Ideopolis: Knowledge City Region

Bristol Case Study

"The most beautiful, interesting and distinguished city in England"

John Betjeman, former poet laureate

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Cover photograph, courtesy of the University of Bristol

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Executive Summary

Bristol's economy is knowledge intensive, with significant niches in aerospace, and this knowledge base is growing at an above average rate. Bristol and the wider city region have a competitive offering for business investment and for quality of life, with the newly formed West of England Partnership being the potential mechanism to ensure continued growth.

Ideopolis driver analysis: strengths, challenges and opportunities

- **Physical knowledge city:** Bristol and the wider region has a competitive quality of life offering and the city centre has an attractive built environment, which has benefited considerably from regeneration in recent years.
- **Building on what's there:** Bristol has a well-established knowledge economy (for example, aerospace companies have been based in the city since the early 20th century), with the economic structure reflecting earlier historical decisions.
- **Diverse specialisation:** This is one of Bristol's key strengths, and one that has equipped the city to be *"resilient in weathering economic change"*.
- **High skill organisations:** Bristol has a highly skilled labour force, however there is also a significant group without skills. With the labour market expected to 'tighten' in coming years, skill shortages will potentially constrain economic growth and this is a key challenge for Bristol.
- **Vibrant education sector:** Bristol's higher education sector is strong. A significant challenge for the city is the difference in educational attainment between state and independent school pupils..
- **Distinctive knowledge city offer:** Whilst those living in Bristol have a distinct impression of the city's strengths, there was a concern amongst interviewees that the city does not market itself well enough.
- **Leadership around a knowledge city vision:** Partnership working between the key players in the city (including Business West, the City Council, HEIs and the RDA) and the recent formation of the West of England Partnership demonstrate leadership around the future vision for the city and wider region. There is an urgent need for Government to support the West of England to work at a city-region level.
- **Investing in communities:** The divide between Bristol's rich and poor communities, although a feature of all UK cities, is concerning.

Policy recommendations

- **Strengthening of the West of England Partnership** to drive growth and address challenges at a city-region level, particularly around major infrastructural issues;
- **Investment in state education secto**r

Lessons for other cities

- Driving forward **partnership working** across different local authorities;
- **Distinctiveness:** Bristol has significant strengths in a limited number of growing sectors. This has created a diverse economic base that is resilient in the face of change.
- **Higher education sector embedded in the city** and wider region, for example the Universities of Bath, Bristol and the West of England setting up a Science Park with 6000 jobs expected.

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1. Introduction

Bristol is a *"good all rounder"*[1] offering the right economic and quality of life blend to residents and investors alike. The city and the wider city-region have adapted well to develop a post-industrial economic base and the statistics show that Bristol is indeed a knowledge city. This case study will focus primarily on Bristol - as defined by the Bristol City Council boundaries - but will also focus on the wider city-region to reflect the reality of economic and social linkages to and from the city. The city region includes Bristol City Council, South Gloucestershire, Bath & North East Somerset, North Somerset and Mendip District Council.

Defining Ideopolis

The Ideopolis is the vision of a sustainable knowledge intensive city that drives growth in the wider city-region. It gives cities a framework for developing knowledge-intensive industries that will be economically successful and improve quality of life.

About the Ideopolis project

The Work Foundation conducted a year-long research project looking at the concept of the Ideopolis – a sustainable knowledge city that drives growth in the wider city-region. Based on literature reviews, data analysis and UK and international case studies, the research highlights nine drivers of an Ideopolis. This case study forms part of the evidence base for the project. It uses the Ideopolis framework and nine drivers to assess to what extent the city is an Ideopolis and what challenges the city faces in the future if it is to be economically successful and sustainable in a knowledge economy..

