

New Labour government must address transport and housing in South West, says business chief

The new Labour government needs to address transport, connectivity and housing issues in the West Country, the head of a regional chamber has said. Phil Smith, managing director of Business West, also called on Sir Keir Starmer's party to launch initiatives that will help boost the economy in the region.

He made the comments as Mr Starmer's party won a landslide victory in the general election, taking power from the Conservatives after 14 years. In a crushing defeat for the Tories, the results saw the downfall of high-profile MPs including former prime minister Liz Truss, defence secretary Grant Shapps, Jacob Rees-Mogg and Penny Mordaunt. Mr Starmer will now become the new PM.

"We congratulate the new prime minister and his government," he said. "We look forward to working with our newly elected Members of Parliament to make our region the best place to live, learn and work."



Phil Smith, managing director of Business West
(Image: Jennifer Rollason)

“We welcome the Labour Party’s commitment to an enduring partnership with business to deliver the economic growth and stability that we need. We also welcome the commitment to involving industry, trade unions and civil society in its plans for growth so we can contribute to building a stronger economy in all parts of the country.”

Mr Smith said the West Country had a “vital role” to play in driving UK productivity, increasing international trade and powering sustainable and inclusive growth.

But he said to do this businesses in the region needed “the right environment” to provide well-paid, jobs and deliver the investment to fund decent public services, and improvements to living standards and infrastructure.

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“Our region has great economic strengths, and we ask that this potential is fully harnessed,” he added. “We need ambitious plans to tackle our longstanding challenges to help kickstart economic growth. These challenges include transport connectivity, housing, and planning.

“We would like to see initiatives that help people gain the skills and support that contribute to growing the economy. We also need investment in our emerging and growth sectors like green energy, alongside investing in the building blocks of the local economy that allow our businesses and staff to thrive.”