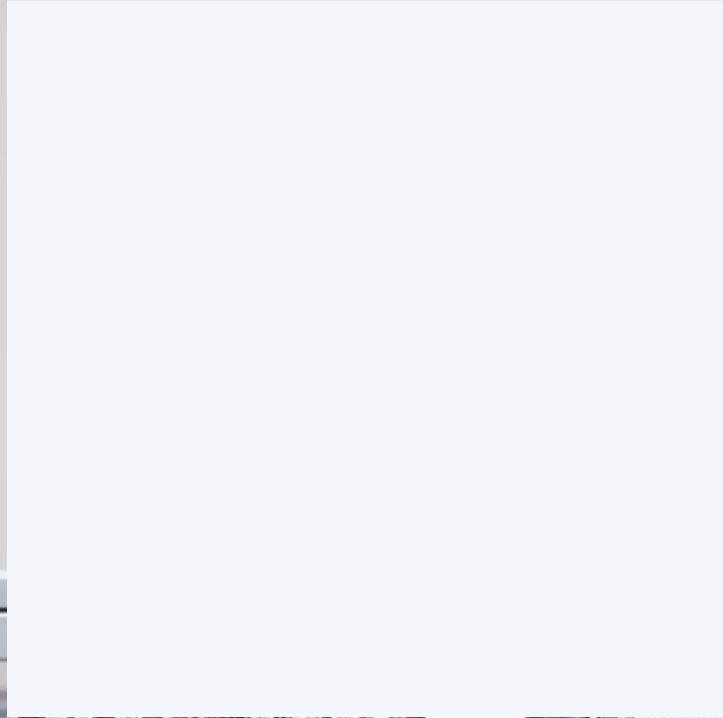
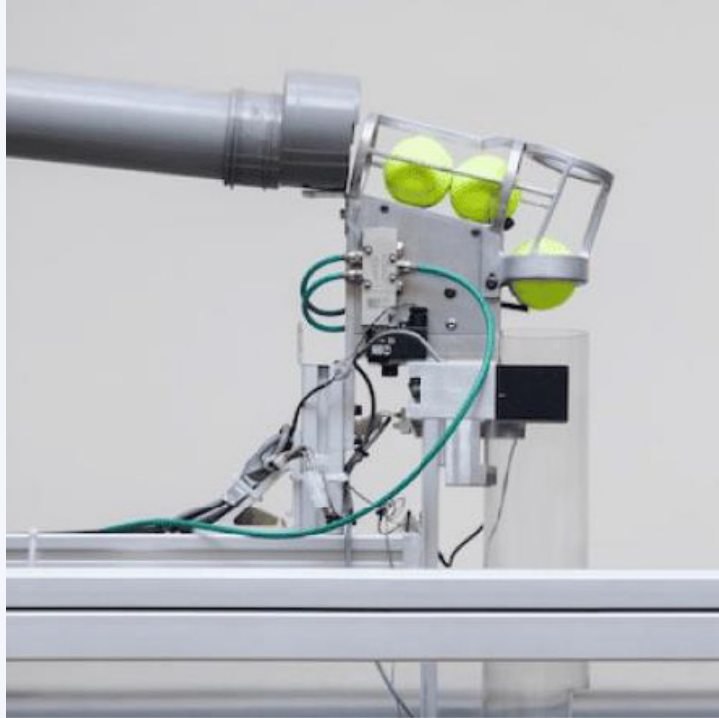
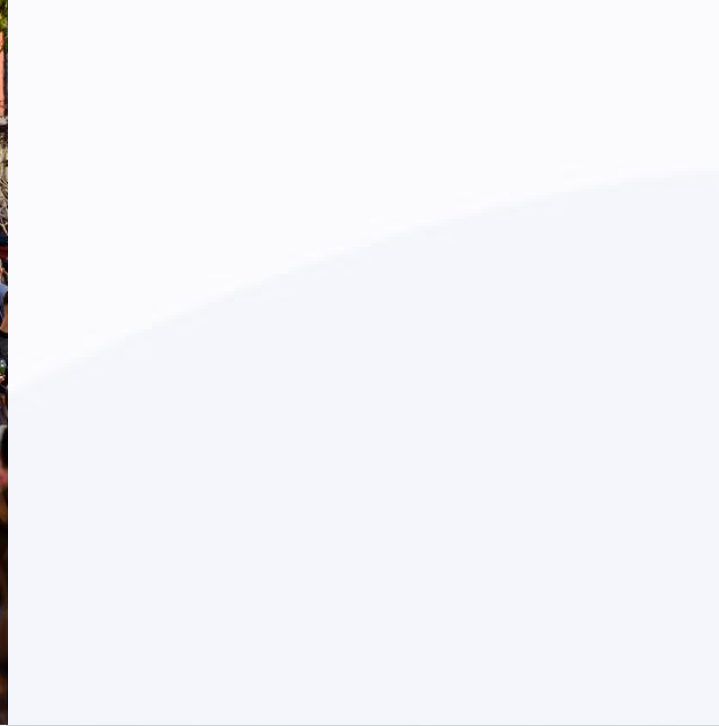




