



Deliberation Gateway

GATEWAYS SERIES

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PAPER I

Industrial Case Studies

Eight sector case studies for citizens' assemblies

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ABSTRACT

The UK's Modern Industrial Strategy names eight sectors. For each, this paper runs one thought experiment: imagine you lead an organisation in that sector and see yourself not as someone chasing a target but as a steward, responsible for how your industry will shape a place for a generation. Could a citizens' assembly help you exercise that stewardship well, and would the citizens come out ahead? Eight case studies, four patterns — consent unlocks build, co-design unlocks people, trust unlocks data, alignment unlocks patience — and an honest account of where the idea is weak. A companion to the Citizens' Industrial Strategy.

How to read this document

This document takes the eight sector plans of the UK's Modern Industrial Strategy (MIS) — the "IS-8" — and, for each, runs a single thought experiment. Imagine you lead an organisation in that sector, and you see yourself not simply as someone chasing a target, but as a steward: someone responsible for how your industry will shape the lives of people in a place for a generation. Many of the best local business leaders already feel exactly this way about the firms they run and the towns they run them in. Asked that way, the question becomes: could a Citizens' Assembly of the kind set out in our Citizens' Industrial Strategy roadmap help you exercise that stewardship well — and would the citizens themselves come out ahead? Each case study is built to answer that, and to be picked up later as a candidate for a funded pilot.

The reframing matters. A steward still has a business to sustain — stewardship that bankrupts the firm helps no one — but the motive runs the other way round. The industrial goal is not the point; it is the means by which the place is made better, and kept better, for the people who live there. That is what makes the assembly more than consultation: it is how a steward shares the responsibility for a transition with the people who will live inside it.

Every case study follows the same structure so they can be compared side by side and synthesised into the national report that sits at the end of our roadmap:

- **A snapshot box** naming the natural lead authority, the sub-region, the citizen cohort, the scale of the assembly, and the specific MIS target in play.
- **The stewardship question** — the responsibility a leader in this sector actually carries for the place, expressed as something citizens could deliberate on.
- **Why an assembly genuinely helps the steward** — not as a public-relations exercise, but as a way of doing right by a place while unlocking something no organisation can buy on its own: a social licence, a labour pipeline, planning consent, trusted data, or patient commitment.
- **Why citizens benefit** from the industry being stewarded well — the other half of the bargain.
- **The shared interest and the place** — how steward and citizens come to want the same thing, and why this particular sub-region (often a left-behind one, sometimes one with exactly the right skills mix) is the right home for the pilot.

A closing section sets out the shortcomings — the places where the logic is thin, where these projects could fail, and what the funded scoping study (Phase 3) would have to resolve before any of this is delivered.

The programme runs in four phases:

- **Phase 1 — the introductory panel.** A public online session in February 2026 that tested the idea in the open. Complete.
- **Phase 2 — the workshop series.** Where we are now. Two working workshops produced these case studies and the four patterns; the third is a round table convened to unlock the funding for Phase 3.
- **Phase 3 — the scoped study.** A funded scoping study (c. £50k) that selects the pilots and resolves the questions set out at the end of this document.
- **Phase 4 — the first sector assembly.** Implementing the first sector assembly, as designed by the scoped study.

A note on the principle that holds it together Our roadmap is explicit that this is "process, not content" and "citizen-led" — the programme helps the Industrial Strategy succeed rather than opposing it. The steward framing in this document is deliberately

written from one chair to make the logic vivid, but a steward is not a saint: the voice still has an organisation to keep alive, and the temptation to use an assembly as cover for a decision already made is real. In a genuine assembly the organisation is one voice among many, the questions are professionally and independently designed, and citizens hold the pen. Where the steward's sense of responsibility and the citizens' own priorities genuinely converge, you have a candidate pilot. Where they don't — where citizens would steward the place differently — that gap is itself a finding worth reporting.

The eight case studies

Each follows the same shape — snapshot box, then the stewardship question, why an assembly helps the steward, why citizens benefit, and the shared interest and the place. The steward's voice is used throughout as the thought-experiment lens.

Advanced Manufacturing

the women's share of manufacturing jobs

SNAPSHOT

LEAD AUTHORITY

A Tier-1 automotive or aerospace manufacturer (e.g. a vehicle plant operator) acting through the West Midlands Combined Authority and the Manufacturing Technology Centre.

WHERE IT SITS

The West Midlands — specifically the Coventry / Birmingham corridor, the UK's densest advanced-manufacturing cluster and a Cluster Champions area named in the MIS.

CITIZEN COHORT

Regional, weighted toward women aged 16–40 not currently in manufacturing: school leavers, returners after caring, women in insecure retail and warehousing work, and FE college students.

SCALE

Sub-regional (combined-authority scale). One assembly of c. 50 citizens, with a wider digital layer reaching several thousand via the RAPID Democracy approach.

