



# AGENDA 2030

The Stephen Williams Plan  
for West of England Transformation



A MAYOR WHO WILL  
**STAND UP FOR THE WEST**

## STEPHEN WILLIAMS

LIBERAL DEMOCRAT CANDIDATE FOR **REGIONAL MAYOR** OF THE WEST OF ENGLAND

"We need a regional champion who will stand up for the West of England. If I am elected mayor I will get a great new deal from London, and deliver an exciting future for the region that is both prosperous and green."

*Stephen Williams*

# AGENDA **2030**

**The Stephen Williams Plan**  
*for West of England Transformation*

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foreword from

# STEPHEN WILLIAMS



**The West of England has been left behind for far too long. We've all seen hundreds of millions of pounds of government money go to other regions, transforming their transport systems and helping grow their local economies. That must change, we must get our fair share. We need a new regional mayor who will stand up for the West of England. I want to use all my experience in business, as an MP and government minister to be our champion in London and around the world.**

Devolution of power from London to England's city regions started just four years ago. It should have been an exciting opportunity for Bath, Bristol and the surrounding towns and villages in South Gloucestershire and North East Somerset. It was a chance to shape our local economic development and crack some of the transport problems that have remained unsolved for decades. We could have planned strategically and holistically how to grow our communities, with new homes and places of work. Unfortunately, that opportunity has been squandered by a Conservative mayor who has been invisible in our region and ignored by London. We cannot afford another four years of weak and ineffective leadership by an inexperienced Conservative.

Our region may be small, compared to London or the West Midlands. But we pack a big economic punch. The West of England, centred on its cities of Bath and Bristol, is the most prosperous city region outside London.

A MAYOR WHO WILL  
**STAND UP FOR THE WEST**

Our vibrant economy is a net contributor of taxes to the Treasury. Our products are consumed the world over and people from around the world visit us. Yet we continue to be over-looked by central government. Investment in public transport goes elsewhere. Our achievements in culture and technology are undersold compared to other regions, let alone London. We need a new mayor who will promote with vigour our attributes and help the region become even more successful.

The actions of our new regional mayor in the next four years will help determine how far we recover from the two shocks of Brexit and Covid. It will not be enough to go back to how we were before these events. We must make sure that we tackle locally the causes of climate change. We must ensure that opportunities in our economy are shared fairly. The West of England bounce back must be both green and socially just.

I want to lead the region to becoming England's first carbon neutral economy by 2030. I want to give everyone the chance to succeed in England's most prosperous region. These objectives won't happen under another Conservative mayor. I hope that the ideas contained in this manifesto excite you and that you will let me use my long experience to make them a reality. If I become the next mayor of the West of England I will deliver an exciting future for you that is both prosperous and green.

Stephen Williams





# STEPHEN WILLIAMS'

SIX POINT PLAN FOR A GREEN RECOVERY

A MAYOR WHO WILL  
**STAND UP FOR THE WEST**



### Create a West of England Centre of Excellence for Green Technology

bringing together the region's leading innovators to develop new products and services, making the region the national leader in green jobs.



**GREEN TECHNOLOGY**



### Create a West of England Investment Fund

with an initial value of £100million from the British Business Bank, to invest in local innovative businesses.



**INVEST IN THE WEST**



### Create a West of England Homes Social Enterprise

to build new climate friendly homes for sale and private rental, with the surplus to be invested in homes for social rent.



**FUTURE HOMES**

### Take control of our buses

by using the power to franchise all routes, leading to new services linking towns and villages, regulated fares and non-polluting buses.



**CONTROL OF OUR BUSES**

### Drive forward a massive programme of tree planting

with all new developments to include a range of native trees and enabling all local communities to get involved in local tree planting.



**TREE PLANTING**

### Seek extra powers from government

including the highest carbon reduction standards for new homes, control of local business rates, regulating short break lets and a potential tourist tax.



**NEW POWERS**



# CLIMATE CHANGE

FINDING SOLUTIONS IN THE WEST OF ENGLAND



Stephen Williams will be a mayor who puts a sustainable recovery from the shocks of Covid and Brexit at the heart of his administration – tackling climate change and championing a green economy. He will protect our local natural environment, declaring a West of England Ecological Emergency. As far as is possible in a region of over a hundred towns and villages he will develop “20 minute communities” – where the everyday needs of life are no more than a short walk, cycle or bus ride away.

