

AN ECONOMIC STRATEGY

FOR

DUDLEY BOROUGH

2008/09

Contents

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1.0 Foreword

Welcome to the seventh edition of the Economic Strategy which brings together the economic regeneration activities that are either planned and/or underway in Dudley Borough, delivered by the Council and a range of external partner organisations, and aimed at achieving sustained growth and development of Dudley's economy.

There have been many achievements during 2007/08. The endorsement of the Phase One Revision to the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy, which recognises Brierley Hill as a strategic centre in the Black Country, represents a significant milestone for Dudley Borough and will enable development plans to go ahead for more shops, leisure facilities, offices and housing.

In terms of the Borough's overall economic situation, although Dudley's position is ahead of its neighbouring authorities in the Black Country in a number of areas – including employment, business formations and unemployment – it still lags behind regional and national performance levels. Income levels within the Borough are a particular problem, with the second lowest level of average gross weekly earnings in the region.

Therefore, there are key economic challenges for the Borough including raising incomes, reducing levels of unemployment and worklessness, enhancing skills and increasing enterprise. The Economic Strategy seeks to address such issues by focusing on five key aims which are based on equipping local people with the relevant skills to meet the current and future needs of local employers, providing support to new and existing businesses in order to provide appropriate future job opportunities and improving the borough's transport infrastructure.

For the future, there will be increasing emphasis on the implications of the Treasury's Sub-National Review of Economic Development and Regeneration, which include assessing the outcomes of the consultation on providing local authorities with a statutory economic duty to promote economic growth in each area. In addition, there is also the importance of Local Area Agreements as the key mechanism for the relationship between central and local government/Local Strategic Partnerships, with a clear focus on economic development and neighbourhood renewal, and the proposed transfer of responsibility for funding 14-19 year-olds' skills policy to Local Authorities.

The Economic Strategy provides a guide to enable us to work together with partners to ensure best use of resources and achieve the ultimate aim of improving the prosperity of the Borough for the benefit of all its residents.

**Councillor Malcolm Knowles
Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration
Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council**

2.0 Introduction

The Economic Strategy for Dudley Borough provides a long-term vision and focus for economic regeneration in the Borough. In doing so, it makes a significant contribution to the achievement of the priorities contained within the Dudley Community Strategy, particularly in relation to the priority of 'Creating a Prosperous Borough' and the Dudley Council Plan, principally the Regeneration Matters theme as well as supporting other themes such as Environment and Safety.

There are some major economic issues and challenges for the Borough including reducing worklessness and developing and improving the skills of local people through quality training and achievement of qualifications, to equip them with the appropriate skills to meet the current and future needs of the local jobs market. Integral to this is the focus required on narrowing the gap between the most deprived wards and the rest of the borough in terms of worklessness and skills levels.

Other important issues for the borough include improving enterprise and increasing the number of business start-ups, encouraging business innovation, improving the transport infrastructure and attracting inward investment to the borough to create higher value added employment opportunities and raise income levels for the Borough's residents.

The vision for the Economic Strategy is articulated through 5 Strategic Aims that have been developed to respond to the economic issues facing the Borough.

The Strategic Aims are:

1. To optimise the opportunities for local people - including the most vulnerable people and those from deprived areas - to develop and improve their skills and obtain local jobs
2. To support and develop new and existing businesses and to attract inward investment to the Borough
3. To encourage and support the development of a diverse and dynamic business base that increases the proportion of well paid jobs across the Borough
4. To improve the economic and environmental infrastructure of Dudley Borough and its town centres
5. To champion the interests and assets of Dudley Borough, securing additional resources and improving its position regionally, nationally and internationally

There are a significant number of long term major physical regeneration developments detailed within the Strategy's Action Plan, particularly around the regeneration of the Borough's town centres (Brierley Hill, Dudley, Halesowen and Stourbridge) that are critical to delivering the vision and strategic aims and are also being pursued in line with the Black Country Vision and Strategy.

These transformational developments will radically change the face and nature of the Borough, offering up major large-scale investment and development opportunities with long term economic, social and environmental impacts. Such developments will see a significant change in roles for each of the four town centres aimed at improving their attractiveness to employers, residents and visitors and therefore significantly boosting the local economy.

Following completion of the Black Country Study, a planning framework is now in place that will shape the regeneration and development of Dudley Borough over the next 25 years. Part of the Black Country Study (BCS) was to plan a way forward for the future of the Brierley Hill/Merry Hill/Waterfront area. In January 2008, the Government endorsed the Phase One Revision to the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy which supports the future long terms plans for the transformation of the Black Country, as set out in the Black Country Study, and gives formal recognition of Brierley Hill as a new strategic centre for the borough and one of the four strategic centres in the Black Country along with Wolverhampton City Centre, Walsall and West Bromwich. This will now enable plans and investment of around £1.5 billion to go ahead for more shops, leisure facilities, offices and housing which will all be built to link Merry Hill, the Waterfront and Brierley Hill High Street together as one centre with real long term benefits for the area.

Dudley MBC is working closely with Brierley Hill Regeneration Partnership and private partners to take forward the regeneration of the Brierley Hill area. Work has already commenced on the building of a new £27 million road in Brierley Hill (the Brierley Hill Sustainable Access Network), which will improve access to Brierley Hill and open up development sites to support future regeneration opportunities. Project finance and legal contracts have also been completed for new community health and social care facilities in Brierley Hill.

The transformation of Dudley town centre is also a key objective for the Council. The Phase One Revision to the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy also endorses an exciting new role for Dudley town centre as both a regional tourism destination and a focus for new homes making the most of its historic and cultural heritage.

The potential development and investment in and around Dudley town centre over the next 15-20 years will total around £500 million. The Dudley Area Development Framework identifies eight opportunity areas in Dudley for significant public and private sector investment and development, resulting in the creation of new jobs and housing in the town centre. In addition, other major projects adjacent to Dudley town centre, including the Castle Hill redevelopment, an employment heart to the south west of Dudley town centre and the Castle Gate developments will strengthen the regeneration of this area. The Council, in conjunction with Sandwell MBC, are also promoting a major improvement to the A461/A4123 Burnt Tree Island junction. Reducing delays and congestion at this important node on the strategic highway network will significantly improve links to the regional and national motorway network thus contributing to the economic well being of the area and further assisting local regeneration.

Area Action Plans will also be developed for Halesowen and Stourbridge which will set out the plans for the future regeneration of these town centres. Halesowen town centre is currently undergoing a £30 million transformation with the redevelopment of the Cornbow shopping centre, a new bus station and a new Asda superstore which are all due to be completed by December 2008. The Council is working in partnership with Centro PTA on improvements to bus services in Halesowen, including an expanded new Bus Station and highway network improvements to facilitate improved access to the town centre. These works will further build on the redevelopment of the Cornbow Shopping Centre which is seen as a major boost for the regeneration of Halesowen Town Centre.

In Stourbridge, Modus are working with Dudley MBC to regenerate and extend The Crown Centre. Proposals include the construction of a 70,000 sq ft anchor store along with a new multi-storey town centre shoppers car park, plus 8 shop units, 45 apartments and a new market hall.

Significant progress is also being made on the development of the South Black Country Innovation Campus. This flagship project is aimed at providing a “gateway” of ideas for entrepreneurs and start-up companies and attracting high value knowledge businesses and jobs to the borough and the Black Country which will meet key objectives of the Economic Strategy and the Black Country Economic Strategy.

It will be essential to ensure that the strategy capitalises on these major developments to ensure that maximum benefits are derived for local residents, in particular in terms of future training and employment opportunities.

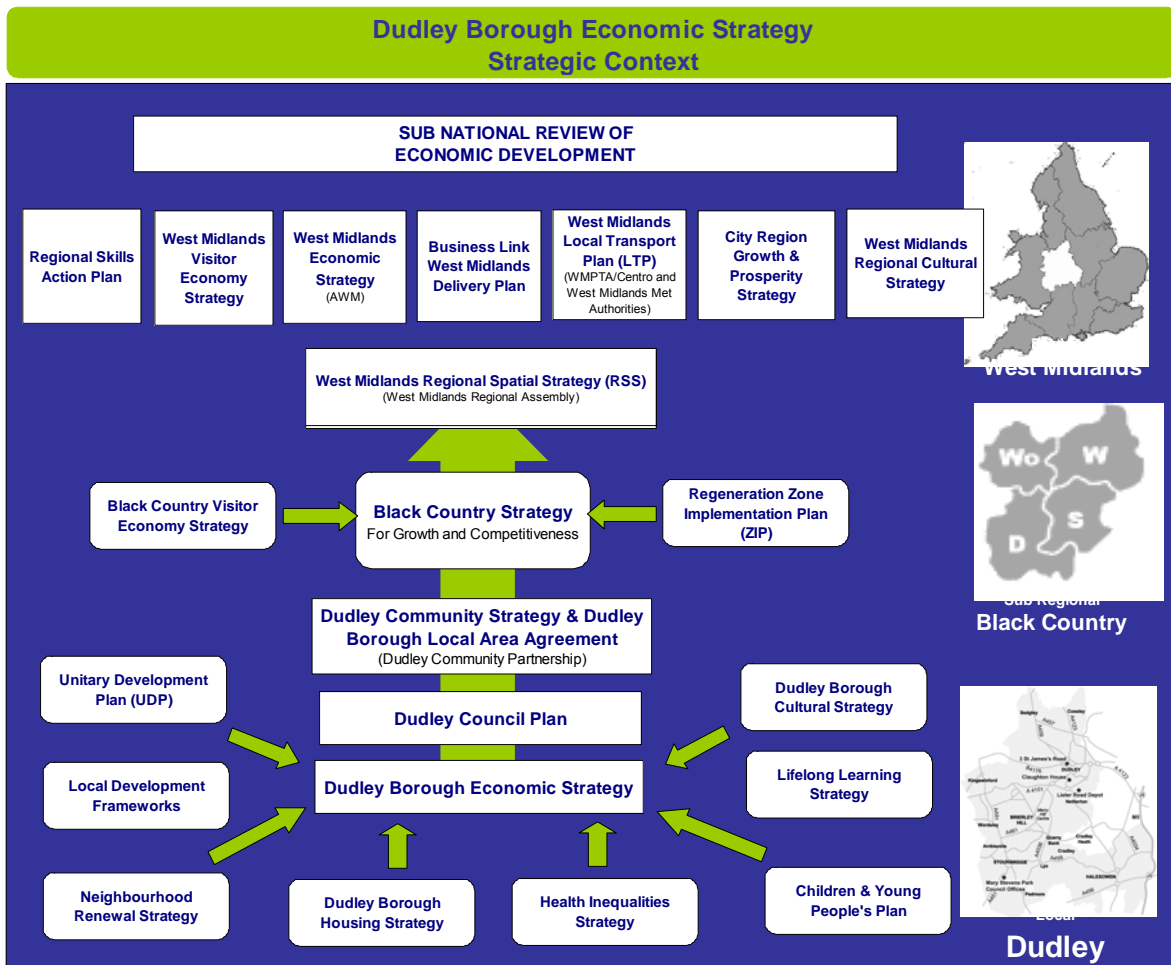
There have been a number of significant achievements in 2007/08 for the Council and its partners across the five aims of the Strategy. These achievements are summarised in Section 8 - Appendix 1.

The revised Strategy for 2008/09 builds on this success and provides details of key activities that will enable continued progress towards achieving the vision and strategic aims for the economic regeneration of Dudley Borough.

3.0 Strategic Context

The Economic Strategy has been developed in the context of a wide range of national, regional, sub-regional and local policies, strategies and plans, which impact on the local economy. Diagram 1 outlines the strategic context for the Economic Strategy. Further details of the key strategy and policy documents can be found in Section 8 - Appendix 2.

Diagram 1



The following provides an overview of the links to some of these strategies and plans.

National Context

The Treasury's Sub-National Review of Economic Development and Regeneration was published on 17 July 2007. The objective is to raise the trend rate of economic growth and reduce disparities within and between regions.

Implications for Local Authorities (LAs) include:

- Consultation on providing local authorities with a statutory economic duty to promote economic growth in each area

- Local Area Agreements (LAAs) move centre stage as the key mechanism for the relationship between central and local government/Local Strategic Partnerships with a clear focus on economic development and neighbourhood renewal (to be embedded in the new LAA Performance Framework)
- RDA funding to be directed to LAs unless there is a good case for keeping it at the regional level
- Transfer of responsibility for funding 14-19 year-olds' skills policy to Local Authorities
- Creation of New Homes Agency to support local authorities in provision of new homes

At a sub-regional level, it proposes:

- Strengthening sub-regional management of transport (as part of Local Transport Bill)
- Multi Area Agreements (MAAs) for collective targets on such areas as housing and worklessness
- Explore the establishment of statutory sub regional bodies to pool responsibilities for economic development on a permanent basis

At a regional level, it proposes:

- That Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) have responsibility for developing a single, integrated Regional Strategy (economic, social and environmental)
- RDA becomes the Regional Planning Body
- Local Authority 'leaders' to agree Regional Strategy, and have scrutiny Function
- Other agencies have duty to contribute to priorities agreed in regional Strategies

West Midlands Context

The ***West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)*** sets out an overarching spatial strategy for the West Midlands region and provides one way that regional partners can jointly address major economic, social and environmental issues facing the West Midlands. The RSS provides a long-term land use and transport planning framework for the region and provides details of policies to ensure that physical development in the region will deliver renaissance for both urban and rural communities in the West Midlands.

In January 2008, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government published the Phase One Revision to the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy which endorses the future long term plans for the future transformation of the Black Country, providing a planning framework for new homes, more jobs, better shopping and a better environment for the sub-region.

The ***West Midlands Economic Strategy (WMES): Connecting to Success*** was launched in December 2007 by Advantage West Midlands and sets out what the West Midlands region needs to do to improve its economic performance. The Strategy sets an ambitious vision for the West Midlands, this being:

"To be a global centre where people and business choose to connect"

The Strategy focuses on 3 main themes – Business, People and Place - which comprise a number of strategic objectives:

- Business - objectives include seizing market opportunities, improving competitiveness and harnessing knowledge
- Place - objectives include increasing Birmingham's competitiveness, improving infrastructure and sustainable communities
- People – objectives include sustainable living, raising ambitions and aspirations and achieving full potential and opportunities for all
- plus the need to provide a powerful voice for the West Midlands.

In order to deliver sustainable economic development and growth, the targeting and prioritisation of resources to deliver the strategy is aligned closely with the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy. The WMES therefore targets its spatial interventions on three primary areas, which are areas of multiple market failure including the Regeneration Zones, concentrations of knowledge assets, including the High Technology Corridors, and Birmingham as the major economic driver within the West Midlands economy. A Delivery Framework accompanies the Strategy and provides further details on how the strategy will be delivered.

The Dudley Borough Economic Strategy supports the vision of the WMES and its key components - Business, People and Place - are important at a local and regional level and the action plan within this Economic Strategy details interventions that will contribute to each.

Skills Action Plan for the West Midlands is a draft document, issued in January 2008, which is currently being developed by Advantage West Midlands and the Learning and Skills Council. It is a three-year plan, with annual review, that is set within the Region's economic goals and the 2020 ambitions of the Leitch Review of Skills. The Skills Action Plan sets out within the region's economic strategy the specific skills ambitions for the region, which are:

- The key actions which meet both the immediate skills needs of employers as well as creating the right conditions for a fundamental shift in the volume and level of employer demand in the future
- Identifies the key progression options for individuals to continually advance through learning and work
- Acknowledges the central role of universities, colleges and providers with a commitment to support their development to be world class providers of skills, meeting the needs of employers within a demand led system

These skills ambitions are set firmly within a wider policy context, in particular the Sub National Review of Economic Development and the planned transfer of 16-19 responsibilities from the Learning and Skills Council to Local Authorities. By embedding the Skills Action Plan within the Regional Economic Strategy, it also facilitates the moves towards a single integrated regional strategy and the new role for RDAs.

The Skills Action Plan sets out a number of key priorities for the first year of the plan which include working with Jobcentre Plus and local authorities to integrate employment and skills delivery in line with Leitch and the recently published White Paper, "Opportunity, Employment and Progression", building on the work of the City Strategy Pathfinder. It also includes working with local authorities individually and through the joint strategic forum of Directors of Children's Services with the LSC to ensure a smooth transition to the new 14-19 arrangements, in particular creating a strong economic focus to the new Specialised Diplomas and clear progression pre and post 19 and into employment and also working with the West Midlands Higher Education Association (WMHEA) and the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) to develop a long term strategy for retaining and attracting more graduates to the region and upskilling the workforce to graduate level.

The indicators for the West Midlands set an ambition for 2020 and are in line with the national indicators from the Leitch Review and are:

- The percentage of adults that have functional literacy and numeracy (basic skills) to increase from 83% literacy and 78% numeracy in 2006 to at least 95%
- To move from 64% to at least 90% of adults qualified to at least a Level 2 as the minimum platform of skills for employment and business competitiveness
- To shift the balance of intermediate skills from Level 2 to Level 3 by increasing Level 3 attainments from 42% at present to 56%
- To move from 24% to 40% of the adult workforce qualified to at least Level 4, allowing the West Midlands to compete globally in markets on the basis of high value add and knowledge.

City Region – Dudley MBC continues to work with the metropolitan authorities of Birmingham, Coventry, Sandwell, Solihull, Telford, Walsall and Wolverhampton on the 'City Region' agenda, aimed at establishing effective strategic co-operation and decision influencing arrangements for the urban 'core' of the West Midlands Region. These authorities, together with the Regional Development Agency, Learning & Skills Council, West Midlands Regional Assembly and business community have joined together to form the *Birmingham, Coventry and Black Country City Region*.

The City Region approach is intended to ensure that strategic policies for spatial planning, economic development, skills and employment, transport, regeneration, housing, the reduction of carbon emissions and quality of life are effectively co-ordinated and mutually supportive.

The City Region proposes to 'add value' to present arrangements through focusing on four key outcomes:

- Creating Employment and Prosperity
- Connecting People with Opportunities
- Connecting the City Region
- Creating a Better Quality of Life

Dudley's participation as a partner in the City Region is viewed as complementary to its Economic Strategy. In many ways, the performance of the local economy is

dependent upon the 'economic geography' of the wider sub-region and region. By a process of collaborative working on 'the bigger picture' – focusing on transport, infrastructure and inward investment across the urban core of the West Midlands – the aim is to further raise Dudley's prospects and increase its potential.

An example of City Region working is the **City Strategy Pathfinder**, which is a new approach to removing barriers to economic participation and employment. The Strategy aims to halve the gap between the City Region employment rate and that of the 55 target wards by 2012. However, it will achieve this by building on existing structures and partnerships and adding value to Local Area Agreements.

The urgency of a City Region-wide, co-ordinated approach to tackling 'worklessness' is demonstrated by the fact that over 30% of the working age population in the City Region target wards is 'workless' (i.e. in receipt of working age benefits including Job Seekers Allowance, Incapacity Benefit/Severe Disablement Allowance and Income Support).

Within Dudley, five of the most disadvantaged wards are included in the City Strategy Pathfinder – Castle & Priory, Netherton, Woodside & St Andrews, St Thomas's, Brierley Hill and St James's wards. For each ward, a Local Management Group has been established composed of the key stakeholders to take forward the delivery of City Strategy in their respective wards in order to reduce the levels of worklessness.

Black Country Context

The endorsement of the Phase One Revision to the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy means that the future development of the Black Country will be focused on four strategic centres and along public transport corridors, leading to a greater choice of homes, more jobs, stronger business opportunities all supported by better public transport and radical improvements to the general living environment. This represents a significant milestone for Dudley Borough as Brierley Hill is now recognised as the fourth strategic centre in the Black Country which will enable plans to go ahead for more shops, leisure facilities, offices and housing.

The **Black Country Strategy for Growth and Competitiveness** focuses on two major drivers of renaissance of the Black Country sub region, which are: lifting educational and skills performance and a radical transformation of the environment. It sets out a clear spatial strategy focusing growth in the four strategic centres and along corridors served by high quality public transport.

The vision-led strategy has been developed to achieve four key objectives, which are:

1. Population growth to 1.2m
2. Raising incomes to the national averages
3. Achieving a better balance of resident households reflecting the national average
4. Transforming the environment

Key outcomes of the Black Country Strategy are the elimination of the sub-region's output gap which currently stands at £3.5 billion, which represents around a third of

the West Midlands regional economic underperformance compared to the national average) and land use/transportation restructuring to create high quality sustainable environments.

Seven programmes have been identified to guide action to achieve growth and competitiveness in the sub-region and these are:

1. Accelerating the growth of the knowledge economy
2. Expanding four strategic centres
3. Building high quality housing market
4. Transforming the environment: Black Country Urban Park
5. Creating a workforce for the 21st Century
6. Creating a prosperous, diverse and harmonious society
7. Developing an integrated transport network

Building on the work of the Black Country Study, the four Black Country Local Authorities (Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton) are working together to produce a **Black Country Core Strategy** in partnership with the community and other key organisations such as voluntary and private sector bodies and businesses. The Core Strategy will be a 'spatial planning document' (dealing not only with land use but also environmental, economic and social issues) that will set out the vision, objectives and strategy for future development in the Black Country at least up to 2026. The Core Strategy will include a number of employment led and housing led regeneration corridors within the Black Country area. The Core Strategy will be a Development Plan Document and will form the basis of the Black Country Local Authorities' Local Development Frameworks.

Local Context

The **Dudley Community Strategy** sets out a 15-year vision for the community and the core of this vision is the promotion of stronger communities. The strategy identifies 6 key priorities to assist the creation of stronger communities and the activities within the Economic Strategy will impact directly on the key priority of 'Creating a Prosperous Borough'.

In 2007/08, Dudley had its first Local Area Agreement (LAA) in place, co-ordinated through Dudley Community Partnership, to deliver the DCP's main priorities for Dudley, from the Community Strategy. This current LAA is structured around 4 main blocks, which are: Children and Young People, Safer and Stronger Communities, Healthier Communities and Older People and Economic Development and Enterprise.