About this case study

Presenting findings from interviews with a range of stakeholders as well as literature review work, this case study analyses Bristol using the Ideopolis framework to assess where the city is on the 'Ideopolis trajectory'. It is organised into the following sections:

- Brief history of Bristol
- Bristol now
- Bristol: knowledge city?
- Ideopolis driver analysis: strengths, challenges & opportunities
- Conclusions
- Policy recommendations
- Lessons learned from Bristol

[1] Ideopolis interviewee

2. Brief History of Bristol

Until the industrial revolution, Bristol was the second largest English city after London. As a port city, Bristol was built on tobacco, alcohol and the slave trade and then developed a vibrant manufacturing sector with a particular specialism in aerospace. Since the 1960s the city has also developed a large financial services sector. Bristol had to adapt to the decline of parts of its manufacturing base but unlike many northern industrial cities, it avoided the worst effects of industrial restructuring. The closure of businesses like the Wills cigarette factory, which saw a drop in the numbers employment in manufacturing industries, were 'more than matched' by the number of jobs created in offices and other service industries[2]. Throughout the 1970s, 80s and 90s, Bristol's employment rate of growth exceeded regional and national averages[3].

Economic development in all cities is path dependent – shaped by geography, the existing structure of the economy and historic business location decisions - and Bristol is no different. Indeed, much of the city's growth in recent decades is less the result of a pre-ordained strategy and more an outcome of history and circumstance. More recent history, most notably the Bristol Initiative led by Bristol West, has made a significant difference to the process of economic development in Bristol and has ensured that quality of life or sustainability issues are considered alongside the imperative to promote growth. Several interviewees commented on the change that has taken place over the last ten years or so: a huge growth in the number of cranes towering over the city indicating regeneration and an explosion in consumption – *"ten years ago it was a struggle to find somewhere to eat out on a Sunday evening, now there is a huge amount of choice"*[4].

Bristol's knowledge economy has a long history, most notably in aerospace. The Bristol Aeroplane Company was based in Filton (10km north of the city centre), and Bristol Aero Engines (which later became Rolls Royce) was located in Patchway. During the Second World War, the Aeroplane Company thrived and in the 1950s became one of the country's major manufacturers of civil aircraft. In the 1960s Filton played a leading role in the Concorde supersonic airliner project. The major aerospace companies in Bristol now are BAE Systems, Airbus and Rolls Royce, based at Filton.

Bristol also has well-established creative and cultural industries, with Oscar winning Aardman Animations situated in the city, as well as the BBC Natural History Unit.

[2] ESRC Cities, Competitiveness and Cohesion Programme, Bristol, March 2002
[3] West of England Sub Regional Review of Spatial Strategy to 2001, Economy, April 2004
[4] Interviewee comment

3. Bristol Now

A key strength of Bristol has been the adaptability of its industrial base following the decline of traditional industries. The diversity of the economy and the city's history as a mercantile centre are also seen as contributing to a strong economic situation now. The city's location and size - close enough to London but at a comfortable distance to allow Bristol to be seen as and to operate as a distinct city - are important factors influencing Bristol's economic and social landscape. The economic impact of the universities - Bristol University and the University of the West of England has been significant within the city and the wider region. The city is seen as a good place to live, offering a high quality of life to most of its residents.

Bristol is undoubtedly economically successful, outperforming other cities, attracting inward investment and offering a competitive quality of life offering to residents. The diverse economic base has some significant clusters, the cultural and arts scene is thriving and Bristol is well connected. As one interviewee commented, *"success has bred success"*[5].

Table 1 (on the next page) shows topline statistics to compare Bristol to the rest of the UK on some key labour market characteristics. Economic activity and unemployment rates reflect the national average. However, Bristol's labour market is highly skilled, with 8% more graduates in the population of working age than the UK average. It is therefore unsurprising that over 45% of Bristol's residents work in managerial, professional or associate professional roles.