# Public Opinion

July 2025



# CaSE Public Opinion

**Ben Bleasdale**

Director of Public Opinion

**Rebecca Hill**

Public Opinion and Involvement Manager

**Florence Young**

Public Opinion and Policy Officer



**100+ members**



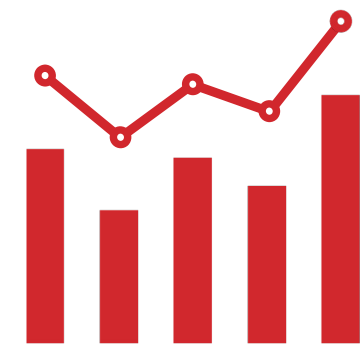
**Voice for R&D**



**Non-partisan**



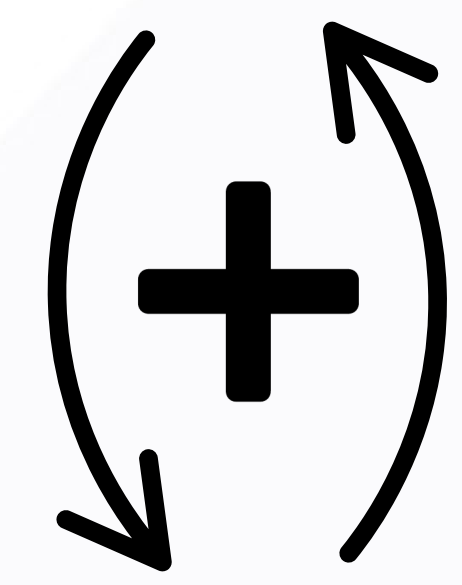
**Expert analysis**

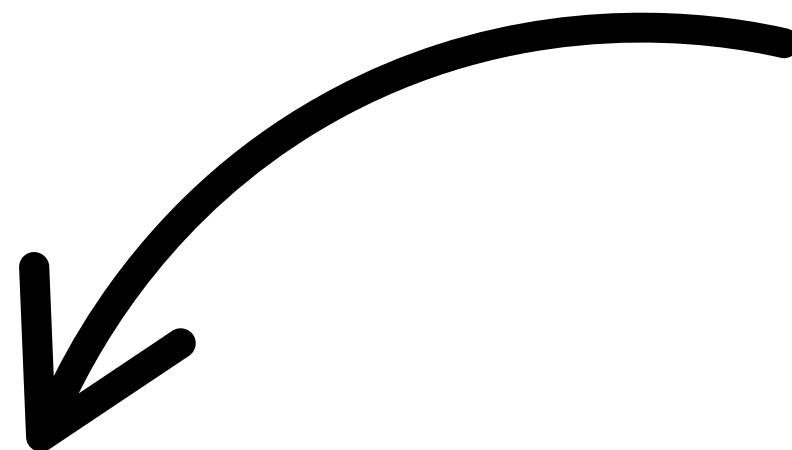
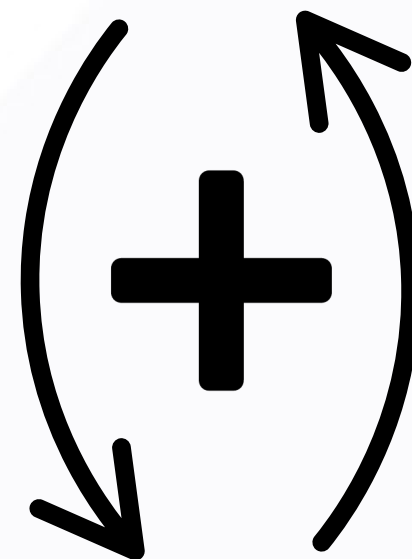