The Economic Development & Enterprise Block of the LAA identifies four key outcomes:

- Increase Employment Levels
- Increase Enterprise
- Increased Competition
- Increase Skill Levels

These priorities complement the Economic Strategy and its identification of the main issues that need to be addressed to sustain and improve economic performance.

The outcomes are supported by two specific stretch targets that directly support local people from recognised priority wards or groups and include placing an additional 300 people into sustained employment and an additional 208 achieving qualifications through a variety of schemes including:

- Initiatives that support local people into local jobs, through effective brokerage services, focusing on key disadvantaged areas and priority clients groups.
- Supporting those with health, mental and physical disabilities to remain or enter work.
- 'First rung' provision that equips local people with the vocational work related skills that individuals need to enter the world of work.
- Mentoring and Information Advice & Guidance services that support the most vulnerable so they can make the most of these opportunities.

DCP is currently preparing the Next Generation Local Area Agreement (NGLAA), which will be a new 3-year LAA, starting in 2008/09, and will replace the current one. The third draft of the NGLAA was submitted to Government in March 2008 and seeks to highlight what needs to be done in the next 3 years to improve the quality of life of residents in Dudley Borough.

The draft vision in the NGLAA is:

“A Borough with a vibrant and sustainable economy, where all neighbourhoods and communities benefit from the prosperity that results and where inequalities are reduced”

This vision does not replace the current vision of the Community Strategy but supports it by recognising that a strong economy is one of the key ingredients necessary to deliver stronger communities.

The priorities for the NGLAA have been clustered into four high level outcome areas:

- Wealthy Communities
- Healthy Communities
- Environmentally-aware Communities
- Safe and Cohesive Communities

In terms of Wealthy Communities, Dudley Community Partnership believes worklessness is a root cause of deprivation and that a diverse, vibrant and growing local economy is essential in providing a healthy jobs market, offering good quality jobs across the range of sectors and occupations with higher income prospects. For most people, employment is the critical factor in improving individual prosperity and can bring about significant improvements in the fundamental elements of their quality of life such as better health and housing.

The key priorities for the NGLAA therefore focus on reducing worklessness, raising skills levels and increasing enterprise and investment in order to impact on headline economic indicators in terms of Gross Value Added per head and income levels.

Further work is now being undertaken with partners to identify the key actions that can make a difference to address the key priorities and to identify the relevant measures and targets to demonstrate what impact the NGLAA will have in improving the local economy.

Dudley's Economic Strategy, together with Dudley Community Strategy, has provided a highly developed evidence-base for informing both current LAA and Next Generation LAA.

The ***Dudley Unitary Development Plan (UDP)*** contains policies and proposals for the physical development of land in the Borough up until 2011. There are a number of strategic policies within the UDP that impact upon economic regeneration including the recognition that the Borough's town centres, older industrial areas and housing areas are a key priority for renewal and regeneration if a more sustainable Borough is to be achieved by 2011. The UDP also has an important role in assisting community development based often on the Borough's centres and in helping the provision of services and facilities. To achieve sustainable regeneration, the Council will co-ordinate the policies and proposals of the UDP with other regeneration strategies, in particular the Regeneration Zone.

The Central Employment Zone (CEZ) identified in the UDP is a major strategic regeneration initiative and stretches from Castlegate in the north to Lye and Quarry Bank in the south of the borough. The CEZ covers major development opportunity sites and renewal sites identified in the UDP and will take forward a number of aims including helping to improve the competitiveness of firms, encouraging the development of brownfield sites and encouraging the creation and retention of jobs for local people.

Local Development Documents that together comprise the (new) Local Development Framework will over time add to or replace elements of the UDP (see page 78 under Objective 5a).

The ***Dudley Children and Young People's Plan 2008-2011*** sets out a vision for children and young people in Dudley and how this will be achieved. The vision sets out a number of key headline objectives for children in the borough including: Be Healthy, Stay Safe, Enjoy and Achieve, Make a Positive Contribution and Achieve Economic Well-being. The plan identifies a number of priorities for 2008-2011 against the headline objectives and, in order to achieve the economic well-being of children and young people in the borough, the key priority is to engage young people in further education, employment or training on leaving school. A Children's Trust has been in place from April 2007 which reports directly into Dudley's Local Strategic Partnership. Commissioning is the core activity of the Trust and will cover the needs of all children and young people aged 0-19 (up to 25 for those with additional needs such as those with a disability and looked after children). A partnership unit,

incorporating commissioning responsibilities, in support of the work of the overall Children's Trust will be developed in 2008.

Key Partnerships

The Economic Strategy continues to recognise that successful implementation depends on joint working, strong partnerships, and input of resources from a variety of public and private sector organisations at regional, sub-regional and local level.

A wide range of partners, including Directorates within Dudley MBC, external partners and community and voluntary groups, will deliver the Strategy. The key partnerships and agencies influencing the implementation of the economic strategy are shown in Section 8 - Appendix 3.

Dudley MBC is an active partner in the **Black Country Consortium** which is a sub-regional partnership for Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton, tasked with taking forward the regeneration of the Black Country over the next 30 years, as set out in the Black Country Vision and the Black Country Strategy for Growth and Competitiveness. The two **Regeneration Zones** that fall within the Black Country, the Arc of Opportunity which covers the area of North West Birmingham and the South Black Country and Future Foundations which covers the area of Wolverhampton, Walsall and South Staffordshire, are now part of the Black Country Consortium Ltd. The resources secured through the Regeneration Zone process are fundamental to implementing the Council's Economic Strategy.

The Local Strategic Partnership, **Dudley Community Partnership (DCP)**, is the overarching partnership for the borough and its role is to extend and improve partnership working within the Borough whilst ensuring that communities are actively involved in determining service delivery. It also has a responsibility to address inequalities that exist within the Borough so as to ensure no one is disadvantaged by virtue of where they live. It is responsible for the development and publication of the Dudley Community Strategy and co-ordinating and leading on the development of the Local Area Agreement (LAA) for Dudley. The DCP currently has six strategic partnerships that deliver a variety of themed agendas, co-ordinated through the DCP board at which they are represented.

The **Economic Development and Regeneration Partnership (EDRP)** is a formally recognised partnership within the DCP structure with responsibility for sustaining the delivery of successful economic regeneration throughout the Borough against the five strategic aims of the Dudley Borough Economic Strategy. Its membership includes key external agencies and organisations including JobCentre Plus, the Learning & Skills Council, Business Link, the Chamber of Commerce and local Colleges, as well as the local authority's Economic Regeneration Division. Through a mixture of membership and external consultation, local employers and businesses are involved and consulted with to ensure that their views are reflected. The Economic Strategy is, in effect, the EDRP's Business Plan, setting out the agreed issues and activities that will drive the agreed strategy.

The **Economic Regeneration Division** within the Council's Directorate of the Urban Environment provides an integrated delivery approach to the Council's economic regeneration activities in the borough. This is achieved through:

- The Economic Regeneration Strategy section who work with partners to develop the Dudley Borough Economic Strategy and to secure financial resources to deliver a range of both capital and revenue projects to take forward the economic strategy, together with engaging with and supporting the development of new and existing businesses to promote an enterprise culture within the Borough. This section also incorporates Future Skills Dudley, providing a range of Local Jobs for Local People schemes to support local people to achieve vocational / recognised skills and qualifications and to support local people into employment.
- Economic Regeneration Delivery which is responsible for town centre management and development, landscape and urban design and the regeneration of the Borough's district and local centres.
- Engineering and Transportation who are responsible for the Borough's highways infrastructure and also incorporates a complementary role in providing traffic and road safety measures to ensure the expeditious movement of traffic in the Borough.

The Economic Strategy also recognises the impact of other Council activities on the regeneration agenda including the role of the **Directorate of Adult, Community & Housing Services (DACHS)** in the provision of Adult & Community Learning and in developing the social and health care sector and in equipping the Borough's residents with skills for entry into this growing sector. This is reinforced by the national standards for commissioning social care inspections, which prescribe a minimum level of qualifications for homes and relevant care providers.

Similarly, the Strategy recognises the key role of the **Directorate of Children's Services**, in the vital area of education as well as, for example, in the creation of Children's Centres with integrated services, that will provide quality childcare, learning provision and early identification of needs.

The implementation of the Economic Strategy will also be reinforced and complemented by the **Health Inequalities Strategy** for the Borough, which addresses issues of poverty, educational attainment, and access to services, including health and employment services. The **Health and Work Group** is a partnership group with membership from DUE, Jobcentre Plus, PCT, DACHS and Children's Services and voluntary and community sector members, formed as a joint working group from the Health and Work Partnership Board and the Economic Development and Regeneration Partnership. The work programme for the group includes overseeing the development of Pathways to Work in Dudley including condition management programmes and to monitor the performance of LAA targets on employment, in particular those targets that relate to employment of people with disabilities and mental health needs.

Resources

The Strategy recognises the potential to generate employment and wealth for local people by encouraging and assisting private sector activity through effective public private partnerships. It also acknowledges the important role of regional and sub regional agencies such as Advantage West Midlands, Government Office for the West Midlands, Black Country Learning and Skills Council and Jobcentre Plus, which have core funding to support and stimulate economic development within the borough.

A prerequisite for implementing the strategy's action plan is to work with existing and new partners thereby optimising the opportunities to gain additional resources from external agencies and ensure that within Dudley MBC both human and financial resources are maximised. Where relevant delivery will also depend on the approval of bid submissions for external funding.

Key funds have already been obtained from competitive external sources, in particular the European Structural Funds, Advantage West Midlands and the Department of Transport.

In January 2008, Dudley MBC was awarded resources from the Deprived Areas Fund (DAF) to support the delivery of the City Strategy initiative in Dudley Borough. A number of other bids have also been submitted to external funding agencies including the Stage 2 Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) bid to attract £1.95m of funding from AWM as match funding against £1.95m from the Heritage Lottery Fund and an application for the Brierley Hill Umbrella programme which will consist of six key projects to take forward the future regeneration of Brierley Hill. Future Skills Dudley has also submitted funding bids to the Learning & Skills Council to support delivery in respect of the employment and skills agenda.

The West Midlands Regional Competitiveness and Employment Programme 2007-2013 is a successor programme to the current ERDF and ESF Objective 2 and Objective 3 programmes. The West Midlands will receive funds under the Competitiveness and Employment objective. This objective will focus on six overarching priorities which are: promoting innovation (ERDF), tackling barriers to business growth (ERDF), sustainable development, production and consumption (ERDF), building sustainable communities (ERDF), extending employment opportunities to all (ESF) and developing a skilled and adaptable workforce (ESF). Sandwell MBC & Dudley MBC are working together to submit an outline application for £12m of European funding for Sustainable Urban Development under Priority 3, which is building sustainable communities, funded through ERDF.

Dudley Borough has a number of wards with Assisted Area Status, which are eligible for Selective Finance for Investment (SFI), which helps fund new investment projects that lead to long-term improvements in productivity, skills and employment. The eligible wards are Halesowen South, Belle Vale & Hasbury and Kingswinford North and Wall Heath, Amblecote, Brierley Hill, Brockmoor & Pensnett, Castle & Priors, Coseley East, Coseley West, Gornal, Halesowen North, Lye & Wollescote, Quarry Bank & Cradley, St Andrew's, St James's and St Thomas's.

In parallel with the introduction of Next Generation LAAs from April 2008, the Government is introducing a number of changes to remove barriers to partnership working and allow greater flexibility in resource allocation. One of these changes is the transfer of a number of specific grants into a non-ringfenced Area Based Grant (ABG). The ABG is accompanied by a breakdown of the funding streams that make it up and those funding streams are allocated according to specific policy criteria rather than general formulae.

With effect from 2008/09, the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund is replaced by the Working Neighbourhoods Fund (WNF), which focuses on measures of worklessness. Dudley will receive transitional funding of £1.1 million in 2008/09 and £0.4m in 2009/10 and clarification is currently being sought as to what criteria will be attached to Dudley's WNF allocation.

Dudley is aiming for inclusion in Wave 7 of the national Building Schools for the Future programme. If successful, investment in excess of £200 million would be used to transform secondary education in the Borough from 2010/11. Transformation would take place over a phased programme of several years in the context of strategic planning with neighbouring authorities. Capital investment in Dudley schools since 1997 has exceeded £60 million. Investing for the Future is a planning framework to enable all capital programmes in Children's Services to be managed strategically and effectively.

Through the Black Country Challenge, Black Country schools will benefit from £28.5 million additional revenue to support the agreed programmes. There will be an enhancement of the School Improvement Partnership role to include working with Black Country Challenge Advisors for some schools. Other outcomes include additional leverage (such as capital programmes), enhanced recruitment and retention activity, additional opportunities for schools to work collaboratively and with other key organisations and prioritisation in terms of piloting national activity.

In addition, new alternative sources of potential external funding will be actively researched and applications submitted, where appropriate.

Since April 2003, the Economic Regeneration Division has secured almost £34 million of external funding to support regeneration projects.

Performance Monitoring

The Economic Strategy is presented as a dynamic action based document, owned by public and private sector partners operating in the Borough, the Black Country and the West Midlands. The Strategy is reviewed regularly and updated annually. The Strategic Action Plan presents each of the five strategic aims with a series of objectives, actions, targets, outcomes, key milestones and timescales to be delivered by Dudley MBC and its partners.

The EDRP will monitor and review progress in delivering the economic strategy against the Strategic Action Plan as well as reviewing the overall economic performance of the Borough, using some nationally recognised economic

regeneration performance indicators as well as local indicators. This ongoing performance review will be reported through the Dudley Economic Situation Report, which is published in conjunction with the Black Country Economic Barometer.

An update of Dudley's current economic performance is detailed in Section 4.

Sustainable Development

The Economic Strategy will follow the sustainable development principles outlined in the Government strategy, "Securing the Future: Delivering UK Sustainable Development Strategy" published in March 2005.

Within this framework the Government has identified 4 priorities for immediate action in the UK, which the Economic Strategy aims to contribute to/work towards:

- Sustainable consumption and production
- Climate change and energy
- Natural resource protection and environmental enhancement
- Sustainable communities

Sustainable development is a key cross cutting principle in Dudley Borough's Community Strategy, recognising the need for a good quality environment not damaged by economic factors overriding environmental or community ones. The community strategy acknowledges the importance of considering the long-term impact that economic development decisions have on the environment and community in creating a prosperous borough. Areas of work identified in the Community Strategy that will contribute to this are the development of an integrated transport system to help relieve congestion, reduce carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions and pollution; reducing the impact of the Borough on climate change by reducing levels of CO₂ produced through car usage, improving energy efficiency of buildings and encouraging businesses to adopt environmental practices.

Through Dudley's Local Area Agreement issues of climate change and reducing CO₂ emissions, and improving the quality and cleanliness of the Borough's environment and green open spaces will help contribute to economic regeneration.

Dudley MBC's Statement of Sustainable Development is designed to ensure that the diverse needs of all residents can be met, in particular by:

- Promoting social cohesion and a fair society, by giving the local community a voice and an opportunity to get involved in decision-making and by promoting leisure, recreational and cultural activities that recognise the role such facilities have in improving people's quality of life.
- Strengthening economic prosperity by supporting physical and social regeneration activity, creating inward investment opportunities and an appropriate skills base.
- Protecting and improving the borough's unique environment – its biodiversity, green spaces, important buildings and structures, and its heritage.
- Managing natural and other resources sensibly by, for example, promoting integrated forms of sustainable transport, improving the energy efficiency of the

borough's housing stock and encouraging the re-cycling of materials. Included in this is the need to use existing buildings appropriately and ensure that Dudley's housing and other assets are put to the best use, and that brown field sites are developed before considering new provision.

Achieving a more sustainable future requires the Council to work in effective partnership with other agencies and organisations, including Dudley Community Partnership and Business Link to bring about a commonality of purpose in contributing towards a better quality of life.

For example, Business Link is assisting local businesses to improve their management of resources, by more efficient energy use, and by reducing waste of materials. The impact of these interventions results in decreased costs to business, thereby increasing employment and providing more secure supply lines, whilst also helping to ensure the future sustainability of materials and energy.

A central aim of the Directorate of Children's Services Investing for the Future strategy is the establishment of good schools and services at the heart of communities to reduce the need for travel. The design of the new and refurbished schools will comply with new energy efficiency standards and encourage children and young people to develop environmentally friendly behaviour.

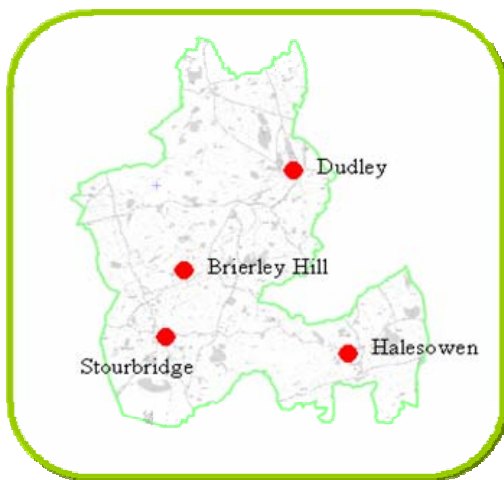
Additionally, the Council's Culture and Community Services Division is actively engaged in improving the borough's many green spaces, including its nature reserves and public parks, thus enhancing the area's environment and image.

A sustainability appraisal of the economic strategy has been undertaken using Dudley's Sustainability Appraisal Toolkit which assessed the impact of the strategy against a series of criteria covering the 3 pillars of sustainability – economic, social and environmental. The appraisal found the strategy to be robust in most areas and also identified some areas for future development and improvement which will be considered by the Economic Development and Regeneration Partnership in order to determine future action.

4.0 Dudley's Economy

Geography

Dudley is a large metropolitan borough council (98 square kilometers/38 square miles) located on the western part of the West Midlands conurbation, approximately 9 miles west of Birmingham and 6 miles south of Wolverhampton. To the west lies the urban fringe of South Staffordshire and the rural parts of Worcestershire. Despite its predominantly urban character, an estimated 25% of the Borough is open space (i.e. not built upon), including just under 1700 hectares of Green Belt and Wedge, which contribute to its environmental quality and attractiveness.



Rather than being dominated by one major centre, Dudley is composed of a number of townships, each having its own identity and culture. The main town centres are: Dudley itself, Stourbridge in the south-west, Halesowen to the south and east, and Brierley Hill in the middle of the Borough. Major visitor attractions in the Borough include Dudley Zoo & Castle, the Black Country Living Museum. The Merry Hill shopping centre, one of the largest retail developments in the UK, and the Waterfront Business and Leisure complex now form part of Brierley Hill town centre.

Population

The economic importance of Dudley is illustrated by a recorded population of 305,300 (2006 mid-year estimates) which is the highest of the four Black Country Local Authorities, and third only to Birmingham and Coventry within the West Midlands Region. This also places Dudley MBC as the 17th largest authority in England & Wales.

Dudley has an ageing population with people over 60 accounting for 22.2% of the total population, compared to 20.6% in 1991. The over 80s account for 4%, increasing from 3.2% in 1991. Children and young people aged 0-19 accounted for 24.7% of the total population in 1991. In 2001 this dropped slightly to 24.5%, and those aged between 20-29 had dropped from 15.2% to 11.2% respectively according to the Census 2001.

The ethnicity of the Dudley Borough population has changed little between the latest census counts. In 1991, White British residents made up 95.51 % of the total population; in 2001, this figure was 93.68%. Of the other ethnic groups, Pakistani is the largest, making up a little over 2% of the overall population. The next highest group is Indian, which constitutes just over 1.5% of the total.

Deprivation

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2007 for England was published by the Department for Communities and Local Government in December 2007 and is based on the approach, structure and methodology that were used to create the previous IMD that was published in 2004. The IMD 2007 is a measure of multiple deprivation at the small area level. The results are published by Super Output Area (SOA), with district level summaries for all 354 Local Authority areas in England.

The new IMD uses more up-to-date data to provide an update to the 2004 Index. Both versions contain seven “Domains” which relate to income deprivation, employment deprivation, health deprivation and disability, education skills and training deprivation, barriers to housing and services, living environment deprivation, and crime. When combined these seven domains form the overall Index of Multiple Deprivation.

Under both Indices each SOA and Local Authority is given a score for each of the seven domains and the overall Index of Multiple Deprivation. These scores are then put in numerical order for the whole of England and given a rank; at the Local Authority level this is between 1 and 354, with 1 being the most deprived and 354 being the least deprived. As there are 32,482 SOAs in England, these are commonly analysed in terms of how many SOAs are in the 10% and 20% most deprived in England based on their rank. Changes between the two Indices can be analysed by comparing the ranks and number of deprived SOAs in 2004 and 2007.

It is important to note that an increase in rank (moving closer to 1) does not necessarily mean that an area has become more deprived. In theory every Local Authority may have become less deprived, but because any change in rank reflects *relative* change, an area may be less deprived but move closer to the rank of 1 due to other areas also becoming less deprived but to a greater extent.

Dudley’s rank has increased from 109 to 100 between 2004 and 2007. This is in the context of an increase in rank of all West Midlands Metropolitan Districts except Solihull. Dudley remains the least deprived authority in the Black Country.

Dudley Borough has 202 Super Output Areas (SOAs) each with an average population of 1,511. Dudley has experienced an increase in the number of SOAs in the 10% most deprived in England under the overall IMD, with the number rising from 12 to 19. The number in the 20% most deprived category has risen from 40 to 45.

The Income, Employment, Health, Education and Barriers domains have also seen an increase in the number of SOAs in both categories. The numbers have remained the same for the Crime domain, and the number of deprived SOAs has fallen in the Living Environment domain.

SOAs do not aggregate to current Ward boundaries, so an analysis of deprivation at the ward level can only be taken as indicative. By “best-fitting” the SOAs to Wards,

the IMD 2007 shows that the five most deprived wards in the Borough match those that have been designated under the City Strategy Pathfinder.

In summary, Dudley's relative position has worsened in keeping with most of the West Midlands in contrast to other conurbations. However, Dudley's problem of deprivation remains a hidden one despite its severity in terms of attracting comparable discretionary funding, for example the "transitional" definition in terms of the allocation of the Working Neighbourhoods Fund.