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[5] ODPM (2004) The English Indices of Deprivation 2004 (Revised), available from www.odpm.gov.uk

[6] Ecotec (2002) An Updated Baseline for Bristol: A Final Report for Bristol One

[7] DfES Performance Tables, 2005

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Table 1– Bristol's labour market (all statistics from NOMIS)

	Bristol	GB
General (Source: Midyear Population Estimates, 2004 and Annual population survey, April 2004 - March 2005)		
Population	393,900	58,124,600
Working age population	259,700	36,037,300
Economically active	78.1%	78.3%
Economically inactive (all)	21.9%	21.7%
Economically inactive (wanting a job)	5.3%	5.2%
Skills (Source: Local Area Labour Force Survey (March 2003 - February 2004)		
NVQ4 and above	33.2%	25.2%
NVQ3 and above	51.6%	43.1%
NVQ2 and above	66.0%	61.5%
NVQ1 and above	80.9%	76.0%
Other qualifications	7.4%	8.8%
No qualifications	11.7%	15.1%
Occupations (Annual population survey, April 2004 - March 2005)		
Manager and senior officials	14.0%	14.9%
Professional	13.7%	12.6%
Associate professional and technical	16.7%	14.0%
Admin and secretarial	10.8%	12.6%
Skilled trades	8.5%	11.2%
Personal services	7.4%	7.7%
Sales and customer service	10.3%	7.8%
Process plant and machine	7.4%	7.5%
Elementary	10.6%	11.5%
Businesses (Source: VAT registrations / de-registrations by industry, 2004)		
VAT registrations	1,255 (10.9%)	181,410 (10.1%)
VAT de-registrations	1,135 (9.9%)	179,375 (9.9%)
Stock (at end of year)	11,475	1,819,855

4. Bristol: Knowledge City?

Measures of Knowledge Intensity

One of the key outputs of the Ideopolis project is the contribution to discussions around how to measure knowledge intensity. Knowledge intensity is too often restricted to the OECD definition of knowledge intensive businesses. The Ideopolis project argues that knowledge intensity should be assessed based on knowledge-intensive occupations and knowledge intensive industries (which should include education and health, as well as all creative and cultural industries). We have developed four measures of assessing knowledge intensity for cities; see Ideopolis report for detailed discussion (this can be downloaded from www.theworkfoundation.com)

Bristol's economy is knowledge intensive, as shown by table 2 (below). 41% of Bristol's residents are employed in knowledge occupations (column A) and Bristol has a higher proportion of knowledge-based businesses than other large cities: 40% of businesses in Bristol are knowledge based (column C). However, the percentage of employment in knowledge-business is lower than for some comparable cities (Edinburgh and Manchester for example), which may be an indication of the size of the knowledge-based businesses in Bristol (in terms of employee numbers)[6].

Table 2 – Knowledge intensity in larger cities[7]

City	A Employed in Knowledge Occupations (Residence Based, 2001) %	B Employed in Knowledge Occupations in Knowledge Industries (Residence Based, 2001) %	C Businesses that are Knowledge Based (Workplace Based, 2001) %	D Employment in Businesses that are Knowledge Based (Workplace Based, 2001) %
Edinburgh	49	36	38	53
Bristol	**41**	**28**	**40**	**47**
Leeds	38	24	31	41
Glasgow	38	25	31	48
Manchester	38	26	37	52
Sheffield	37	24	28	40
Birmingham	36	23	30	42
Newcastle*	35 (39)	23 (27)	31 (33)	45 (50)
Bradford	35	21	25	37
Liverpool	35	24	32	48

**Figure given is Newcastle-Gateshead, Newcastle alone in brackets*

Source: Annual Business Inquiry

Method: The Work Foundation Definition Knowledge Intensity, District/Unitary Local Authority units

[6] Some knowledge industries, particularly within the creative and cultural sector, have a high proportion of SMEs and therefore may make up a significant proportion of total business stock whilst not creating a similar proportion of employment within the city

[7] Local authorities with populations greater than 350,000.

Table 3 below compares knowledge intensity in 'central' cities (that is, the core of the city region) and the wider city region. The data for Bristol shows no significant differences between the city and city region on this measure, which might be contrasted with Edinburgh, where the city itself is far more knowledge intensive. This is likely to reflect travel to work patterns, and also the presence of another city (Bath) within the city region. When comparing residence based and workplace based data however, some differences emerge between Bristol as the central city and the wider city region. Column C shows that Bristol has a higher proportion of businesses that are knowledge based than its wider region..

