

Territorial Network 60th Anniversary Event

RSA 60th Anniversary Workshop on Inclusive Innovation for Regional Futures

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The RSA 60th Anniversary Workshop on "Inclusive Innovation for Regional Futures" successfully convened around 70 participants including leading academics, policymakers, and practitioners at Alliance Manchester Business School on 30th September 2025. The event explored critical questions around designing regional innovation ecosystems and policies that deliver economic competitiveness whilst addressing social and ecological imperatives.

Richard Jones (University of Manchester) delivered the opening keynote on inclusive innovation and the future of the North, examining productivity challenges, regional R&D distribution, and Greater Manchester's strategic response through innovation districts (SISTER/ID Manchester), manufacturing innovation parks (Atom Valley), and engagement with FE colleges as anchor institutions.

Four panel discussions explored: innovation and governance in a changing UK; delivering inclusive innovation across diverse economic geographies; the roles of universities and FE colleges as anchor institutions; and inter-regional learning across UK contexts. Panels featured perspectives from multiple city regions including Manchester, Newcastle, Cardiff, Glasgow, Belfast.

Key themes emerged around the need for genuine devolution with adequate resourcing, the importance of social innovation, tensions between global university ambitions and civic responsibilities, and the critical but often overlooked role of FE colleges in innovation ecosystems.

The event demonstrated strong appetite for continued Pan-Northern collaboration and provided valuable cross-regional learning, marking both the RSA's 60th anniversary and reinforcing the importance of place-based innovation policy for creating more inclusive and sustainable regional futures.

