

# Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation

Economic Vision  
2026





Dina Foods, Park Royal

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## Mayor's Foreword



London is bursting with opportunities – and unlocking them for all our communities is central to my vision for a fairer, greener and more prosperous city for everyone.

For centuries, people and businesses from across the globe have chosen London to innovate, invest and build their futures. From historic trading districts to emerging centres of excellence, this is a city where talent and ambition thrive. Through the London Growth Plan, I've set out how we will harness London's full economic potential – not just for today, but for the decades ahead.

Old Oak and Park Royal sits at the heart of our vision. It brings together the powerhouse industries of Park Royal – London's largest and most dynamic industrial estate – with the once in a generation regeneration opportunity at Old Oak, home to Imperial's WestTech London. With unrivalled transport connections linking the area to the UK's leading business clusters and global markets, this is a place ready to drive the next wave of scientific innovation and national growth.

OPDC's Economic Vision captures this potential with clarity and purpose. It charts a path that strengthens long-established businesses while nurturing the frontier industries, startups and creatives that will define London's future economy.

But the true engine of growth is Old Oak and Park Royal's business community. From the scientists and innovators of WestTech London to the filmmakers, artists, bakers, grocers and mechanics of Park Royal, this corner of West London is powered by talent, creativity and determination.

Yet too many local people still face barriers to the jobs, skills and opportunities they deserve. This Economic Vision confronts that challenge head on. It commits to inclusive growth – connecting communities to opportunity, investing in skills and supporting my Inclusive Talent Strategy so that everyone can share in the benefits of this next stage of industrial innovation.

Working with Brent, Ealing and Hammersmith & Fulham, alongside residents, businesses, educators and development partners, we have a unique chance to shape Old Oak and Park Royal into the UK's leading hub for cutting-edge industrial innovation – a place where everyone can contribute, participate and prosper, and a place that showcases the very best of London to the world.

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**Sadiq Khan**  
Mayor of London

## Chair's Foreword



Old Oak and Park Royal offer one of the UK's biggest opportunities to drive productivity and growth. This exceptionally connected part of West London can support a future facing commercial district, thousands of jobs and 8,000 new homes, alongside the established industrial strength that already powers London's economy and serves communities across the capital and beyond.

Park Royal is London's engine room and a destination in its own right: its diverse community of entrepreneurs who make and distribute the things that keep our city going, from biscuits to broadcasts, while its specialist offer to our Middle Eastern community is internationally renowned.

Our people are our greatest asset. With 625,000 working age residents across Brent, Ealing and Hammersmith & Fulham, and a growing, highly skilled population across West London, Old Oak's development and new transport connections will open up a wider range of high value opportunities, supported by investment in education and skills.

Old Oak and Park Royal sits at the heart of the UK's growth corridor — linking world leading research in London and Oxford, less than 40 minutes from the West Midlands' advanced manufacturing cluster, and a short Elizabeth line journey to Heathrow, the world's most connected airport.

Bringing together the area's past, present and future, our Economic Vision defines the sectors and strategies that will boost productivity for major employers while nurturing the next generation of frontier start ups, creatives and manufacturers.

This Economic Vision sets out our mission: to harness these unique assets, work with partners to deliver inclusive growth at scale, attract investment, develop and retain a diverse workforce, and create a world class innovation and commercial district by 2040 — making global opportunities local for everyone who lives, works and visits here.

**Dame Karen Buck**  
Chair, OPDC





Blast Studio - finishing lamps



POW workshops, Park Royal Design District



Phil Webb, metal work sculptures for Park Royal Design District



Standard Road Market, Park Royal Design District

# Our Vision for Economic Growth

OPDC's Economic Vision for Old Oak and Park Royal is one of world-leading Industrial Innovation. Neighbouring the White City Innovation District, Old Oak and Park Royal sits in the pathway of the expanding WestTech London innovation ecosystem, which also includes the nearby Paddington Life Sciences<sup>2</sup> and Imperial's Albertopolis. There are therefore unparalleled opportunities to curate high growth in frontier industries that are a crucial part of the national growth plan, and to transform productivity for foundational industries through the introduction of tech and innovation.

**By 2040 Old Oak and Park Royal will be a global centre for businesses designing, making, selling and distributing innovative products, and delivering London's essentials productively and sustainably, modelling low carbon, circular economy production.**

As the Mayor's statutory planning and regeneration agency, it is OPDC's role, working with our host borough partners and wider stakeholder community, to realise this potential for everyone from current residents and businesses to exciting newcomers.

This vision communicates our ambition to government, development partners and investors.

We will actively pursue dialogue to further our vision, while aligning our policy framework and enabling investment. Where necessary, we will advocate for more freedoms and flexibilities to demonstrate the outcomes which concerted and thought-through intervention can achieve.

Our vision celebrates Old Oak and Park Royal's productive past and embraces its future. It uses our development investment, planning powers, convening responsibility and partnership levers to:

- build upon established neighbouring scientific and growth excellence to catalyse further growth and commercialisation, prioritising frontier industries.
- create a physical and human environment which nurtures pioneering thinkers and entrepreneurs and attracts frontier technology.
- enable the establishment of new production facilities to manufacture innovation at scale.
- substantially increase the number and diversity of knowledge economy jobs.
- bring innovative practice to our foundational industries and market-leading creative sector – affording them the room and productivity to stay and grow, even as the area transforms and land values increase.
- meet our host borough priorities to deliver inclusive growth, offering good quality opportunities for all our residents and businesses, alongside affordable homes and other amenities.