MIS TARGET IN PLAY

Increase women's share of manufacturing jobs to 35% by 2035 (currently roughly a quarter); part of nearly doubling annual business investment to c. £39bn and growing the sector by c. £31bn.

The stewardship question

I run a manufacturer that has anchored this part of the West Midlands for decades, and I take that seriously: the plant is not just my business, it is part of the fabric of the place. The industry is growing and changing, and I carry a responsibility for who gets to be part of that future. Right now half the people who live around me — women — are largely shut out of the best industrial jobs in the region, by an image and access problem no recruitment campaign has shifted in twenty years. The 35% target is the policy number; the real question I hold is whether this industry, as it grows, will widen who shares in its prosperity or simply entrench who already does. That is a question about the place, not just the payroll, and it is not one I can answer alone.

Why a Citizens' Assembly genuinely helps the steward

A representative assembly of West Midlands women would tell me, with an authority I cannot manufacture myself, exactly why women in this region do not see modern manufacturing as a life worth choosing: shift patterns incompatible with caring, a shop-floor culture they have heard about, careers advice that still routes girls away from engineering, transport that does not reach the plant for an early shift. These are solvable, but only if I know which ones actually bind. The assembly converts diffuse anecdote into a prioritised, evidenced design brief — and because citizens authored it, the changes carry credibility with the very people I hope will build their working lives here. Done as stewardship rather than recruitment, this is not a campaign to fill vacancies; it is letting the community shape what kind of employer the region's anchor industry becomes. The labour pipeline follows from that, but it is the consequence, not the purpose.

Why citizens benefit

The West Midlands has high rates of women in low-paid, insecure work. Manufacturing jobs at this tier pay well above the regional median, offer structured progression and apprenticeships, and are far more secure. If the assembly's recommendations reshape entry routes — returnships, term-time contracts, on-site childcare, bus timetables aligned to shifts — the beneficiaries are women who gain a genuinely better and more stable economic future, and a region that keeps its young women rather than exporting them. Just as importantly, they gain a say over how the place's defining industry treats the next generation.

The shared interest and why here

Steward and citizens end up wanting the same thing: an industry that draws its strength from the whole community rather than half of it. I get a workforce and the social permission to recruit; citizens get redesigned jobs that fit real lives and a binding commitment that the firm acts on what they recommend. The West Midlands is the right home because it is simultaneously a high-skills cluster (the infrastructure and employers already exist) and a place with deep pockets of female under-employment. The assembly works here because the jobs are real and immediate — citizens are deliberating about something that can change their lives within a year, not a decade.

Clean Energy Industries

grid build and the heat-pump workforce

SNAPSHOT

LEAD AUTHORITY

A transmission network operator or major offshore-wind / hydrogen developer, partnered with the relevant Mayoral Combined Authority and an FE skills consortium.

WHERE IT SITS

The Humber (Hull, Grimsby, Immingham, Scunthorpe) — named in the MIS as a flagship Clean Energy cluster, and one of the UK's most economically pressed estuarine regions.

CITIZEN COHORT

Regional, with two linked strands: (a) residents along proposed transmission and CCUS pipeline routes; (b) working-age people — including ex-steel and ex-refining workers — who could retrain to install heat pumps and build the grid.

SCALE

Sub-regional, but explicitly designed as a transferable model: the Humber pilot produces a toolkit for other estuary clusters (Teesside, Merseyside).

MIS TARGET IN PLAY

Double the pace of transmission build vs the last decade; train c. 70,000 heat-pump installers by 2035; reach ≥50% UK content in CCUS and hydrogen value chains; double annual clean-energy investment to £30bn+.

The stewardship question

I am building the energy infrastructure that will run through the Humber for the next fifty years — pylons, pipelines, the works — and I am acutely aware this is a region that was promised a future once before and watched it leave with the steel and the fishing. The transition is going to happen to this estuary one way or another. My responsibility, as I see it, is whether it happens to people or with them. The narrow version of my job is consent and labour: I cannot get infrastructure built fast enough and I cannot recruit installers fast enough. But those are really one question — whether this community feels the energy transition is theirs. A steward treats that as the actual task, not an obstacle to the actual task.

Why a Citizens' Assembly genuinely helps the steward

A Humber assembly lets me do the transition with the community rather than to it — and, not coincidentally, that is also what unlocks the build rate the MIS wants doubled. Citizens can deliberate on the genuinely hard questions a developer cannot resolve alone: where infrastructure goes, what community benefit is fair, how the transition is sequenced so the steelworker's daughter has a route into the new economy before the old one closes. This is the difference between a planning inquiry that drags for four years and a community that has pre-agreed the trade-offs. The consent is real because the stewardship is real: people can tell the difference between a developer asking permission and one genuinely sharing the decision about their estuary's future.

Why citizens benefit

The Humber has lived through deindustrialisation once and is justifiably wary of promises. The benefit on offer is concrete: c. 70,000 installer roles nationally, a large share of which could anchor here; apprenticeships that keep young people in the region; community-benefit funds that citizens themselves help direct; and — if 50% UK content is hit — a domestic supply chain rather than imported kit and imported jobs. For a region that watched its industries decline, this is the rare chance to be on the right side of an industrial transition, and to have shaped the terms of it.

