



RSA 60th Anniversary Workshop: Inclusive Innovation for Regional Futures: Bridging Economic Development, Ecological Recovery and Social Equity

Date&Time: 30th September 2025 | 9.15—17.30

Location: The Penthouse, 10th Floor , Alliance Manchester Business School, University of Manchester

As the UK rethinks its approach to industrial strategy and regional development, there is growing interest in how innovation policy can support green and inclusive futures. Whether framed through mission-led approaches, place-based strategies, or transformational innovation frameworks, policymakers are increasingly challenged to design innovation systems that deliver economic competitiveness while addressing social and ecological imperatives.

As part of the 'Pan-Northern Branch' series, this one-day workshop brings together leading academics, policymakers, and practitioners to explore how to navigate these complex demands.

Through a mix of keynote talks and panel discussions, we will explore:

- The changing dynamics of central-local relations in UK innovation policy
- The practical challenges of delivering inclusive innovation across diverse economic geographies
- The evolving role of universities and FE colleges as civic anchors and innovation enablers

As part of the RSA's Pan-Northern Branch series—and marking the 60th anniversaries of both the Regional Studies Association and Alliance Manchester Business School—this event offers a platform to reflect on six decades of regional studies scholarship while looking ahead to the role of innovation in shaping more inclusive and sustainable regional futures.

The RSA 60th Anniversary workshop is organised by the RSA Northern Territorial Representatives:

- Ignazio Cabras, North East Branch
- Will Eadson, Yorkshire and Humberside Branch
- Elvira Uyarra, North West Branch

Attendance is free but spaces are limited – register here:

<https://www.regionalstudies.org/events/rsa60thnorth/>

Programme:

08:45 – 09:15 | Arrival and Registration

09:15 – 09:30 | Welcome and Opening Remarks

Ken McPhail, Head of Alliance Manchester Business School

Alan Kinder, Regional Studies Association

09:30 – 10:15 | Opening keynote: Inclusive Innovation and the Future of the North

Chair: Elvira Uyarra, University of Manchester

Speaker: Richard Jones, Vice-President, Regional Innovation and Civic Engagement (University of Manchester)

10:15 – 11:30 | Panel 1: Innovation and Governance in a Changing UK

Chair: Kieron Flanagan, University of Manchester

Speakers: Kevin Morgan (Cardiff University), Alan Harding (University of Manchester), Sarah Evans (CLES), Raquel Ortega Argilés (University of Manchester)

11:30 – 11:45 | Coffee Break

11:45 – 13:00 | Panel 2: Delivering inclusive innovation across diverse economic geographies

Chair: Katie Penny, University of Manchester

Speakers: Cecilia Wong (University of Manchester), David Waite (University of Glasgow), Beth Sharratt (Greater Manchester Combined Authority), Marianne Sensier (University of Manchester).

13:00 – 14:00 | Lunch at The Mill, AMBS

14:00 – 15:15 | Panel 3: Inclusion and the roles of Universities and FE colleges as anchor institutions

Chair: Mabel-Sanchez Barrioluengo (University of Manchester)

Speakers: Coral Grainger (Manchester Metropolitan University and GM Colleges), Tomas Coates Ulrichsen (University of Cambridge), David Charles, (Northumbria University), Luke Georghiou (University of Manchester).

15:15 – 15:30 | Coffee Break

15:30 – 17:00 | Panel 4: Inter-Regional Learning and UK-wide Perspectives

Chair: Rick Delbridge, Cardiff University

Speakers: Rhys Thomas (PWC), Alba Escala (Glasgow City-Region), Adrian Johnson (Innovation City Belfast), Andy Westwood (University of Manchester).

17:00-17:30 | Closing Reflections

Ignazio Cabras (Northumbria University) and Will Eadson (Sheffield Hallam University)