By 2040, Old Oak and Park Royal will be a leading UK location for Industrial Innovation where frontier and foundational firms alike model the productive use of new technologies and processes:

- Old Oak and Park Royal will encompass all the institutions, businesses, and premises required to take cutting edge ideas through to full scale commercialisation and production. Located at the heart of WestTech London, we will encourage clustering and maximise our exceptional national and international connectivity to support innovative production and learning partnerships.
- The area will be a hub and a destination. People arriving at Old Oak and exploring Park Royal will know we take innovation, creativity and production seriously. The built form and environment will encourage business growth, exploration and learning, and model inventiveness and sustainability.
- Old Oak and Park Royal will be a centre for London's experience and visitor economy. We will draw performers, artists and audiences from far and wide, creating an exciting and dynamic new town.
- Innovation will not be confined to new industries. With our partners, we will facilitate the application of ideas and technology to existing businesses in the foundational and creative economies, improving sustainability, productivity, profitability and pay.
- Old Oak and Park Royal will be a circular economy. From food to film, labs to data centres, we will model sustainable approaches to production and distribution, using cleaner energy and turning by-products into new materials and fuel, rather than landfill and pollution.
- Everyone, regardless of background, will have access to improved opportunities. We will create a physical landscape which connects Old Oak and Park Royal to its surrounding communities, and a training landscape which supports industrial innovation for all, enabling people across the host boroughs to access rewarding roles in our economy wherever and whenever they start.



## What is Industrial Innovation?

- Industrial Innovation is an approach to growth which places knowledge, research, frontier technology and innovation at the centre of our commercial strategy.
- It creates spaces and neighbourhoods, including labs, offices, factories, social spaces and homes which will attract innovators and allow them to invent and refine systems, products and processes.
- It provides the volume of space, quality of infrastructure and connectivity and access to investment, that will allow innovators to turn their ideas into reality and manufacture and distribute at scale.
- It actively encourages the introduction of innovation and technical academic expertise to existing businesses, allowing them to develop.



## About the Area

**Old Oak and Park Royal is a 655-hectare opportunity area in West London spanning parts of three boroughs – Ealing, Brent and Hammersmith & Fulham. It includes Park Royal industrial estate, the Old Oak development area around High Speed 2’s new Old Oak Common Station, and some of the protected land at Wormwood Scrubs.**

The area is already an economic powerhouse: existing industries employ more than 40,000 people at a range of levels across 2,000 businesses, with well-established clusters in core London sectors including food and drink manufacture, film and TV, creative industries and transport and logistics. Park Royal also enjoys a unique significance for Middle Eastern communities, drawing people from across the UK and even further afield to its specialist food offer. However, despite these strengths, neighbouring areas still face economic challenges, with residents and businesses unable to reach their full potential.

Following the completion of Old Oak Common station, which will connect HS2, Elizabeth line, Great Western Mainline and Heathrow Express services, redevelopment of the station worksites will provide the opportunity for up to 200,000 square metres of commercial and community space and in excess of 11,000 jobs. Old Oak will be a new business district for London. It sits next to White City Innovation District, the epicentre of the emerging WestTech London. As it expands, it is important that Old Oak captures the growth opportunities by delivering the right commercial and campus space, along with housing that supports the emerging polycentric economic centre of the city.

Old Oak and Park Royal is located in the WestTech London innovation ecosystem, which connects world-leading university led research and innovation anchors from Imperial and Brunel towards the M4 corridor, Oxford and the wider South-East. Here exceptional institutions are co-located with laboratories, start up space, grow-on commercial facilities and increasing volumes of production space.

Thanks to Elizabeth line and HS2, the area in the future will be 10 minutes from Bond Street in central London and Heathrow Airport, and a 38-minute train ride from the West Midlands, the UK’s principal hub for advanced manufacturing. As such, it is uniquely placed in its access to investment finance, export markets and sophisticated production capacity and can be a key anchor in the delivery of the government’s industrial strategy.

