in the city.
- Build partnerships with the business community, via the Bristol Green Capital Partnership and other platforms including Business West, to find solutions for a more sustainable and carbon neutral way of life.
- Offer comprehensive support to businesses affected by the incoming Clean Air Zone.

## CHALLENGE #4

### DELIVERING THE HOUSING BRISTOL NEEDS

Bristol has sharply rising housing costs and is now one of the least affordable cities in the UK when measured against average local salaries. This has significant social implications, and detrimental impact on the city's businesses, the well-being of our workforce and our ability to attract and retain new talent. Bristol has made good progress in building new and affordable homes during the past four years. This needs to continue.

#### We call on the Mayor to:

- Produce an action plan within the first 100 days of taking office as Mayor to get Bristol building more homes, including at least 2,000 new homes annually.
- Commit to raising the planned levels of housing within the West of England's Joint Spatial Plan, so that it has a meaningful impact on future housing affordability.
- Continue to use Bristol City Council's own assets and borrowing capacity to deliver more new affordable homes close to existing or planned infrastructure and on brownfield sites.



## CHALLENGE #5

### GETTING OUR INFRASTRUCTURE RIGHT

A thriving economy requires effective transport and digital infrastructure. For too long, Bristol has missed opportunities to create a truly integrated public transport system. Despite the major schemes now under construction, which we have supported to make happen, the current state of our transport network remains poor. Bristol is frequently recognised as one of the most congested cities in the UK with poor air quality, which limits local growth, harms public health and portrays a negative image for the city and wider region.

#### We call on the Mayor to:

- Work together with neighbouring authorities and WECA, to deliver a city and city region transport plan with major investments to reduce congestion, address climate change and drive a major behavioural change programme.
- Start to put into place a long term mass transit system with particular focus on services to the region's travel to work areas.
- Enhance local and regional cycling and walking infrastructure, as requested by the Bristol Cycling Works Campaign.
- Lead and deliver on low emission transport infrastructure, including charging point capacity.
- Extend and improve bus services and their reliability to continue to drive up bus passenger usage.
- Deliver an orbital route around the South East side of the city to improve access to South Bristol and remove traffic from the city centre.
- Improve the commuter rail network investing in increasing capacity, rolling stock and stations, including the delivery of an ambitious version of Metro West Phase 2.
- Work to meet the current funding gap to transform Bristol Temple Meads station into a modern, 21st Century Western rail hub for the UK.
- Deliver, in partnership with South Gloucestershire Council, a new Park and Ride mobility hub for the M32.
- Work to improve surface access to Bristol Airport and Bristol Port for passengers and freight.

## CHALLENGE #6

### SKILLS & EDUCATION ACCESSIBLE TO ALL

Bristol has made significant progress on education and skills. However, businesses continue to tell us that they find it difficult to attract people with the right skills, preparedness and attitudes for the local labour market. In the home city of two world-renowned universities, there are too many who are still not progressing and developing – this educational attainment gap in our adult residents must be addressed.

#### We call on the Mayor to:

- Build on the Learning City Partnership to put education and lifelong learning at the centre of how people of all ages are supported.
- Work with the business community, universities, colleges and stakeholders to deliver a city skills plan that fully addresses business needs.
- Work with the business community to increase interaction and exposure for younger and older people with Bristol based companies and the world of work.
- Work with schools to close the gap in educational performance in the city, so that children from deprived backgrounds have outcomes that match the English national average.
- Address the uneven impacts of the pandemic on skills and employment including interventions to help those who have lost their jobs retrain and improve their employment prospects.
- Prioritise support to tackle digital exclusion for all young people.

## CHALLENGE #7

### CULTURE, SPORT AND QUALITY OF PLACE

Our cultural and sporting offer is pivotal to our city region's economic growth. Bristol is regularly voted as one of the best places to live and visit in the UK, and our world class culture, arts and festival scene are a key driver behind this. The Covid-19 crisis has had a disproportionate impact on these industries.

#### We call on the Mayor to:

- Recognise the link between cultural investment, sport and shared economic prosperity.
- Guarantee necessary investment in our 'cultural and sporting offer', ensuring our venues, facilities and other visitor attractions continue to be funded and cherished.
- Support the new Bristol Beacon, YTL Arena Bristol, Ashton Gate developments and active management of the Floating Harbour as a key city asset.

## CHALLENGE #8

### THE NEXT PHASE OF CITY GROWTH

Bristol has been transforming itself over the past two decades, creating many new jobs, homes and workspaces in the process.

The city's central shopping area needs further investment with major changes in retailing, and other areas of the city, including Castle Park and South Bristol, could also be transformed through ambitious interventions.

#### We call on the Mayor to:

- Deliver key city developments including Temple Quarter, University of Bristol's new campus, Redcliffe and Temple BID and Ashton Gate.
- Drive investment into our digital infrastructure to meet the needs of commercial, educational and R&D uses, including 5G rollout.
- Set out plans to unlock development on key brownfield regeneration areas in a way that protects jobs and businesses in these areas.
- Outline new employment land and workspace opportunities for the next generation, addressing the shortcomings in current plans.
- Establish a culture of positive planning within the council, which is properly resourced and outcome led, and gives businesses a role in shaping Bristol's future growth.

**Business West – Chamber & Initiative looks forward to working with the Mayor over the next four years.**

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