Dudley's Economic Performance

Whilst Dudley has unique characteristics and a proud industrial heritage, its economy operates very firmly within a sub-regional, regional, national and international context. The borough's economic success and prosperity is therefore partly dependent upon external factors and influences, and partly on the skills of its residents and the Borough's enterprise and industry. The local economy is changing as a result of these influences.

The following section provides an assessment of the current economic situation in Dudley and is structured around key indicators, which are in line with the indicators in the Black Country Economic Strategy and include:

- Gross Value Added (GVA) per head
- Earnings
- Employment & Worklessness
- Skills
- Enterprise
- Local Businesses

This allows progress against key indicators to be measured consistently across all four Black Country authorities and allows comparisons with regional and national figures. The performance indicators also support the delivery and monitoring of Dudley's Local Area Agreement and the Dudley Community Strategy and the 'Regeneration Matters' theme of the Council Plan.

Gross Value Added (GVA) per head

As part of the Black Country Study evidence base the Black Country Observatory calculated the '**Black Country Output Gap**' in 2001 which showed a £2.6bn gap compared to the national average. The output gap is the difference in GVA per head of the Black Country against the UK multiplied by the Black Country population.

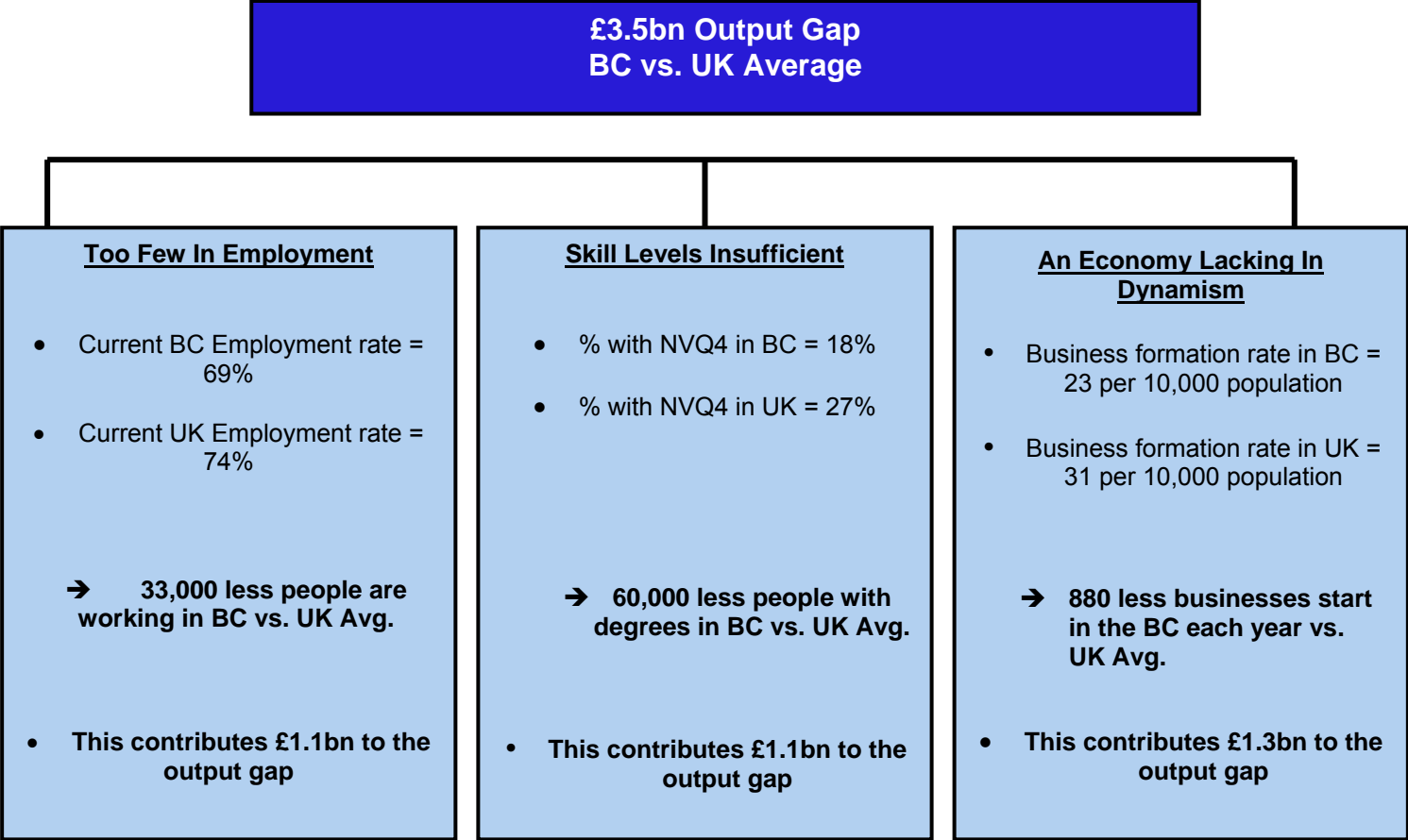
A recent update of this analysis shows that this gap continues to rise each year and is now almost £1bn greater at **£3.5bn** when comparing against the UK. The Black Country forms a major component (33%) to the £10.7bn regional output gap, thus the Black Country is critical to the regional objective of raising GVA per head.

There are 3 main components to the output gap - jobs, skills and new business formation. The proportion contribution of these component parts to the output gap

have also changed over the years with the fall in resident jobs (15,000 from 2005 – 2006) and qualifications levels increasing their contribution to the output gap.

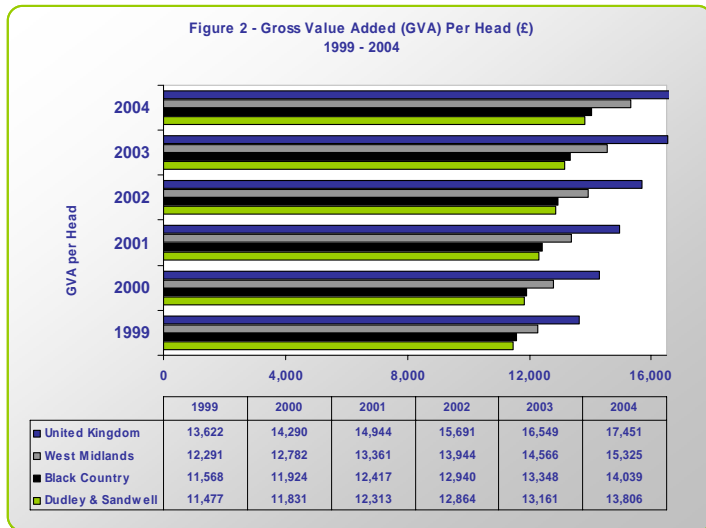
The latest information on the Black Country Output Gap is shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 – The Black Country Output Gap



Source: Black Country Observatory

Gross Value Added (GVA) measures the contribution to the economy of each individual producer, industry or sector in the United Kingdom. GVA per head is not available at Local Authority level. Figure 2 shows that **Gross Value Added (GVA) per head for Dudley & Sandwell is £13,806**, which is below the Black Country average of £14,039, the West Midlands average of £15,235 and the UK average of £17,451.



GVA per head for Dudley and Sandwell increased by 4.9% from 2003 to 2004, however the UK average increased by 5.5% over this period, demonstrating that, compared at a national level, we have a relatively weak economy based on a lack of productivity, low employment, skills and enterprise.

Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Income Levels

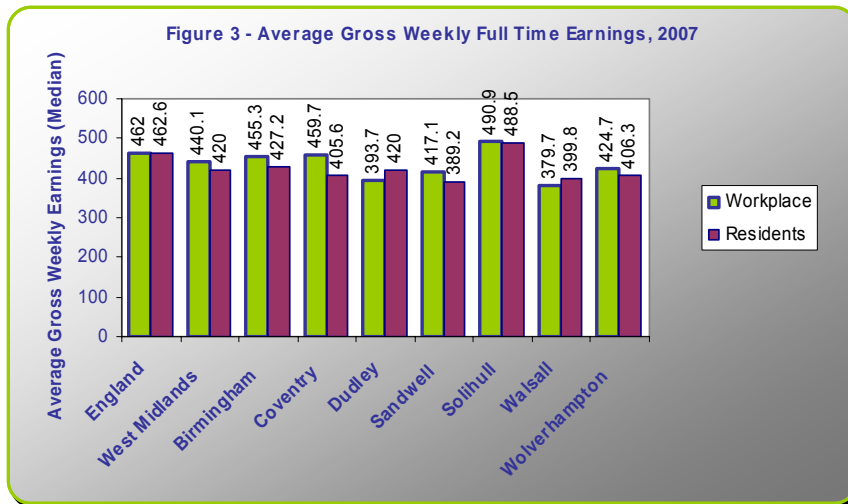
Income levels within the Borough are a particular problem. The results of the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) 2007¹, shows that the average gross weekly earnings for people working in Dudley Borough is £393.70, which is the second lowest level of earnings in the Black Country and compares to £430 for the West Midlands and the national average of £458.60.

The weekly earnings for male full time employed stands at £425.50 and £323.50 for full time employed females.

In terms of gross annual earnings for people working in the area, Dudley at £20,397 is below the West Midlands average of £23,361 and the national average of £24,402.

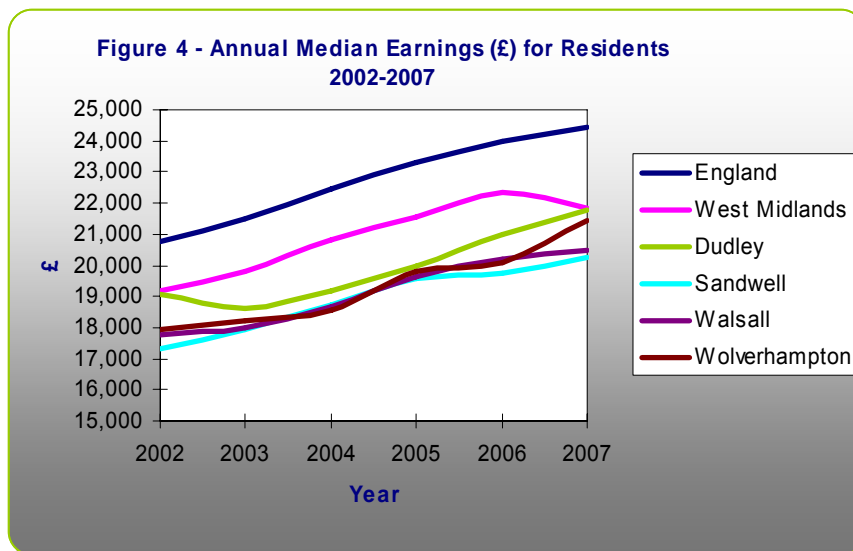
With regard to incomes for employed people living in the borough, Dudley has the highest level of average gross weekly and annual earnings in the Black Country at £420 (weekly) and £21,766 (annual). However, weekly and annual earnings for employed people living in the borough are below the national averages of £459 (weekly) and £24,428 (annual).

¹ The statistics quoted use the median values as the headline statistic. The median is the value below which 50 per cent of employees fall. It is preferred over the mean for earnings data as it is influenced less by extreme values and because of the skewed distribution of earning data.



Source: ASHE, 2007

All four Black Country Local Authorities have experienced a growth in full-time annual earnings over the last 12 months, using the resident based statistics. The rate of growth for Dudley Borough at 4.4% was greater than the national average rate of growth at 2.8%. However, the gap between the wages in the Borough and the Black Country and the regional and national averages continues, as illustrated in Figure 4 below.



Source: ASHE, 2006

Employment

Figure 5 below shows the labour market position using the Annual Population Survey (APS) July 2006 - June 2007 for the 4 individual Black Country boroughs, the Black Country in total, the West Midlands and England.

The employment rate for Dudley Borough is 74.4%, which continues to be the highest of the four Black Country Boroughs and also higher than the regional and national averages. The Government has set an ambitious national employment rate target of 80%.

Figure 5 - Labour Market Position, July 2006 - June 2007

	Total Population	Working Age Population	% Economically Active:	% in Employment	% Unemployed	% Economically Inactive
Dudley	305,300	184,200	78.2	74.4	5.6	21.8
Sandwell	287,600	174,500	71.2	65.8	7.7	28.8
Walsall	254,500	150,700	74.1	68.0	7.4	25.9
W'ton	236,600	144,000	73.1	66.4	8.2	26.9
West Mids			77.2	72.7	5.7	22.8
Great Britain			78.5	74.3	5.2	21.5

Source: NOMIS

Note: All percentages are calculated as a % of the working age population, except unemployed which is based on economically active.

In terms of the Black Country, to reach the current UK average would require 33,169 more Black Country residents into jobs. Since 2003, the UK employment rate has levelled out and assuming this continues, the Black Country must grow by 1.8% each year to 2010 to reach the national average. Last year, it fell by 3.2%. To reach the Government's 80% employment target would require 70,740 additional Black Country residents in employment and an annual growth rate of 3.8%.

(Note: This assessment is based on figures from the APS relating to the period January - December 2006)

Worklessness

The issue of "worklessness" continues to be a critical for the Borough to address and, as such, reducing worklessness is one of the key priorities in the draft Dudley NGLAA.

Currently, 15.8% of the Borough's working age population, (29,130) people, are in receipt of Working Age Client Group (WACG) benefits, namely Job Seekers Allowance, Income Support and Incapacity Benefit/Severe Disablement Allowance.

This is higher than the average figures for the West Midlands at 15.7% and Great Britain at 14.2%.

Figure 6 shows Dudley's position as at May 2007, in respect of the Borough's benefits claimant rate for the Working Age Client Group and the rate for priority wards in the LAA.²

² All above percentages are calculated using the Census 2001 Working Age Population as denominator e.g. Total WACG Benefits / Working Age Population x 100.

WACG data removes double-counting and places claimants into statistical groups based on a hierarchy of benefits e.g. a person claiming more than one benefit will be counted only once and assigned to the highest benefit claimant group.

Figure 6 – Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) Working Age Client Group (WACG) Benefits Data (May 2007)		
Area	Total WACG Benefits Rate	Total WACG Numbers
DUDLEY	15.8%	29,130
Total for LAA Priority Wards	23.3%	14,645

Source: DWP

Figures 7 & 8 show Individual Benefits Data for Dudley and the LAA priority wards and also the figures for Dudley and the 3 other Black Country Local Authorities as at May 2007. More up to date JSA claimant count ward data is available on the following page. However the JSA figures for May 2007 have been used Figures 7 & 8 otherwise the data would not be comparable with the other benefits data, which is only available by ward for May 2007 via DWP.

Figure 7 - DWP Individual Benefits Data (May 2007)						
Area	JSA		IB/SDA		Income Support	
	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number
DUDLEY	3.2%	5,970	7.1%	13,040	5.4%	10,020
Total for LAA Priority Wards	5.1%	3,215	10.2%	6,405	9.2%	5,760

Source: DWP

Figure 8 – Worklessness in the Black Country (May 2007)					
Individual Benefits	Dudley	Sandwell	Walsall	W'ton	Black Country
Job Seekers Allowance (JSA)	5,970	7,970	5,840	7,160	26,940
Incapacity Benefit & Severe Disability Allowance	13,040	16,230	13,080	13,191	55,541
Income Support	10,020	14,630	11,330	12,320	48,300
Total	29,030	38,830	30,250	32,671	130,781

Source: DWP

Note: It is impossible to obtain claimant figures for individual types of benefits from WACG data. This information is provided by DWP's Individual Benefits data. However, claimants may be counted more than once here e.g. a person claiming JSA and Income Support will be counted in both individual categories.

According to the Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) claimant count data issued by the Office for National Statistics for December 2007, the JSA claimant unemployment rate for Dudley stands at 2.9%, a total of 5,358 claimants.

This percentage of Dudley residents claiming Job Seekers Allowance is lower than for each of the other Black Country boroughs, the same as the West Midlands average but higher than the average for Great Britain which is 2.1%.

In terms of long term unemployment, the number of people unemployed for 12 months or more is 20% of the total unemployed, which is the highest percentage in the Black Country and compares to 14.8% nationally.

Figure 9 shows a breakdown of the JSA Claimant Count for Dudley wards as at December 2007. High concentrations of unemployment remain in Brierley Hill, Castle & Priory and Netherton, Woodside and St Andrew's with unemployment rates significantly above the average for the borough for St James's ward (5.0%) and St Thomas's ward (6.6%). The reasons for this may be related to the incidence of low-skills among residents which is also examined in this section.

Figure 9: JSA Claimant Count by Ward – December 2007³

WARD	Male Claimant Rate		Female Claimant Rate		Total Claimant Rate	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Amblecote	98	2.2	39	0.9	137	1.5
Belle Vale	206	5.2	67	1.9	273	3.6
Brierley Hill	285	6.9	90	2.3	375	4.7
Brockmoor & Pensnett	186	4.6	82	2.2	268	3.5
Castle & Priory	248	5.9	96	2.4	344	4.2
Coseley East	199	5.2	81	2.3	280	3.9
Cradley & Foxcote	206	4.7	60	1.5	266	3.2
Gornal	152	3.6	57	1.5	209	2.6
Halesowen North	141	3.8	49	1.4	190	2.7
Halesowen South	79	2.1	28	0.8	107	1.5
Hayley Green & Cradley South	99	2.8	29	0.9	128	1.9
Kingswinford North & Wall Heath	76	1.8	24	0.7	100	1.3
Kingswinford South	69	1.7	18	0.5	87	1.2
Lye & Wollescote	187	4.5	74	1.9	261	3.2
Netherton, Woodside & St. Andrew's	327	7.1	80	2.0	407	4.7
Norton	67	1.8	34	1.0	101	1.4
Pedmore & Stourbridge East	82	2.2	19	0.6	101	1.4
Quarry Bank & Dudley Wood	171	4.4	66	1.9	237	3.2
St James's	292	7.4	82	2.4	374	5.0
St Thomas's	363	9.6	133	3.6	496	6.6
Sedgley	87	2.3	34	1.0	121	1.7
Upper Gornal & Woodsetton	177	4.5	59	1.7	236	3.2
Wollaston & Stourbridge West	120	3.2	43	1.3	163	2.3
Wordsley	68	1.6	29	0.8	97	1.2
Total	3985	4.2	1373	1.6	5358	2.9

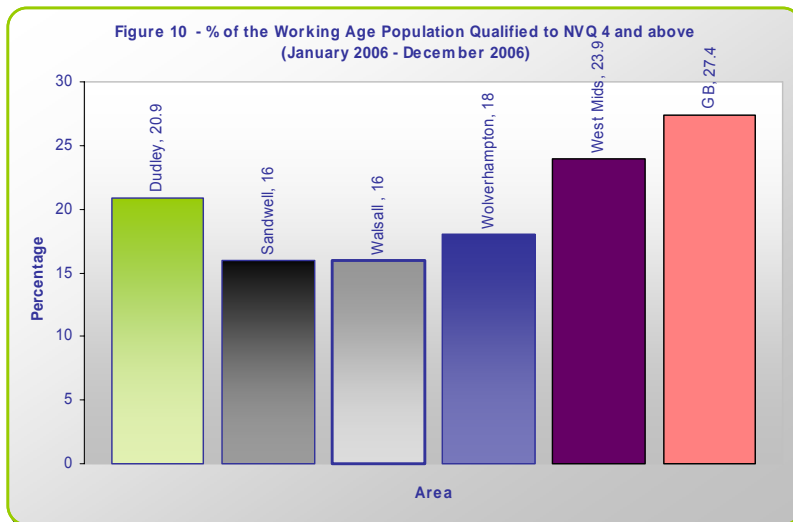
Source: NOMIS

³ ONS Census Division only made 2001 Census data available for those 2005 wards which were different from those in "2001/2003", so the rates in Figure 9 are based on Census data for "2001/2003" and 2005 Wards. As a result the district rate may be slightly different to information available using 2003 Wards.

Skills

According to the APS (January 2006 - December 2006), 18.9% of Dudley's working age population have no qualifications compared to 17.5% in the West Midlands and 13.8% nationally.

112,900 people of working age (61.6%) in Dudley Borough are qualified to NVQ Level 2, which compares to 60.5% for the West Midlands and 63.8 % for Great Britain.



21% of the working age population (38,400 people) have higher-level skills (equivalent to NVQ 4 and above), compared to 24% for the West Midlands and 27.4% nationally.

Source: APS, January 2006 – December 2006

Knowledge workers are defined as people working in professional, managerial, scientific and technical occupations. The percentage of knowledge workers in the employed population is used as a benchmark indicator of the knowledge-intensity of residential communities. From April 2006 to March 2007, the APS shows that the percentage of knowledge workers in Dudley Borough is currently 38.3% compared to 42.3% nationally.

Continued development of high-level skills that meet the needs of local employers is essential in building a competitive, knowledge-driven economy.

A recent Report from the Regional Skills Partnership on 'The Knowledge Economy', (August 2006) stressed that much of the region's potential for higher economic growth is dependent upon the growth of the knowledge economy. The Report defined knowledge intensity as:

The proportion of people that have acquired higher level qualifications (at least NVQ 4 or equivalent) which may include graduates with a degree, higher degree or those who have gained an equivalent work based or vocational qualification.

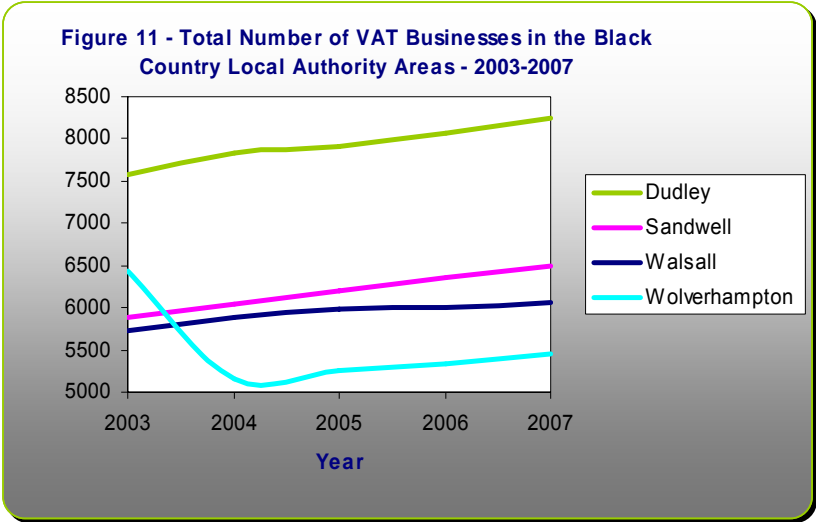
The low skills base and the challenge of developing higher levels skills in order to develop the borough's knowledge economy has been recognised within the current LAA, which includes a range of targets to be delivered through DUE and DACH that

aim to target the long term unemployed with activities that will equip them with the tools to start the learning journey, with recognised NVQ delivery up to level 1. The 3 year target is to support 208 local unemployed adults to achieve a mixture of First Rung, Key Skills and vocational skills. The LAA also targets to increase achievement rates at NVQ Levels 2, 3 and 4, through the Learning & Skills Council & the HE sector. Improved skills and qualifications levels continue to be a key priority for the NGLAA.