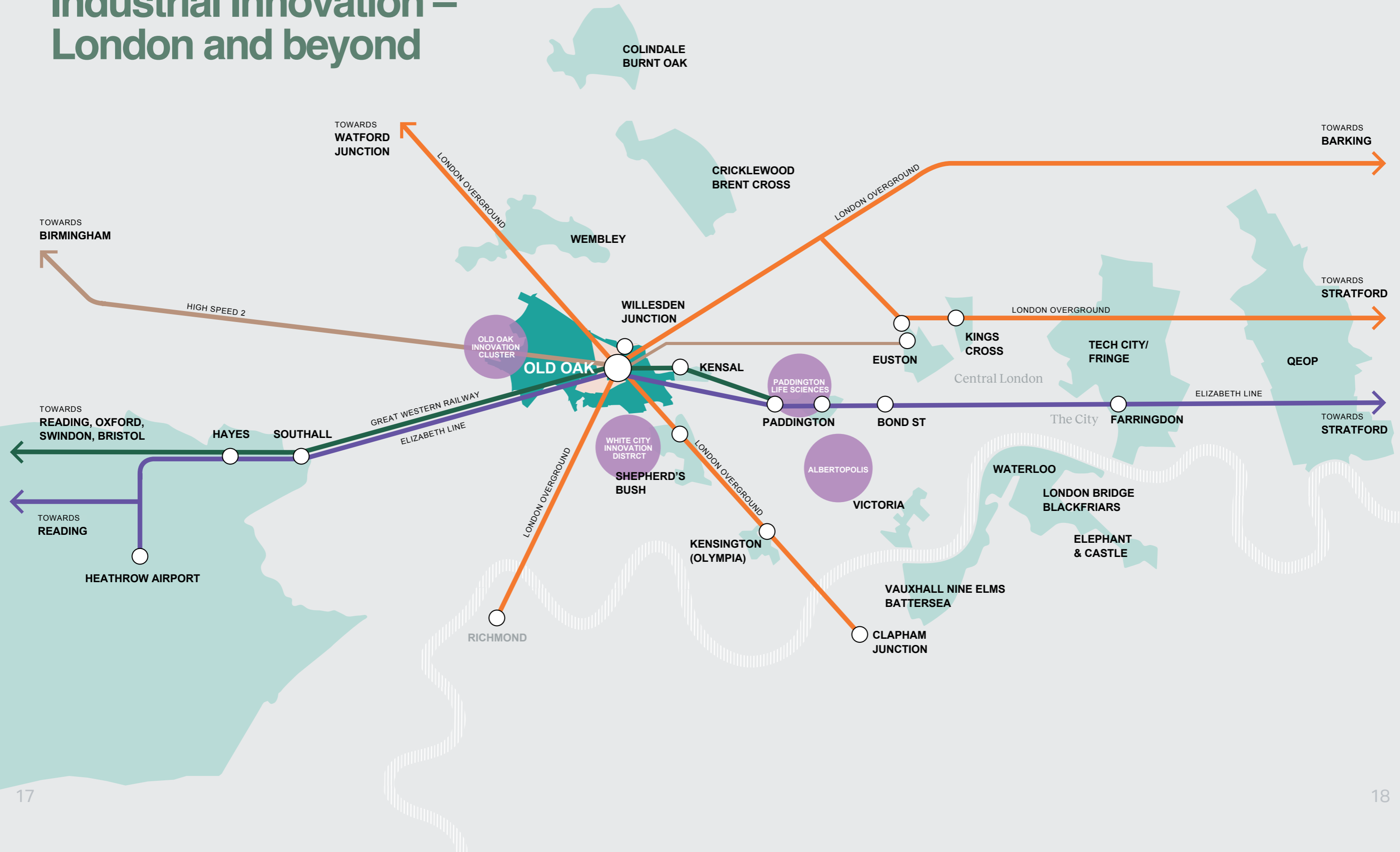
## Case Study Upstream London

Published in November 2024, Upstream London is the second phase of Hammersmith & Fulham’s industrial strategy which was launched in 2017 and is achieving inclusive economic growth across the borough. The strategy celebrates the growth and investment (13,000 jobs, £6bn) curated during the first phase which established the White City Innovation District as a fast-growing global hotspot in long-cycle, frontier industries. The second phase sets out plans to expand partnerships and curate further inclusive growth in the industries that are coming to dominate the mid-21st century: life sciences, climate tech, cyber security, AI, fintech, the creative industries, digital, defence tech, TV and film. It details the added agility and breadth of operation delivered by an adapted ‘Triple Helix’ model of ‘Entrepreneurial Municipal Government’ involving academia, business and local government working together.

Multus Biotechnology,  
Imperial, White City

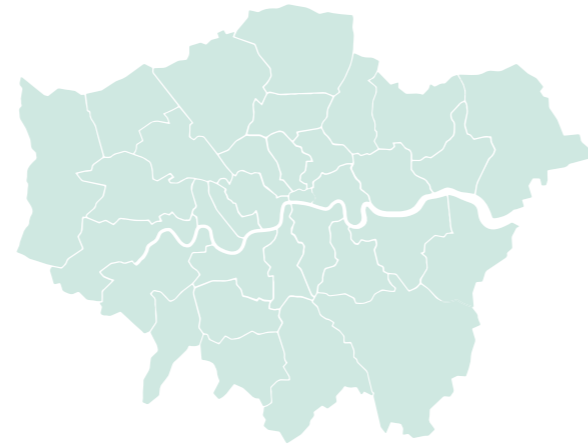


# Industrial Innovation – London and beyond





Absolute Beginners Exhibition and Workshop, Park Royal Design District



## About OPDC

**Lead responsibility for delivering the economic vision rests with OPDC, the Mayor of London's statutory regeneration agency and planning authority for the Old Oak and Park Royal area. As a Development Corporation, OPDC can marshal planning, development and convening powers to secure transformative change.**



Peter Booth Designs, Standard Studios, Park Royal



Women construction trainees at Build East training centre



In partnership with government, we are delivering large-scale investment in housing and infrastructure, and modelling a future-facing approach to economic growth. As part of the GLA family we contribute to Mayoral priorities and draw on colleagues' expert support on matters as diverse as inward investment and skills. As a committed West London partner, we work with our host boroughs to understand and serve our communities and businesses with sensitivity and imagination.

The redevelopment of Old Oak and Park Royal can bring a successful, productive future for residents and businesses both existing and new. Done right, we can improve productivity and enhance opportunities for all, allowing small firms to start-up and thrive, and people to improve their skills, earnings and job opportunities.

We have talked to many stakeholders in the development of this vision, and all are ambitious for Old Oak and Park Royal's commercial and industrial future. They understand the role that innovation and business will play in shaping the new Old Oak neighbourhood, and the risks of a laissez faire approach.

Together we are confident of delivering Industrial Innovation across Old Oak and Park Royal.



Goodies Supermarket, Park Royal



## Key Stakeholders

### The Mayor of London and his agencies

OPDC is a Mayoral Development Corporation, and we are fully aligned with the Mayor's aspirations for London as expressed in the London Plan, Housing Strategy, Economic Development Strategy and Growth Plan. This vision was developed in collaboration with the GLA and with London & Partners, the Mayor's growth agency for London and both organisations will be fundamental to its success.

### UK Government

The UK government is instrumental to the successful development of Old Oak and Park Royal, through its strategic investment in transport, housing and infrastructure. OPDC's Outline Business Case for Old Oak, prepared in partnership with government, identifies driving economic growth as the primary strategic objective for investment.

### Transport Partners: Network Rail, HS2 and Heathrow Airport

OPDC's transport partners are key to delivering the Old Oak development and to realising the full potential of Old Oak and Park Royal. We are talking to rail partners about maximising economic outcomes to the West of England, West Midlands and along the WestTech Corridor from our enhanced connectivity, and with Heathrow about strengthening skills, employment and supply chain opportunities.

### Local Authorities

The OPDC area straddles three local authority boundaries: Brent, Ealing and Hammersmith & Fulham, all of which are ambitious for inclusive economic growth to drive up outcomes for residents and businesses. Borough colleagues have been supportive and engaged participants in the development of this vision.

### West London Alliance

West London Alliance is the public sector partnership for West London, comprising seven authorities including our host borough neighbours. Their insights on the sub-region's economic potential and challenges, and the role which Old Oak and Park Royal plays in the sub-regional economy, have helped shape the vision and define the narrative.