# The Challenge









**How can we help make R&D  
matter to more people?**

# How can we help make R&D matter to more people?



**Audiences**



**Messages**



**Activities**



**Dialogue**

# Public Opinion Research



## Public Opinion Research

**Quantitative:** Nationally-representative polls covering **30,000+** people

**Qualitative:** **20** focus groups around the UK

**Results:** Published as an **open-access** resource

**Explore the data**



# Support for R&D - the dilemma

## Government investment in R&D is supported by a large majority

- 70% of people feel its important for the **Government to invest in R&D**
- R&D attracts support from **voters for all major political parties**

# Support for R&D - the dilemma

## Government investment in R&D is supported by a large majority

- 70% of people feel its important for the **Government to invest in R&D**
- R&D attracts support from **voters for all major political parties**

## But people struggle to see R&D's benefits, risking it being labelled a 'luxury'

- Over a third see **very few / no ways** that investment in R&D improves their lives
- The idea there are "**more pressing issues**" resonates as a reason to cut or pause R&D investment

# Low visibility

## Efforts to build the R&D sector's public image aren't cutting through

- The sector's **terminology** is unhelpfully fragmented
- R&D evokes consumer tech - much of the sector's work **isn't visible**
- The public aren't aware of the scale of the **professional R&D workforce**

**"I don't know much about research, what the actual researchers do and their remit. I don't know anything about research"**

**Therapist, Female, 63, Mansfield**

# Lost audiences

## R&D's poor connection with younger people is a major risk

- 72% of 35-44s either agreed that “**R&D doesn't benefit people like me**” or were neutral or unsure, compared with 43% for those aged 65+
- Almost half of 25-34s agree that “We currently **invest too much in R&D** rather than solving issues that matter now” versus 21% of those aged 65+
- More likely to say UK **can't afford** to fund R&D at the moment

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- More likely to say UK **can't afford** to fund R&D at the moment

**Socioeconomic group and gender are also notable differentiators**

# What works?

**Place**

**&**

**Purpose**

**Place**

**&**

**Purpose**

**65%**

want to hear  
more about R&D  
in their area

**66%**

would support a  
research lab being  
built in their area

**56%**

trust local voices  
to talk about R&D's  
benefits

# Place

**65%**

want to hear  
more about R&D  
in their area

**66%**

would support a  
research lab being  
built in their area

**56%**

trust local voices  
to talk about R&D's  
benefits

**&**

**77%**

say new research is  
essential or important to  
tackle climate change

**20% -> 46%**

net support for increasing the  
R&D budget, when the ask  
links to a goal (healthcare)

# Purpose

# Messengers

**The sector can - and must - be a leading voice for R&D investment**

- R&D sector voices are seen as **interesting and reliable**, including less-known names
- The risk of **perceived bias** doesn't derail them as advocates: they are trusted to be **honest** about R&D investment needs
- **Political voices** performed less well

**"I want to hear it directly  
from the people  
involved, the scientists,  
the creators."**

**Retail Manager, Male,  
63, Wimbledon**

# **Evidence to action**

# Briefings

## R&D actors

A range of institutions and individuals fund and carry out R&D in the UK. Our research sought to understand the public's attitudes towards these R&D actors, and these briefings examine four key groups: universities, the private sector, government, and charities.



### Public Attitudes to R&D and Universities

18 Apr 2023

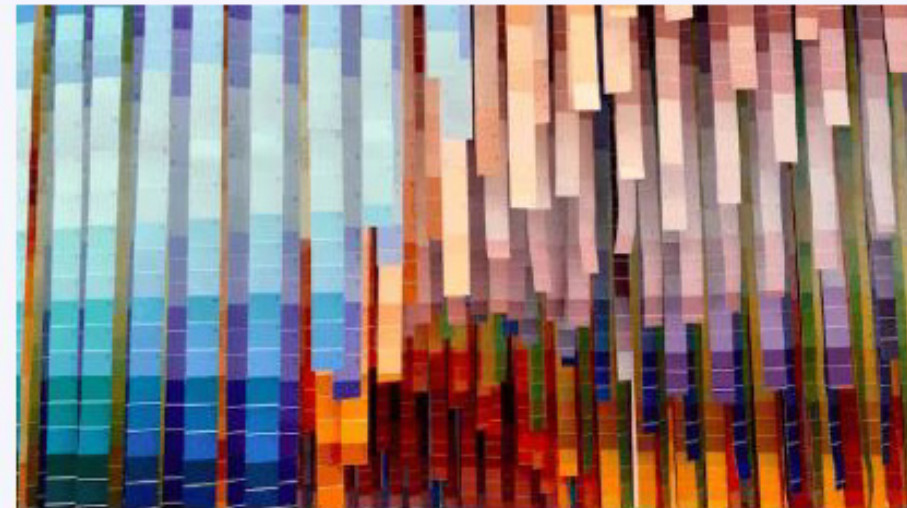
This briefing covers key findings for universities from CaSE's Discovery Decade 2022-23 public attitudes study.