Enterprise

The number of businesses registering for VAT is the best official indicator of the number of business start-ups and the level of entrepreneurship and health of the business population. New businesses with a turnover below the mandatory VAT registration threshold (£64,000 during 2007) may not decide to register and would therefore not appear in the figures.

At the start of 2007, Dudley had **8,245 VAT registered businesses**. Over the past five years, the borough has consistently had the highest number of VAT registered businesses compared with other Metropolitan areas in the Black Country.



Source: SBS

As seen from the business formation rates per 10,000 population in Figure 11 Dudley and the Black Country lag behind the regional and national averages. 880 less VAT registered businesses start each year in the Black Country compared to the national average. Assuming England continues to grow at average past rates (-0.4% from 2000-2006) the Black Country must grow by 7.3% each year to 2010 to reach the national average. Last year it fell by 3.1%

Figure 11 - Business Formation Rate	
Area	VAT Registrations per 10,000 population
Dudley	32
Sandwell	27
Walsall	27
Wolverhampton	29
WM	30
England	39

Source: SBS

These low levels of business formation clearly demonstrate the weak enterprise culture in the Borough and the Black Country.

This challenge is recognised in the current LAA with targets that reflect the work carried out by Business Link West Midlands to create new businesses in the borough (not the number of businesses registering for VAT) and also to provide intensive assistance to local businesses to support the growth, development and diversification of local businesses. From April to December 2007, a total of **800 individuals in Dudley Borough have received new business start-up support from Business Link West Midlands, 124 new businesses have been created in Dudley Borough and over 400 businesses have been provided with intensive assistance.**

Dudley has four secondary schools that have been awarded specialist status in Business and Enterprise. This provides an additional resource in developing an enterprise culture in the borough in order to encourage new business start-ups.

Local Businesses

Small firms are a crucial part of the economy. According to the Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR) 2007, of the 29,435 businesses located in the Black Country, 30% are based in Dudley, 26% in Sandwell, 23% in Walsall and 21% in Wolverhampton.

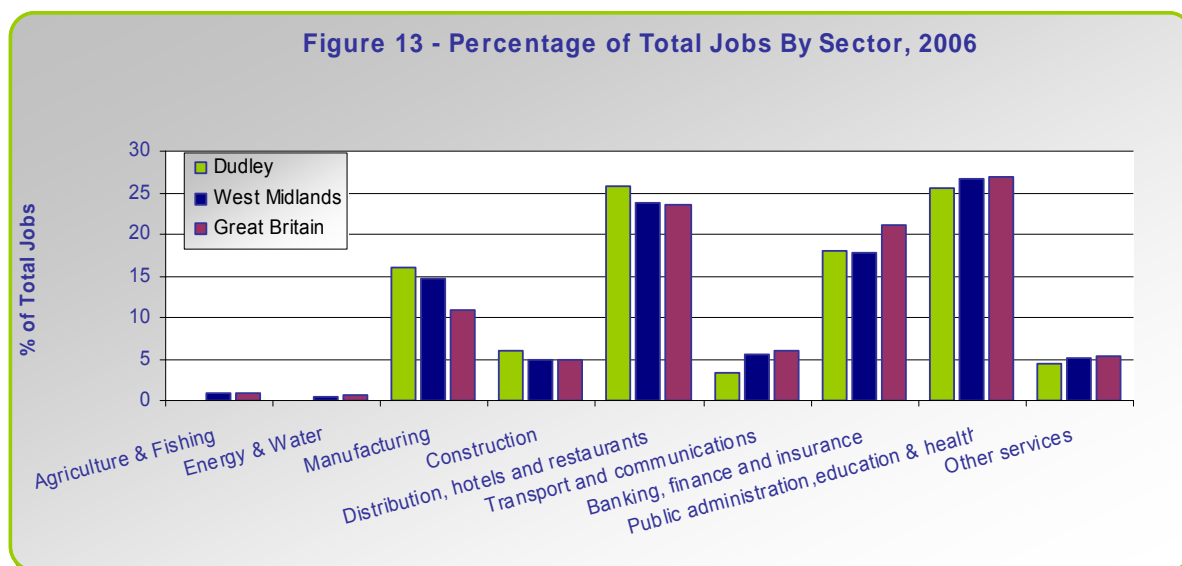
Dudley borough has a preponderance of micro businesses (78.5%) employing between 1 and 9 people. Figure 12 illustrates Dudley's reliance on a high percentage (96%) of small businesses employing 1 to 49 people. Businesses designated as 'large', employing 250+, account for only 0.4% of all businesses.

Figure 12: Businesses in Dudley by Employee Size				
		Employee Size	Number of Businesses	% of Total Businesses
SMALL BUSINESSES	MICRO	0 - 4	5,605	62.2
		5 - 9	1,475	16.4
		10 - 19	930	10.3
		20 - 49	640	7.1
	MEDIUM	50 - 249	320	3.6
LARGE	250 +	40	0.4	
TOTAL			9,010	100

(Source: IDBR, 2007)

As with many other areas the local economic base has undergone dramatic restructuring during the past twenty-five years, which is a key challenge for economic regeneration in the borough. Figure 13 shows the percentage of total jobs by sector. Traditionally, the Dudley economy has been heavily dependent on manufacturing. In 1981, 43.3% of people working in Dudley were employed in this sector (Annual Employment Survey). In 2006, this percentage had fallen to 16% (19,144 jobs), according to the ABI, which is still higher than the figure for Great Britain of 11%.

In contrast the service sector now makes up a greater proportion of jobs in Dudley, having increased from 48.9% of the workforce in 1981 (Annual Employment Survey) to 78% in 2006 (ABI). Pre-eminent within the service sector are distribution (including retail), hotels and restaurants employing 25.7%, public administration, education and health employing 25.6% and banking, finance and insurance employing 18%.



Source: ABI, 2006

Dudley, and the Black Country, currently has a lower percentage of businesses, and employment, based in knowledge intensive based sectors than the regional and national averages. These sectors are the fastest growing, most innovative areas of the local economy and employ the most highly qualified – and highly paid - people.

Typically, knowledge intensive industries (K1 sectors) have more than 40% of the workforce qualified to NVQ level 4 and above. The Black Country Observatory's Knowledge Economy Barometer reports that private sector employment in K1 sectors for the Black Country accounts for only 1.6% of total employment, using data for 2002. In the West Midlands, the private sector has only 22% of its staff qualified to this level. Overall, only 4% of regional employment is in K1 knowledge intensity private sector industries – compared with 14% for England as a whole.

According to recent research by the Centre for Economics and Business Research, the number of people employed in the provision of business services (a key class of knowledge workers) increased by 2m over the past 15 years, and is set to rise by a further 400,000 by 2010. Nationally, the number of people employed in the provision of business services is forecast to increase from 13.8% to 15% - or 4.7m people.

Given Dudley's high reliance on retail and distribution and other 'vulnerable' low-pay, low skill service sectors, it is vital that the borough 'captures', trains and retains an increasing share of the knowledge economy market. However, it can only do this by ensuring that local people have the range of high level skills demanded by knowledge businesses. Also, whilst graduate retention has improved in the region, it remains below the national average – with the majority of graduates entering the public sector.

This will be taken forward through a number of initiatives to attract high-value added companies to Dudley. In particular, a high quality environment and empathetic infrastructure will be developed locally in order to encourage the 'right type' of inward investment. The aim is to create a further 11,000 new jobs in Brierley Hill alone over the next 20 years – many of them in knowledge rich occupations. Proposals for the development of a South Black Country Innovation Campus will also be critical in promoting innovation and attracting knowledge based businesses to the area. At the same time, working with the City Region's 'Science City' approach, to develop closer collaboration between the Region's universities and businesses, to ensure cutting-edge research is exploited for commercial purposes and also working with Black Country Chamber's Business & Professional Network to promote and support the growth and development of firms in the business and professional sectors.

Additional Information

Education and Young People in Dudley

Young people represent the future of Dudley; this is as true from an economic standpoint as it is from a social and community perspective. Therefore, education is at the heart of economic regeneration.

However, given the skills and earnings gaps identified above, it is critically important to improve aspirations, participation and standards in education and training post-16.

Whilst, currently, the outcomes achieved in education are satisfactory and improving, there remains a need to increase the rate of improvement. Levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 are broadly in line with national averages and above the Black Country average. Schools are making increasing use of vocational qualifications and post-16 participation rates and levels of attainment are climbing steadily.

There are four post 16 Colleges in the borough, and the majority of young people benefit from being able to access a wide range of provision. At the same time, improving post-16 participation and training amongst more vulnerable, less confident young people is a major priority.

Strong partnerships have been developed between the Local Authority and Colleges, Connexions, the Learning & Skills Council, employers, training organisations and the voluntary sector, in order to assist young people achieve their full potential.

The Black Country Challenge is aimed at challenging key players to work in new ways to raise attainment and aspiration. The Black Country is one of only three areas nationally to benefit from a 3 year City Challenge programme backed by considerable investment from Central Government. The three challenges for the programme remain:

- To reduce the number of underperforming schools
- To increase the number of outstanding schools
- To reduce the gap in educational outcomes for disadvantaged children

Areas for Priority Action

The following examples of areas for priority action are chosen on the basis of their potential impact on economic performance:

- Improve attainment, particularly 16-19 vocational skills
- Improve attainment from Early Years through to Key Stage 4
- Increase educational participation post 16 and 18
- Engage more effectively with employers to assess their needs and provide skills which meet their future needs
- Expand work based learning and improve its quality
- Reduce the proportion of young people who are not actively engaged in education, employment or training

The following examples are intended to illustrate recent trends in educational attainment:

- Nearly 12% of GCSE entries were for vocational qualifications in 2007 as opposed to 7% in 2005.
- The percentage of pupils achieving 5+ A*-C GCSE grades has risen steadily from 44.3% in 1998 to 56% in 2007.
- The proportion of 16 year olds participating in post-16 education has risen from 62% in 2000 to 86.2% in 2007
- Almost 90% of Dudley school leavers entered post-16 education, training or employment in 2006
- The proportion of 16 year olds who were available for employment, but not actively engaged in education, employment or training in Dudley has fallen from 9.2% in 2003 to 6.2 % in 2007
- There is an increasing emphasis within schools upon functional Maths, English and ICT skills. In Dudley 43.6% of 16 yr olds gain five or more good GCSE passes including English and Maths which is slightly below the national average.
- Improving the quality of work based learning (for example through apprenticeships) is a key priority within the borough's 14-19 improvement plan

Housing in Dudley

The housing market is the context against which all the housing needs of the area are set. According to the Housing Needs and Demand Study undertaken for Dudley MBC in 2005, 88% of households live in accommodation that is suitable for their needs.

70.7% of housing stock in Dudley is owner occupied, which is the highest level of the Black Country Local Authorities (Sandwell (59.6%), Walsall (64%), Wolverhampton (60%)). The private rented sector accounts for only 4% of the housing stock in the Borough, which is less than half of the national average levels. The Borough's social housing (local authority and housing association stock) at 21.8% is above the national average of 19.3% but lower than all of the other Black Country Local Authorities ranging from 27.3% in Walsall up to 30.4% in Sandwell.

The affordability of housing within the Borough is a concern, particularly as 65% of the Borough's households earn less than the national average household income of £27,500 per annum. Between 2000 and 2005 property prices have risen by 89%. The average property purchase price within Dudley during 2005 (including all property types) was £137,008. This average is higher than Wolverhampton at £123,788 and Sandwell at £117,394. 13,896 households within Dudley have indicated that they will be moving within the next 3 years.

The objective of housing policy at both national and local levels is to meet the housing requirements of the whole community by providing land for a sufficient quantity of new homes to be built, and by ensuring greater choice of housing, including affordable housing. The key characteristics that need to be taken into account in order to meet local housing needs are:

- The increase in the number of elderly households
- The increase the formation of smaller households and the need for appropriate housing to meet their needs
- The need to balance the local housing market by encouraging the growth of the private rented sector and providing a more balance property profile within the Borough – i.e. more terraced and starter type homes need to be built

The net requirement for the new housing in Dudley between 1991-2011 is 11,300 dwellings, 565 a year. Net completions from 1991 to 2006 have averaged out at 532 per year, leaving on outstanding requirement for 3,314 net completions up to 2011, an average of 663 dwellings per year. The UDP identifies the need for 1440 units of affordable housing by 2011, using a target of 30% of total dwellings as affordable on suitable housing sites.

In seeking to achieve sustainable development, Dudley aims to build over 90% of its new housing on previously developed land. In 2005/06, 99.82% of completions (gross) were built on previously developed land. Housing density is a measure of how efficiently land is used. The UDP seeks minimum densities of 30 - 50 dwellings per hectare for new residential developments and higher in areas with good public transport access. However, the Council also recognises that the character in some parts of the Borough is formed by lower density development. In 2005/06, 85% of dwellings completed were built at a density of 30 dwellings per hectare.

The Borough Housing Strategy was published in 2007. The implementation of Dudley's Economic Strategy will contribute to meeting the objectives of this strategy by creating opportunities to stimulate inward investment to the Borough and create higher value added employment opportunities with increased earnings potential for local residents. Increased income levels will widen peoples' housing choices and options. A key theme of the strategy is also to develop closer working arrangements with planners and economic regeneration agencies in order to work towards meeting the Borough's housing needs.

There is a recognition that there is a need for a greater diversity of housing types and quality types within the Borough. This means meeting the needs of those seeking affordable social housing, whilst also building housing that will attract and retain people with higher level skills and earnings in order to change the socio-economic mix of residents in the Borough.

5.0 Key Economic Issues

The Global Economy in 2008/09: another year of growth?

Expectations for 2008

The global economy grew by an unprecedented 4.9% in 2007/08. The consensus amongst economic forecasters is that growth will continue into 2008/09, but at a sharply lower, more moderate rate, and with reduced momentum. The IMF expects growth to 'decelerate' to 4.1% in 2008. The reasons for the expected slowdown are to be found in the widely reported 'credit' crunch, arising out of the sub-prime mortgage crisis in the United States, has severely affected liquidity and confidence within the banking system, and is expected to have a dampening effect on confidence and economic prospects throughout the year ahead.

The Eastern Engine of Global Growth

The continued expansion in global economic activity comes with more than the usual note of caution, since the overall trends disguise sharp differences in expectations among the major economic blocks. That the positive momentum is forecast to carry through to 2008 is itself largely due to the seismic shift that has taken place in global economic power. China, India and Russia accounted for half of total global growth in 2007/08. (IMF – 'World Economic Outlook'). Whilst growth across the globe is expected to be uneven, the fast-developing economies in the far-East will again set the pace. The highest rates of growth are expected in China, and India, at around 10%, according to the IMF... High rates of growth are also expected in other 'emerging' economies, such as Brazil and Russia. Even Africa, for so long a source of economic woe, is expected to experience growth of 4.5% in 2008/09 – though of course this will come mainly from countries that have stable political and economic systems. These growth forecasts have themselves been hastily revised in recent months, to reflect expected slowdowns in the major Eastern economies, as the reverberations of the 'credit crunch' spread from the U.S. and begin to impact across a – still resilient - world economy.

The Developed Economies

The Growth rates in Western nations are expected to be much lower. Growth in the United States is particularly problematical. Many commentators expect the sub-prime crisis, and its severe disruption to the housing market, to have a severe impact on consumer demand and confidence. As a consequence, little if any growth is expected, certainly in the first half of 2008, and this lack of economic momentum will reduce prospects among major trading partners, such as the United Kingdom. The IMF, however, continues to anticipate (albeit weak) growth in the US, of around 0.8% in 2008. As a consequence of these difficulties, growth in the UK is therefore expected to fall to around 2%. In his Budget Speech (12 March) the Chancellor revised the forecast for UK growth (downwards) to between 1.75% and 2.25%. However, the average of independent forecasts (published by the Treasury) forecasts growth of 1.7% for 2008/09. A similar slowdown, and reduced rates of economic growth, are expected in France and Germany. Overall growth in the (Euro)

economies will, according to the IMF, ease from 2.6% in 2007 to 1.6% in 2008, but with central and Eastern Europe continuing to grow at 4.6%. Again, these forecasts reveal the sharp disparities in prospects between established economies and the newly emerging countries of Eastern Europe.

Whilst the main engine of global growth is expected to be the phenomenal expansion of the developing far-Eastern economies of China and India, particularly, the deteriorating global environment, in an integrated world economic system, is forecast to moderate growth prospects for established and newly emerging economies alike.

The Risks to Growth

Whilst the fundamentals appear to point to growth, albeit at a more modest level, forecasts for the year ahead contain more than the usual set of caveats. Almost without exception, economic forecasters' view is that all of the risk is on the downside. There are a number of reasons for this. Geo-political risk is ever-present, though difficult to quantify. There is also a significant risk that the unprecedented rates of growth seen in China and elsewhere will increasingly encounter capacity constraints that will feed into higher prices and inflation. Further, global demand for oil has resulted in a sharp rise in the price of oil to over \$100 a barrel: if this price level continues into 2008/09, it will inevitably act as a dampener on growth. While it is the price of oil that has hit the headlines, the cost of many other raw materials – for example steel, copper, timber, and many food products – have also risen sharply in response to increased global demand. Finally, the full effects of the 'credit crunch' resulting from the 'sub-prime' mortgage problems in the United States have yet to run their course. The full impact of this financial crisis on the wider world economy is the subject of intense debate amongst economists, and its extent will only become clear as the year unfolds.

The global outlook, therefore, is for a further period of sound growth in output, underpinned by strong global trends, but with significant variations resulting from the difficulties faced mainly by the 'advanced' economies of the United States and Western Europe.

The Outlook for the UK Economy in 2008/09

A More Cautious Outlook for 2008

Growth in the UK economy in 2007/08 marginally exceeded expectations, at 3.1%. Forecasts for the year ahead, however, have been reduced sharply, with the latest Treasury forecast of growth of between 1.75% and 2.25%. This forecast is in line with most independent forecasts, for example from the IMF and OECD, even if these focus on the lower end of expectations – i.e. around 2%. The average of independent forecasts, published by the Treasury (February 2008), is for growth of only 1.7% for 2008/09. Since forecasts for growth have been consistently reduced over the last six months, based on evidence of deteriorating prospects, forecasts for the coming year need to be treated with additional caution.

In general terms, as an advanced economy and a major trading nation, the UK should continue to benefit from the major trends of global integration, and global expansion. There are other favourable factors, including recent immigration from Eastern Europe (which has eased wage pressures and increased competitiveness), a relatively stable, flexible labour market, an employment rate at close to record levels, and sound regulatory policies. However, 'globalisation' is a double-edged sword, and the UK (particularly as a major international banking and finance sector) cannot be immune from the effects of the forecast international slow-down.

Challenges ahead

Despite reasonably strong fundamentals, the UK economy faces a number of difficult issues, some domestic, others the result of external influences. Business investment and consumer spending are expected to be squeezed by continuing high interest rates. These reached a high of 5.75% in the summer of 2007. Partly as a result of the credit crunch referred to above, the Bank of England Monetary Policy Committee reduced rates in December 2007 by ¼%, to 5.5%, and by a further ¼% in February 2008, to 5.25%. Whilst rates are not expected to rise further, inflationary pressures mean that there is some uncertainty as to how far, and how fast, these reductions might go. The Consumer Price Index rose to 2.2% (January 2008), above the 2.0% rate considered acceptable by the Treasury. Consumers will therefore face an unwelcome combination of continued high mortgage costs, high debt-servicing costs, higher utility (particularly energy) costs, from the sharply increased cost of oil, without correspondingly large increases in incomes to help offset these. In addition, an unwelcome increase in food prices, due to global demand and poor weather, will add to these pressures. Expectations for lower interest rates provide one of the few glimmers of hope on the immediate horizon. A weakening of consumer confidence is thus likely, feeding through (as spending declines) to reduced business confidence and activity.

An additional difficulty concerns the sub-prime mortgage crisis that began in the United States, but whose repercussions have been felt in the UK, particularly in the banking sector. Whilst it is still too early to assess the full impact of these problems, it is already clear that the 'credit crunch' has resulted in tighter credit control by lenders, and increased borrowing costs for both consumers and business. These factors are expected to weigh most heavily on the business and financial services sectors of the economy – the most highly performing sectors over recent years.

Most commentators consider it likely that the combination of lower disposable incomes, high real interest rates, and tighter credit will lead to a slight fall in house prices in 2008 – further reducing consumer confidence.

Continuing structural factors

As the OECD's Economic Survey of the United Kingdom points out, however, the long-term competitiveness issues facing the economy continue to be its continuing 'productivity gap' with other major economies (resulting in lower-trend growth), raising educational achievement across the population (to meet the challenges of an increasingly technical and knowledge based global economy), and raising the skill

levels of the workforce (including those of the least qualified/un-skilled). Despite recent improvements, these remain the core challenges that need to be addressed in order to ensure the future competitiveness and prosperity of the UK economy and its people.

The West Midlands Perspective

The prospects for the West Midlands economy appear to be reasonable, provided that the growth forecasts reported above come through, and given the relative strength of an economy that has undergone significant, and painful, restructuring over recent times.