### Local Businesses and representative groups

Our area is host to a wide variety of enterprises, from creative micro enterprises through workspace operators and medium sized food businesses to film studios, major manufacturers and leading-edge industrial investors/developers. It neighbours other significant clusters from Heathrow Airport to the White City Innovation District. West London Business, Park Royal Business Group and the West London Chamber of Commerce support and represent our business community.

We have consulted with a range of business voices to develop this vision: their insights are invaluable as we build a district prioritising sustainable business growth.

### Higher & Further Education Institutions: Imperial, Brunel, University of West London, West London College

West London has a unique complement of education institutions whose combined weight and expertise help drive our economic vision. Imperial's elite science base is driving frontier innovation and rapid business expansion while Brunel's engineers are developing solutions to support SME sustainability. University of West London and West London College deliver education and training targeted at our foundational sectors.

Their collective knowledge capability will anchor our focus on industrial innovation, by developing knowledge and skills, pioneering new products and enhancing productivity across existing sectors.

### Our Local Communities

Old Oak and Park Royal is growing and changing. We are already home to 40,000 workers spread across Park Royal, Old Oak, and established and emerging residential communities in North Acton. As development proceeds, we will welcome tens of thousands more people to live and work here and the housing typologies and tenures created will need to support a diverse workforce.

But our community is wider than that: it extends to the hundreds of thousands who live in the three host boroughs and across West London. Our interviews have reinforced the need to open our area to this wider community, and our Industrial Innovation vision will play a central role: addressing both physical and knowledge boundaries.

# Strategic Context



**Government Missions: Our vision of industrial innovation, focusing on productivity and sustainability alongside improving skills provision and earning, supports the national missions to kickstart economic growth, make Britain a clean energy superpower and break down barriers to opportunity.**

The UK government green paper **Invest 2035: the UK's modern industrial strategy**, sets an ambitious direction for the UK economy. It recognises our established strengths and prioritises several key sectors including life sciences, creative industries and advanced manufacturing where Old Oak and Park Royal has established strengths or emerging potential.

It acknowledges the importance of good transport connectivity and access to investment finance: Old Oak and Park Royal is one of the only places in the UK which combines rapid access to investors and export markets with world-leading innovation and substantial advanced manufacturing capabilities.

Notably, the strategy seeks to improve productivity through the application of technology and ideas: aligning with our aspirations for the foundational economy. It also confirms the gap in technical skills emerging from our consultation, and which stakeholders must address to improve productivity. We want to pioneer a devolved solution to this challenge and look forward to discussing our ideas with government and education partners.

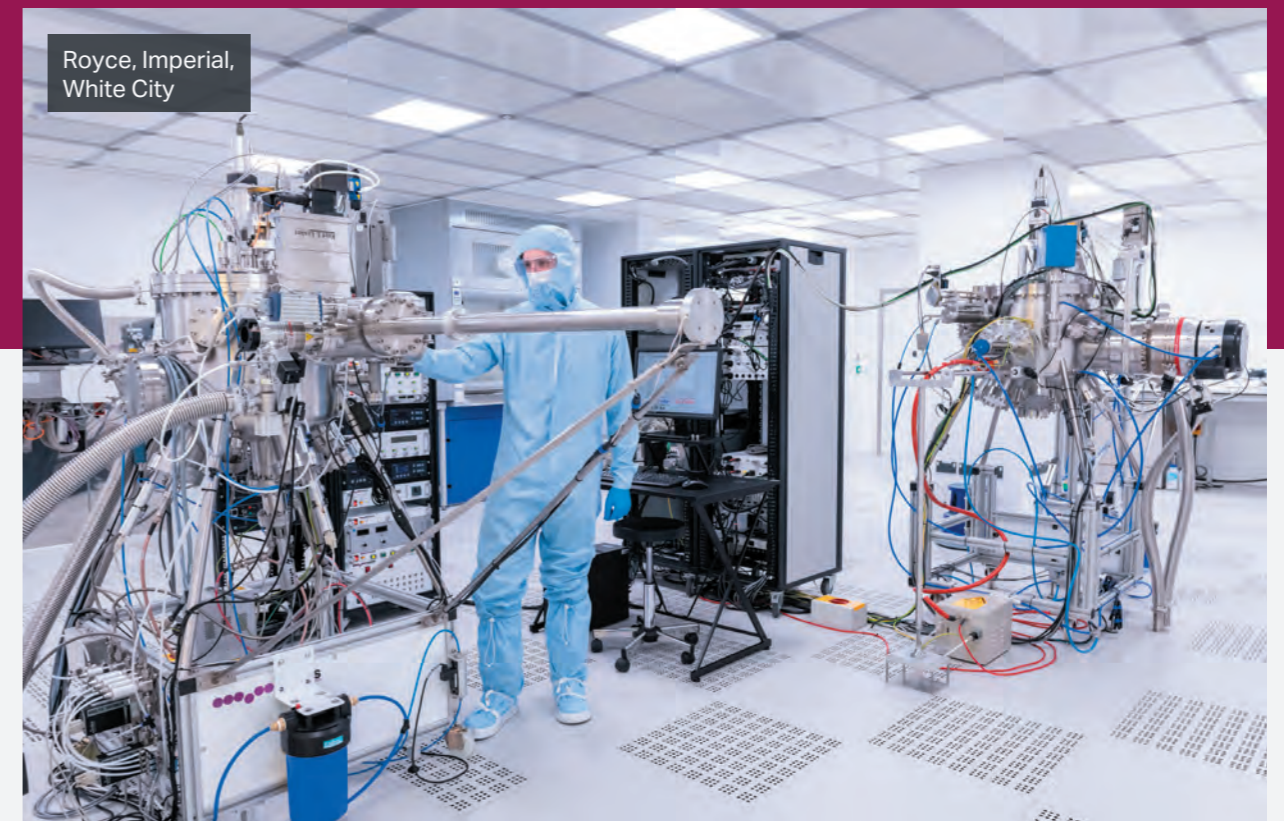
We will be working with the Mayor of London to highlight our contribution to the UK industrial strategy and secure support and investment for our initiatives.