## STEPHEN'S FURTHER IDEAS FOR LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION

- ◆ Stephen as Regional Mayor will be an effective lobbying voice on the national stage for clean energy.
- ◆ Work with the grid provider to make sure we can get the huge uplift needed in electric vehicle charging provision and also to facilitate local energy production.
- ◆ Set up a West of England Solar Together scheme, to get economies of scale for households installing photo-voltaic panels.
- ◆ Start a call for renewable energy sites, to provide the clean energy, such as solar, hydro and wind schemes we need. We will actively promote district heating projects, where shared infrastructure can lead to lower bills and sharply reduced carbon emissions.
- ◆ Initiate a community suggestion scheme, to help identify new on shore wind turbine and solar farm sites.
- ◆ Work with local government to be supportive of community led clean energy schemes.
- ◆ Oppose shale gas fracking and any other fossil fuel extraction.
- ◆ Work with farmers and landowners to protect and restore the natural landscape, acknowledging their critical role in local food production, rural employment, tourism, leisure and well-being.
- ◆ Ensure a variety of tree species are planted in new construction developments.
- ◆ Work with the Environment Agency and the water companies to make all of our rivers and streams clean by 2030.
- ◆ Open up more more sections of river banks for safe and attractive walking and cycling routes into towns and our cities, eg the Frome from Dodington to central Bristol.
- ◆ Set up a register of West of England food producers and develop a product mark, to support local food and locally manufactured goods.
- ◆ Work with producers and retailers to increase provision of locally produced food and other products
- ◆ Host an annual West of England Produce Festival, with events in Bath, Bristol and all our towns and local high streets.
- ◆ Set a target with the local authorities to reduce household waste sent to landfill to below 10% by 2030.
- ◆ Intensify work with commercial sector to reduce food waste and to catch up with household levels of recycling.
- ◆ Work with local businesses to reduce packaging, developing West of England recognition awards for businesses that eliminate single use plastic.
- ◆ Embed in land use planning the concept of like-minded clusters of businesses (“symbiotic industrial relationships”), for instance zones for digital and creative businesses or food manufacturing.

## STEPHEN'S TOP FIVE IDEAS FOR OUR LOCAL ENVIRONMENT

- 1 | Set up a West of England Centre of Excellence for Green Technology.** Bringing together the region's universities, leading businesses and skills providers to develop new products and training packages for a carbon neutral regional economy by 2030
- 2 | Massive programme of tree planting** – increasing land area covered by broad leaved native species and bridging gaps between existing forests
- 3 | Identify more points on the Avon suitable for hydro power** and find an operator and work with the Welsh Government to harness the power of the Severn
- 4 | Agree a 2030 target for local clean energy use,** measured against locally produced clean energy and customers switching to clean energy tariffs
- 5 | By 2030 identify roughly a third of urban area and nature corridors that can support local wildlife and biodiversity**





# PROSPERITY IN A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY



Stephen Williams wants to build an economy that delivers prosperity, sustainability and inclusivity. Our economic recovery from the shocks of Brexit and Covid must be green and contribute to social justice. The West of England is the country's most prosperous city region outside London. Stephen will work with employers, training providers and other agencies to make sure that everyone has the opportunity to share that prosperity.

- ◆ Give particular attention to the sectors likely to have been damaged the most – aerospace, culture, tourism and hospitality.
- ◆ Decarbonise the West of England economy, becoming the lead region for clean energy, from a combination of solar, wind and hydro power. Plan for the transfer of skilled workers from Hinckley C power station as its construction winds down.
- ◆ Create thousands of skilled jobs through retrofitting homes with the insulation, glazing and cleaner power sources that are needed to drive down domestic heating bills and cut carbon emissions.
- ◆ Provide new construction and engineering jobs by decarbonising our local transport network. These jobs will be delivered through investment in new rail services and the completion of fully electrified lines, re-purposing all park & ride sites and car parks into multi-modal transport hubs and installing electric vehicle charging points across the region.
- ◆ Complement the rural economy and traditional agriculture with new biotechnology, attracting to the West of England a producer of clean meat.
- ◆ Seek from government the power to reintroduce in the West of England the Zero Carbon Homes standards (with Allowable Solutions) that Stephen took through Parliament, in the Infrastructure Act 2015. This will be a major economic boost for the region.
- ◆ Use land use planning powers to set aside space for Small Business Zones for start-ups and social enterprises.
- ◆ Seek from government the extra powers needed to become a pioneer in flexible green taxes, expanding the planned clean air zones into wider road user pricing. Net proceeds would be reinvested in subsidising clean public transport.
- ◆ Seek from government the extra powers needed to levy an overnight visitor and tourist levy, charged on hotel bedrooms, all small bed and breakfast providers and including Airbnb houses. Net proceeds would be reinvested in the visitor economy, for instance by supporting local museums, public toilets, signage and street cleaning.
- ◆ Seek from government the power and resources to run a regional trial of Universal Basic Income. The various government economic reliefs during the Covid pandemic have not protected everyone who has suffered major loss or total loss of earnings. A universal (also known as unconditional) basic income would provide a floor for everyone.
- ◆ Seek from government not just the devolution of 100% of business rates revenue but also the power to vary rates between economic activities, to support high streets and new local businesses.