However, any rise in prospects, and prosperity, starts from a relatively low base. Economic activity is unevenly distributed across the country; London and the South East account for over a third of total UK output, with the West Midlands accounting for 6%. Whilst variations in population size are an obvious reason for the discrepancy, there are nevertheless marked differences in GVA between the regions: for example, Gross Value Added (GVA) per head in London and the South East is currently £23,600 per year, while the figure for the West Midlands is £15,235. Over the last decade, the West Midlands GVA has grown by 64% - well below the English average of 70%, and London's 75%.

Recent diversification into service sector industries, the 'knowledge economy', creative industries sectors and high value niche consumer products industries has increased the resilience of the region to external economic shocks, and should help ensure that the West Midlands is able to take advantage of a sustained increase in economic prospects.

The continued relative reliance on manufacturing (18% of the Regional economy, by employment), and the difficulties facing the retail sector, will act as a drag on performance. Nevertheless, the West Midlands faces additional challenges that impede its economic renaissance, including its relatively low skills (and qualifications) base, a poor record of enterprise and business start-ups, and high - and increasing - levels of economic exclusion, or 'worklessness'. For example, the proportion of the Region's workforce qualified to NVQ level 4 or above is 23.9% (January-December 2006), compared to the English average of 27.4%. This needs to be contrasted with an increasingly globalised and intensely competitive global economy, where educational standards are rising inexorably, but where labour costs (particularly in the Far East, including China and India, South America and Eastern Europe) are extremely competitive. Whilst the Region's skills base is rising, the gap between the West Midlands and the rest of the UK (and overseas competitors) is not closing.

Despite a benign underpinning economic background, and therefore gradually rising per capita incomes, the West Midlands economy will continue to under-perform whilst these structural challenges remain.

These challenges continue to be exacerbated by an inadequate public transport system, and high levels of traffic congestion, that have a severe impact on business efficiency.

6.0 Strategic Action Plan

The following Action Plan takes each of the five Strategic Aims and provides a series of objectives with key actions, milestones and timescales that will guide the implementation and management of the economic strategy.

Progress against the five Strategic Aims will be reviewed on a regular basis by the Economic Development and Regeneration Partnership.

Strategic Aim 1: To optimise the opportunities for local people - including the most vulnerable people and those from deprived areas - to develop and improve their skills and obtain local jobs

The Economic Development and Enterprise Block of the Dudley Local Area Agreement for 2007-2010 identifies two key outcomes - 1. To increase employment levels and 2. To increase skills levels and sets performance targets for the next 3 years to deliver these outcomes. The following action plan shows in practical terms what actions will be undertaken to achieve this strategic aim and the outcomes of the LAA. In particular, the LAA and the economic strategy place emphasis on initiatives that will assist residents who experience disadvantage to receive high quality training and to equip them with the appropriate skills that meet the needs of local employers. It also seeks to directly link those residents to employment opportunities both in existing companies and new inward investing businesses in order to reduce unemployment in the Borough.

The Strategy recognises the importance of linkages with Future Skills Dudley, local colleges and the Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services to deliver this strategic aim as well as the contributions from the Directorate of Children's Services, schools, colleges, higher education institutions and other partner agencies in raising young people's aspirations and preparing for the workforce of the future.

Objective 1a – The reduction of worklessness levels within Dudley Borough, with a focus on disadvantaged wards / groups

Actions	Targets/Outputs	Timescales	Additional Key Milestones & Timescales, where applicable	Responsibility	Resources
<p>The successful delivery of the Local Area Agreement (LAA) Economic Development & Enterprise Block Stretch Targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local Jobs for Local People - Employability Skills & Training for local People 	<p>Achieve the following outputs for beneficiaries from defined priority groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 300 local people placed into sustained employment (more than 13 weeks). 60 of these people will enter permitted employment (can receive benefits for a period whilst in employment) <p>This activity will also include the delivery of specialised programmes to support those with learning disabilities and mental health problems into permitted and sustained employment</p>	2007-2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The output / target is to deliver activities that contribute towards the narrowing of the gap between the recognised disadvantaged wards and 4 priority groups and the borough as a whole. The Priority Wards are: Castle & Priory, St James', St Thomas', Brockmoor & Pensnett, Brierley Hill, Netherton, Woodside & St Andrews', Lye & Wollescote and Coseley East. <p>Priority Groups are: Lone Parents, adults aged 50-64, adults aged 18-64 from Black & Minority Ethnic groups and benefit claimants aged 18-64 who have</p>	<p>Economic Development & Regeneration Partnership (EDRP)</p> <p>Health & Work Group (H&WG)</p> <p>Health & Wellbeing Partnership (H&WBP)</p> <p>Dudley MBC Dudley Community Partnership</p>	<p>DMBC, DCP, LAA, Local FE Colleges, BCLSC</p>

Objective 1a – The reduction of worklessness levels within Dudley Borough, with a focus on disadvantaged wards / groups

Actions	Targets/Outputs	Timescales	Additional Key Milestones & Timescales, where applicable	Responsibility	Resources
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 208 local people achieving qualifications, ranging from entry level Skills for Life through to NVQ Level 1. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> been unemployed for 18 months or more, people aged 18-64 who suffer from learning disabilities, mental ill health, special needs or hold health/disability barriers to work. 	(DCP).	
<p>Delivery of the City Strategy Pathfinder - co-ordination of activity to maximise opportunities for training, support and employment for local people in the five target wards - Castle and Priory, Netherton and Woodside, St Thomas', Brierley Hill, St James'.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To reduce the worklessness levels within the 5 most disadvantaged wards by 50%. For 2008/09 – a total of 281 people into work, allocated by ward: Brierley Hill - 48 Castle & Priory - 63 Netherton, Woodside & St Andrews - 47 St James's - 55 St Thomas's - 68 	By 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly meetings of newly established ward based City Strategy Local Neighbourhood Groups to guide and co-ordinate activity 	DMBC - Economic Regeneration Division EDRP	DAF, DMBC (Infrastructure through existing resources)
<p>Delivery of the Pathways to Work programme – key measures/interventions to address the health barriers to employment of Incapacity Benefit claimants, and support these clients into work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To achieve 250 starts per month (around 9,000 people over the project lifetime), with 60% of starts (around 5,400 people) achieving sustained employment (more than 26 weeks) in Dudley Borough 	2008 - 2010		Seetec (Pathways to Work provider)	Jobcentre Plus

Objective 1a – The reduction of worklessness levels within Dudley Borough, with a focus on disadvantaged wards / groups

Actions	Targets/Outputs	Timescales	Additional Key Milestones & Timescales, where applicable	Responsibility	Resources
<p>The delivery of effective training & personal support services, which equip beneficiaries with the ability to compete in the labour market through Future Skills Dudley, the Adult and Community Learning Teams in DACH and their variety of partners.</p> <p>Cross Reference with Objective 1b.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FSD to recruit and support approximately 480 clients per annum onto training and personal support programmes • Adult & Community Learning Team to recruit and support around 700 clients each year 	<p>April 2008 - March 2009</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuation of 2007/08 activity to be supported through the Next Generation Local Area Agreement (LAA), DAF and City Strategy Initiatives, with links that bring added value to mainstream initiatives held by the delivery partners. 	<p>DMBC – FSD, DACHS - Adult & Community Learning Team</p>	<p>AWM, DWP/ JcP/ ESF, DMBC, BCLSC, LAA, DAF, Stourbridge College Franchise, Nextsteps</p>

Objective 1a – The reduction of worklessness levels within Dudley Borough, with a focus on disadvantaged wards / groups

Actions	Targets/Outputs	Timescales	Additional Key Milestones & Timescales, where applicable	Responsibility	Resources
The delivery of effective Local Jobs for Local People Brokerage / Job Search programmes that link local residents with employment opportunities through Future Skills Dudley, the Adult & Community Learning Teams with Libraries, Archives and Adult Learning within DACH and their variety of partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FSD to place approximately 144 clients into work as a result of support. DACH to recruit and support around 370 clients each year and place at least 109 clients into work as a result of support. 	April 2008 - March 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuation of 2007/08 activity to be supported through the Next Generation Local Area Agreement (LAA), DAF and City Strategy Initiatives, with links that bring added value to mainstream initiatives held by the delivery partners. 	DMBC - FSD, DACHS - Adult & Community Learning Team	AWM, DWP/ JcP / ESF, DMBC, BCLSC, LAA, DAF
To design and deliver new responsive programmes and initiatives that aim to support local unemployed people into work and reflect employer needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During 2008/09 the development of a range of programmes that link individual client requirements to opportunity 	April 2008 - March 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuation of 2007/08 activity to be supported through the Next Generation Local Area Agreement (LAA), DAF and City Strategy Initiatives, with links that bring added value to mainstream initiatives held by the delivery partners. 	DMBC - FSD	DWP/ JcP / ESF, DMBC, BCLSC, LAA, DAF

Objective 1b – Provide Appropriate Training, Advice / Support to equip the workforce of the borough with the Skills required by the Economy

Actions	Targets/Outputs	Timescales	Additional Key Milestones & Timescales, where applicable	Responsibility	Resources						
The delivery of effective Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) services for local people that underpin the chances of success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult & Community Learning Team to deliver 290 formal IAG targets in 12 month period Adult & Community Learning Team to deliver 150 informal IAG interviews in targeted wards and communities FSD to deliver approximately 180 discrete IAG sessions per annum 	April 2008 - March 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-accreditation of local Matrix standards for key providers and the delivery of services - throughout 2007/08. 	DMBC - FSD and DACHS - Adult and Community Learning Team	AWM/ Regeneration Zone, ESF, Jobcentre Plus, DMBC, NRF, BCLSC, LAA, Liveability Fund						
The delivery of key focussed and tailored initiatives that will support local people into specific career choices, including Construction/Land Based and Retail sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction/Land Based targets – to support approximately 120 people per annum 	April 2008- March 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of focal point initiatives that link local people to inward investment opportunities including end user employment opportunities 	DMBC - FSD	AWM, DWP/ JcP/ ESF, DMBC, BCLSC, LAA, DAF, Stourbridge College Franchise						
Connexions to continue to support young people aged 16-19 to enter Employment, Education or Training through various outreach locations, Connexions Centres, home visits, Connexions Bus, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued reduction of the NEET target - the percentage of 16-18 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET) <p><u>LAA targets – Without Stretch</u></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>2008</td> <td>647 people</td> <td>5.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2009</td> <td>609 people</td> <td>4.9%</td> </tr> </table>	2008	647 people	5.2%	2009	609 people	4.9%	2007 - 2010		Connexions/ Partners	Connexions
2008	647 people	5.2%									
2009	609 people	4.9%									

Objective 1b – Provide Appropriate Training, Advice / Support to equip the workforce of the borough with the Skills required by the Economy

Actions	Targets/Outputs	Timescales	Additional Key Milestones & Timescales, where applicable	Responsibility	Resources
	2010 571 people 4.6% <u>LAA Targets – With Stretch</u> 2008 609 people 4.9% 2009 571 people 4.6% 2010 533 people 4.3%				
Respond to regional and sector needs in relation to Skills for Life (Literacy & Numeracy) capabilities of the population and the workforce of the Borough, achieved through the Learning and Skills Council, Jobcentre Plus and other funding bodies' sponsorship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieve 19+ Skills for Life targets within the current LAA for Dudley Borough – targets for 2008/09 and 2009/10 to be confirmed 	2007-2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The delivery of the Jobcentre Plus skills for life provision within the Future Skills Dudley (FSD) Prime Jobcentre Plus Contract The delivery by FSD of a variety of LSC Employability / Key Skills Programmes. The continued delivery by the FE sector through local colleges of the Skills for Life programmes in college and community settings. The continued delivery of Skills for Life programmes through DACHS programmes 	Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services (DACHS) Libraries Archives and Adult Learning Teams FSD (DUE) & its Partners.	BCLSC DMBC FE Sector Local Providers
Respond to regional and sector needs in relation to NVQ awards delivered through the Learning and Skills Council, Jobcentre Plus and other funding bodies sponsorship of local programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NVQ achievement levels for 19+ residents at Level 2, 3 and 4 within the current LAA for Dudley Borough - targets for 2008/09 and 2009/10 to be confirmed 	2007-2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The delivery of the Jobcentre Plus provision within the Future Skills Dudley (FSD) Prime Contract The continued delivery by the FE sector through local colleges of the NVQ programmes in college and community settings. The continued delivery of NVQ programmes through DACHS programmes. 	Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services (DACHS) Libraries Archives and Adult Learning Teams FSD (DUE) & its Partners.	BCLSC DMBC FE Sector Local Providers

Objective 1b – Provide Appropriate Training, Advice / Support to equip the workforce of the borough with the Skills required by the Economy

Actions	Targets/Outputs	Timescales	Additional Key Milestones & Timescales, where applicable	Responsibility	Resources
Deliver employment training programme for the health and social care sector in partnership with Black Country Partnership for Care (BCPC), Black Country LSC, Sandwell, Walsall & Wolverhampton Local Authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 35 Individual Learners 	July 2008		Directorate of Children's Services Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services/HR NVQ Assessment Centre	Learn Direct BCLSC Independent Care Sector-BCPC.
Deliver C4K3 (Caring for Kids 3) Partnership BCPC, Black Country LSC and other Local Authority Children's Services Directorates in the Black Country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 48 Learners • 80% Achievement Rate 	By March 2009		Directorate of Children's Services, HR NVQ Assessment Centre, DACH	BCLSC Independent Care Sector - BCPC

Objective 1c – The promotion of Social Inclusion through responsive provision & the removal of barriers

Actions	Targets/Outputs	Timescales	Additional Key Milestones & Timescales, where applicable	Responsibility	Resources
Promote social inclusion through the following Prince's Trust initiatives to help support disadvantaged 14-30 year olds across the Black Country: The Prince's Trust XL programme which aims to assist those students who are at risk from exclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain 11 XL clubs within 10 secondary schools in the Black Country 	April 2008 - March 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to develop funding sources and sponsorship for Prince's Trust activities - Ongoing 	Prince's Trust	Prince's Trust Tarmac DMBC - Economic Regeneration Division
The Prince's Trust Team Programme aimed at enhancing personal development through teamwork in the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete 12 Teams with an average of 12 unemployed young people per team 60% of all Team completers to enter full time education, training or employment 	April 2008 - March 2009		Prince's Trust, City of Wolverhampton College	Prince's Trust, City of Wolverhampton College, BCLSC
Development Awards of between £50 - £500 enable young people aged 16-25 to access opportunities in education, training and employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make 25 awards to young people in core client groups of the unemployed, educational underachievers, ex-offenders in or leaving care 	April 2008 - March 2009		Prince's Trust	Prince's Trust, James Beattie Charitable Trust

Objective 1c – The promotion of Social Inclusion through responsive provision & the removal of barriers

Actions	Targets/Outputs	Timescales	Additional Key Milestones & Timescales, where applicable	Responsibility	Resources
Community Cash Awards to provide grant funding to groups of young people aged 14 -25 to develop community based projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approve 6 Big Boost Awards:- 14 -16 year olds - between £250 - £1000 16 -25 year olds - between £500 - £5000 	April 2008 - March 2009	Continue to develop funding sources and sponsorship for Prince's Trust activities - Ongoing	Prince's Trust	Prince's Trust, Royal Bank of Scotland
Promote social inclusion through Dudley MBC's Youth & Community Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the accreditation opportunities available to young people and achieve local Youth Service targets, as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15% of 13-19 year old population to participate in the service 20% of the 15% to gain a learning outcome 10% of the 15% to gain an accredited outcome 	April 2008 - March 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to support the work of the Youth & Community Team through partnership working - ongoing Support the development of increased training opportunities and recruit voluntary staff to participate, enhancing chances to attain paid work within the service - ongoing. Implementation of the Development Framework 	Directorate of Children's Services - Youth & Community Team, Connexions	DMBC - Directorate of Children's Services

Objective 1c – The promotion of Social Inclusion through responsive provision & the removal of barriers

Actions	Targets/Outputs	Timescales	Additional Key Milestones & Timescales, where applicable	Responsibility	Resources
<p>Deployment of Connexions Personal Advisers (PAs) in various settings (e.g. schools, colleges, Teenage Pregnancy Unit, Youth Offending Service, etc) to support young people universally and those who are vulnerable who need support through IAG in order to raise aspirations and achieve their full potential.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connexions, alongside partners, to increase the number of young people entering Education, Employment and Training (Participation Rate). <p><u>Participation Target</u> Nov 08 - 88.4% Nov 09 - 89.0% Nov 10 - 89.6%</p>	<p>2008-2010</p>		<p>Connexions Schools Colleges Directorate of Children's Services BCLSC</p>	<p>Connexions</p>
<p>To create a Family Learning Network for Dudley Metropolitan Borough which will ensure co-ordination of provision, effective communication between providers and practitioners and a cohesive structure for the implementation of the strategy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To engage 250 new learners from priority target groups in First Rung learning and support programmes leading to further training and jobs To engage 100 new learners from priority target groups in FLLN learning and support programmes leading to further training and jobs Provision of 50 learning programmes in local communities, with progression to NVQ level 2 	<p>April 2008 - March 2009</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to develop Family Learning provision with target priority groups from April 2008 - March 2009 	<p>Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services/ Libraries Archives and Adult Learning Team</p>	<p>BCLSC College Partnership</p>

Objective 1c – The promotion of Social Inclusion through responsive provision & the removal of barriers

Actions	Targets/Outputs	Timescales	Additional Key Milestones & Timescales, where applicable	Responsibility	Resources
Identify gaps and support the development of 4 Phase 3 Children's Centres to ensure all communities within the borough can access children's centre services; to add to the 17 already developed in Phase 1 (6 during 2004-06) & Phase 2 (11 during 2006- 08)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 Phase 3 Children's Centres sites identified ensuring all communities can access children's centre core services depending upon need or signposting to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ integrated care & early education ○ support from Job Centre Plus ○ adult learning, job training and employment opportunities ○ provision of Family support services 	By March 2010		Early Years Foundation Stage, Childcare & Extended Services Unit (EYFSCESU) Children's Service Directorate, Jobcentre Plus, Dudley PCT, Maintained sector	DCSF Directorate of Children's Services, Jobcentre Plus, Dudley PCT, Private, Voluntary and Independent sector childcare providers, Maintained sector
Provide ongoing support and challenge to 17 Phase 1 and Phase 2 children's centres and ensure all communities are able to access core services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Children's centres continue to deliver good quality services and are able to respond to local need 	March 2008 - 2011			

Objective 1c – The promotion of Social Inclusion through responsive provision & the removal of barriers

Actions	Targets/Outputs	Timescales	Additional Key Milestones & Timescales, where applicable	Responsibility	Resources
Support the development of Extended Service on Schools site to ensure that all schools are extended by 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All schools are offering extended services by 2010; including as necessary; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Integrated care & early education ○ Access to a varied menu of activities (secondary) ○ Quick and easy access to specialist services and parental support ○ Family & adult learning 	By March 2010			
To undertake the initial Childcare Sufficiency Assessment to ensure that sufficient good quality affordable childcare and early years education places are available to meet the requirements of parents in the borough who require childcare in order to enable them: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To take up, or remain in work • To undertake education or training, which could reasonably be expected to assist them in obtaining work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with all stakeholders and partners and undertake and complete the first borough childcare sufficiency assessment by March 2008 • To undertake an annual stock take of childcare provision • To undertake a three yearly childcare sufficiency assessment 	March 2008 - 2011 Jan 2009 Jan 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Childcare Sufficiency Assessment complete - Jan 2008 • Consultation period Feb - March 2008 • Publication of Childcare Sufficiency Assessment - March 2008 	DMBC - EYFSCESU, Children's Services Directorate	DMBC - DCSF, Children's Services Directorate

Objective 1c – The promotion of Social Inclusion through responsive provision & the removal of barriers

Actions	Targets/Outputs	Timescales	Additional Key Milestones & Timescales, where applicable	Responsibility	Resources
<p>To ensure that Dudley take into account of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childcare places for which the childcare element of the working tax credit is payable • Free nursery places for 3 & 4yr olds • The needs of disabled children • Services for children in need • Children from minority ethnic groups and • Childcare outside the local authority area 					
<p>To develop with partners an appropriate Children's workforce strategy document for the 2008 – 2011 plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the Children's Workforce Strategy is completed and available to support the 2008 – 2011 plan 	<p>March 2008 - 2011</p>	<p>Completed strategy document - March 2008</p>	<p>DMBC - EYFSCESU Children's Services Directorate</p>	<p>DMBC - DCSF Children's Services Directorate</p>
<p>Promote access to and manage the Graduate Leader Fund to ensure that all full daycare setting has a Graduate Leader in post by 2015</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work on an increase in trajectory to ensuring having a Graduate Leader in every full daycare setting by 2015 	<p>March 2008 - 2011</p>			

5.2 Strategic Aim 2: To support and develop new and existing businesses and to attract inward investment to the Borough

The availability of suitable sites and premises of the right quality and in the right place are fundamentally important in stimulating inward investment and promoting economic regeneration. Dudley MBC has been actively involved in the Black Country Study which identifies in its preferred spatial strategy key employment land investment corridors for the provision of high quality, accessible employment land required for knowledge-led businesses which will be linked to the strategic centres, be accessible by public transport and have reliable fast links to the national highway network.

This aim also focuses on the provision of business advice and support to existing businesses and new business start-ups which play a crucial role in the development of the local economy.