The new **London Growth Plan** identifies Old Oak and Park Royal as one of six key areas for London's next phase of growth, and a key site for industrial innovation – which it defines as the application of frontier innovation. Our vision directly contributes to its principal ambitions of improved productivity, inclusivity and green growth and supports Growth Plan priority sectors such as the cultural and creative industries and frontier innovation.

Our long-term vision for Park Royal, which strengthens existing industrial businesses while creating the conditions for innovative and advanced manufacturing growth, exemplifies the strategic approach to industrial areas which the London Growth Plan seeks.

At the same time, through productivity enhancements to foundation economy businesses, it will improve wages and conditions for lower income Londoners.

Other dimensions of the plan could be instrumental in supporting our ambitions. We are excited to collaborate on the emerging Inclusive Talent Strategy and demonstrate how skills investment can support better and fairer growth in Old Oak and Park Royal, and we welcome Mayoral ambitions to increase Mayoral Development Corporation powers around land assembly.



Brent Council's **Inclusive Growth Strategy**<sup>3</sup> celebrates the borough's diversity but also highlights critical issues facing Brent including population change and an older workforce, a decline in high street retail and the challenge of automation to existing employment. It recognises that many residents are on low incomes, and that some parts of the borough, including Harlesden which borders Park Royal, are characterised by deprivation and high unemployment. OPDC's Economic Vision will address these issues and reinforce the regeneration and business growth priorities set out in the Brent Prospectus by supporting future-facing employment growth, enhancing business productivity, and upskilling people of all ages.

Ealing Council has identified that while the borough makes a huge contribution to the UK's economy, it also faces challenges including a decline in knowledge economy jobs, poor returns on employment for residents and business difficulties in finding affordable workspace and skilled staff. Its **Jobs and Skills Strategy for 2024-29**<sup>4</sup> identifies the regeneration and investment opportunity presented by OPDC as a critical asset to the borough and strongly supports industrial intensification and investment in high growth sectors, setting out career progression pathways into those sectors.

Published in November 2024, **Upstream London**<sup>5</sup> is the second phase of Hammersmith & Fulham's industrial strategy. It sets out how the White City Innovation District and the emerging Fulham Riverside Life Sciences Precinct will curate inclusive growth across the super-cluster that is being established in the WestTech London innovation ecosystem. OPDC believes our Vision chimes well with Hammersmith & Fulham's long-established approach, offering welcomed opportunities to collaborate on creating and safeguarding affordable, flexible workspace, attracting inward investment, prioritising innovation and developing and strengthening opportunity pathways for all residents.

The West London Alliance recently set out West London boroughs' shared strategic priorities for growth, including promoting West London as a global innovation gateway, enabling the clean energy transition, improving orbital transport and equipping residents with future skills. OPDC's Economic Vision will contribute significantly towards these goals.



Park Royal Industrial Estate



## Opportunities

**Old Oak and Park Royal is unique amongst London's Opportunity Areas in combining significant capacity for commercial development with one of the largest and most successful industrial estates in the UK.**

Built out, Old Oak will provide up to 200,000 square metres of commercial and community space, in highly accessible locations at the heart of the new urban district. While the opportunity area was originally identified in the pre-COVID era, its development timeline (sites are expected for release between 2028 and 2030) means we are well positioned to respond to new trends and priorities in the regional and national economy including the growth in life sciences and clean technology. The scale of the sites and our own planning guidance both support and encourage a varied built form, accommodating all the types of uses, from labs to workshops to office space, that an innovation district might require.

Moreover, as these sectors increasingly generate 'hard' products and solutions versus software and applications, Park Royal provides the space and the entrepreneurial capacity to test and develop innovations, and manufacture and distribute them at scale. The importance of such space to London in retaining the benefits of innovation has been highlighted in recent research by **London & Partners/ Med City**<sup>6</sup>.

Productivity growth, a consistent theme of national and regional growth strategies, is also an opportunity for Old Oak and Park Royal. As London's engine room, Park Royal provides an essential service role to London, making much of the capital's food and acting as a distribution hub for a far wider range of goods. The sustainability imperative makes it essential that these support functions stay close to home, even as other factors such as rising property prices might crowd them out. By supporting foundational economy firms to innovate we can increase their sustainability and productivity, making it cost effective for them to stay and grow. Well-managed intensification can also increase jobs and productivity on the Park Royal estate.

Old Oak and Park Royal forms part of the West London economy which produces more than £70bn GVA annually. Our location, proximate to the White City Innovation District, Paddington Life Sciences, central London, and well connected to the Midlands via HS2 and the West of England via Great Western Railway (GWR), enhances our potential to foster innovation, secure investment and find new markets. Using existing track and infrastructure, a direct GWR rail service from Old Oak to Oxford could readily deliver a transformative upgrade in WestTech London connectivity.

### Case Study Brunel Park Royal Net Zero Food Systems

Brunel University's Park Royal Net Zero Food Systems project is an outstanding pathfinder for industrial innovation. It uses investment from UK Research and Innovation to support academic research and collaboration with Park Royal's food manufacturers, focusing on sustainability and the circular economy. The project is already delivering real productivity gains for businesses, for example by designing systems which capture and re-use waste heat from the production process, thereby reducing energy bills.



Dina Foods, Park Royal

Minutes away via the Elizabeth line, Heathrow is a unique asset of global significance to the area, bringing an international dimension to our connectivity and a substantial customer base for both innovative and foundational economy firms. We are already exploring the opportunities which these enhanced connections bring for innovation and commercial partnerships.

Local and subregional interventions can enhance this locational advantage still further: investment in walking, cycling and bus routes can significantly reduce the journey time between White City and Old Oak and the West London Orbital rail project would deliver sustainable connectivity for people and business across the sub-region, allowing 450,000 more people to access the area within an hour's travel.