The shared interest and why here

Steward and citizens converge on a managed, well-paid transition the region helped design rather than one imposed on it: I get faster consent and a workforce, the Humber gets a future it had a hand in. The Humber is the textbook depressed-but-strategic region: real deprivation and post-industrial scarring, but also the assets (ports, industrial land, grid, skilled-but-displaced labour) that make it central to Clean Power 2030. A pilot here is high-difficulty and therefore high-value — if stewardship and deliberation can build genuine consent in a sceptical post-industrial estuary, the model will work anywhere.

Creative Industries

a creative cluster and the national arts & music centre

SNAPSHOT

LEAD AUTHORITY

A creative anchor (a major studio, games house, or broadcaster) with the relevant combined authority and a university with creative-tech strength.

WHERE IT SITS

A Northern or Midlands creative cluster outside London — strong candidates: Greater Manchester (media/createch) or West Yorkshire (Leeds/Bradford, with Bradford's recent City of Culture momentum).

CITIZEN COHORT

Sub-regional, weighted to young people 16–30, freelancers and micro-businesses, and communities historically excluded from the creative economy (so it does not simply serve the already-connected).

SCALE

Sub-regional, with a strong digital participation layer — fitting for a sector whose citizens are themselves digitally fluent.

MIS TARGET IN PLAY

Grow investment from £17bn to £31bn a year and 1.5× faster than the wider economy; +£18bn GVA and +160k jobs from createch; £100m R&D clusters; launch a national arts & music centre in England by 2026.

The stewardship question

I run a creative anchor in the North — a studio, a games house, a broadcaster — and a flagship national arts and music centre may be sited near me. I could treat that as an asset to exploit. As a steward I treat it as a trust: a once-in-a-generation public institution that will shape what young people here believe they are allowed to become. The danger is well known: creative investment pools in London, and a "national" centre gets sited and designed without the communities it claims to serve, producing a building people admire but never enter. My responsibility is to make sure the creative economy I am part of opens up this place rather than decorating it — that the talent which is undeniably here gets a reason to stay and a door to come through.

Why a Citizens' Assembly genuinely helps the steward

Where the centre goes, and what it is for, is the perfect deliberative question precisely because its value depends entirely on local ownership. An assembly can answer what no market research can: what would make young people in this place stay and create here; what programming, training, and access would turn a venue into a genuine talent pathway; how createch firms and community arts share one ecosystem. The output is a cluster strategy and a venue brief with a built-in audience and a built-in workforce — not because I engineered it that way, but because the people who will use it designed it. For a steward, that is the whole point: an institution the community recognises as theirs is the only kind that lasts.

Why citizens benefit

Creative jobs are aspirational, well-paid at the top, and currently gatekept by geography and networks. A cluster strategy authored by local young people and freelancers means the 160k new jobs and the new training routes are designed to be reachable by people in the region, not just by graduates who can afford to intern in London. The centre becomes theirs — a place for music education, community production, and progression — rather than a venue they read about. And they hold a say over a cultural institution that will outlast all of us.

The shared interest and why here

Steward and citizens want the same durable thing: a creative life that can be built in this town and stays rooted in it. I secure a sticky, skilled cluster and a flagship that draws audiences and talent; citizens secure access to one of the few growth sectors that can grow where they already live. A Northern cluster is the right home precisely because the MIS wants creative growth to spread beyond London. Bradford or Greater Manchester offer the right skills mix (universities, existing studios, young populations) while still being places where "levelling the creative map" is most keenly felt.

Defence

the nuclear workforce and "defence as an engine for growth"

SNAPSHOT

LEAD AUTHORITY

A prime defence contractor (submarines / shipbuilding / munitions) with the combined authority, MOD as observer, and the regional FE/university skills partnership.

WHERE IT SITS

Barrow-in-Furness and the wider Cumbria coast (submarine build), with Derby (nuclear/Rolls-Royce) as a comparison site. Both are strategically critical and, in Barrow's case, geographically isolated.

CITIZEN COHORT

Sub-regional and deliberately broad: not only potential recruits but the whole community whose town is being reshaped by defence expansion — housing, schools, infrastructure, and those with reservations about a defence-dependent economy.

SCALE

Sub-regional / town-scale (Barrow is close to the "smallest functional polity" our brainstorm flagged).

MIS TARGET IN PLAY

Grow the nuclear workforce to c. 65,000 by 2030; £6bn in munitions incl. a £1.5bn "always-on" pipeline; +£2.5bn MOD spend with SMEs by 2028; new defence colleges and a skills pipeline 2025–35.