Table 3 – Knowledge intensity in central cities and city regions

Central City of City region	A Employed in Knowledge Occupations (Residence Based, 2001) %		B Employed in Knowledge Occupations in Knowledge Industries (Residence Based, 2001) %		C Businesses that are Knowledge Based (Workplace Based, 2001) %		D Employment in Businesses that are Knowledge Based (Workplace Based, 2001) %	
	City Region	**City**	**City Region**	**City**	**City Region**	**City**	**City Region**	**City**
Bristol	**41**	**41**	**26**	**28**	**35**	**40**	**41**	**47**
Edinburgh	39	49	26	36	30	38	42	53
Manchester	38	38	22	26	30	37	37	52
Leeds	37	38	22	24	28	31	37	41
Glasgow	37	38	24	25	28	31	40	48
Liverpool	36	35	22	24	33	32	39	48
Birmingham	35	38	20	23	27	30	34	42
Newcastle*	35	35 (39)	22	23 (27)	27	31 (33)	39	42 (50)
Sheffield	32	37	19	24	25	28	35	40

**Figure given is Newcastle-Gateshead, Newcastle alone in brackets*
Source: Annual Business Inquiry, 2001 Census
Method: The Work Foundation Definition Knowledge Intensity, District/Unitary Local Authority units

So far we have established that Bristol's economy is knowledge intensive, and table 4 below shows that the proportion of knowledge based businesses of total business stock is growing at above the UK average. Bristol saw a 12% increase in its knowledge based business stock between 1998 and 2004. Of all case study cities, Sheffield saw the most significant growth, however this reflects the low base from which Sheffield started. As a city with a history of knowledge based businesses (discussed further below), Bristol's knowledge economy is still growing and driving the city's economy.

Table 4 – Growth in percentage of businesses that are knowledge based for the case study cities

	1998 Businesses that are Knowledge Based *(Workplace Based)* %	2004 Businesses that are Knowledge Based *(Workplace Based)* %	Growth 1998 - 2004 %
UK Average	*30*	*33*	*9*
Birmingham	28	32	13
Brighton and Hove	36	42	15
Bristol	**35**	**39**	**12**
Cambridge	42	46	10
Edinburgh, City of	37	40	8
Glasgow City	31	34	10
Manchester	33	38	13
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	32	35	11
Sheffield	26	31	20
Watford	34	34	0

Source: Annual Business Inquiry
Method: The Work Foundation Definition Knowledge Intensity, District/Unitary Local Authority units

[9] Robert Huggins Associates (2005) UK Competitiveness Index

5. Ideopolis driver analysis: strengths, challenges and opportunities

Ideopolis drivers

This next section of this case study will analyse Bristol according to the nine drivers of the Ideopolis[8] which have been identified through our literature review, data modelling and case study research. It will consider the following questions: what are the factors that have supported Bristol's success? And what are the remaining challenges that the city faces, as well as the opportunities that will support Bristol in realising and sustaining the Ideopolis vision?

5.1 Physical Knowledge City

The wider city region that includes Bristol offers *"a bit of everything"*[9], including urban life, coastline, open space, and small towns. This amounts to a competitive quality of life offering on a *"liveable human scale"*[10]. One interviewee described the city as *"big enough to have all the amenities you need, but not so big that it is unmanageable"*11. Bristol is a Georgian city with an attractive built environment. Like other UK cities, there was considerable city centre regeneration during the 1990s, cleaning up after heavy industries and correcting bad post-war planning decisions (including a dual carriageway through Queen Square). Regeneration has included significant lottery funding for cultural facilities, as well as housing developments, and housing conversions on the waterfront.

Whilst Bristol offers the physical knowledge city to knowledge workers, or the wealthier residents of Clifton, the city, like all others in the UK, suffers from economic and social polarisation embedded in the physical environment. With *"tower blocks against a backdrop of rolling hills"*[12], Bristol suffers from pockets of intractable deprivation, concentrated predominantly in the south of the city. The manifestations of this deprivation are present in the polarisation of housing quality. The major challenge for Bristol – as for other cities – is to ensure that rising prosperity benefits all residents.