OPDC's housing responsibilities enhance our ability to deliver industrial innovation for Old Oak and Park Royal. By fostering a diverse mix of typologies and tenures, we can create homes which will attract and retain the workforce that drives the innovation economy.

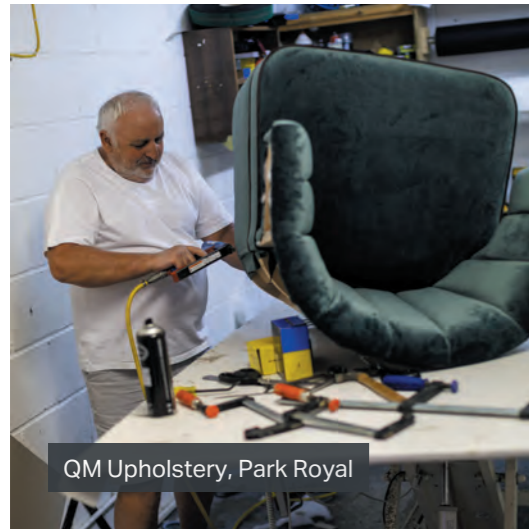
To fill these roles, Old Oak and Park Royal can already call on a workforce of exceptional potential and diversity, with 625,000 working age people living across Brent, Ealing and Hammersmith & Fulham.

People from all kinds of backgrounds are already running businesses and fulfilling roles across our economy and the youthful local population offers a digital-native workforce of enormous potential. However, we know from our borough partners that many residents and businesses struggle to maximise their potential. Industrial innovation will create more and better paid opportunities and deliver a skills and employment support landscape which allows people to understand and access new jobs and customers.

Finally, OPDC's membership of the GLA family together with our commissioning, placemaking function and convening remit support targeted interventions and investments. For economic development and inward investment this means close collaboration with London & Partners and Opportunity London. We can bring partners together around new ideas and demonstrate to government and investors how these will deliver against their priorities. Some initiatives, like our district heat network, are already in train. By pioneering new ideas in industrial innovation, we can sharpen the area's competitive edge and serve as a pathfinder for national and regional strategy.



Rashida, Pastry Chef and owner of Rashida Patisserie, Park Royal



QM Upholstery, Park Royal



## Challenges

**OPDC and our partners know that the biggest and most exciting challenge we face in delivering Old Oak and Park Royal's economic future is change. Over the 25 years in which our new district develops, sectors will emerge and contract, commerce will experience a significant but currently unknowable impact from AI, robotics and automation, and geopolitical change will continue.**

New businesses which respond to this context, such as data centres, are already establishing themselves in the area, presenting new demands on our resources and employment space. By focusing on innovation, sustainability and productivity and by developing an area which fosters learning we will give Old Oak and Park Royal the best prospects for a thriving future.

However, taking an innovation-led approach itself generates a further challenge: that innovative and knowledge intensive industries may increase the risk of crowding out or displacing our existing commercial base - and thus the 40,000 'everyday economy' jobs which provide employment for people with all levels of skills and qualifications. The risk is threefold:

- Knowledge industries may directly displace lower-margin firms
- Their impact on commercial property values may drive up rents to unaffordable levels
- Residents may not have the skills to find work in the new economy

In this context it is notable and challenging that OPDC's influence in Park Royal, as planning authority, is more limited than in Old Oak where we lead development.



Sunday Lighting, Park Royal

We are also mindful of the secondary risk of creating a 'disjointed' place, with separate commercial areas – one knowledge-led and one foundational – having very little communication with each other and with residents of established communities unable to connect to the new opportunities we are creating.

Addressing these concerns has been central to developing the vision. It explains our emphasis on

connecting old and new businesses and neighbourhoods both physically and via innovation/productivity partnerships, on developing a learning infrastructure that supports productive employment in our priority sectors and on making the case for increased placemaking powers where required. This approach will ensure that all areas of the economy benefit from innovation, and that all our residents can find more rewarding work and adapt to change.



David Samuel, Artist and Founder of RareKind Studios, Park Royal

# Understanding the Context

**Research conducted for this study confirmed that Park Royal remains a regionally significant centre for food and drink manufacture, the creative industries and distribution.**

The area enjoys high levels of occupancy and supports a large volume of jobs at a variety of levels, containing thousands of active workspaces in sectors from breweries to artists' studios<sup>7</sup>. The business community is highly diverse and serves and attracts customers from far and wide. Specifically, its connections to the Middle Eastern community give the area an international profile.

Businesses appreciate the area's location and connectivity but experience some frustration with the overall quality of infrastructure, particularly energy supply and road quality and congestion. We established that many SMEs operate low margin businesses, putting them at risk should commercial rent levels rise and reducing their ability to invest and plan for the future. We also know that they are ambitious to innovate and modernise, as evidenced by their participation in Brunel's Park Royal Net Zero Food Partnership.

SME employers and local authority partners alike identified an exceptional work ethic and enormous potential across our community. Interviewees commented that many of the businesses found in Park Royal are of a nature which still support progression from the shop floor to the board room.

However, businesses also highlighted that basic skills gaps (literacy, numeracy and English language) sometimes prevented experienced and competent workers from progressing within their organisation. Other stakeholders testified to a shortage of technical production skills across the population which could limit business efficiency and deter inward investment and

growth. This gap has also been identified in the national Industrial Strategy and suggests a market failure which we should seek to address, working with the West London Skills and Employment Board.

Our stakeholder interviews highlighted that our universities excel in innovation and the application of academic, scientific and engineering expertise to industry, the thriving White City Innovation District and Brunel's Park Royal Net Zero Food Partnership provide distinctive and compelling examples of this practice. It is clear that higher education partners have the capacity and desire to expand on this activity.

The area has already seen several pilots focused on industrial sustainability, in particular reusing waste and by products, both materials and energy. Stakeholders felt there was potential to do more in this regard, both extending existing projects and exploring more systematised and industrialised approaches – for example recycling food waste into fuel.