The stewardship question

I run the defence prime that effectively is Barrow's economy, and I am about to nearly treble parts of my skilled workforce in a remote town that cannot, as it stands, house, school or transport the people I need. I cannot pretend my only job is the order book. When one employer dominates a town, expanding that employer reshapes everything — housing, schools, roads, the town's very sense of itself — and deepens its dependence on a single, politically contingent industry. As a steward I have to hold all of that: not just "can I grow the workforce to its share of 65,000?" but "can this town absorb that growth and still be a good place to live, and does it consent to becoming even more defence-dependent?" No single employer can or should plan a town alone.

Why a Citizens' Assembly genuinely helps the steward

Barrow is almost a closed system — which makes it ideal for deliberation. An assembly can convene residents, employer, council and skills providers around one question: how do we grow and absorb our share of the national expansion without breaking the town? Citizens can broker the housing-and-infrastructure settlement I have no right to impose, surface the genuine reservations of those uneasy about defence dependency, and design the local benefit that makes the expansion something the town chooses rather than endures. For a steward, that is exactly the help needed: not a way to manufacture buy-in, but a way to share a decision that is too big for any one organisation to own — and the recruitment and retention plan that results carries the town with it because the town wrote it.

Why citizens benefit

Barrow has some of the highest-skilled, best-paid industrial jobs in the country alongside acute deprivation and isolation. The expansion brings secure, high-wage careers, new colleges, and — if citizens shape it — the housing, transport and amenities the town has long lacked. The reservation citizens get to deliberate on, over-dependence on a single sector, is real and worth them owning rather than having decided for them. They get a say over the future of their own town at the moment it is being remade.

The shared interest and why here

Steward and town want a Barrow that thrives because of the expansion rather than merely surviving it: I get the people and the licence to grow, the town gets the infrastructure dividend and a genuine say over its own transformation. Barrow is the right home because it is both depressed-and-isolated and strategically indispensable, and because its near-island geography makes it the cleanest possible test of whether a single-employer town can deliberate its own industrial future. Derby offers a contrasting, more diversified comparison to test whether the model travels.

SNAPSHOT

LEAD AUTHORITY

A hyperscaler or AI infrastructure operator siting a data centre / compute campus, with the host combined authority, the energy network, and universities.

WHERE IT SITS

A candidate AI Growth Zone location with spare grid and land but real deprivation — e.g. the North East (around the Teesside / Tyneside corridor), where industrial land, water, and power coincide with high unemployment.

CITIZEN COHORT

Sub-regional, spanning residents near the proposed compute site (energy, water, land-use, noise concerns) and working-age people who could be among the 7.5 million upskilled to use AI.

SCALE

Sub-regional, with a national thread: the place-based assembly feeds a parallel national conversation on what "upskilling to use AI" should mean for ordinary workers.

MIS TARGET IN PLAY

AI Growth Zones hosting 500MW+ of compute; scale UK AI compute 20x by 2030; up-skill 7.5 million people to use AI by 2030; frontier tech to add up to c. 8.4% to GDP; a top-3 place to start and scale tech firms.

The stewardship question

I want to site a multi-billion-pound compute campus in the North East, and I know data centres now face exactly the consent problem energy did a decade ago: communities worry about power draw, water use, land, and jobs that never materialise locally. I could fight that through planning. As a steward I would rather ask the prior question: this region is going to host a piece of the defining infrastructure of the next economy — will that arrival enrich the people who live beside it, or just draw power and give little back? The national upskilling target is abstract — "7.5 million people" means nothing here unless it means opportunity in this region. My responsibility is to make the AI build something the North East owns a stake in, not a fenced compound it resents.

Why a Citizens' Assembly genuinely helps the steward

An assembly turns a feared facility into a negotiated one — and a negotiated one into a shared project. Citizens can deliberate on the genuine trade-offs: energy and water use, what waste heat could do for local housing or horticulture, what binding local hiring and training commitments come attached, and what "upskilling" should actually deliver for people here. For a steward, the value is not just a faster planning decision; it is a credible local skills compact and a site the community has chosen to host. AI Growth Zones are being sited "in due course" — a region that has genuinely deliberated and pre-consented is not only a faster home but a fairer one, and people can tell which they have been offered.

Why citizens benefit

The North East has the land and grid but needs the opportunity. A deliberated AI Growth Zone could anchor genuinely new high-value employment, route a meaningful slice of the 7.5 million upskilling commitment to local people, and — if citizens negotiate it — capture local benefit from the infrastructure (waste heat, community compute, school programmes) rather than watching value flow out. The alternative is exactly the fenced compound everyone fears. Citizens get to decide which of those their region becomes.

The shared interest and why here

Steward and region want the same outcome: infrastructure that compounds local prosperity rather than extracting from it. I get a fast, consented site and a local talent base; the region converts spare grid and post-industrial land into the next economy, on terms it set. The North East is the right home because it has the technical prerequisites (power, water, land, engineering heritage) and the deprivation that makes inward AI investment transformational rather than marginal. It also lets the programme test the hardest version of the upskilling question: can deliberation make "AI for everyone" mean something concrete in a left-behind place?