5.2 Building on what's there

As we have already seen, Bristol has a well-established knowledge economy. The city has also adapted well to the emergence of new technologies by building on its existing knowledge base. The relocation of a major Ministry of Defence facility to Abbey Wood on city's northern fringes exemplifies the city's success in attracting knowledge intensive activities. ESRC research found that the major influences on Bristol's economic structure are related to sectoral trends 'augmented by an embedding of earlier historical decisions'[13].

[8] For a full account of the Ideopolis drivers, please read the full report which can be downloaded from www.theworkfoundation.com

[9] Ideopolis interviewee

[10] Ideopolis interviewee

[11] Ideopolis interviewee

[12] Ideopolis interviewee

[13] ESRC Cities, Competitiveness and Cohesion Programme, Bristol, March 2002

5.3 Diverse specialisation

"Bristol is resilient in weathering economic change"[14]

Bristol has always had a diverse economic base, with strong performance in a number of industrial sectors. It is widely acknowledged that this has been the key to continued growth and prosperity.

One of the main economic strengths of Bristol has been the adaptability of its industrial base following the decline of traditional industries. As a trading port with a long history, Bristol's economy and labour market has adapted well to global economic change. The city economy is dominated by the finance, business and property sectors, making up around 35% of all firms and 29% of the workforce. Within the wider city region around Bristol, there are specialist industries in aerospace/defence, computer services, financial and business services, media and creative industries, tourism and higher education. Some of these industries are discussed in greater detail in Box A (below)

Financial Services

"Bristol has a strong legacy of supporting a whole range of professional services" [15]

Employing more than 30,000 people (almost of quarter of the workforce compared to 19% nationally), the financial service sector is particularly strong in Bristol. Whilst a proportion of these services are locally oriented, serving local businesses and people, the majority are operating within national markets, thus representing a significant 'export'. Financial services moved in to Bristol as traditional industries declined, attracted by conventional locational factors including proximity to London, the scale and quality of the labour supply and the quality of life offer to workers.[16]

Creative and Cultural Industries

The presence of creative and cultural industries in Bristol is significant and includes Oscar winning Aardman Animations as well as the BBC Natural History Unit. The city has a producing theatre (the Bristol Old Vic), a hosting theatre (Bristol Hippodrome) and a concert venue (Colston Hall). Bristol (and the wider region) is acknowledged as the birthplace of 'trip-hop' and thus a pioneer and location of a thriving music scene. Bristol has several museums as well as the Watershed media centre (occupying a disused dockside warehouse) and the Arnolfini gallery. However, a report by Culture South West found that only 3.7% of Bristol's working population is employed in the creative sector which is lower than in some cities.

Aerospace & Defence

The Ministry of Defence recently relocated 6000 jobs to the north of the city. Knowledge industries are to be found in the same location, with an increase of around 30,000 jobs in the past twenty years. The Mall (a large out-of town retail development), Sun Life and the MoD account for around half of these jobs. High-tech and office based businesses account for the remainder[17].

[14] Interviewee comment
[15] Interviewee comment
[16] ESRC Cities, Competitiveness and Cohesion Programme, Bristol, March 2002
[17] West of England sub Regional Review of Spatial Stategy to 2001, April 2004

5.4 High skill organisations

Almost half (45%) of Bristol's labour force works in managerial, professional and technical occupations and one third (33%) are educated to NVQ level 4 and above. Bristol has a skilled labour market, and with high levels of graduate retention from the four universities within the West of England region, this skill level will continue to rise. In 2002, Gross Value Added per capita in Bristol was £21,513, which, excluding London, is the third highest of UK's large cities (after Edinburgh and Manchester).

Like most British cities, Bristol also has a group of people of working age with low or no skills. Labour market polarisation in Bristol poses a future threat to growth in the city - if the labour market tightens further there is a real risk that skills supply will be inadequate to meet demand.