We learned that London's overall reputation as a business centre, together with its world-leading higher education and research offer is attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) from new and established firms. Our interviewees suggested that an increasing proportion of spinout and FDI firms are creating new physical products (as distinct from software and apps) and will therefore require prototyping and manufacturing space.

Looking at innovation districts overseas it is apparent that there is no single template for success. Some are established by the business community and land developers, others by an academic institution. Some emerge through a combination of the soft power leadership of a municipality working in partnership with business or a university - such as with Barcelona's 22@ and the White City Innovation District. Others, like Kalundborg Symbiosis began as a single unifying idea (a fully circular ecosystem) which required significant investment and curation to realise and maintain. Most provide a diverse range of workspace, both in scale and affordability, enabling both start-ups and expansion. The international partnerships forged by White City Innovation District and Hammersmith & Fulham's Upstream London offer the opportunity for further learning and a template for mutual support and collaboration.

One factor which should be acknowledged is the greater flexibility afforded to many international districts to determine their own operating context whether through enhanced planning powers to encourage or deter particular forms of development, or fiscal powers to raise, lower or retain local business taxes.

Arguably the unifying factor is that every successful district has been ambitious and entrepreneurial in deploying the levers available to them to drive success, from shaping the built form and commercial uses to the provision of workspace and skills investment. It is also notable that technology-led projects typically require significant investment in research capability and facilities, which may take time to recoup.

International comparators were also helpful in understanding how to maximise benefits from our improved links to the Midlands via HS2. We looked at the impact of several comparable high speed rail schemes on economic growth in their respective cities, including Frankfurt to Stuttgart, Madrid to Barcelona and Paris to Lyon.

For Paris to Lyon, benefits were seen at both ends of the line. Major engineering firms have used the enhanced connectivity for example to streamline their operations between Paris headquarters and Lyon-based manufacturing, and to pioneer new manufacturing technologies based on university-led innovation. Similar examples of impact can be drawn from the life sciences sector where Sanofi, headquartered in Paris, has leveraged the high-speed rail link to streamline its operations and enhance collaboration with research institutions in Lyon, accelerating the development of new pharmaceuticals.

This implies substantial opportunities for Old Oak and Park Royal arising from HS2, especially given the Midlands' industrial strengths in advanced manufacturing and automotive technology. Likewise, our own universities and many of the leading institutions in and around Birmingham share research and innovation strengths in cleantech, life sciences and advanced manufacturing, together with a commitment to commercialisation exemplified by initiatives including the White City Innovation District and Midlands Mindforge.



Calligraphy Workshop, Levant Restaurant, Park Royal

## Developing the Vision

**Our Economic Vision has been developed by drawing on a range of techniques and resources.**

We commenced our work with a context analysis which profiled the local economy and demographics to establish key issues and potential.

We reviewed the development and performance of other specialist business and innovation districts in the UK and elsewhere, paying particular attention to the levers and resources available to sponsors, developers and investors in each instance. We visited key commercial locations and businesses in or connected to the OPDC area including Park Royal, the White City Innovation District and Birmingham.

We interviewed a range of local stakeholders to establish their understanding of, and priorities for, the Old Oak and Park Royal area. We asked them to expand on options for economic development and the explored financial viability and resilience to change for each option.

We outlined several alternative visions, all drawing on the characteristics and potential of the area. We tested these with a consultative group comprising GLA, borough and business representatives. Finally, we developed the preferred vision through a series of workshops with key partners.

## Refining Our Model

Four competing visions for Old Oak and Park Royal's economic future were tested with stakeholders. These included:

- A traditional office-based business district model
- A life sciences focused model
- Growth built around Park Royal's existing clusters
- An approach based on Industrial Innovation

Industrial Innovation aligns well with national, regional and local strategies for growth. It is sufficiently flexible to adapt to changing sectoral strengths and priorities, while at the same time setting a tone and direction for investment and the built form – which will be more varied in height and scale than an office scheme. This means we can create a new district at Old Oak which looks and feels distinctive and which, in rejecting uniformity, finds common ground with Park Royal.

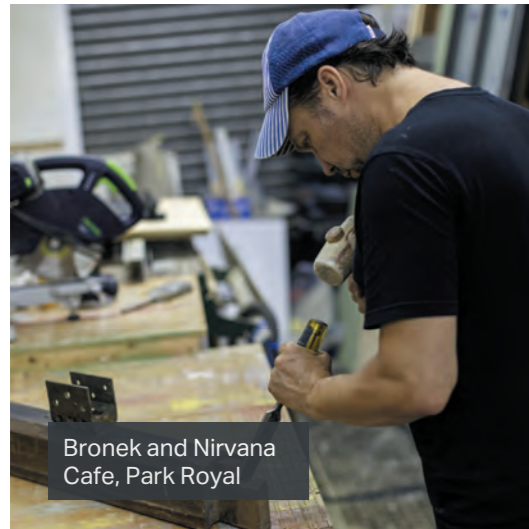
Importantly, by placing a premium on experimentation and making, Industrial Innovation anchors employees to their workplace, creating buzz and bustle, and limiting the risk of under-occupied ghost offices.

Busy, full buildings are critical to establishing a new district and supporting the 'everyday economy' including the shops, cafes, bars and restaurants which workers and residents need. Such a district would also see students at all levels, further as well as higher education, learning alongside their future employers. Increasing the visibility of our new economy will be invaluable in raising awareness and aspiration.

Finally, 'Industrial Innovation' acknowledges and celebrates the tradition and contribution of Park Royal to the area and to London. By brokering partnerships between old and new, it works with and for existing businesses and helps drive up the overall quality of employment in the area while maintaining the area's essential engine room function. At the same time, it preserves and extends the range of jobs available, so that there are productive opportunities for people with diverse aptitudes and skills levels.