SNAPSHOT

LEAD AUTHORITY

The trustee board / chief investment officer of a defined-benefit pension fund (or a Local Government Pension Scheme pool), acting with the relevant Mayoral Combined Authority, a place-based impact-investment vehicle, and an FE/skills partner.

WHERE IT SITS

A single coherent functional economy the fund can underwrite for decades — e.g. a city region such as the West of England, South Yorkshire, or the Liverpool City Region: large enough to diversify, small enough to know.

CITIZEN COHORT

Resident, cross-generational and place-bound: working-age people, employers and SMEs, young people deciding whether to stay, and retirees — the citizens whose long-run prosperity is the same thing as the fund's long-run yield.

SCALE

Sub-regional and recurring — not a one-off assembly but a standing deliberative relationship that revisits the regional investment plan as conditions change, mirroring the fund's indefinite horizon.

MIS TARGET IN PLAY

Underpins the MIS access-to-finance and city-region growth goals — the +£4bn British Business Bank commitment for the IS-8 sectors, up to c. £200bn net-zero transition finance by 2030, and raising city-region productivity toward national levels (worth c. £90bn/year nationally).

The stewardship question

As the fiduciary, my duty is not this quarter and it is not even this decade — it is the stipend a member retiring in 2070 has not yet started to earn. I am, in the most literal sense, a steward: I hold money in trust for people who are counting on it long after I am gone, and I have to secure a modest, dependable return I can pay out indefinitely. That makes my real risk different from a normal investor's. It is not volatility; it is decay — the slow hollowing-out of a place whose economy, workforce and tax base quietly erode until the assets I bought there stop yielding. I can hedge a market. I cannot hedge a region that loses its young people, its skills and its purpose. My problem is that the long-term sustainability of my fund is the long-term sustainability of the places I put it into — and I have no reliable instrument for the latter.

Why a Citizens' Assembly genuinely helps the steward

If I am going to underwrite a region for forty years, I need to know it will still be worth owning in forty years — and that is precisely what no market signal, broker note or due-diligence report can tell me. A standing Citizens' Assembly can. A representative, cross-generational assembly tells me what would make this place economically durable from the inside: which industries the workforce will actually sustain, what skills pipeline keeps the young here rather than exporting them, which infrastructure and housing decisions make the regional economy compound rather than stall, where consent for the energy and transport build that any long-term yield depends on can be secured ahead of time. The assembly converts my single most dangerous unknown — will this place still be productive when my members retire? — into a citizen-authored, periodically-renewed regional investment plan. And because the people who live there wrote it, it is self-reinforcing: residents have a stake in the success of the very assets I am holding. For a steward of patient capital, a community that is invested in the durability of my investment is the rarest and most valuable form of de-risking there is.

Why citizens benefit

Patient capital is exactly what left-behind regions never get. Most investment is fast money: it arrives for a tax break or a cheap asset, extracts a return, and leaves before the consequences land. A pension fund is the opposite — it has every reason to want the region still thriving in fifty years, because that is when it still needs to be paid. If citizens help direct that capital, they get a long-term partner whose interests are genuinely aligned with theirs: investment in the skills, enterprises, clean infrastructure and housing that make a place liveable and productive for the next generation, not just profitable for the next quarter. They also get agency over money that is, in large part, theirs already — much of it the deferred wages of working people. Communities long treated as somewhere capital passes through become a place capital commits to.

The shared interest and why here

The bargain is unusually clean because the time horizons match: stewardship is the whole relationship. I need a region that stays productive indefinitely so I can pay stipends indefinitely; citizens need an investor patient enough to build something that lasts. Neither of us wants a quick exit. A whole, coherent city region is the right unit — large enough that my capital is diversified across housing, energy, transport and enterprise, but small enough that an assembly can hold the real trade-offs and that I can actually see whether the place is getting more durable over time. A region with real deprivation but genuine assets (universities, ports, grid, displaced-but-skilled labour) is the strongest pilot: it is where patient, citizen-guided capital is most transformational, and where the fund's appetite for a modest-but-perpetual return meets the community's need for someone who will stay. If deliberation can make a region investable for the long run here, it can do it anywhere — and it gives the pensions sector a credible, repeatable model for turning fiduciary duty into place-based resilience.

SNAPSHOT

LEAD AUTHORITY

A pharma / MedTech company or research-intensive NHS trust, with the new Health Data Research Service (HDRS), an Integrated Care Board, and a research university.

WHERE IT SITS

A city region with a major teaching hospital and genomics strength but a diverse, sometimes data-sceptical population — e.g. Greater Manchester, Birmingham, or Leeds (all have the hospital, university, and population mix).

CITIZEN COHORT

Sub-regional and demographically representative by design — critically including communities historically under-represented in research and most wary of data-sharing, whose trust is the whole point.

SCALE

Sub-regional, feeding a national framework: one city-region assembly designs a trust model the national 5-million cohort and HDRS can adopt.