The poor performance of the state education system (see discussion below) is a major contributory factor to what could be a significant skills shortage. One of Bristol's strengths in the past has been the adaptability of its labour market, however population projections across the wider city region suggest that labour shortages are likely to constrain economic expansion and the emergence of growth industries in the future.[18]

Of course, one might anticipate that the market will operate to attract workers with appropriate skills to the city – although this assumes that the right decisions have been taken about infrastructure and housing policy. Our argument to the contrary is that it would be more effective to raise the skill levels of those residents currently excluded from the labour market so that the city's existing productive resources are fully utilised.

5.5 Vibrant Education Sector

Higher education is a huge industry and a major economic driver in Bristol. There are two universities within Bristol itself: Bristol University and University of the West of England, and two in Bath: University of Bath and Bath Spa. There are 45,000 students within the city region.

Like other university sectors in UK cities, higher education institutions in Bristol and the wider region suffer from a global/local tension. A review by the University of Bristol found that 'the international character of much of the university's research does not contribute to many of the problems faced by the local economy'

The University of Bristol is currently setting up a Science Park in conjunction with the University of Bath and the University of the West of England (to be based at Emerson's Green, 8 miles from the city centre), with the backing of South West RDA. Around 6000 new jobs are expected to be created in the £30million development. This is a good example of the city region's higher education institutions working together to have a positive influence on the local economy.[19]

While the higher education sector thrives, the state education sector is failing. At the city level, only 36% pupils achieved GCSEs at levels A*-C in 2005, compared to a national average of 54.7% in 2006. The independent school sector in Bristol is thriving, meaning that school-age education is, like many other critical services, starkly polarised. Bristol is not unique in this respect – many other cities in the UK are having to grapple with a situation in which many middle class parents are moving house to obtain places in the 'best' state schools or are sending their children to private schools.

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[18] West of England Sub Regional Review of Spatial Strategy to 2001, April 2004

[19] http://www.bris.ac.uk/publications/chatter/contrib.htm#spin

.5.6 Distinctive knowledge city offer

"Bristol's charm is a slower pace of life than London"[20]

With a distinctive self-image, Bristol has avoided becoming a 'clone town'. The cultural offer is diverse: it has an intellectual culture as well as innovative sub-cultures within the creative industries. Bristol's distinctiveness draws on its history: 2006 sees the Festival of Ideas and a celebration of the contribution made by Brunel – the Great Western Railway, the SS Great Britain and the Clifton Suspension Bridge.

Economically, Bristol is known for its specialisms and one interviewee commented that the city has *"got its act together in terms of networking and this has contributed to the clustering of new media, digital and cultural industries"*[21]. However, there was concern amongst some interviewees that the external identity was not well managed: *"Bristol does not market itself well enough"*.

This concern related specifically to Bristol losing funding bids (such as the European Capital of Culture) but not following proposed work up by trying to find alternative sources of funding. Some interviewees argued that if Bristol wants to be seen as a capital of culture or a creative city, this should be the external image that city leaders are working towards, irrespective of whether funding is won or not. One interviewee commented that Bristol will always the *"nearly city"*. This relates to other comments about Bristol being complacent. Whilst the successes that Bristol has seen over the last ten years do, to a certain extent, undermine this claim of complacency, the opportunity for Bristol here is to focus leadership around the distinctive offer that it clearly has.

5.7 Leveraging strong connectivity

Bristol is one-day lorry drive from 45 million people across the UK; it is easily accessible by rail from London, Cardiff and cities in the Midlands. The city's international connections are expanding: it has the fastest growing port and regional airport in the UK.[22] Like other cities, Bristol does suffer from its own success: it has a *"creaking transport system"*, and national rail networks that link the city to the rest of the UK are in need of upgrading. There is also a reliance on cars for commuting, and like other cities, Bristol relies on the political will of several local authorities for major infrastructure projects to go ahead.[23]

Connectivity in Bristol has meant that the north of Bristol and the city centre have developed at a faster rate than the rest of the city. There are a number of reasons for this:

- Connections to the M4 motorway
- South and eastern areas have 'borne the brunt of the halving of manufacturing employment in the city over the past thirty years' [24]
- Proximity of development sites close to the M4 motorway

With much of the economic growth concentrated in north Bristol, deprivation is concentrated in the south. Recently, office space has been created at Temple Quay in the south and more redevelopment is underway or planned: *"I can't wait to be honest…its about time it got sorted"*[25].