### Public Attitudes to R&D and Business

18 Apr 2023

This briefing covers key findings for businesses from CaSE's Discovery Decade 2022-23 public attitudes study.



## R&D topics

Our research identified a range of issues of concern to the public across the UK, and explored how attitudes to R&D were influenced by the problems that research was seen to address.



### Public Attitudes to R&D and Healthcare

25 Apr 2023

This briefing covers key findings on healthcare from CaSE's Discovery Decade 2022-23 public attitudes study.



### Public Attitudes to R&D and Environment

25 Apr 2023

This briefing covers key findings on the environment from CaSE's Discovery Decade 2022-23 public attitudes study.

## Audiences & Language

Understanding how different groups of people think and feel, and how they respond to different messaging, is vital for effective engagement. These briefings explore core elements of getting the right message: demographic trends identified through our research and the most effective types of language and messaging.



### Public Attitudes to R&D: Audience demographics

22 Jun 2023

This briefing considers demographic differences in attitudes to R&D in CaSE's Discovery Decade 2022-23 public attitudes study.



### Public Attitudes to R&D: Terminology

05 Dec 2023

This briefing covers responses to terminologies tested in CaSE's Discovery Decade 2022-23 public attitudes study.



### Public Attitudes to R&D: Regional Analysis

22 Feb 2024

This briefing explores attitudes to R&D across the UK's regions in CaSE's Discovery Decade 2022-23 public attitudes study.

# Advocacy Toolkit

**Practical guides** for talking about R&D with different audiences:

## CaSE's Guide for Engaging the Public

---

Advice for R&D  
advocates to engage  
the public in relevant  
and meaningful ways

## CaSE's Guide for Engaging Politicians

---

Helping advocates to  
convey the public's interest  
in R&D to secure long-term  
political support

# **General Election 2024**

# Broadening the pool of political champions

**Pre-election:** Emails with personalised results of MRP analysis to ~4,000 Parliamentary candidates



**CaSE**  
Campaign for Science and Engineering

## CaSE's Guide to R&D on the Doorstep

70% of the UK public would support their MP campaigning for more Research & Development jobs in their area

## Why talk to constituents about R&D?

The public believe investing in R&D is important, about two-thirds want to hear more and they support their MPs taking actions to support R&D both locally and nationally.

**70%** would **support** their MP campaigning for more R&D jobs in their area

**63%** would like to **vote** for someone who will support R&D in the UK

**70%** would **support** their MP voting in Parliament in favour of **decisions that support R&D** in the UK

**76%** would **support** their MP campaigning for their nearest **NHS hospital to host more clinical trials**

**72%** would **support** their MP creating a new scheme for **local school children to visit research centres**

# Broadening the pool of political champions

**Post-election:** Individualised printed Welcome Packs to each of the 650 newly-elected MPs.


RESEARCH  
DEVELOP  
THRIVE

**CaSE**  
Campaign for Science and Engineering

## Help R&D to thrive in Holborn and St Pancras

70% of the UK public would support their MP campaigning for more Research & Development jobs in their area

Start a conversation about what R&D means for your constituency and the wider UK



122

**CaSE** Campaign for Science and Engineering

### What do your constituents think about R&D?

**67%**  
Would support their MP engaging with the leaders of local R&D organisations such as Universities and businesses.

**66%**  
Would support their MP creating a new scheme for local school children to visit research centres.

**65%**  
Would like more R&D investment and facilities in their local area.


**65%**  
Would support their MP speaking in Parliament about the importance of R&D.

**72%**  
Would support their MP campaigning for their nearest NHS hospital to host more clinical trials.

Source: CaSE Public Attitudes to R&D and the General Election, Mar/Apr 2024


**3** Help R&D to thrive in your constituency

### How R&D is improving lives and livelihoods in London



**MSD**  
Location: King's Cross  
Type of R&D: Medicines research  
Number of Employees: 50-200

For more than a century, MSD has been at the forefront of research, bringing forward medicines, vaccines, and innovative health solutions for the world's most challenging diseases. We have made a significant investment of £1 billion into a world leading discovery centre and headquarters in the heart of London's Knowledge Quarter, which will host talented researchers to drive medical advances in neuroscience and immunology. Our growing discovery research team, currently located at the London Bioscience Innovation Centre and the neighbouring Francis Crick Institute comprises biology, pharmacology and chemistry expertise. Our teams combine leading drug discovery capabilities and world-class R&D with the purpose of turning breakthrough science into life-changing medicines.