MIS TARGET IN PLAY

5 million people in a national health-research cohort by 2030; launch the Health Data Research Service (2025–26); 500,000 genomes in the national research database; cut clinical-trial set-up to <150 days by 2026; No.1 Life Sciences economy in Europe by 2030.

The stewardship question

My pipeline depends on data and recruitment: a 5-million-person cohort, 500,000 genomes, trials that set up in under 150 days. But I have come to see the data not as a resource to extract but as something held in trust by the people it describes — most of all the communities historically treated as research subjects rather than partners. The sector remembers care.data, and it should: one poorly-handled scheme can destroy public trust for a decade. As a steward of a life-sciences economy that lives or dies on legitimacy, my responsibility is not to harvest data faster but to be worthy of it — to build a relationship in which people in this city region share their data because they understand and shape how it is used. The pipeline follows from that trust; it cannot precede it, and it certainly cannot be bought.

Why a Citizens' Assembly genuinely helps the steward

Health-data governance is the deliberative question par excellence: high-stakes, value-laden, and dependent for its legitimacy on public consent. An assembly — especially one over-sampling under-represented and sceptical communities — can co-design the conditions under which people will share their data: what safeguards, what benefit-sharing, what say in commercial use, what red lines. For a steward, the output is not a clever consent mechanism but a genuine social licence, durable precisely because citizens authored it and can revisit it. A trust framework with a real democratic mandate is worth more to the cohort than any communications budget, and it directly speeds the recruitment that <150-day trials require — but the legitimacy is the point, and the speed is the dividend.

Why citizens benefit

Citizens gain real influence over something that affects them intimately and is usually decided over their heads, plus benefit-sharing they help define — earlier access to new medicines and MedTech (the MIS targets top-3-in-Europe access), research that actually reflects their communities, and a regional life-sciences economy that brings high-value jobs and inward investment. Communities long treated as data subjects become data stewards in their own right — the relationship is reciprocal rather than extractive.

The shared interest and why here

Steward and citizens want the same thing: a life-sciences economy built on trust that lasts rather than trust that is spent. I get the trusted data and faster recruitment my pipeline needs; citizens get genuine agency over their data and a fairer share of the value created from it. A diverse city region with a teaching hospital is the right home because it has the research infrastructure (the skills mix) and the demographic complexity that makes a trust model designed there robust enough to scale nationally. Solving the trust problem in the hardest population first, and honestly, is what makes the 5-million cohort credible everywhere else.

Professional & Business Services

a regional PBS hub and AI assurance

SNAPSHOT

LEAD AUTHORITY

A professional-services firm or PBS-hub anchor consortium, with the host combined authority, universities, and the local chamber of commerce / SME network.

WHERE IT SITS

One of the five named PBS hub locations — Liverpool City Region is a strong pilot: it carries an MIS hub commitment and combines genuine deprivation with a growing professional base.

CITIZEN COHORT

Sub-regional, spanning would-be entrants to professional careers (young people, career-changers, those without traditional networks) and local SMEs that need affordable professional and AI-assurance services.

SCALE

Sub-regional, with a digital layer; designed so the Liverpool model can be compared against the other four hubs (Manchester, West Yorkshire, West Midlands, Edinburgh–Glasgow).

MIS TARGET IN PLAY

Set up 5 PBS hubs (Liverpool, Manchester, West Yorkshire, West Midlands, Edinburgh–Glasgow); nearly double PBS investment from c. £35bn to c. £65bn a year; +£322bn GVA and +500,000 jobs by 2035; grow AI assurance from c. £1bn to c. £6.5bn GVA.

The stewardship question

I am anchoring a professional-services hub in Liverpool, and I could build it the easy way — recruiting the already-advantaged and reproducing the very networks that have always gatekept these careers. As a steward I cannot. Professional services growth is real but London-centric, and a hub that simply imports the existing professional class would deepen the closure it was meant to cure. At the same time a wholly new market, AI assurance, is forming — and it is forming without any settled view of what the public would actually trust. My responsibility runs two ways: to open these careers genuinely to people in this city region who have no route in, and to help shape an AI-assurance practice that the public, who are ultimately affected by it, would actually consider trustworthy. Neither is something my firm can or should decide on its own.

Why a Citizens' Assembly genuinely helps the steward

Two deliberative questions sit naturally here. First: how should this hub open professional careers to people in this city region who currently have no way in? Second — more novel — what would make AI-assurance services genuinely trustworthy in the eyes of the public affected by them? An assembly can answer both, giving me an inclusive recruitment design and, uniquely, a citizen-grounded specification for an emerging product market. For a steward, a public mandate for AI assurance is more than a competitive moat — though it is also that: it is the difference between selling "trustworthy AI" as a marketing claim and earning it as a verdict the public actually reached. That is exactly the legitimacy regulators and clients increasingly demand and that no firm can self-certify.