## STEPHEN'S IDEAS FOR GREEN AND INCLUSIVE PROSPERITY

- ◆ Set up a West of England Investment Fund, with a requested initial resource pot of £100million, managed by the British Business Bank, which was set up by the Coalition Government. This will put us on a par with the Northern Powerhouse and Midlands Engine.
- ◆ The WoEIF would support regional businesses through equity stakes, long term debt, small business loans and to support innovation there would be a proof of concept fund
- ◆ Explore the possibility of the Avon Pension Fund and other regional pension funds becoming partner investors in WECA promoted schemes.
- ◆ The WoEIF would complement the activities of the emerging Avon Mutual, an independent proposal for the first new regionally focussed financial institution in a century. Subject to thorough due diligence, Stephen would favour the Combined Authority becoming a founder investor, using the return to support the WoEIF.
- ◆ Stephen would also explore the set up or attraction to the region of banks that have a local focus to retain more of our locally generated wealth and innovative development.
- ◆ There must be an urgent recast of WECA's Industrial Strategy (2019) so that it plots a path to a carbon neutral economy by 2030, taking into account the need for a strong recovery from the shocks of Covid and Brexit.
- ◆ Have strong focus on the people who have been hit hardest by recent economic shocks, especially those without the formal skills needed to maximise their chances of finding new rewarding work and to navigate an uncertain future.
- ◆ Some of the sectors hit hard such as hospitality and retail disproportionately employ women and people from ethnic minorities, all plans must address gender imbalances and race equality.





## SKILLS FOR A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY



Stephen Williams will use the mayor's devolved skills budget to equip West of England people with the skills needed for an ever changing world. He will bring together Further Education colleges, universities and private sector skills providers to harness their research, innovation and teaching capacities to work for a carbon neutral West of England by 2030. Stephen will make sure that skills funding enables all adults to access the appropriate training for them to fulfil their potential.

### STEPHEN'S IDEAS FOR A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

- ◆ Engage with the construction industry to identify the skills needed for new build, retrofit and clean energy installation.
- ◆ Work with employers to reduce the gender gap in engineering and construction.
- ◆ Employment and skills training hubs must be accessible by green travel routes and provide on line learning, with priority for access from disadvantaged areas.
- ◆ Set up a commission to agree a West of England Real Living Wage, to address low pay across the board and to help attract people into shortage areas.
- ◆ Set up a West of England mark for employers paying the region's RLW, with local authorities leading by example and paying the RLW before 2030.
- ◆ Make sure that adults with learning difficulties are provided with ongoing support to access training and work.
- ◆ Encourage integration and widen opportunities for migrants by using the skills budget to ensure adequate English language learning is available for all who need it.
- ◆ Work with training providers to make sure everyone of working age has digital competency.
- ◆ Work with employers where apprenticeships are currently under-utilised, to drive up provision of high quality on the job training.
- ◆ Support and develop the new Design, Engineering, Technology and Innovation centre, DETI.



## AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND SUSTAINABLE LAND USE PLANNING

Stephen Williams as regional mayor would put sustainability at the heart of planning the use of our land. He will seek to build new communities that are socially balanced and environmentally sustainable. The West of England has high house prices and rents, making it difficult for young people to set up their own home. Tens of thousands of new homes to suit all budgets and household sizes must be built as part of a holistic plan that takes account of proximity to places of work, public transport and walking and cycling routes.