Objective 2a - To maintain a balanced supply of industrial land and premises in Dudley Borough					
Actions	Targets/Outputs	Timescales	Additional Key Milestones & Timescales, where applicable	Responsibility	Resources
Undertake review of brownfield land within Dudley Borough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production of Black Country Brownfield Land Action Plan (BLAP) or Brownfield Land Strategy 	July 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree process within the Black Country Engage with English Partnerships to secure funding and/or support 	BCC, Black Country Local Authorities	DMBC, English Partnerships
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish Brownfield and Contaminated Land Working Group Action Plan 	March 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications Plan Skills Audit Data capture and information management systems SPD for brownfield land Eyesore sites policy Dudley Brownfield Land Action Plan Contaminated Land Strategy Review 	DMBC - Corporate Brownfield & Contaminated Land Group	DMBC
Provide management & support of Lye Business Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustain 90% occupancy rate of Lye Business Centre 	Ongoing		DMBC - Economic Regeneration Division	DMBC

Objective 2a - To maintain a balanced supply of industrial land and premises in Dudley Borough

Actions	Targets/Outputs	Timescales	Additional Key Milestones & Timescales, where applicable	Responsibility	Resources
Maintain a balanced supply of industrial land and premises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing, and in accordance with Dudley Unitary Development Plan Policies 	Ongoing		DMBC - Planning Policy and Development Control Teams	DMBC

2b - To support new and existing businesses through delivery of a range of business support programmes and initiatives

Actions	Targets/Outputs	Timescales	Additional Key Milestones & Timescales, where applicable	Responsibility	Resources
Continue to develop business parks strategies with an overall aim to reduce business related crime and improve the physical environment of local business areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist 255 businesses Create 287 new jobs Safeguard 10 jobs Improve 6.85 hectares of brownfield land Achieve £10.5m new sales Safeguard £10.5m sales Create 29 new businesses Assist 16 businesses with environmental improvements Assist 5 businesses to improve 	December 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement Business Park improvement strategies - December 2008 Establish Committees for each of the Business Parks - December 2008 	DMBC - Economic Regeneration Division	AWM, ERDF/GOWM, Business Link, Black Country Chamber of Commerce, DMBC, Sandwell MBC, Private Sector

Objective 2b - To support new and existing businesses through delivery of a range of business support programmes and initiatives

Actions	Targets/Outputs	Timescales	Additional Key Milestones & Timescales, where applicable	Responsibility	Resources
Continue to provide support and assistance to new businesses through the Prince's Trust Business Programme to help young people aged 18-30 to start their own businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up 130 new businesses across the Black Country, from ERDF/ESF 'core' and 'transitional' areas': (10% of starts from ethnic minority groups, 20% starts of women-owned businesses, 10% of starts from ex-offenders, 10% of starts from disabled residents) • Achieve survival rate targets of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 85% of businesses trading after 12 months - 65% of businesses trading after 24 months - 55% of businesses trading after 36 months 	April 2008 - March 2009		The Prince's Trust, DMBC - Economic Regeneration Division	The Prince's Trust, ERDF, West Midlands Loan Fund
Provide advice and support for new business start-ups through the Council's Business Support Team, including the third sector			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge and give credence to the conclusions of the Business Support Simplification exercise • Work with Black Country Housing Group to actively promote and sustain the development of social enterprises in the Borough - Ongoing • Continue involvement with the Regional Organisation for Social Enterprise Support (ROSES) and 	DMBC - Economic Regeneration Division, Black Country Housing Group	Black Country Housing Group, Business Link, DMBC, ROSES, WMSSEN

Objective 2b - To support new and existing businesses through delivery of a range of business support programmes and initiatives

Actions	Targets/Outputs	Timescales	Additional Key Milestones & Timescales, where applicable	Responsibility	Resources
			the West Midlands Social Enterprise Network (WMSSEN) to share best practice and support social enterprises across the region - Ongoing		
Work towards closing the access to finance gap for small businesses in the Borough			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Black Country Reinvestment Society, Business Link West Midlands, the West Midlands Regional Finance Forum and other lenders (e.g. banks) to provide financial support to small and medium sized businesses 	DMBC - Economic Regeneration Division, Black Country Reinvestment Society, Business Link	Black Country Reinvestment Society, Business Link
To enable more local companies to supply Dudley MBC and other large organisation with goods and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase the level of goods and services provided by Dudley SMEs to the Local Authority and other large public sector organisations 	April 2008 - March 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be aware of and work closely with the West Midlands Centre of Excellence Procurement Hub 	Black Country Local Authorities, Dudley PCT	Black Country Local Authorities, Black Country Housing Group, Black Country Knowledge Society

Objective 2b - To support new and existing businesses through delivery of a range of business support programmes and initiatives

Actions	Targets/Outputs	Timescales	Additional Key Milestones & Timescales, where applicable	Responsibility	Resources
Improve access for businesses, business support services and business information provided by the Council and its partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a single point of access within the Council through the Business Support Manager to deal with business support and property and inward investment enquiries 	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide access to property portfolio through Black Country Investment Work with Black Country Investment to attract companies to locate in Dudley Borough including high value added/knowledge based businesses 	DMBC - Economic Regeneration Division	DMBC
Develop and implement the Single Business Account (SBA) to provide a single point of contact and information for businesses in the Borough			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to support the Business Matters regional project through representation on the Project Board - Ongoing 	DMBC - Economic Regeneration Division, DMBC SBA Steering Group, Business Matters Project Board	DMBC
Develop and maintain relationships with Dudley companies identified on the Black Country "FTSE 150" strategic companies list	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop action plan for ongoing relationship with companies 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and updating of FTSE 150 list - Ongoing 	Black Country Local Authorities	Black Country Local Authorities, Black Country Observatory
To review the potential for supporting businesses in relation to renewable energy and recycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake initial review and develop proposal for support, if appropriate 	June 2008		DMBC	DMBC

5.3 Strategic Aim 3: To encourage and support the development of a diverse and dynamic business base that increases the proportion of well paid jobs across the Borough

A key theme of the WMES – “Connecting to Success”- is Businesses. A vibrant local economy is dependent on the wealth generating potential of its businesses, thus making improving business competitiveness an important element of this strategy. A key focus for the strategy is innovation and research & development in order to diversify the economic base and create higher value added employment opportunities and ensuring businesses are equipped to meet future demands and compete effectively in the global marketplace.

A key partner in developing and delivering the key strategic actions is Business Link West Midlands which has been in operation since April 2007 to provide support to existing businesses and anyone who is looking to start a business.

Actions	Targets/Outputs	Timescales	Additional Key Milestones & Timescales, where applicable	Responsibility	Resources
To deliver business start-up support to individuals looking to start a business		April 2008 - March 2009		Business Link West Midlands	AWM
To increase enterprise and provide support to create new businesses in Dudley Borough as per the Dudley Borough LAA	LAA target - 200 new businesses created in Dudley Borough LAA 3-year target - 590 new businesses created in Dudley Borough	April 2008 - March 2009 2007-2010		Business Link West Midlands	AWM

Actions	Targets/Outputs	Timescales	Additional Key Milestones & Timescales, where applicable	Responsibility	Resources
To increase competition by providing intensive assistance to support businesses in Dudley Borough to grow and develop, including support for innovation and product development, new market development, people skills and workforce development, process sourcing and supply chain development, access to finance and ICT and sales and marketing	<p>LAA target - 220 businesses in Dudley Borough provided with intensive assistance</p> <p>LAA 3-year target - 650 businesses in Dudley Borough provided with intensive assistance</p>	April 2008 - March 2009		Business Link West Midlands	AWM
Continue the development of the South Black Country Innovation Campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with delivery partners • Work with funding partners / funding applications • Develop relationships with the partners • Attract and recruit private sector developer • Develop joint venture company 	2008-2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memorandum of support signed by project partners - April 2008 • Outline funding application approved - May 2008 • Agreement signed with the partners - June 2008 • Private sector developer appointed - September 2008 • Joint venture company established - October 2008 	DMBC - Economic Regeneration Division	DMBC, Black Country Consortium, Business Link, Higher Education Partners, BCLSC, Local Colleges

5.4 Strategic Aim 4: To improve the economic and environmental infrastructure of Dudley Borough and its town centres

Improving the external image of the Borough and the movement of people, goods and services within it are a priority for sustainable regeneration as is the provision of major development sites for creating new employment opportunities and diversifying the economic base. The development of a robust transport infrastructure to ensure the expeditious movement of traffic within the borough is key to maintaining a vibrant local economy and has the potential to encourage inward investment. The development and regeneration of the Borough's town centres is crucial to delivery of this strategic aim in order to help to retain their distinctive local character and improve their competitiveness through creating better job and investment prospects and attracting businesses and visitors to the Borough.

Consideration will be given to issues relating to community safety respecting new and existing developments with each development application which will include the application of Supplementary Planning Guidance on Community Safety respecting development sites, review of community safety against Section 17 of the Crime & Disorder Act (CDA) 1998 and consideration of Secure by Design principles. Cross cutting issues relating to Community Safety and economic development will be addressed through the Safe & Sound Partnership and the Economic Development and Regeneration Partnership.

Objective 4a - To maximise the potential of the Borough's major development sites for the benefit of the local economy					
Actions	Targets/Outputs	Timescales	Additional Key Milestones & Timescales, where applicable	Responsibility	Resources
Develop the Castle Hill area of Dudley for mixed use to provide business, employment and leisure and housing opportunities with significant investment and improvements to Dudley Zoo & Castle in order to reposition Dudley town centre as a high profile regional tourist attraction	AWM contracted outputs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 673 New FTE Jobs Created • 60 FTE Jobs Safeguarded • 639 People Assisted to get a job (Employment Support) • 25.12 Hectares of Brownfield Land reclaimed/Redeveloped • £33.35m Private Sector Leverage 	2008 - 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding agreement with AWM complete - spring 2008 • Start on site - summer 2008 • Completion anticipated - March 2013 	DMBC - Economic Regeneration Division, St Modwen	AWM, St Modwen
Employment Heart - redevelopment of underutilised industrial sites adjacent to the Dudley Southern Bypass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit full application • Begin acquisitions 	September 2008 February 2009		DMBC - Economic Regeneration Division	DMBC, AWM

Objective 4a - To maximise the potential of the Borough's major development sites for the benefit of the local economy

Actions	Targets/Outputs	Timescales	Additional Key Milestones & Timescales, where applicable	Responsibility	Resources
Support the proposed development of the Glasshouse Project by the Ruskin Mill Educational Trust (RMET)	Proposed Outputs - tbc	2007-2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject to AWM approval, support the delivery of the project - 2008 onwards 	RMET, DMBC - Economic Regeneration Division	To be confirmed

Objective 4b - To promote the regeneration of the Borough's Town Centres

Actions	Targets/Outputs	Timescales	Additional Key Milestones & Timescales, where applicable	Responsibility	Resources
Develop and implement an Area Action Plan for Brierley Hill Town Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adoption of Brierley Hill Area Action Plan 	October 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to work with and support the Brierley Hill Regeneration Partnership (BHRP) - Ongoing Develop and prioritise the implementation of activities resulting from the Brierley Hill Town Centre Area Action Plan - October 2009 onwards Secure funding for the implementation of the Brierley Hill Town Centre Area Action Plan - October 2009 onwards 	DMBC - Planning Policy Team (Lead), DMBC - Economic Regeneration Division, BHRP	AWM, ERDF/GOWM, Westfield Shopping Towns Limited, Centro, BHRP, DMBC, Brierley Hill Community Forum, Brierley Hill Traders, Dudley PCT, Private sector stakeholders
Delivery of the Waterfront II Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 150 New Jobs Created 362 Jobs Safeguarded £9m New Sales £162.1m Safeguarded Sales 200 Businesses assisted with Environmental Management 	December 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete final evaluation of Waterfront II project – 2009 Continue to monitor revenue element of Waterfront II Project - ongoing until project completion 	BHRP, DMBC - Economic Regeneration Division	ERDF, BHRP, DMBC

Objective 4b - To promote the regeneration of the Borough's Town Centres

Actions	Targets/Outputs	Timescales	Additional Key Milestones & Timescales, where applicable	Responsibility	Resources
Implement the Brierley Hill Sustainable Access Network (BHSAN), which will provide an alternative route for traffic. Development of a quality bus network and other public transport initiatives to support the centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved accessibility and development sites opened up to support future regeneration projects. • Reduction in transport costs and journey times • Reduced congestion • Improved air quality 	December 2008		DMBC - Economic Regeneration Division	LTP, DMBC, Westfield, Centro, Travel West Midlands
To develop and deliver an umbrella programme of developments for Brierley Hill around 6 key projects to continue to develop and deliver the master plan and implementation strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • acquisition of commercial properties • upgrading Brierley Hill High Street environment • community service centre • new education facilities to support the needs of local people and employers • extending the scope of the BHSAN to include Brierley Hill Gateway 	Proposed Outputs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1050 Jobs Created • 700 People Assisted to get a job • 4 Businesses Supported to improve their performance • £57.6m public infrastructure investment levered • £345.5m private infrastructure investment levered • 7.19 hectares of Brownfield Land reclaimed/redeveloped • 410 People Assisted in skills development • 16 Graduates into employment • 34 Businesses Created - demonstrating growth 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission of full application to AWM - summer 2008 • Approval of full application - summer 2008 • Work to commence on site - autumn 2008 	DMBC - Economic Regeneration Division, BHRP	AWM (to be confirmed)

Objective 4b - To promote the regeneration of the Borough's Town Centres

Actions	Targets/Outputs	Timescales	Additional Key Milestones & Timescales, where applicable	Responsibility	Resources
<p>Deliver the LIFT (Local Improvement Finance Trust) Project which will provide a new health and social care centre for local people in the heart of Brierley Hill Town Centre, and will provide significant economic and social benefits for the residents of Dudley Borough.</p>	<p>Direct Output:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remediation of 0.59 hectares of the former Brier School site <p>Indirect Outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 new jobs created • The construction of a health and social care centre of 9,033 sq m • 150 people assisted to get a job • 100 people assisted to improve their skills • 2 new businesses created • 2 new businesses demonstrating growth after 12 months 	<p>2009/10</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remediation of site - summer 2008 • Completion of building works - February 2010 • Indirect outputs will be achieved following completion of the development 	<p>Dudley PCT</p>	<p>LIFT. Dudley PCT. AWM</p>
<p>Implement the Dudley Town Centre Master Plan.</p>	<p>Implementation of the Area Development Framework (Master Plan) will bring significant benefits to the town centre including the creation of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,100 residential units; • an additional 2,500 residential population in the town centre; • £10m of improvements to public and civic spaces • development in the region of £318m; and 	<p>2009-2013</p>	<p>Cabinet, on 13th June 2007, approved in principle the Dudley Area Development Framework via a traditional joint venture approach.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure public sector support (Advantage West Midlands and English Partnerships) - March 2008 • Set up Arms Length Company - early 2008 • Set up Dudley Town Centre Partnership following establishment of the Arms Length 	<p>DMBC - Economic Regeneration Division, Independent Advisers</p>	<p>AWM, DMBC, Retail and Housing Developers, Safe & Sound Partnership, Dudley Town Centre Forum, West Midlands Police</p>

Objective 4b - To promote the regeneration of the Borough's Town Centres

Actions	Targets/Outputs	Timescales	Additional Key Milestones & Timescales, where applicable	Responsibility	Resources
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a catalyst for complementary development in and around the town centre 		Company <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select a Joint Venture partner - November 2008 Negotiation with the preferred partner to sign contracts would be completed by April 2009 Prepare Development Agreements and Planning Applications - April 2009 Commence work on site - It is anticipated that development of the first opportunity area by the Joint Venture would start towards the end of 2009 		

Objective 4b - To promote the regeneration of the Borough's Town Centres

Actions	Targets/Outputs	Timescales	Additional Key Milestones & Timescales, where applicable	Responsibility	Resources
Develop a Stage 2 Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) submission to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to restore, maintain and conserve buildings of character in Dudley Town Centre conservation area	If the bid is successful, the following outputs are anticipated: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 109 Jobs Created • 21 Businesses supported to improve their performance • £6,509,704 public/private sector investment • 2,347 sq m of brownfield land reclaimed/redeveloped (in the form of vacant floorspace) 	May 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2008/09 – secure AWM full application approval in order to release HLF funding. • Appoint Townscape Heritage Manager 	DMBC - Historic Environment Team (Lead), DMBC - Economic Regeneration Division	To be confirmed
Develop and implement an Area Action Plan for Halesowen Town Centre	Adoption of Halesowen Area Action Plan	December 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commence development of Halesowen Area Action Plan - July 2008 	DMBC - Planning Policy Team (Lead), DMBC - Economic Regeneration Division	DMBC
	Completion of Halesowen Bus Station highway enabling works	December 2008		DMBC - Economic Regeneration Division	LTP, DMBC, Centro

Objective 4b - To promote the regeneration of the Borough's Town Centres

Actions	Targets/Outputs	Timescales	Additional Key Milestones & Timescales, where applicable	Responsibility	Resources
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete development of the Cornbow Shopping Centre 	December 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ASDA store to be trading – November 2008 	DMBC - Economic Regeneration Division	DMBC, Vale Retail (Cornbow) Ltd
Stourbridge Area Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commence development of Stourbridge Area Action Plan - March 2008 Issue and Options consultation - January 2009 Preferred Options consultation - September 2009 Submission - August 2010 Pre-examination meeting - January 2011 Examination - May 2011 Adoption - February 2012 	Present to February 2012	Progress to be monitored via the Local Development Scheme	DMBC - DUE (Planning Policy and Economic Regeneration)	DMBC - DUE
Management and promotion of Brierley Hill, Dudley, Stourbridge and Halesowen Town Centres			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the Shop Improvement Scheme in Brierley Hill Town Centre - August 2006 onwards Continue to expand coverage of the Dudley Borough Business Crime Partnership within retail centres in the borough and increase membership and radio links systems - Ongoing Develop and deliver corporate entertainment and events programme - April 2008 to March 	DMBC - Economic Regeneration Division	DMBC - Economic Regeneration Division Westfield

Objective 4b - To promote the regeneration of the Borough's Town Centres

Actions	Targets/Outputs	Timescales	Additional Key Milestones & Timescales, where applicable	Responsibility	Resources
			2009 • Promote the partnership to deliver Brierley Hill in Bloom, Halesowen in Bloom and Stourbridge in Bloom - Ongoing		
Increase opening hours in town centre libraries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 libraries, totalling 53 hours per week 	April 2008 - March 2009		DMBC - Heads of Library Service	DMBC

Objective 4c - To promote the regeneration of the Borough's District and Local Centres

Actions	Targets/Outputs	Timescales	Additional Key Milestones & Timescales, where applicable	Responsibility	Resources
Implement the Lye District Centre Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete Phase 2 of Christ Church Park 	September 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure resources - April 2008 Let contract - June 2008 Completion - September 2009 	DMBC - Economic Regeneration Division, Lye & Wollescote Partnership, District and Local Centres Officers Group	DMBC Capital Programme
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement priority actions to be delivered in the Lye District Centre Action Plan 2004 	April 2008 onwards		DMBC Legal and Property	Big Lottery Fund
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of vacant land fronting By Pass 	January 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submission of planning application for retail development - September 2008 	DMBC - Economic Regeneration Division, Private Sector	DMBC
Improve traffic flows in Shell Corner Local Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve traffic flows 	September 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design possible road layout for banning right turn into Malt Mill - April 2008 Identify resources and implementation programme - September 2008 	DMBC - Engineering & Transportation and Economic Regeneration Division	DMBC

Objective 4c - To promote the regeneration of the Borough's District and Local Centres

Actions	Targets/Outputs	Timescales	Additional Key Milestones & Timescales, where applicable	Responsibility	Resources
Develop Shell Corner Local Centre Regeneration Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete Shell Corner Local Centre Regeneration Plan 	July 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft Regeneration Plan - May 2008 Final Plan - July 2008 	DMBC - Engineering & Transportation, Urban Design, Planning Policy and Economic Regeneration Division	DMBC
Develop Cradley Local Centre Regeneration Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out developers brief for Foredraft Street opportunity site identified in the Cradley Regeneration Plan Bid to Bus Showcase to fund some of improvements identified in Cradley Regeneration Plan 	April 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final Developers Brief - May 2008 	DMBC - Engineering & Transportation, Urban Design, Planning Policy and Economic Regeneration Division Consultants	DMBC
Develop Quarry Bank Local Centre Regeneration Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production of Quarry Bank Local Centre Regeneration Plan 	March 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify resources for plan production - April 2008 Agree programme for production - April 2008 		To be confirmed
Develop Pensnett Local Centre Regeneration Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production of Pensnett Local Centre Regeneration Plan 	May 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft Regeneration Plan - March 2008 Final Regeneration Plan - May 2008 		To be confirmed

Objective 4c - To promote the regeneration of the Borough's District and Local Centres

Actions	Targets/Outputs	Timescales	Additional Key Milestones & Timescales, where applicable	Responsibility	Resources
Increase the supply of affordable Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6,000-6,500 affordable dwellings to be provided across the Region each year between 2001-2011 (West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy Policy CF5) Provision of 1440 affordable dwellings by 2011 (Dudley UDP 2005-2011) 	By 2011	Housing Strategy 2007-2010 Adoption Dudley's of Next Generation LAA 2008-2011, which includes a local partnership target - National Indicator 155: Number of affordable homes delivered Target of 30% of total dwellings on suitable sites to be affordable (UDP)	DMBC Registered Social Landlords (Supported Housing and Social Housing Providers) Developers	DMBC Regional Housing Advisory Forum

Objective 4d - Develop the Visitor Economy through enhancing the Borough's tourism potential and promoting the Borough as a high quality visitor destination

Actions	Targets/Outputs	Timescales	Additional Key Milestones & Timescales, where applicable	Responsibility	Resources
Assist in the implementation of the Black Country Visitor Economy Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased activity within the Visitor Economy 	2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Black Country Visitor Economy Strategy to be implemented - by 2008 	DMBC - Culture and Leisure	AWM, Black Country Tourism, Black Country Local Authorities Private Sector
Implement the Dudley Action Plan of the Black Country Visitor Economy Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote Dudley Borough as a high quality visitor destination Support business development within the sector 	2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See actions within Visitor Economy Strategy - Ongoing 	DMBC - Culture and Leisure	AWM, Black Country Tourism, Private Sector
To develop Strata and the Wren's Nest National Nature Reserve so as to encourage the geotourism potential of the Borough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased number of visitors 	2008 - 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit Heritage Lottery Fund application - March 2008 Continue to apply for funding to realise Strata vision 	DMBC - Culture and Leisure	Heritage Lottery Fund, Big Lottery Fund AWM
Continue to support the Black Country Tourism initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successful completion of the ERDF project 	2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support delivery of Advancing Tourism in the Black Country programme through the Black Country Visitor Economy Action Plan - Ongoing 	DMBC - Economic Regeneration / Culture and Leisure Division BCC	Black Country Local Authorities, BCC, Private Sector
Support the transition process of Black Country Tourism to new visitor economy partnership after completion of ERDF project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased activity within the Visitor Economy 	2008-2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BCT exit Strategy agreed - May 2008 New partnership formed - July 2008 	DMBC - Culture and Leisure	AWM Local Authorities Private sector