**Park Royal Industrial Estate**  
Location: Park Royal  
Type of R&D: Knowledge exchange  
Number of Employees: 1-50

A consortium led by Brunel University London has been awarded £2.5 million by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) for a 4-year project in which they will collaborate with food manufacturers based at Park Royal in West London – the largest business park in London, home to more than 500 businesses in the food sector, who collectively produce 30% of the capital's food and drink – to develop innovative ways of reducing the emissions of food supply systems to as close to zero as possible.

Contact CaSE to be introduced to R&D organisations in your area [info@sciencecampaign.org.uk](mailto:info@sciencecampaign.org.uk)

# Putting R&D on the map

**"I had never heard of [graphene being discovered in Manchester]. Is that because we're supposed to take the time to find out? That's the type of thing I'd like to see put on social media, let's be proud!"**

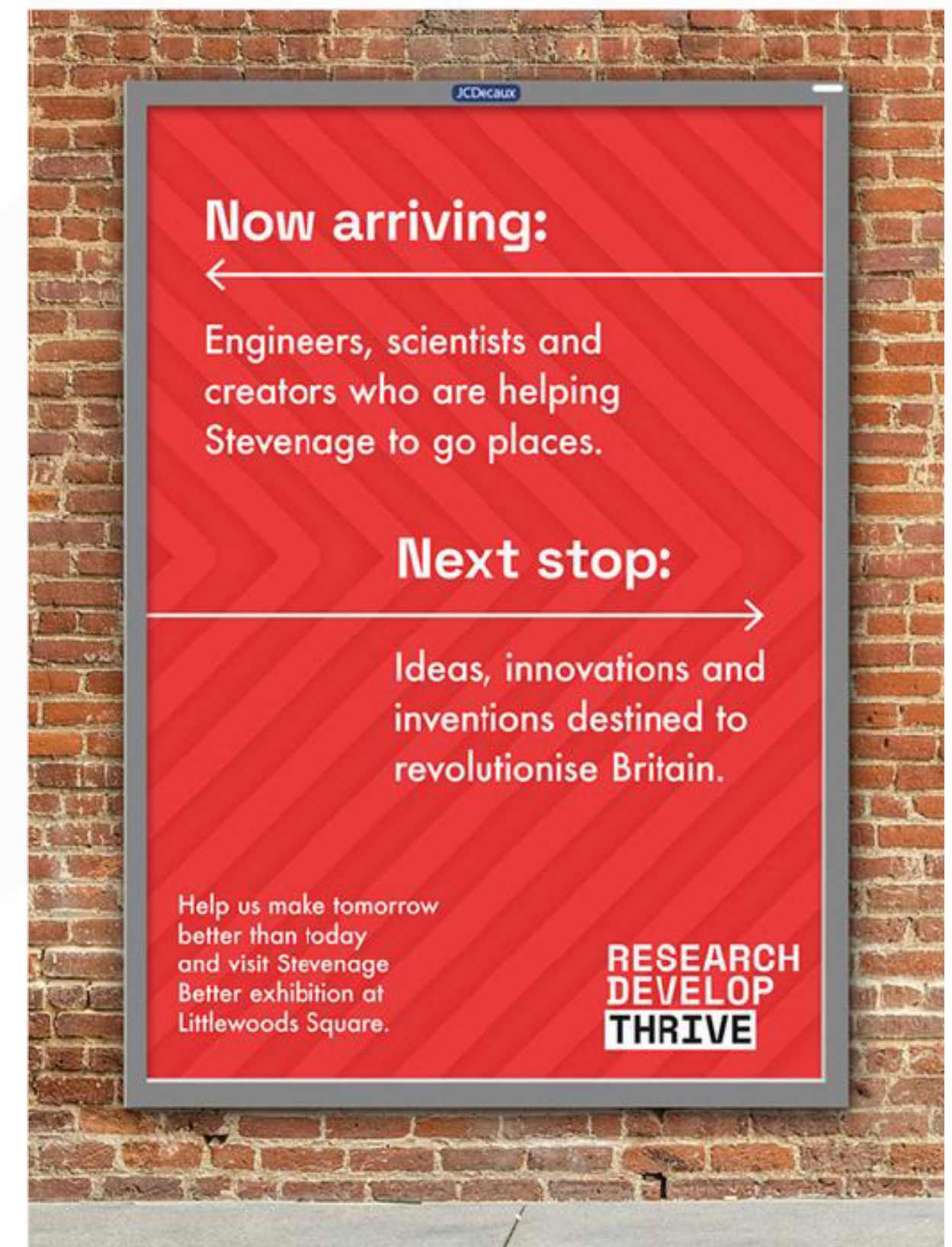
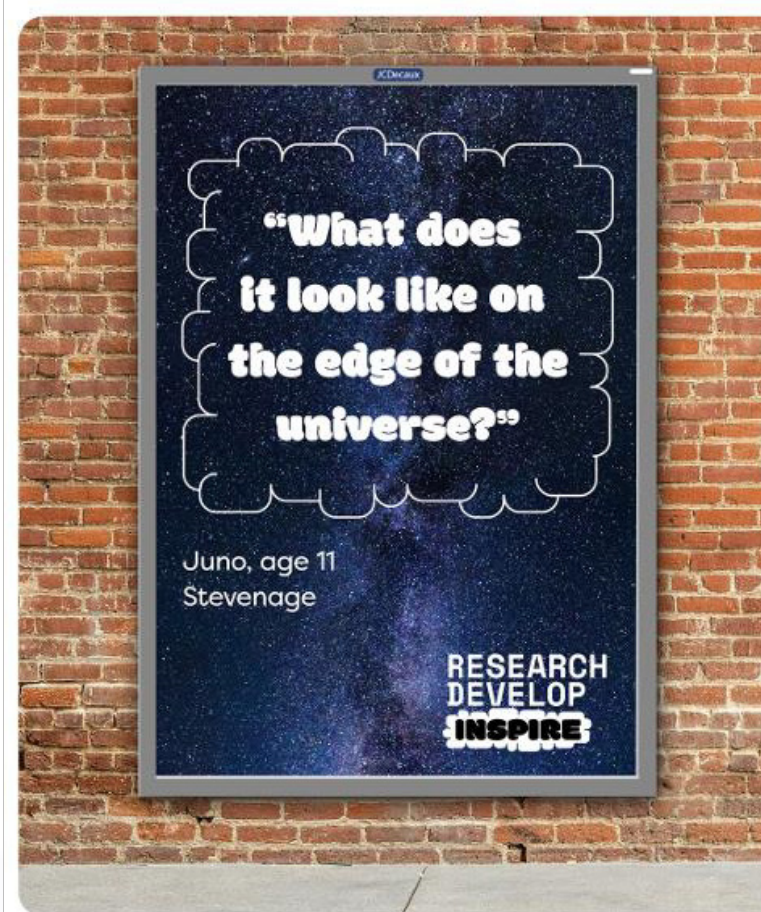
**Buyer for a Hotel Chain, Female, 34, Greater Manchester**