Koalaa, Adult and Children Prosthetics, Park Royal



Bronek and Nirvana Cafe, Park Royal



# Delivering Industrial Innovation: Actions and Next Steps

**Industrial Innovation is a vision which OPDC shares with our local, regional and national stakeholders. To realise the vision, we will need to work together: deploying all the policy, leverage and investment powers we have to hand, and advocating for greater resources as and when required.**

Old Oak and Park Royal will be the place where innovation and productivity meet:

- Our children, young people and older residents understand the variety of productive careers available, and can easily access the skills and connections to get ahead
- Businesses, established and new, know that innovation can enhance their productivity, and that this is the right place to access that innovation
- Our built form, landscape, infrastructure and transport deliver a truly permeable place – stimulating curiosity and supporting exploration and growth

OPDC and our partners already have exciting projects underway which support our vision:

- Imperial's development of the Victoria Road industrial Estate is creating flexible and affordable follow-on space for innovators nurtured in the White City Innovation District.
- OPDC's small business loan fund, the Creative Enterprise Zone, Brunel's Net Zero project and the Park Royal Decentralised Energy scheme all support business productivity, sustainability and long-term viability.
- OPDC's Local Plan and award-winning Supplementary Planning documents - which guide development in Old Oak and in our industrial areas - encourage a built form and environment which is varied and accessible, supporting the creation and retention of spaces for innovation and manufacturing, including affordable, flexible workspace.

## Case Study Imperial/ Victoria Industrial Estate

A global top-10 university, Imperial's emerging WestTech strategy anchors innovation across a number of key locations including White City Innovation District and Paddington Life Sciences. Already invested in North Acton through affordable student accommodation and a commitment to 2 million sq. ft. of mixed-use growth at One Portal Way, Imperial sees Old Oak, with its outstanding connectivity, as the essential next WestTech location. Imperial is developing Victoria Industrial Estate (VIE) to offer flexible and affordable spaces for frontier innovators, such as manufacturing, pilot facilities, prototyping and Good Manufacturing Practice, serving as a UK pathfinder for the industrial intensification underpinning exemplar innovation ecosystems in the USA. A 50,000 sq. ft. commercial innovation building will open at One Portal Way in 2026, generating impetus for the longer-term scheme.



London Biofoundry, Imperial, White City



Brew Collective, Excelsior Studios, Park Royal



## What We Need To Do

**Our next steps involve continuing to work closely with stakeholders and our development partner on the delivery of this vision.**

Supporting inclusive, innovation-led growth, the strategy must meet the twin tests of ambition and deliverability. Where appropriate we will advocate for greater powers and more investment, so that Old Oak and Park Royal can maximise our contribution to UK PLC.



You are the Circle Exhibition by the Women of Park Royal Artists - Park Royal Open Workshops at Excelsior.

In the short term we will:

- Deploy our development, placemaking, planning, leverage and convening resources in support of this vision.
- Use the Economic Vision as a key tool in branding Old Oak and Park Royal, building momentum and shaping stakeholders' expectations.
- Work with Opportunity London and London & Partners to market the commercial potential of the site and attract innovation-focused investors and occupiers.
- Open conversations with sector-leading employers, regional and national partners about transformative pathfinder investment in technical and vocational skills.
- Hold in-depth discussions with all businesses in the foundational, creative, film and television and innovation-led sectors to understand their space and other support requirements.
- Adapt and expand our existing programmes of employment and business support in line with our productivity and innovation focus, prioritising our nearest communities and businesses in Acton, Harlesden, Willesden and Northolt.
- Develop a programme of meanwhile occupancy that begins to shape the local economy toward our vision.

In the medium term we will:

- Explore the development of specialist investment and funding approaches to attract and retain innovative businesses.
- Pursue collaborative conversations with cities, universities and innovation districts across the UK and overseas.
- Ensure emerging policy development (including the new Local Plan) and development negotiations support a physical and investment landscape conducive to Industrial Innovation.
- Work with our development partners to shape a varied building typology across our key commercial sites.
- Apply our affordable workspace policy and s106 funds to safeguard the affordability of existing commercial spaces as well as creating new ones.
- Actively pursue energy saving and other initiatives to transform the sustainability and underpin the productivity of Park Royal.
- Develop a knowledge transfer programme for our existing businesses, focused on productivity and sustainability, with Brunel's Net Zero project as a template.
- Work with partners to develop a careers education and work experience model, building on good practice examples such as the Upstream Pathway Bond.

# Notes

<sup>1</sup> The White City Innovation District was launched in 2017. It is an economic growth partnership between the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham and Imperial College London. Its focus is on curating growth in science, technology, engineering, maths, medicine and media (STEM<sup>3</sup>) industries. Since its launch, it has generated £6bn of high growth investment, which is more than all of the rest of West London combined. It has curated over 13,000 STEM<sup>3</sup> jobs and seen more spin-out start-ups than anywhere else in the UK.

<sup>2</sup> Paddington Life Sciences is the health and life science precinct which has been built around St. Mary's Hospital. Its business plan aims to generate £2.8bn in Gross Value Added (GVA) per year by 2050, over 21,800 jobs by 2050 and employment growth of approximately 152%.

<sup>3</sup> [brent.gov.uk/business/regeneration/inclusive-growth-strategy](https://www.brent.gov.uk/business/regeneration/inclusive-growth-strategy)

<sup>4</sup> [goodforealing.com/ealings-jobs-skills-strategy-2024-29/](https://www.goodforealing.com/ealings-jobs-skills-strategy-2024-29/)

<sup>5</sup> [lbhf.gov.uk/upstream-london](https://www.lbhf.gov.uk/upstream-london)

<sup>6</sup> [medcity.london/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/MedCity-Lab-Showcase-Report-Updated-28.01.025.pdf](https://www.medcity.london/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/MedCity-Lab-Showcase-Report-Updated-28.01.025.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Park Royal Atlas, GLA, 2018



Aerial view of HS2 station construction site, Old Oak



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 [london.gov.uk/opdc](https://london.gov.uk/opdc)