Objective 4d - Develop the Visitor Economy through enhancing the Borough's tourism potential and promoting the Borough as a high quality visitor destination

Actions	Targets/Outputs	Timescales	Additional Key Milestones & Timescales, where applicable	Responsibility	Resources
Continue to support and develop the canal network in Dudley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and promote canals in Dudley working with British Waterways 	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with British Waterways and Canal Trusts to identify projects - Ongoing Support the 150th Celebrations of Netherton Canal Tunnel - 2008 	DMBC - Economic Regeneration Division, British Waterways	AWM, ERDF/GOWM, British Waterways, DMBC, BCC
Black Country Canals Tourism Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage additional visitors to the network through series of project as identified through the Strategy. 	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to develop projects as and when funding becomes available - Ongoing 	DMBC - Economic Regeneration/ Culture and Leisure Division	DMBC, Black Country Tourism
Dudley MBC to support the development work for the World Heritage aspiration for the Black Country Canal network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased protection of historic assets on canal network Increased visitors and users of the canal network 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of canal management plan 	DMBC - Economic Regeneration Division, BCC	DMBC, Black Country Local Authorities
Supporting 'glass quarter' as a visitor destination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with partners including local businesses to develop the 'glass quarter' as a visitor destination and as a place to stay or relocate for any glass related business 	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to support and develop the International Festival of Glass - Ongoing. Supplementary Planning Guidance for the Glass Quarter - April 2008 to December 2009 	DMBC - Economic Regeneration Division/ Culture and Leisure/ Planning	AWM, DMBC, Private Sector

Objective 4e - Provide a comprehensive Public Transport System in the Major Urban Areas and ensure the expeditious movement of traffic within the Borough

Actions	Targets/Outputs	Timescales	Additional Key Milestones & Timescales, where applicable	Responsibility	Resources
To work with Centro to implement the construction of the Midland Metro extension from Wednesbury to Brierley Hill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of Metro 	2010/2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commencement on site - 2008/10 	Centro DMBC - Economic Regeneration Division	Centro DMBC
Optimisation of existing Highway infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver transportation priorities as set out in the Minor Improvements Schemes Programmes 	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A491/Lawnswood Rd - finalise preferred option - 2008/09 A4101/High St - progress design - 2008/09 Mill St/Mount Pleasant, Quarry Bank - finalise preferred option - 2008/09 A456/Grange Rd, Halesowen - finalise preferred option - 2008/09 A4036/High St, Quarry Bank - develop options - 2008/09 	DMBC - Economic Regeneration Division	DMBC
Improve traffic management in Dudley Borough			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to review transport issues and take forward the implementation of the Area Development Framework 	DMBC - Transportation and Traffic Management Group	DMBC
Develop initiatives/schemes to improve public transport in the Borough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a public transport improvement plan for Brierley Hill Develop partnership working with operators and Centro (PIPs) 	2008/09 2008/09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement Dudley Bus Service Review - April 2008 Develop approved programme of IT Block funded public transport improvements 	DMBC - Economic Regeneration Division	DMBC

Objective 4e - Provide a comprehensive Public Transport System in the Major Urban Areas and ensure the expeditious movement of traffic within the Borough

Actions	Targets/Outputs	Timescales	Additional Key Milestones & Timescales, where applicable	Responsibility	Resources
Undertake A458 Traffic Management Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusion in West Midlands Major Scheme Business Case (MSBC) 	September/ October 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek Cabinet approval to consultation - June/July 2008 Undertake consultation - summer 2008 Seek Cabinet approval for inclusion in the West Midlands MSBC for Priority Investment Corridors - September 2008 	DMBC - Economic Regeneration Division, CEPOG	DMBC
Work in partnership with Sandwell MBC on the development of major junction improvements at Burnt Tree Island.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commence work on site Scheme completion 	May 2009 March 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detrunking of A4128 - 2008/2009 Submission of business case to DfT for full approval - December 2008 	DMBC - Economic Regeneration Division	DMBC Sandwell MBC LTP
Bus Showcase - develop and implement a number of integral schemes and junction improvements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop programme 	Summer 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scheme submissions to Network Co-ordination Group ongoing and will be submitted at various times during the project – Ongoing Seek Council authority to implement schemes/improvements identified - Ongoing 	DMBC - Economic Regeneration Division	LTP DMBC
Undertake studies relating to AQMAs (Air Quality Management Areas)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modelling data - Ongoing Congestion studies - Ongoing Mitigation - Ongoing 	DMBC - Economic Regeneration Division	DMBC

Strategic Aim 5: To champion the interests and assets of Dudley Borough, securing resources and improving its position regionally, nationally and internationally

Dudley MBC works closely with a range of key partners to ensure a coherent approach to strategy development and implementation and maximise opportunities for the prosperity of Dudley Borough. These partners include Dudley Community Partnership, Black Country Chamber, Black Country Learning & Skills Council, Black Country Consortium, Advantage West Midlands and the other Black Country local authorities.

Achieving economic success increasingly involves taking a Black Country, a West Midlands and even a national and international perspective. For example, Dudley's economy and transport systems are inter-related and interdependent within a broader sub-regional and regional context: proposed improvements, funding proposals and interventions therefore need to be tackled in a joined-up way. The Black Country Study has demonstrated the common challenges facing the sub-region, and the concerted joint action that is needed to raise the prosperity and quality of life of our residents. Similarly, the 'City Region' agenda recognises the benefits of working together across the West Midlands. The objectives and actions below recognise the complex activities and relationships that need to be energetically pursued if we are to enhance the borough's strengths, and address its relative weaknesses.

Objective 5a - To support the development of a comprehensive spatial strategy for the Borough within a sub-regional and regional context					
Actions	Targets/Outputs	Timescales	Additional Key Milestones & Timescales, where applicable	Responsibility	Resources
Adoption and implementation of Local Development Documents comprising the Local Development Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Black Country Core Strategy Stourbridge Area Action Plan Brierley Hill Area Action Plan Development Strategy Development Plan Document 	<p>Nov 2006 - October 2009</p> <p>March 2008 - Feb 2012</p> <p>August 2006 - October 2009</p> <p>March 2008 - December 2011</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit to Secretary of State - October 2008 Adoption - October 2009 Submit to Secretary of State - August 2010 Adoption - February 2012 Submit to Secretary of State - October 2008 Adoption - October 2009 Submit to Secretary of State - August 2010 Adoption - December 2011 	DMBC - Planning Policy Team & Economic Regeneration Division	DMBC, Sandwell MBC, Walsall MBC & Wolverhampton MBC

Objective 5a - To support the development of a comprehensive spatial strategy for the Borough within a sub-regional and regional context

Actions	Targets/Outputs	Timescales	Additional Key Milestones & Timescales, where applicable	Responsibility	Resources
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halesowen Area Action Plan • Design in Brierley Hill Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document • Glass Quarter Supplementary Planning Document 	<p>July 2008 - March 2012</p> <p>March 2009 - March 2010</p> <p>November 2008 - December 2009</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit to Secretary of State - August 2010 • Adoption - March 2012 • Adoption - March 2010 • Adoption - December 2009 	<p>As above</p>	<p>As above</p>

Objective 5a - To support the development of a comprehensive spatial strategy for the Borough within a sub-regional and regional context

Actions	Targets/Outputs	Timescales	Additional Key Milestones & Timescales, where applicable	Responsibility	Resources
To ensure that Dudley MBC is fully engaged in revision and delivery of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and secure the desired outcomes for Dudley Borough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) 	Up to the end of 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of RSS Phase 2 - Examination in Public - Early 2009 Review of RSS Phase 3 - Examination in Public - Late 2010 	BCC, DMBC - Economic Regeneration Division & Planning Policy Team	BCC, DMBC, Other Black Country Local Authorities, Black Country Chamber of Commerce
To ensure Dudley MBC is engaged in the development of the City Region agenda			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing involvement in City Region and review of implications for Dudley Borough 	City Region Partners, including DMBC	City Region Partners, including DMBC

Objective 5b - To maximise resources and funding opportunities to support economic regeneration activities

Actions	Targets/Outputs	Timescales	Additional Key Milestones & Timescales, where applicable	Responsibility	Resources
Work with Dudley Community Partnership to ensure the successful design and implementation of the economic development elements of the Dudley Local Area Agreement to attract and bring together funding to support Economic Well Being initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of outcomes and stretch targets in current LAA • Next Generation LAA agreed with Government Office 	<p>2007-2010</p> <p>June 2008</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set future targets for 2008/09, based on achievement profile, and include within the LAA - March 2008 	DCP, EDRP, DMBC - Economic Regeneration Division	GOWM - LAA Performance Reward Grant, Business Link
Ensure Dudley Borough's interests are included in the wider Black Country package of funding accessed from AWM via the Black Country Regeneration Zone.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure funding for endorsed projects in Dudley Borough as detailed in the Regeneration Zone Implementation Plan 2008 - 2011. 	2008-2011	Develop funding applications for proposed projects for submission to the Regeneration Zone - 2008/2011	DMBC - Economic Regeneration Division, BCC, Regeneration Zone	AWM

Objective 5b - To maximise resources and funding opportunities to support economic regeneration activities

Actions	Targets/Outputs	Timescales	Additional Key Milestones & Timescales, where applicable	Responsibility	Resources
Maximise resources which assist DMBC to link local people to local jobs within the borough, either through support, brokerage or training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To seek resources for Dudley, from all local agencies, including the Regeneration Zone, AWM, LSC, JcP 	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to identify the key partners and opportunities for long term support and funding - Ongoing Continue to develop sets of proposals and submit applications for funding support - Ongoing 	DMBC - Economic Regeneration Division, FSD, DACH	AWM, LSC, Regeneration Zone, JcP, GOWM, DMBC
Attract other funding that enables local residents to access training and development and job opportunities brought about by physical development projects in the Borough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To support the development of the Section 106 policy for Dudley to maximise financial and policy support to facilitate projects within the Economic Regeneration and Individual Well Being agendas. 	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to develop the linkage of FSD construction training to physical development/investment opportunities in the Borough to maximise training and job opportunities for local people, including for example Dudley Town Centre developments and Brierley Hill/Merry Hill – ongoing 	DMBC - Economic Regeneration Division & Planning Policy Team	AWM Section 106 income

Objective 5b - To maximise resources and funding opportunities to support economic regeneration activities

Actions	Targets/Outputs	Timescales	Additional Key Milestones & Timescales, where applicable	Responsibility	Resources
To seek to maximise other funding streams appropriate to the economic strategy aims and objectives			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be proactive in researching external funding sources to implement economic regeneration priorities - Ongoing • To work with the Council's External Funding Group to ensure directorates and Dudley Community Partnership work together to achieve common objectives - Ongoing 	DMBC DCP	DMBC DCP

Objective 5c – To raise the profile of Dudley Borough regionally, nationally and internationally

Actions	Targets/Outputs	Timescales	Additional Key Milestones & Timescales, where applicable	Responsibility	Resources
<p>To ensure proactive participation and involvement from DMBC, at member and officer level, with appropriate national, regional, sub-regional and local organisations and forums in order to promote Dudley Borough and develop beneficial relationships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in the West Midlands Regional Assembly (WMRA) and its constituent committees and groups • Maintain membership of the West Midlands Passenger Transport Authority (WMPTA) • Continue involvement and support for the Black Country Consortium (BCC) at political level and at officer level to support groups including the Regeneration Zone Board and Black Country Regeneration Reference Groups • To continue work with the Dudley Business Group • Continue to support the Brierley Hill Regeneration Partnership • Host support for the Regional Brownfield Land Group • Ongoing development of the Future Skills Partnership 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<p>DMBC - Economic Regeneration Division Cabinet Member for Transport</p> <p>DMBC - Economic Regeneration Division</p> <p>DMBC - Economic Regeneration Division AWM Brownfield Land Group DMBC - Economic Regeneration Division Future Skills Dudley</p>	<p>DMBC</p> <p>AWM</p>

Objective 5c – To raise the profile of Dudley Borough regionally, nationally and internationally

Actions	Targets/Outputs	Timescales	Additional Key Milestones & Timescales, where applicable	Responsibility	Resources
To investigate opportunities for developing transnational partnerships and working relationships			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Partners across the West Midlands to identify potential opportunities - Ongoing 	DMBC - Economic Regeneration Division	DMBC
Undertake a representational programme based on 8 policy pillars to deliver the business agenda for the Black Country (Business Crime, The Economy, The Environment, Manufacturing Support, Red Tape & Bureaucracy, Skills Agenda, Transport, Visitor Economy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake quarterly parliamentary reviews Deliver a European Lobby Programme 	2008/09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise business leaders' representational visits to Westminster and Brussels 	Black Country Chamber of Commerce Black Country Chamber of Commerce	Black Country Chamber of Commerce Black Country Chamber of Commerce West Midlands in Europe Office
Increase international trade by establishing UK Trade & Investment centres of excellence to encourage export activity				Black Country Chamber of Commerce UKTI	Black Country Chamber of Commerce UKTI
To encourage and develop young professional workers through the re-launch of Black Country Chamber of Commerce's Young Professionals Network			Ongoing development and promotion of the network	Black Country Chamber of Commerce	Black Country Chamber of Commerce

Objective 5c – To raise the profile of Dudley Borough regionally, nationally and internationally

Actions	Targets/Outputs	Timescales	Additional Key Milestones & Timescales, where applicable	Responsibility	Resources
Develop Local Archives service to support a Black Country wide Heritage Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Web site hits - 500 per month 	April 2008 - March 2009		DMBC - Head of Archives Service, LAAL, DACH	DMBC
To preserve the heritage assets of Dudley Borough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of collections brought in - 50 	April 2008 - March 2009			

7.0 Glossary

AAP	Area Action Plan
ABI	Annual Business Inquiry
AIG	Advice, Information and Guidance
APS	Annual Population Survey
ASHE	Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings
AWM	Advantage West Midlands
BCC	Black Country Consortium
BCHG	Black Country Housing Group
BCI	Black Country Investment
BCIS	Black Country Incubation Strategy
BCLSC	Black Country Learning & Skills Council
BCO	Black Country Observatory
BCPC	Black Country Partnership for Care
BCPL	Black Country Partnership for Learning
BCKS	Black Country Knowledge Society
BCRS	Black Country Re-investment Society
BCS	Black Country Study
BHRP	Brierley Hill Regeneration Partnership
BHSAN	Brierley Hill Sustainable Access Network
BIG	Big Lottery Fund
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
BSF	Building Schools for the Future
CBI	Confederation of British Industry
CDFI	Community Development Finance Initiative
CfED	Centre for Equality & Diversity
CENTRO/WMPTA	West Midlands Passenger Transport Authority
CEPOG	Chief Engineers and Planning Officers Group
CIS	Children's Information Service
CLG	Communities and Local Government
COG	Cluster Opportunity Group
COVE	Centre of Vocational Excellence
CPO	Compulsory Purchase Order
CRDP	City Region Development Plan
DACH	Directorate of Adult, Community & Housing Services
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
DCP	Dudley Community Partnership
DCS	Directorate of Children's Services
DCVS	Dudley Council for Voluntary Service
DfES	Department for Education & Skills
DfT	Department for Transport
DMBC	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
DUE	Directorate of the Urban Environment
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
EDRP	Economic Development & Regeneration Partnership
EEF	Engineering Employers Federation
EP	English Partnerships
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	European Union
EZ	Employment Zone
FE	Further Education
FSB	Federation of Small Businesses

FSD	Future Skills Dudley
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GOWM	Government Office for the West Midlands
GVA	Gross Value Added
HE	Higher Education
HLF	Heritage Lottery Fund
HMRA	Housing Market Renewal Area
HTC	High Technology Corridor
IB	Invalidity/Incapacity Benefit
ICT	Information & Communications Technologies
IDBR	Inter-Departmental Business Register
JcP	Jobcentre Plus
JSA	Job Seekers Allowance
LAA	Local Area Agreement
LEA	Local Education Authority
LEGI	Local Enterprise Growth Initiative
LGA	Local Government Association
LPSA	Local Public Service Agreement
LSC	Learning & Skills Council
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
LTP	Local Transport Plan
NDC	New Deal for Communities
NEET	(Young People) Not in Education, Employment or Training
NETP	National Employer Training Programme
NLC	Neighbourhood Learning Centre
NOCN	National Open College Network
NOMIS	National Office of Management Information Statistics
NRF	Neighbourhood Renewal Fund
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
MAS	Manufacturing Advisory Service
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PAG	Planning Advisory Group
PEG	Principal Engineers Group
RDAs	Regional Development Agencies
ROSES	Regional Organisation for Social Enterprise Support
RSS	Regional Spatial Strategy
RZ	Regeneration Zone
SBA	Single Business Account
SBS	Small Business Service
SFI	Selective Finance for Investment
SFL	Skills For Life
SIC	Standard Industrial Classification
SME	Small or Medium-sized Enterprise
SOA	Super Output Area
TEA	Total Entrepreneurial Activity
THI	Townscape Heritage Initiative
TIF	Transport Innovation Fund
UDP	Unitary Development Plan
UKTI	UK Trade International
VAT	Value Added Tax
WACG	Working Age Client Group
WMES	West Midlands Economic Strategy
WMRA	West Midlands Regional Assembly
WMRO	West Midlands Regional Observatory

WMLGA	West Midlands Local Government Association
WNF	Working Neighbourhoods Fund
ZIP	Zone Implementation Plan

8.0 Appendices

Appendix 1 - Economic Strategy Achievements 2007/2008

The following information highlights achievements against actions specified in the 2007/2008 Economic Strategy. Details are arranged under the five strategic aims and provide a position statement of how the strategy has delivered against the aims and objectives.

Strategic Aim 1 – To optimise the opportunities for local people – including the most vulnerable people and those from deprived areas - to obtain local jobs

Objective 1a – The reduction of Worklessness levels within Dudley, with a focus on recognised disadvantaged wards / groups

- **Local Jobs for Local People Brokerage / Job Search programmes** – FSD, the Adult & Community Learning teams and a variety of delivery partners deliver a number of Local Jobs for Local People / Job Search programmes that link local residents with employment. From April to December 2007, 535 clients have been placed into work as a result of support against a target of 250 for the period.
- **Local Training & Skills Programmes** – FSD, the Dudley MBC Adult & Community Learning Team and a variety of partners deliver effective local training and skills programmes which recruit and equip beneficiaries with the ability to compete in the labour market. From April to December 2007, almost 4,000 clients have commenced training and employment support provision.
- **Information, Advice & Guidance** - FSD and the Adult & Community Learning Team provides Information, Advice and Guidance services for local people that underpin the chances of success in terms of employment. From April to December 2007, 390 formal IAG's have been delivered.

Objective 1b – Provide appropriate training, advice / support to equip the work force of the borough with the skills required by the economy

A number of key focused and tailored initiatives have been delivered to support local people into specific career choices including:

- **The Building Essential Skills for Construction Trades (BEST)** project, managed by Future Skills Dudley (FSD), has run for 4 years in Dudley Borough from July 2003 to December 2007, with a grant of £5.5 million to create learning opportunities and place local unemployed people into jobs within the construction and allied sectors. Specific initiatives have supported priority groups, such as the long-term unemployed, members from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups and those still at school. To the end of December 2007, 1,219 learning opportunities have been created, 1,092 qualifications achieved and 690 people have been assisted into employment, which is in excess of the targets set for the programme. This programme is now closed and further continuation strategies are currently being implemented.
- **Learning to Care** - A Black Country wide employability training programme designed to train local residents for employment in the care industry. From April to December 2007, a total of 146 people have been supported against a target of 104. Other outputs achieved since the start of the programme include the completion of 500 information and advice sessions to include the completion of individual training plans. In addition, 260 people have achieved a Level 1 Technical Certificate and 207 people have achieved NVQ Level 1 certificates. This programme was completed in December 2007.

- **Groundforce Programme** - Through the Arts, Heritage & Parks Team within the Directorate of the Urban Environment, the Council received approval for its Liveability Fund submission which provides around £3.5 million of support for parks across Dudley. From this fund approval, FSD runs a set of pilot programmes, which involve maintaining two of the boroughs parks in a unique way. Through a very active working partnership between Green Care and FSD, trainees and staff have, and continue, to maintain the two parks (Priory and Netherton), whilst learning skills that will lead to employment. Trainees have completed a range of environmental improvements and, through doing so, have acquired skills in Horticulture, Landscaping, Fencing and General Construction. From April 2006 - December 2007, 200 local people have taken part in training / work experience, 136 qualifications have been achieved, 53 people have achieved jobs and 19 Dudley MBC Greencare staff have started on the Train 2 Gain programme which is aimed at achieving a NVQ Level 2 qualification.
- **Construction Initiatives Development Manager (CIDM)** - To ensure that local people are provided with access to jobs and training opportunities arising through the planned investment and capital developments across the borough, working with the Brierley Hill Regeneration Partnership and funded through AWM, the CIDM is responsible for setting in place agreements and delivery frameworks that match local people into training and jobs wherever the opportunities arise. Activities have now taken place with local developers in Brierley Hill and Central Dudley. Additionally FSD and its partners have already ensured local people have gained jobs through large employers relocating to the area and through new partnering agreements.
- The Brierley Hill Jobs Plus service is now embedded into the **Signpost programme** which is managed by the Brierley Hill Community Forum. Signpost is a brand led initiative that seeks to ensure that local people from disadvantaged communities are clear about the services that they are entitled to access and how to access them. Jobs Plus is focused on linking local people to local jobs that are being / will be created as a result of the regeneration of Brierley Hill and together with Signpost there is also the provision of a much wider range of complementary services that ensures a much wider range of barriers to work can be addressed in a personal, sensitive and coordinated way in a location that those who are in greatest need have identified as most accessible for them.
- **Kickstart and Entry into Employment programmes** - these programmes are aimed at working with the NEET group and delivering appropriate programmes to prepare 16 -18 year olds below Level 2 qualification for work. Across the Black Country the Kickstart programme has delivered 98 achievements of non accredited qualifications, 99 achievements of Skills for Life/ Essential Skills Entry Level 3, 240 achievements of Skills for Life / Essential Skills Entry Level 1, 341 Progressions to Learning, 4 progressions to paid full time employment and 7 progressions to paid part time employment. Entry to Employment has achieved 350 starts to the programme in Dudley Borough out of a total of 645 starts for the Black Country.
- **The Caring for Kids 2 (C4K2) initiative** is specifically aimed at the children's services sector, to qualify people working with vulnerable children to NVQ Level 3 and is delivered in partnership with BCPC, Black Country LSC and Local Authority Children's Services Directorates in the Black Country. As at December 2007, a total of 156 carers achieved NVQ Level 3.