[20] Interviewee comment
[21] Interviewee comment
[22] Interviewee comment
[23] An example here is a proposed tram route into South Gloucestershire
[24] West of England Sub Regional Review
[25] South Bristol shopkeeper on the prospect of demolition of his shop in the belated redevelopment of South Bristol, 'Bristol plans to take its good vibrations south', The Guardian

5.8 Leadership around a knowledge city vision

"Bristol has done well in spite of itself"[26]

Interviewees in Bristol felt that the city had prospered in spite of what they saw to be a lack of civic leadership. The criticism of civic leaders by interviewees was clear:

"The council has abdicated leadership to different partner organisations"; and

"Bristol does not fight very hard: without a strong political and administrative leadership, the city accepts defeats rather than challenges them".

However, Bristol, unlike many other case study cities, has developed strong partnerships and a committed private sector involvement in these partnerships. All interviewees cited Bristol West as the organisation that has had a pivotal role in bringing together the council, universities and other stakeholders to get things done in Bristol. A successful 'knowledge city' is not only dependent on political leadership (where Bristol has been relatively weak), but also on leadership in other sectors (where strong business leadership in Bristol has, to a degree, compensated for the weakness of public institutions).

Nevertheless, while the city council may have been without a chief executive for some time, civic leadership from the council has gradually strengthened, with an emerging recognition that things need to happen at the city region level. The development of a vision for the West of England Partnership has the potential to strengthen the region's bargaining power with Whitehall, placing the city-region well ahead of many other 'city-regions' in the UK.

The recognition that decisions should be made at an appropriate spatial scale also led many interviewees to comment that the city could benefit from an elected city cabinet and/or an elected mayor. As one interviewee put it, *"Bristol does not have equivalent of a Ken Livingstone who is prepared to stick his or her neck out for the city".*

Globalisation has meant that business leaders who were once the city's philanthropists are no longer based in the area. Whilst the corporate social responsibility agenda is encouraging some businesses to show a higher degree of commitment to local communities progress has been uneven and the loss of previously Bristol based businesses (largely through merger or acquisition) has probably led to a decline in overall business commitment. There has certainly been a decline in the pool of locally based CEOs to represent business through the economic development institutions, or work with the voluntary sector to invest in communities.

5.9 Investing in Communities

Even though Bristol has *"strong vibrant communities"*[27], the differences between rich and poor areas are stark. South Bristol has a relatively low employment rate, high numbers in receipt of incapacity benefit (8.3% of the working age population) and low levels of skills. In Bristol, as in many UK cities, poor areas are also where a greater proportion of the black and minority ethnic population lives. All quality of life factors are polarized: housing, educational attainment, health, and community safety/security. Two wards within the inner area of Bristol are within the worst 10% of wards nationally according the Index of Multiple Deprivation.

This represents a major challenge for Bristol (as well as for national policymakers). There

[26] Interviewee comment

[27] Interviewee comment

have been huge levels of investment in the public sector, but this has had only a limited impact on the extent of inequality. At local level the incidence of deprivation can be influenced by education policies (improving the level of attainment in schools), housing policy (improving the quality of the stock and the supply of affordable accommodation) and regeneration policies (encouraging large businesses back to the city centre and looking to develop entrepreneurship in the most deprived areas). However, many of the factors affecting the level of inequality can only be addressed at national level – through tax and benefit policies and other initiatives to improve the quality of employment (and employment opportunities) for those at the bottom of the earnings distribution.