Why citizens benefit

Liverpool gains access to a high-growth, high-wage sector that has historically bypassed it; young people and career-changers without the usual networks get a designed route into professional careers; local SMEs get affordable professional and AI-assurance support; and citizens get a real say in how AI is assured on their behalf — a decision usually made entirely within industry. They are not consulted on a finished product; they help write the standard.

The shared interest and why here

Steward and city converge on a professional economy that is genuinely open and an AI-assurance practice the public can stand behind: I get an open talent pipeline and a public licence for a new service line; the city gets entry into a +500,000-job sector and a stake in shaping the AI-assurance market. Liverpool is the right home because it is a named hub, it has the universities and growing professional base (the skills mix), and it carries enough deprivation that genuinely opening these careers is transformational. Running the pilot in one named hub also lets the programme compare directly against the other four — a built-in evaluation across five contrasting city regions.

The eight at a glance

Read together, the eight case studies cluster into four recognisable types of deliberative opportunity. In every one the lead voice is a steward — someone who treats their industry as a trust they hold on behalf of a place, not merely a target to hit. What differs is what the assembly unlocks. Knowing which type a pilot is shapes how it should be designed and funded — and the fourth, newest pattern is the one the pensions example opened up, where stewardship over time becomes the whole relationship rather than the means to a discrete end.

Four patterns

- **Consent unlocks build (Clean Energy, Digital, Defence).** The binding constraint is local consent to physical infrastructure or growth. Deliberation trades visible local benefit for the social licence that accelerates delivery. These are the highest-value and highest-difficulty pilots.
- **Co-design unlocks people (Advanced Manufacturing, Creative, Professional Services).** The constraint is a talent pipeline that recruitment spend cannot fix. Citizens redesign the route into the jobs, and authorship makes the route credible to the people it targets.
- **Trust unlocks data (Life Sciences).** The constraint is legitimacy for something citizens must actively opt into — here, sharing their health data. Deliberation produces a mandate that no communications budget can buy, and it is durable precisely because citizens authored it.
- **Alignment unlocks patience (Financial Services).** This one breaks the pattern of the other three. They are transactions — deliberation does a discrete job and then the asset is built, the jobs are filled, the data flows. The pension case has no endpoint: the constraint is the short time-horizon of capital, and what deliberation unlocks is an ongoing alignment between a patient investor and the community whose long-run prosperity is the asset. It is the only pattern that is about time rather than a single decision, which is exactly why it is the natural hook for the pensions and impact-investment world.

Sector / Case study	Suggested place	Civic problem addressed	The shared interest
1. Advanced Manufacturing	West Midlands (Coventry–Birmingham)	Women shut out of the best jobs	Citizen-designed routes open the industry to the whole community
2. Clean Energy	The Humber	Grid consent + installer shortage	A transition done with the region, not to it; faster build, local jobs
3. Creative Industries	Greater Manchester / Bradford	Talent retention + venue siting	A flagship the community owns; a cluster that stays rooted
4. Defence	Barrow-in-Furness (Cumbria)	Whole-town absorption of growth	A town that shapes its own remaking; expansion it consents to
5. Digital & Technologies	North East (Teesside–Tyneside)	Data-centre consent + hollow upskilling	Consented AI Growth Zone; local AI skills
6. Financial Services	City region (e.g. South Yorkshire)	Short-horizon capital; regional decay	Patient pension capital secures a durable, perpetual return
7. Life Sciences	Diverse city region (e.g. Manchester)	Public trust in health data	Mandated trust model; faster cohort & trials
8. Professional & Business Services	Liverpool City Region	Closed careers + unproven AI assurance	Open pipeline; public licence for AI assurance

Places are illustrative starting points for the Phase 3 scoped study, not final selections. Each would need confirmation against the criteria in the next section.

Shortcomings of these projects

These case studies are deliberately optimistic — they are the case for each pilot, written from a steward's chair. Honesty about where they are weak is what makes the document useful rather than promotional, and most of these weaknesses map directly onto the open questions already flagged in our roadmap and our last brainstorm. Resolving them is the work of Phase 3, the scoped study.

1. The "route to decision" problem

Our brainstorm asked the sharpest question: is there a credible route to decision — genuine power and commitment to act on what citizens decide? Every case study assumes the company and authority will act on the assembly's recommendations. If they will not, the assembly is consultation theatre and will be seen as such, destroying rather than building trust. None of these pilots should proceed without a binding, pre-agreed commitment mechanism. This is the single biggest risk and it is not yet solved.

2. A steward's good intentions are not citizen authority

The stewardship framing is more sympathetic than the old CEO-with-a-target one, and that is exactly its danger. A leader who genuinely believes they are acting for the good of the place is harder to challenge than one who is obviously self-interested — and may be just as wrong about what citizens actually want. Benevolent stewardship can shade into paternalism: deciding for a community in the sincere belief it is for their own good. A genuinely independent assembly might reject the steward's premise altogether — decide the AI Growth Zone is not wanted, that defence dependency is too high, that a different future should be prioritised. The case studies under-weight that the honest answer may be "no," and that "no" is a legitimate and valuable output. The governance must protect the assembly's freedom to reach it, precisely because a well-meaning steward is the hardest kind of voice to contradict.