## Building local R&D messaging strategies

- Explore how localities of different sizes could raise the profile of R&D
- Pilots in **Stevenage, Greater Manchester** and **Northern Ireland**
- Convened local R&D organisations, businesses and local or mayoral authorities to explore shared goals, and use these to build an **evidence-led narrative** about R&D in their area
- Worked with a **creative agency** to bring the campaign choices to life

# Pilot 1 of 3: Stevenage



Via lift Pub restaurant  
Lost property Left luggage

# MARS



## VIA STEVENAGE

The ExoMars rover  
Rosalind Franklin:  
Built in Stevenage.  
Destined for the stars.

RESEARCH  
DEVELOP  
THRIVE

Stevenage  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

STEVENAGE  
BETTER

CaSE

AIRBUS

JCDecaux

Platforms  
and 2  
London



RESEARCH  
DEVELOP  
THRIVE

GSK AIRBUS

CaSE



## Now arriving

The **brightest minds**, helping  
Stevenage go places.



## Next stop

Innovation, opportunities  
and growth.

**Welcome to Stevenage.**

Where cutting-edge organisations  
create a better tomorrow.

Stevenage  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

STEVENAGE  
BETTER

JCDecaux

London King's Cross...

...to Stevenage

How do  
we regain  
our energy  
security?  
**Research,  
Develop,  
Thrive.**

Researchers across  
the UK are working  
together to tackle our  
biggest challenges.

Let's keep investing  
in our future.

[researchdevelopthrive.org.uk](http://researchdevelopthrive.org.uk)

RESEARCH  
DEVELOP  
**THRIVE**

Powered by  
**CaSE**  
Co-operative Energy Security



Tottenham Court Rd		
24	29	176
to New Oxford St		
Night Bus N20	Night Bus N29	
Night Bus N279	Golden Tour Hop-On Hop-Off	





How do  
we build  
a stronger  
economy?  
**Research,  
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[researchdevelopthrive.org.uk](http://researchdevelopthrive.org.uk)

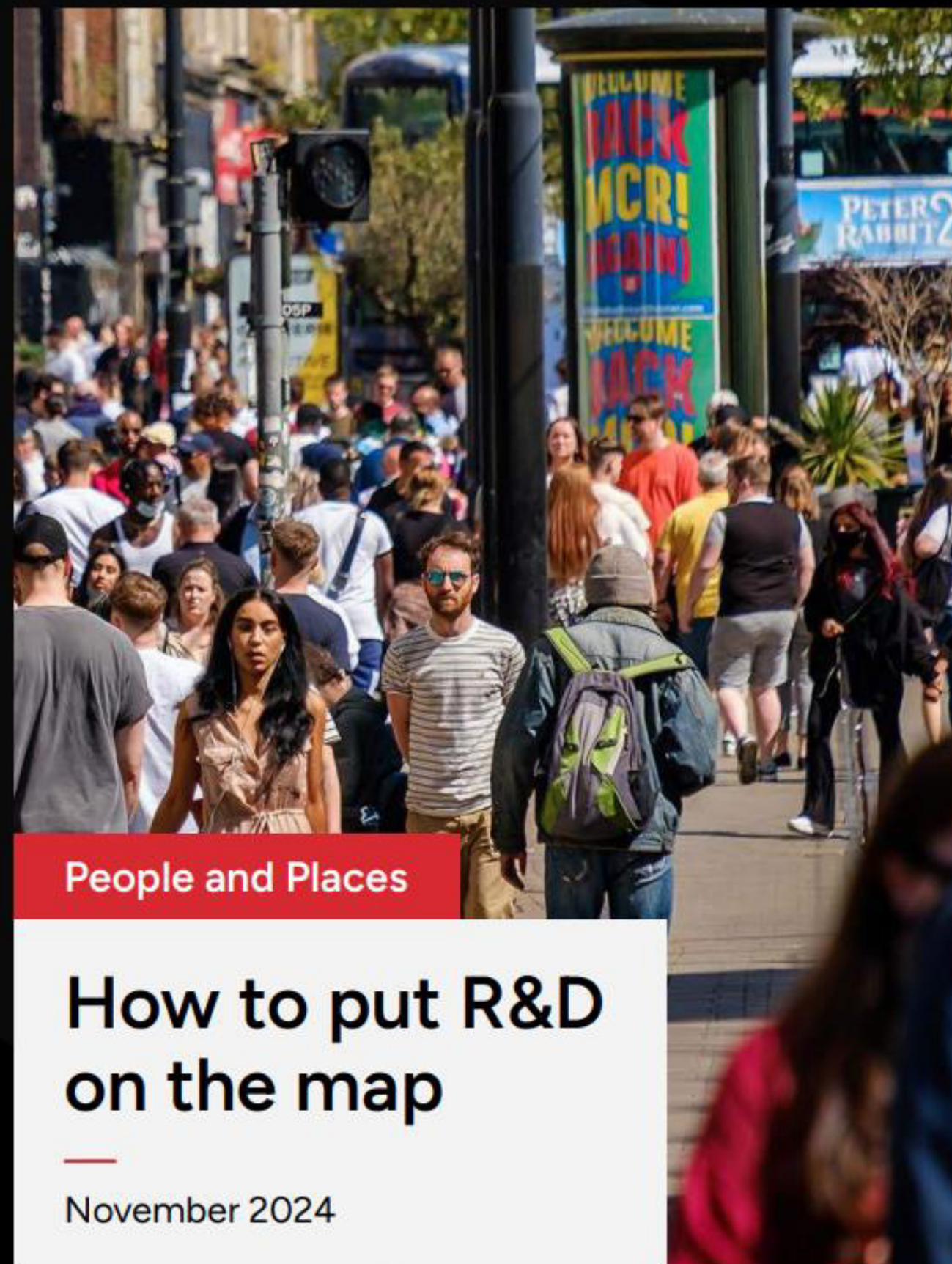
Partnership  
**CaSE**  
Cambridge Advanced Science and Engineering

