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Oxfordshire tops UK "Innovation map" while London falls behind

Teeside and Merseyside beat Manchester for innovation in the North

by Henry Williams Updated: May 29, 2015 Published: May 29, 2015



Oxford

Oxfordshire has the most innovative economy in the UK, with London falling behind at 25, according to an 'innovation map' produced by the Enterprise Research Centre (ERC).

The findings challenge the belief that London is Britain's centre for innovation and growth, with an "arc of innovation" stretching from Cambridge, through the Southeast Midlands, Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire.

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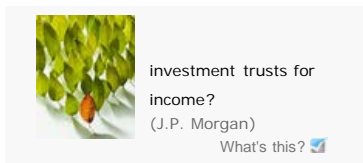
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Elsewhere, Manchester's position as the powerhouse of Northern England has been brought into question by the report having been outperformed by Teeside Valley at seven and Merseyside at 10, while it sits down in 20th.



Surprisingly, rural Dorset was listed as the sixth most innovative region, with Eastern Scotland, Northern Ireland and Cumbria taking the bottom three places.

The data was compiled from the responses of 14,000 companies to the UK Innovation Survey 2013, ranking 45 economic regions by their innovation activity between 2010 and 2012 – including new services, research and development and collaboration.

Just 27% of businesses in London surveyed released a new or updated product or service in the last two years, compared to 27% of Oxfordshire firms. This could be attributed to the capital's focus on tightly regulated sectors such as law and finance, whereas the Oxfordshire belt plays host to several major universities and high end manufacturing companies.

The report also found that although 45% of respondents described themselves as "innovation active", only 18% were actually creating new products. The proportion of companies giving time to research and development varies from 28% in Oxfordshire to 26% in Cambridge, and 8-10% in Lincolnshire and West England.

Prof Stephen Roper, who led the ERC research, commented: "The findings run counter to the dominant narrative of a country dependent on London, with innovation being more dispersed across the country than was previously thought.

"Innovation is strongly linked to growth, exporting and productivity – all areas in which the economy needs to improve if we want to boost our international competitiveness."

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