6. Conclusions

Whilst Bristol is not yet an Ideopolis, it certainly has the potential to achieve the vision of the Ideopolis city-region. It has a knowledge intensive diverse industrial base that is driving growth in the city and the wider region, and on many measures is second only to Edinburgh in terms of knowledge intensity and the quality of life offering the city has. However, there are some challenges that Bristol and the West of England needs to overcome before achieving the aspiration of becoming an Ideopolis.

"Bristol is complacent: historically the city has been recession proof (alcohol and tobacco industries were major industries which saw booms during recessions as people smoked and drank more) – this complacency may prevent Bristol from realising its potential"[28]

Bristol is at a "crossroads", and there was concern amongst some interviewees that the city won't capitalise on its opportunities and will therefore remain as a middle-ranking city. For some, the worst scenario is if it continues as it is, especially if deprivation continues at the current levels. Whilst the basic elements for future success are already in place, there was consensus amongst interviewees that strengthening leadership capacity is critical to generate sustainable high levels of growth.

[28] Interviewee comment

7. Policy Recommendations for Bristol

A recent consultation undertaken by the University of the West of England identified the following priorities for Bristol:

- Securing major investment in transport infrastructure, including the completion of the ring road into south Bristol
- Increasing the co-operation and co-ordination between the various bodies responsible for the delivery of economic and employment policy
- Increasing the supply of affordable housing in locations that are well connected to jobs[29]

One of the major policy recommendations emerging from the Ideopolis project is that a narrow definition of the knowledge economic is not helpful. This has particular resonance in Bristol: *"The Government agenda about science and technology is restrictive – what about the service economy? What about creative, media, cultural, financial, performing arts industries?"*[30]

Polarisation is the *"contradiction at Bristol's heart "*[31]: how can the city be so successful with the extent of inequality faced by the city? This problem does not have a ready solution. One interviewee argued that *"Investment is not the solution: if it just drives prosperity it will fail"*[32].

Other policy recommendations include:

Physical knowledge city

- Building houses to maintain job creationBuilding diversity

Vibrant education sector

- At the national level, policies that encourage and reward universities for excelling in knowledge transfer.

Leveraging strong connectivity

- Taking a co-ordinated and strategic approach to the major infrastructural issues facing the city. *"At the moment transport issues are bickered about by four tiny authorities"*[33]
- Investing in national rail connections: *"a 40-minute journey time to London is possible – why are we not doing this?"* In fact the average Bristol-London journey time is longer than it was twenty years ago.

Leadership around a knowledge city vision

- Strengthening the West of England Partnership, with powers over transport and planning: *"Local government needs to get used to realising that they are better off if they play together in a bigger pond "–*
- Leadership at the city-region level is *"essential": "to tell government what the city region needs, what the priorities are, what infrastructure we need to support growth – or the money will go elsewhere"*[34]

Investing in communities

- Tackle deprivation: focusing on education (attracting good teachers) and physical environment and finding better ways of delivering public services
- Investment and redevelopment of south Bristol to ensure that the entire city benefits from rising prosperity

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[29] West of England sub Regional Review of Spatial Strategy to 2001
[30] Interviewee comment
[31] Interviewee comment
[32] Interviewee comment
[33] Interviewee comment
[34] Interviewee comment

8. Lessons Learned from Bristol

There are many lessons that other cities can learn from Bristol's experience. These include:

- Adapting to economic change
- Partnership working
- HE sector embedded in the city
- Creative and cultural industries
- Starting and driving the debates about city-region – economic boundaries do not reflect political boundaries
- Avoiding 'clone town' – *"Starbucks is always half as full as Boston Tea Party. Small chains have success"* [35]

Appendix A: Interviewees

This case study presents findings from a literature review and consultation with the following people:

- Phil Gibby, Arts & Business
- Andrew Kelly, Bristol Cultural Development Partnership
- Helen Moss, Quart Community Foundation
- Sir Howard Newby, HEFCE
- John Savage, Business West
- Ian Thompson, South West RDA
- Terry Wagstaff, Bristol City Council

[35] Interviewee comment