### STEPHEN'S TOP FIVE IDEAS FOR HOUSING AND LAND USE

- 1 | Work in partnership with social housing and social capital providers to establish a West of England Homes social enterprise**, to build homes for sale and private rental and invest the surplus from these commercial activities in building homes of all sizes for social rent. Community shares could be issued to raise more capital.
- 2 | Plan housing and transport hand-in-hand**, only releasing land for development once the sustainable transport infrastructure is in place to support it.
- 3 | Ensure developers make it as easy as possible for pedestrians and cyclists** to get around their developments and out on to the wider network and provide secure bike storage for every family.
- 4 | Ensure new developments include plans for biodiverse green and blue spaces**, nature corridors within and between developments, and recreation areas with biodiverse wild space.
- 5 | Secure from government the devolved power to reintroduce the Zero Carbon Homes standards**, legislated for in the Infrastructure Act 2015 by Stephen when a minister. This would include the "allowable solutions" for house builders to finance off site projects that reduce the carbon footprint of housing, retrofitting older homes with energy efficiency measures being the top priority.



## AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND SUSTAINABLE LAND USE PLANNING CONTINUED

### STEPHEN'S FURTHER IDEAS FOR HOUSING AND LAND USE PLANNING

- ◆ A new Spatial Development Strategy will replace the discredited and abandoned former Joint Strategic Plan, which was thrown out by government inspectors. Stephen will work with the three councils within the Combined Authority and with North Somerset to develop a high level plan that is evidence led and lays out common principles for the unitary councils' Local Plans, which will deal with the details of particular development sites.
- ◆ The SDS will focus development around centres of employment, public transport hubs and "micro-transport" (walking, cycling and e-scooter) routes.
- ◆ The SDS will protect green fields from being covered in unsustainable, car-dependent development.
- ◆ Set sustainability criteria for choosing where large amounts of housing should go in the new Mayoral Spatial Development Strategy.
- ◆ Set community social balance criteria so that larger developments include homes of varying sizes, with a mix of one bedroom flats and smaller houses to enable young people or people on low incomes to own or rent a new home.
- ◆ Facilitate community led housing, working with the Bristol Community Land Trust to build homes for sale or rent where the underlying land value is held by or via a trust. This approach could be of particular benefit to smaller towns and the many villages of the West of England, enabling local young people or local people on below average incomes to stay in their home town or village.
- ◆ Respond to the radical changes Covid has produced by ensuring that new housing developments include homes that have ultrafast fibre optic broadband and space to accommodate home working.
- ◆ Establish hubs in towns and village communities to provide comfortable and well-appointed spaces where people can work and have access to fast and effective communications infrastructure.
- ◆ Encourage more commercial property space within major housing developments to accommodate cafes and shops to support a localised economy (especially with the reduction in city and town centre working) where people working from home have access to the same experience they had when working in the centre of Bath or Bristol or one of our towns.
- ◆ Design in community growing spaces when planning new developments.
- ◆ Set a target for Biodiversity Net Gain for brownfield sites. This could be achieved through 'green' roofs, as well as through native and pollen rich green infrastructure.
- ◆ Listen to local people and Town & Parish Councils, working with communities that bring forward development proposals to fulfil their aspirations, including through Neighbourhood Plans, which were championed by Stephen when he was Minister for Communities.
- ◆ Embed the requirement for assessments of the 'whole-life carbon emissions' on significant building schemes as part of the planning process. All publicly funded building projects will include a whole life carbon assessment and whole life carbon targets where project benchmarks can be established.
- ◆ Investigate new forms of financing, to solve the energy problems for new builds now and repay the cost over the lifetime of the building, by accommodating mortgaged built-in energy savings in new homes.
- ◆ Identify sites for modular build, reducing the cost of construction. This has the potential to bring home ownership into the reach of more people.
- ◆ Aim to bring a modular building company to the West of England.
- ◆ Redeploy some of WECA's existing investment funds to provide access to resources and investment packages dramatically increasing the thermal efficiency of homes through a one-off "deep retrofitting" approach, including both external insulation and electric heat pumps.
- ◆ Work with some of our local financing organisations, such as mutuals and ethical lenders, to encourage the development of additional significant lending streams on long term arrangements so as to provide the capital necessary for retrofitting of older homes with energy efficiency measures. The workforce to secure the delivery of these projects will be facilitated through Stephen's focus on green jobs, and work with colleges and universities in the local area.
- ◆ Focus retrofitting initially on social housing, which accounts for 17% of the UK's housing stock. Social landlords often have a stronger interest in housing performance in the long term and own a large number of properties, which could be retrofitted at once, bringing down costs. Energy efficiency upgrades could also be integrated into other policy measures of upgrading homes to cater for an ageing population and improving fire resilience.
- ◆ Seek the power from central Government to safeguard new build and new tenancy social properties from "right to buy", which undermines the ability of social landlords to borrow against rental streams, losing much needed capital for the building of new social rent homes.
- ◆ Seek the power to permit our three local authorities to introduce licensing for "Airbnb" and other short term lets to ensure tenant safety and enable enforcement action if they cause disturbance to neighbours.
- ◆ Seek the power to create a new planning use class for such short term lets, so that planning permission would be required, giving neighbours an opportunity to comment and councils the control to direct where such properties are located.