3. Independence and funding tension

If the lead authority is the company that benefits, who guarantees the assembly's independence? Our roadmap rightly separates convening (RSA fellows) from delivery (specialist practitioners) and stresses unbiased expert voices and observers from bodies like UKRI and Whitehall. But corporate co-funding of an assembly about that corporation's own infrastructure is a legitimacy hazard the Phase 3 scoped study must design out — through arms-length commissioning, independent facilitation, and transparent funding.

4. Scale, timing, and the smallest-polity question

Our brainstorm wrestled with the right unit — borough, region, watershed — and warned the toolkit forces organisers to "work it out yourself" across numerous variables. The case studies pick plausible scales but do not resolve this. Worse, deliberation is slow and the MIS has hard dates (Clean Power 2030, trials under 150 days by 2026). Can an assembly designed, run, and acted upon land in time to influence delivery? For the nearest deadlines, possibly not. Pilots should be sequenced against the targets they can realistically still shape.

5. Selection, reach, and the echo-chamber risk

Reaching citizens without going through "organisations" that bring bias — while staying within GDPR — is unsolved, as our notes acknowledge. Several pilots depend on recruiting precisely the people who are hardest to reach and most sceptical (data-wary communities, women outside the workforce, the digitally excluded). If recruitment defaults to the usual suspects, the assembly reproduces the bias it was meant to correct. Sortition method and outreach budget will make or break representativeness.

6. Integration with delivery machinery

Our brainstorm asked how assembly outputs integrate with the IS-8's actual levers — sector plans, Local Growth Plans, combined-authority powers — and whether the

programme sits inside the accountability system or parallel to it. The case studies gesture at combined authorities and named hubs but do not specify the wiring. A citizen plan with no connection to a Local Growth Plan or a Sector Plan budget line is a wish list. This integration is design work, not a given.

7. Place-selection bias — "beloved places"

Our notes flagged the temptation to earmark favoured places. This document leans toward both depressed regions (the Humber, Barrow, the North East) and high-skill clusters (West Midlands, a teaching-hospital city). That breadth is a strength for a comparative report, but the selection logic must be explicit and defensible — starting in the easiest, most photogenic place would undermine the very claim the national report wants to make. The brainstorm's instinct to pilot in a harder place (it named Middlesbrough, Oldham) to produce a more transferable toolkit is the right one.

8. Measuring success

Every case study asserts a win-win but none specifies how we would know it was won. Our roadmap names the impact framework as a critical funder requirement and our brainstorm asks whether the design produces genuinely implementable preferences. Without a theory of change and metrics agreed up front — consent secured, jobs filled, data shared, trust measured before and after — "win-win" stays rhetorical.

9. Fiduciary duty and the pensions pilot

The Financial Services case rests on a claim the Phase 3 scoped study must test rather than assume: that the long-run durability of a place is a legitimate financial interest for a pension fund, not a charitable one. Trustees are legally bound to act in members' financial interest and to diversify prudently, so a place-based, citizen-guided allocation has to clear that bar — it cannot be justified on social grounds alone. The argument that a perpetual obligation makes regional resilience a genuine investment concern is increasingly accepted, especially for Local Government Pension Scheme pools with explicit local-investment mandates, but it is contested and jurisdiction-specific. A pension pilot would need proper investment and legal advice on the fiduciary framing before any fund could participate. (This document is a thought experiment, not investment advice.)

From case study to pilot: what Phase 3 must resolve

These eight studies are inputs to the funded scoped study (Phase 3, c. £50k) described in our roadmap, not a delivery plan. The Phase 2 round table exists to secure that funding. To move any of them toward a real sector assembly in Phase 4, the scoped study would need to:

- **Select 3–4 pilots** spread across the four patterns (consent, co-design, trust, alignment), deliberately including at least one genuinely difficult, left-behind place to test transferability — and treating the alignment/pensions pilot as the natural anchor for any finance- or impact-investment funder.
- **Secure a binding route to decision** for each — a written commitment from the authority and any corporate partner to act on, or formally respond to, the assembly's recommendations.
- **Design the deliberation questions professionally and independently** — open, appropriately bounded, and capable of producing both locally meaningful and nationally comparable outputs (our roadmap's four-part interpretation / aspiration / design / comparison structure).
- **Fix the governance** so independence is structural — arms-length commissioning, independent facilitation, transparent funding, and observers from UKRI, Innovate UK, the relevant department, and the combined authority.
- **Wire each pilot into delivery** — a named link to a Local Growth Plan, a Sector Plan budget line, or a combined-authority lever, so outputs have somewhere to land.
- **Agree the impact framework** up front: baseline measures, the win-win metrics, and how the comparative national report will read across the pilots.

Done well, the result is the landmark comparison our roadmap aims at: a map of where citizens' priorities for their own places meet — and improve — the UK's Modern Industrial Strategy.