A 50:50 joint venture between the University of Cambridge and the UK's leading science and technology companies

RESEARCH  
DEVELOP  
**THRIVE**

JCDecaux

13:23



## People and Places

# How to put R&D on the map

November 2024

## Insights: Liverpool City Region

Liverpool City Region, which comprises six local authorities in North West England, has been proactively developing highly collaborative approaches to place-based innovation over the last 11 years, focused on maximising its distinctive world-leading capabilities.

John Whaling, Lead Officer for Innovation and Commercialisation at the Combined Authority, reflects that, although innovation wasn't a stated priority for the Metro Mayor Steve Rotherham when he was first elected in 2017, his signature projects – Mersey Tidal (potentially the world's largest tidal power scheme) and LCR Connect (a gigabit-capable cross-regional fibre backhaul network) – were inherently very innovative.

Moving from implicit to explicit support meant demonstrating that R&D is a vital tool for solving the region's challenges as well as unlocking big opportunities. Whaling's team tackled this in a few ways, working with anchor institutions and via the LCR Innovation Board, the first such sub-national body of its kind. First, creating a headline ambition that is easy to grasp – to invest 5% of GVA (gross value added) in R&D a year by 2030 – and second was to translate that into practical terms, notably a net additional 44,000 new jobs, £20 billion GVA, and 10% productivity increases. On top of this, the team helped facilitate site visits to key R&D projects for the Mayor and other leaders. "Seeing is believing," Whaling says. "This has led to a point where not only is innovation a mayoral priority, it's now also built into our organisational mission; the Liverpool Combined Authority's new corporate strategy is titled *Innovating for Growth*."

The city region is home to a wealth of R&D, both historic and current. For Whaling, this connection can help projects succeed: "We're obviously seeking to accelerate and scale up, and that has a much greater chance of sustainability if it's not artificially created, but rather founded on longstanding world class expertise."

“There's a rich history here, and this is the place's identity – it's kind of back to the future.”

One example is Glass Futures, an organisation established in 2012 to deliver unprecedented collaborative worldwide solutions to decarbonise and therefore sustain glass-making and other energy intensive industries. It recently opened a unique global centre of excellence and training facility, bringing investment, profile, high value jobs and training opportunities back to the area. That the scheme is centred on St Helens is no accident; the town is famous as the birthplace of float glass thanks to the Pilkington brothers, and employed tens of thousands of people in the 1960s and 70s. "There's a rich history here, and this is the place's new identity – it's kind of back to the future," Whaling says.



When asked about engaging the public, Whaling emphasises the need to make R&D feel relevant, personal and on the doorstep. For instance, 2030 is the 200th anniversary of the opening of the Liverpool to Manchester railway. "Of course we want to tell this story in a new engaging way," he says. "But even more importantly, we're focusing on the people and businesses that are right here, right now; those who are changing the world."

A related focus has been engaging primary school children. In particular, Whaling highlights *The Animates: Learning in Liverpool* a children's book by local author Natalie Reeves Billing and illustrated by Hannah Jesse, supported by the Connected Places Catapult in tandem with Knowledge Quarter Liverpool. *Natalie is pictured above with pupils from Pleasant Street Primary School in Liverpool.* The book follows a group of characters whose spaceship crash lands in Liverpool, leading them to explore different R&D facilities to gather the means to repair it, giving a fun, inside view of institutions that might otherwise seem out of reach. "We can inspire the innovators of tomorrow by doing it today," Whaling says, with plans to send the book to every primary school in the region.

When asked about the factors that can help foster a place-based identity for R&D, Whaling emphasises the importance of strong, long-term relationships that allow partners to create and act on trust, plus the dedicated money and capacity to deliver projects to their best.

"But the most fundamental thing of all is the uniqueness of place," he says. "It's about distinctiveness. It's not just that different places have different individual assets – it's also the combination of them. There are other parts of the world well known for culture, infectious disease, AI solutions and materials chemistry – but where else has our particular blend?"

# Next steps

# Next steps



Creating a robust data series to **track attitudes over time**



Driving adoption and expanding our **Advocacy Toolkit**



Expanding our work on **place** with new partnerships and locations



Integrating public views into **policy development and influencing**

# Get in touch



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