# A SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT REVOLUTION



Stephen Williams as mayor will use his transport powers and budgets to tackle the climate emergency, improve public health and increase social justice. He will prioritise investment in sustainable travel, with separate but complementary plans for public transport, cycling, and walking, in order to meet ambitious 2030 carbon neutrality targets.

## A MAYOR WHO WILL STAND UP FOR THE WEST

### STEPHEN'S TOP SIX IDEAS FOR SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

- 1** | **Take effective control of local bus services via the franchising powers available under the Bus Services Act 2017**, using them to oblige bus operators to provide new orbital services linking city suburbs and more services for villages. Service standards will be set covering timetables, fares and modes of clean propulsion.
- 2** | **Seek from government the power to introduce a workplace parking levy**, disincentivising currently cheap car commuting to city centre and out of town office parks. The net proceeds would be invested in public transport, with particular attention to commuter routes and journey times.
- 3** | **Park and Ride bus sites will be converted to multi-modal "arrive and choose" transport hubs.** They will have electric vehicle charging services, secure and dry bicycle parking and hire facilities for electric bikes and scooters for those who want to complete their journey that way. Cafes on site will make the sites more attractive to morning commuters and tourists.
- 4** | Agree with the Welsh Government and England Department of Transport **a new hydrogen train service between Cardiff and Bath**, a first for the British Isles, following the initiative taken by Lower Saxony.
- 5** | **General presumption against new roads**, which would simply fill with traffic.
- 6** | **Stephen will appoint a Cyclists' Champion and a Walkers' Champion** to work with him and campaign groups, giving advice on how to make the West of England an exemplar region for both cyclists and walkers.



## A SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT REVOLUTION CONTINUED

### STEPHEN'S FURTHER IDEAS FOR SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

- ◆ As Regional Mayor Stephen will work with and support our regional partners in Wiltshire and other parts of Gloucestershire and Somerset to win investment in our rail network and other clean transport modes.
- ◆ Work with the three West of England local authorities plus North Somerset on a common plan to improve air quality, with Clean Air Zones targeted at polluting commercial vehicles and Residents Parking Zones to reduce the impact of commuting by car.
- ◆ Use bus franchising to accelerate the switch to electric or hydrogen buses, with diesel ending by 2030, with park and ride buses much sooner.
- ◆ Bus franchising will also be used to have new bus links, with orbital services complementing the current largely radial routes into Bristol, Bath and Weston.
- ◆ Bus franchising will also be used to attract a wide range of service providers, including social enterprises.
- ◆ Bus franchising will enable more night buses, supporting employees who work and customers who use evening retail, hospitality and cultural services.
- ◆ Explore the potential for access to more stops on express bus routes, eg the X39 buses on the A4 Keynsham by-pass.
- ◆ City centre multi-storey and large surface car parks in Bath and Bristol will be repurposed to have electric vehicle charging services, secure and dry bicycle parking and hire facilities for electric bikes and scooters for those who want to complete their journey that way.
- ◆ Trial small “pocket park and rides” to test their viability for cutting car commuting from towns and villages.
- ◆ Work with local authorities, using their licensing powers to switch all taxis and private hire vehicles to electric before 2030.
- ◆ Presumption against major new roads will include ceasing all work on plans for a new road south of Bristol via Whitchurch. Stephen also opposes the conversion of the disused rail path through Brislington into a new road, preferring its adoption as the Brislington Greenway for walkers and cyclists, and a haven for wildlife.
- ◆ Small road improvement schemes will be permitted where they remove pinch points that cause congestion and poor air quality.
- ◆ Develop green transport plans for each of the main road corridors into Bristol and Bath – the A367, A370, A37, A38, A39, A4, A420, A432 and A46. These plans will optimise bus travel, safe cycle and pedestrian routes.
- ◆ Ensure that each of the three Enterprise Zones (Temple Meads, Somer Valley and Bath) and four Enterprise Areas (Filton, M5J21, Avonmouth and Emersons Green) has excellent bus, cycle and walking connections.
- ◆ Work with employers, colleges and training providers to enable people to acquire or have access to a bike for their journey to work, study or training.
- ◆ Construct a joined up cycle and walking network, with clear dedicated links between strategic routes, eg between the Bristol-Bath Path and the Two Tunnels Path.
- ◆ Provide more links onto the main cycle paths, eg from the Bristol-Bath Path at Bitton into Keynsham.
- ◆ Pay particular attention to fixing potholes at the side of roads used heavily by cyclists.
- ◆ Work with the Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable to address enforcement of parking infringements that block cycle routes and pavements, causing danger to cyclists and pedestrians.
- ◆ Demand that the government show the same level of commitment to major rail investment demonstrated in other regions by completing electrification of the main lines from Wotton Bassett through Chippenham, Bath Spa, Bristol Temple Meads through to Weston Super Mare.
- ◆ Expedite the opening of stations on existing passenger lines at Ashley Down, Charfield, Portway and Saltford.
- ◆ Agree with Network Rail a more urgent timescale for new stations at Long Ashton, St Annes and Winterbourne.
- ◆ Agree with Network Rail a more urgent timescale for new passenger services on the route to Portishead and across north Bristol through Henbury and Brentry.
- ◆ Agree with the Department of Transport and GWR more frequent services for Yate and for a direct service from Clifton to Bath.
- ◆ Investigate the feasibility of a passenger rail service for Thornbury, using the existing freight line to Tytherington.
- ◆ Agree a plan with Western Power to enable a roll out of mass access to electric vehicle charging points.
- ◆ Aim for a car club EV point in every street of over 50 houses in urban areas and at least one per village in rural areas, for instance located in church hall car parks.
- ◆ Set aside parking space in residential areas for bike hangars, allowing for safe storage of bicycles.
- ◆ Work with the three local authorities to roll out more Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, where there is demonstrable support from local residents (Traffic Calmed Areas were pioneered in the 1990s in Kingsdown, Bristol, when Stephen was its county councillor)
- ◆ Work with the three local authorities to pedestrianise more sections of the highway, such as the roads around Corn Street in Bristol, Milsom Street in Bath and other town high streets where there is local support from retailers and shoppers.
- ◆ Stephen opposes the proposed expansion of Bristol Airport, but current passengers need to reach the airport more sustainably. Stephen will aim to build a light rail or tram link from Bristol Temple Meads to Bristol Airport





# THE NEXT STEPS

MAKING THE MOST OF DEVOLUTION



Stephen Williams as regional mayor would unite the West of England, working across all parties and none, to get the best deal for the region from central government. As a former MP for Bristol West and a former government minister, Stephen knows how to work the system to get the best deals for our region. Stephen would also significantly raise the profile of the Regional Mayor, whilst welcoming robust scrutiny from the public, press and local councillors.

- ◆ North Somerset to be fully integrated as a member of the Combined Authority by 2025 and treated as an observer member but active participant in the Combined Authority in the meantime.
- ◆ Agree programmes for joint working on transport with Wiltshire, Swindon and the likely new unitary councils in Somerset and Gloucestershire.
- ◆ Agree areas of common interest with the Welsh Government, most obviously rail and motorway investment and major clean energy projects.
- ◆ Be a lead player in the Western Gateway / Porth y Gerllewin, strengthening the voice of South Wales and the wider West of England within Britain and on the world stage.
- ◆ Ask central government for a range of new powers including green taxes, overnight stay tax, regulation of Airbnbs, student accommodation and office to residential conversions. Plus the full devolution of 100% of the proceeds and regulation of business rates.
- ◆ Ask central government to devolve control of DWP budgets for job search and training. (but not benefit administration)
- ◆ Stephen as Regional Mayor will raise the profile of the region at home and abroad. He will continue marketing the area for inward investment based on the well-known names of the cities of Bath and Bristol, extending this approach to market the region for tourism. The current legal name of "West of England" will remain for official business of the Combined Authority.
- ◆ Stephen would have a programme of "Meet the Mayor" sessions, touring the hundred plus towns and villages of the region, as well as the communities of Bath and Bristol. Sessions would also be available on the various on-line platforms that have become widely accepted during the Covid lockdowns.
- ◆ Stephen as Regional Mayor would hold quarterly question times with councillors from all 3 local authorities plus regular forums with town and parish councillors.
- ◆ Stephen as Regional Mayor would hold fortnightly 'on the record' press conferences, with questions welcomed from journalists from established news outlets and the editors of community magazines.





“ The Liberal Democrats exist to build and safeguard a  
**fair, free and open society,**  
in which we seek to balance the fundamental values of  
**liberty, equality and community,**  
and in which no one shall be enslaved by  
**poverty, ignorance or conformity.** ”



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