Objective 1c - Promote Social Inclusion

- **The Prince's Trust** deliver a range of initiatives to help support disadvantaged 14-30 year olds across the Black Country. The Prince's Trust XL programme aims to assist those students who are at risk from exclusion and at the end of December 2007, a total of 9 XL Clubs were being operated from within Dudley

schools for a total of 105 students. The Prince's Trust Team Programme is aimed at enhancing personal development of young people aged 16-24 through teamwork in the community. As at the end of December 2007, a total of 28 unemployed people in Dudley Borough have participated in the programme. In addition, 6 development awards have been made to enable young people in Dudley aged 16-25 in core client groups of the unemployed, educational underachievers, ex-offenders in or leaving care to access opportunities in education, training and employment local groups to benefit the local community.

- **DMBC's Youth and Community Team** provides accreditation opportunities for young people which include Youth Achievement Award, Junior Sports Leaders Award, Duke of Edinburgh Award and Senior Member training. In addition, further accreditation opportunities are being delivered in some schools to Yr 10/11 and include Prince's Trust XL and Certificate of Personal Effectiveness. From April to December 2007, 7.6% of the 13-19 year old population in the borough have participated in the Youth Service and almost 36% of the 7.6% have gained a learning outcome and 7.8% have gained an accredited outcome. The Youth Service continues to provide training to both its own volunteer staff and those working within Dudley's third sector. Courses provide the necessary basic skills for working with young people in a meaningful and safe environment as well as accredited opportunities up to NVQ Level 3.
- **The Family Learning Network for Dudley Borough** ensures co-ordination of provision, effective communication between providers and a cohesive structure for strategy implementation. A total of 566 new learners have been engaged from priority target groups in first rung learning and support programmes leading to further training and jobs. 204 new learners have been engaged in family literacy and Numeracy learning and support programmes and 207 learning programmes have been provided in local communities offering progression to NVQ Level 2. Targeted work in deprived wards and with BME communities, males, grandparents and teenage mums has increased the engagement of priority groups.
- **The Early Years & Childcare Team** within the Directorate of Children's Services is working with a number of partners to develop childcare provision to enable working carers to have access to local affordable childcare thus reducing barriers to learning and employment, therefore ensuring that the employment and skills agenda is supported and sustained. The Early Years & Childcare Team has contributed towards the achievement of this strategic aim through the following activities:
 - 6 Children's Centres were designated in the Borough by December 2007 and a further 5 centres will be designated by March 2008.
 - Childcare Sufficiency Assessment undertaken (New duty under Childcare Act 2006). Currently 97% of 3 & 4yr olds access sessional childcare. Childcare Strategy Implementation Plan under development for the period 2008 – 2011.
 - The existing childminder network is no longer a priority target; however the existing network has expanded in number to 50 childminders across borough. Links established between Children's Centres and Extended Schools. The network was re-assessed in 2006 and has retained its status as a quality assured network by NCMA.
 - Transformation fund promoted to all childcare & early years providers; take up much lower than anticipated nationally. (Foundation degree takes 3 years to achieve) The Transformation Fund has now been replaced in 2008/2011 by the Graduate Leader Fund which creates a target of all Early Years Foundation Stage providers must have a graduate leader in post by 2015.
 - Promotion of development and sustainability grants continues; however criteria has changed and focuses on targeting development of service to fill gaps in provision.
 - Long term sustainability and viability for all providers continues to be supported via business health check programme implemented in 2007.
 - All providers continue to access training & development opportunities. Early Years & Childcare workforce strategy for 2008 – 2011 under development.

- Promotion and access to Working Tax Credit (WTC) continues to be promoted via Children's Information Service (CIS); PSA 2B target; 'To reduce the number of children living in households where no one is working, by 2008 increase the number of children in lower income working families using formal child care is supported by the development of children's centres across the borough.
- CIS continue to promote 'Care to Learn' funding and are active partners in the Teenage pregnancy strategy group
- CIS delivering 'Information Champion Training' to all Children's Centres and Extended Schools.

Strategic Aim 2 - To support and develop new and existing businesses and to attract inward investment to the Borough

Objective 2a - Maintain a balanced supply of industrial land and premises in Dudley Borough

- Dudley MBC is hosting the Regional Brownfield Land Pilot Project and the Regional Brownfield Land Co-ordinator. DMBC established a Brownfield and Contaminated Land Group in February 2008.
- The **Lye Business Centre** continues to provide a 'value added' property managed service to new and existing small businesses. The occupancy rate of its 31 units as at December 2007 was 84%.

Objective 2b - Deliver an integrated package of support to businesses on key industrial estates in Dudley and Sandwell Boroughs through the Dudley & Sandwell Business Parks Network

- Working in partnership with Business Link, the **Dudley/Sandwell Business Parks Network** project which aims to engage companies to address the problems associated with poor infrastructure and environment is being delivered in Dudley Borough. To December 2007, the project has achieved 237 businesses assisted, 278 new jobs, 1068 jobs safeguarded, 22 businesses created, £6m new sales, £5m sales safeguarded and 4.57 hectares of premises/brownfield land brought back into use.

Objective 2c - Support new and existing businesses through delivery of a range of business support programmes and initiatives

- From April to December 2007, the **Prince's Trust Business Programme** has supported 31 new business start-ups in Dudley Borough, providing loan funding of £86,500. Of the 31 new business starts, 17% are from ethnic minority groups, 26% are women owned businesses, 7% of starts are from ex-offenders and 11% of starts from disabled residents. As at the end of December 2007, the programme has achieved survival rates of 85% of businesses trading after 12 months, 65% of businesses trading after 24 months and 58% of businesses trading after 36 months.
- From April to December 2007, the **Business Support** team at Dudley MBC have advised 47 potential new businesses, ranging from fair trade clothing and wedding accessories to refuse bin cleaning.
- **Black Country Reinvestment Society (BCRS)** is a Dudley based Community Development Finance Institution which supports new and existing businesses to develop and create wealth in disadvantaged communities and under-served markets by providing access to finance to small businesses that are unable to get business loans from traditional sources such as banks. From April to December 2007, BCRS has received 45 enquiries from businesses in the borough and has provided loans totalling £59,000 to small businesses based in the borough. This investment is forecast to create 1 new job and secure 11 jobs as well as achieving £210,000 new sales and safeguarding £630,000 of sales.

Strategic Aim 3 - To encourage and support the development of a diverse and dynamic business base that increases the proportion of well paid jobs across the Borough

Key Performance Targets:

- As at December 2007, **Business Link West Midlands** has provided advice and support to **3,900 businesses in Dudley Borough**. Of this total, the highest proportion of businesses supported were in the manufacturing sector (25%) followed by Retail and Wholesale (17%) and the real estate, renting & business activities (16%)
- **423 businesses have been provided with Intensive Assistance**, where Business Link West Midlands partnership works in with businesses to deliver support, for example through a long term relationship through an advisor / account manager, consultancy project or course of training and development, that leads to measurable improvement in the performance of the business as a result of Business Link's intervention. Of these 423, 140 businesses are in the manufacturing sector.
- In respect of new business start ups, 823 individuals in Dudley Borough have received pre-start support from Business Link and a total of 124 new businesses have been started with support from Business Link.

Strategic Aim 4 - To improve the economic and environmental infrastructure of Dudley Borough and its town centres

Objective 4a - To maximise the potential of the Borough's major development sites for the benefit of the local economy

- The Economic Regeneration Division continues to work with St Modwen and AWM in taking forward the £36m mixed use re-development of the **Castle Hill** area, for which £5.35m of AWM funding was approved in December 2006.

Objective 4b - To promote the regeneration of the Borough's town centres

- Officers continue to work closely with **Brierley Hill Regeneration Partnership** on a number of activities including the LIFT Project and the funding application for the umbrella programme of developments in Brierley Hill.
- **Brierley Hill town centre** - Cabinet approved the Brierley Hill Area Action Plan Preferred Options document, as a basis for statutory public consultation, in February 2008 (Preferred Options consultation period: 29 February to 11th April 2008). Results from this consultation will be considered alongside the technical evidence to prepare the final draft Area Action Plan to be submitted to the Secretary of State for Independent Examination. Following examination and the receipt of the Inspectors Report it is anticipated that the Brierley Hill Area Action Plan will be adopted in October 2009.
- **Waterfront II Project** - To November 2007, the project has achieved 207 new jobs created, 362 jobs safeguarded, almost £18m sales created and £162m safeguarded sales.
- Work commenced on the **Brierley Hill Sustainable Access Network** in April 2007 to build the parallel route to Brierley Hill High Street which aims to deal with the traffic congestion in and around Brierley Hill and create new development opportunities by unlocking the potential of the land between the High Street and the canal.
- **Brierley Hill LIFT Project** - Dudley Infracare Lift Limited (DIL) was established in October 2005 to provide new primary health care and social care buildings for Dudley. The Company is a Public Private Partnership (PPP) with the NHS Primary Care Trust in Dudley, part of the innovative NHS LIFT (Local Improvement Finance Trust) National Programme. Brierley Hill LIFT is a Community Health and Social Care Facility which will provide services to people in post code areas DY5, DY6 and DY7. The services to be delivered include: - Expansion and consolidation of services currently provided at the Albion Street Health Centre and Cottage Street Audiology Centre, Consolidation of three GP Practices consisting of 10 GP's (with a combined list of 14,000 patients), Diagnostics/Assessment/Minor Surgery Services, Dental Department of three Dental Surgeries, Audiology, Chiropody and Leg Ulcer Services, Re-location of

local Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council Social Services Office, Re-location of Dudley PCT Headquarters.

- **Dudley Town Centre** - It was agreed by Cabinet in October 2007 to create an Arms Length Company (ALC) and identify a development partner to lead the delivery of the Dudley Town Centre Area Development Framework. It was also agreed to establish the Dudley Town Centre Partnership following the creation of the ALC.
- A Stage 2 **Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI)** - £1.95m of funding has been approved by the Heritage Lottery Fund subject to the approval of £1.95m match funding from AWM. Approval of the outline application from AWM has been secured and confirmation of approval of the full application is currently being awaited. This funding is to restore, maintain and conserve buildings of character in the Dudley Town Centre conservation area.
- The **Dudley Borough Business Crime Partnership** is designed to fight crime & disorderly behaviour at business outlets within the borough of Dudley, working with the police in each of the areas of the borough & supported by Dudley MBC. The partnership started in June 2003 & has 120 members in total covering areas of Dudley, Brierley Hill, Kingswinford, Stourbridge & Halesowen. The partnership also supports area retail radio links in Dudley (33 members), Brierley Hill (5 members) & Halesowen (21 members). These enable stores to contact each other & inform police on current activities of crime & incidents within the stores as they occur.
- **Halesowen town centre** - the £30m redevelopment of the Cornbow Shopping Centre in Halesowen is underway. The demolition of the multi-storey car park is complete and major steel construction is to continue in 2008.
- **Stourbridge Town Centre** - information gathering exercise is now complete and Cabinet approval of Local Development Scheme timetable was received in February 2008.

Objective 4c - Promote the Regeneration of the Borough's District & Local Centres

- **Shell Corner Local Centre Regeneration Plan** - the needs analysis which is the first stage of the Regeneration Plan has taken place. This involved consultation with local businesses, community group's organisations and stakeholders and focused on understanding key issues and aspirations. The second stage consultation took place in January 2008 with a final plan due to be completed by July 2008. In addition, Dudley MBC has undertaken a traffic survey to look at improving traffic flows in the area and designs of a proposed scheme are expected in May 2008.
- **Cradley / Windmill Hill Local Centre Regeneration Plan** - this plan was approved as Development Control Guidance by the Council's Cabinet in February 2008.
- **Lye District Centre Action Plan** - Dudley MBC are in pre-application discussions with a retail developer interested in developing the site identified in the Lye District Centre Action Plan as a retail led scheme. The planning application for the retail led scheme is expected by April 2008. Discussions have also taken place with the Primary Care Trust who is keen to develop the site identified for community facilities in the plan as a LIFT project.
- **Pensnett Local Centre Regeneration Plan** - the first stage consultation, identifying issues and opportunities for the local centre, has been undertaken and the second stage consultation on alternative regeneration options took place in January 2008. The final plan is expected in May 2008.

Objective 4d - Develop the Visitor Economy through enhancing the Borough's tourism potential and promoting the Borough as a high quality visitor destination

- **Strata and Wrens Nest National Nature Reserve** - a significant amount of work was undertaken in 2007 to raise the profile of this project, as one of the key projects in the Black Country Urban Park project, in respect of the Living Landmarks: The People's Millions programme. The Black Country project came

second to the Sustrans Connect2 project. Funding opportunities continue to be explored to realise the Strata vision.

- A **Glass Quarter Development Group** has been created to develop a Glass Quarter Development Plan focusing on Business Development and Support, Physical infrastructure and orientation and Attracting the visitor. Supplementary Planning Guidance for the Glass Quarter has been included in the Council's Local Development Scheme.
- **The International Festival of Glass** was extremely successful with over 7000 visitors attending the event. Progress on the 2008 event is already underway.
- **The Dudley Rock & Fossil Festival** was held in September 2007 and was the most successful event held to date with over 9,000 visitors to the event.

Objective 4e - Provide a comprehensive public transport system in the Major Urban Areas

- Work commenced on Halesowen Bus Station and highway enabling works in October 2007.
- Transport strategy finalised and approved by the Council's Cabinet in February 2008 to provide a coherent framework for implementation of the Local Transport Plan and to address local transportation issues.

Strategic Aim 5 - To champion the interests and assets of Dudley Borough, securing resources and improving its position regionally, nationally and internationally

Objective 5a - Support the development of a comprehensive spatial strategy for the Borough within a sub-regional and regional context

- Phase One Revision to the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy endorsed by Government securing strategic centre status for Brierley Hill.
- **City Region Joint Investment Plans** in place and City Region to be a company limited by guarantee.

Objective 5b - Maximise resources and funding opportunities to support economic regeneration activities

- Dudley MBC's Economic Regeneration Division continues to work closely with the **Regeneration Zone** Secretariat to maximise resources for Dudley based projects. £4.5 million of external funding was secured from AWM in 2007/08 for economic regeneration projects.

Objective 5c - Raise the profile of Dudley Borough regionally, nationally and internationally

- Dudley MBC continues to be an active partner in a number of appropriate forums and organisations including the **West Midlands Regional Assembly, the Black Country Consortium and the West Midlands Passenger Transport Authority.**
- Dudley MBC is also actively involved in the **Dudley Business Group**, chaired by the Leader of the Council and the President of Dudley Chamber of Commerce, and has addressed a number of key topics and issues throughout 2007 including transport, procurement, eyesore sites and marketing of the borough.
- Dudley MBC attends the **Regional European Funding & Policy Group** which develops the regional strategy on European Structural Funds and ESF funding. A Black Country European Group has also been established, comprising representatives from the 4 Black Country Local Authorities, to work together on Framework Programme (FP7) – a financial framework for working with other European regions to attract funding to the Black Country.

Appendix 2 – Strategic Context

The key policies and strategies affecting economic regeneration within Dudley Borough include:

Title	Brief Description
<p>West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) West Midlands Regional Assembly</p> <p>More information available at: www.wmra.gov.uk</p>	<p>The West Midlands Regional Assembly is the Regional Planning Body for the West Midlands region and is charged with producing and implementing the West Midlands Spatial Strategy, formally Regional Planning Guidance. The main purpose of the RSS is to provide a long term land use and transport planning framework for the region until 2021 to guide the preparation of local authority development plans and local transport plans. It also includes the Regional Transport Strategy.</p>
<p>West Midlands Economic Strategy (WMES) –‘Connecting to Success’ Advantage West Midlands</p> <p>More information available at: www.advantagem.co.uk</p>	<p>The <i>West Midlands Economic Strategy (WMES): Connecting to Success</i> was launched in December 2007 by Advantage West Midlands and sets out what the West Midlands region needs to do to improve its economic performance. The Strategy sets an ambitious vision for the West Midlands, this being:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“To be a global centre where people and business choose to connect”</i></p> <p>The Strategy focuses on 3 main themes – Business, People and Place. In order to deliver sustainable economic development and growth, the targeting and prioritisation of resources to deliver the strategy is aligned closely with the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy. The WMES therefore targets its spatial interventions on three primary areas, which are areas of multiple market failure including the Regeneration Zones, concentrations of knowledge assets including the High Technology Corridors and Birmingham as the major economic driver within the West Midlands economy.</p> <p>A Delivery Framework accompanies the Strategy and provides further details on how the strategy will be delivered.</p> <p>In order to measure progress in achieving the vision, the headline focus for the strategy is on closing the gap between the performance of the West Midlands and that of the UK as a whole and measuring this progress by tracking GVA per head in the region compared with the UK average.</p>
<p>West Midlands Regional Visitor Economy Strategy Tourism West Midlands</p> <p>More information available at: www.advantagem.co.uk</p>	<p>AWM have developed the West Midland Regional Visitor Economy Strategy which seeks to achieve the following by 2010: ‘The West Midlands Visitor Economy will be recognised for its continuing growth, and for the excellence of a number of sophisticated, world-class urban and authentic rural destinations for business and leisure visitors, which showcase the region’s creativity and heritage, celebrate its diversity and set new standards for quality and sustainability.’</p> <p>To achieve this vision, there are three key strategic aims:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Add value to the West Midlands visitor economy by attracting: more visitors from outside the region, more overnight

Title	Brief Description
	<p>visitors, more businesses and high-value leisure visitors and more private sector tourism investment.</p> <p>2. Enhance the West Midlands for residents and visitors by creating: 'liveable' and 'visitable' places, world-class cultural/sport/leisure facilities, high standards of quality, avenues for the learning, business support and careers, jobs and economic benefit, sustainable development, local and regional pride.</p> <p>3. Support local businesses and cultural life by enhancing and promoting: the quality and quantity of authentic local products, what is distinctive and unique about the region/sub-regions, and the multi-cultural experience of the region.</p>
<p>West Midlands Local Transport Plan (LTP) March 2006</p> <p>More information available at: www.advantagemw.co.uk www.westmidlandsltp.gov.uk</p>	<p>The final LTP March 2006 sets out a shared vision agreed by the seven authorities in the West Midlands Metropolitan area. The strategy in the LTP works towards reducing congestion, improving air quality, accessibility and road safety, and achieving regeneration across all 7 districts in the Metropolitan area and provides a framework for the programme of transport initiatives that will be pursued between 2006 - 2011.</p>
<p>Black Country Strategy for Growth and Competitiveness Black Country Consortium</p> <p>More information available at: www.blackcountryconsortium.co.uk</p>	<p>The Black Country Strategy for Growth and Competitiveness focuses on two major drivers of renaissance of the Black Country sub region, which are: lifting educational and skills performance and a radical transformation of the environment. It sets out a clear spatial strategy focusing growth in the four strategic centres and along corridors served by high quality public transport.</p> <p>The vision-led strategy has been developed to achieve four key objectives, which are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Population growth to 1.2m 2. Raising incomes to the national averages 3. Achieving a better balance of resident households reflecting the national average 4. Transforming the environment <p>Key outcomes of the Black Country Strategy are the elimination of the sub-region's output gap which currently stands at £3.5 billion, which represents around a third of the West Midlands regional economic underperformance compared to the national average) and land use/transportation restructuring to create high quality sustainable environments.</p>
<p>Zone Implementation Plan (ZIP) 2008-2011</p> <p>More information available at: www.arcofopportunity.com</p>	<p>The main purpose of the ZIP is to secure approval from AWM for plans to invest £129m of Single Programme across 2 Regeneration Zones – the Arc of Opportunity and Future Foundations. The 'Arc of Opportunity' is the South Black Country and West Birmingham Regeneration Zone covering an area stretching in an arc from Dudley through Sandwell to Birmingham City Centre.</p> <p>The ZIP identifies 3 Strategic Aims to focus and review future Zone activity. These are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enterprise - this aim will co-ordinate activities limited to incubation, business support and entrepreneurship.

Title	Brief Description
	<p>2. Employment - this aim will work to enhance workforce skills and reduce levels of worklessness across the zones.</p> <p>3. Environment - activities under this aim will focus on transformation of and use in support of economic and population growth. In particular the zones will focus on strategic centres and corridors across the sub-region.</p>
<p>Black Country Chamber of Commerce Representation and Lobbying Campaign</p> <p>More information available at: www.blackcountrychamber.co.uk</p>	<p>Black Country Chamber of Commerce is committed to creating a strong and sustainable economy within the Black Country that will support vibrant communities where people want to live, access good education, training and employment and enjoy a good quality of life. To achieve this aim the Chamber is committed to supporting the four pillars of the Regional Economic Strategy, as well each of the individual community strategies adopted by each of the four local authorities in Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton.</p> <p>A strong business base, essential to a strong economy, relies on a trading environment conducive to entrepreneurship, business growth and innovation. As a membership organisation the Chamber has the structure to engage effectively with a wide cross-section of the business community. This allows an understanding of the issues affecting business on a day-to-day basis and therefore effective lobbying on their behalf.</p> <p>There are eight key areas to the Chamber's lobbying strategy namely: Manufacturing, Economy, Education and Skills, Transport, Crime, Red tape and legislation, Environment, Visitor economy. These have been identified as key issues that have a direct impact on the success or failure of business. It is our intention, as one of the largest Chambers in the UK, to ensure that the local business voice continues to influence policy makers at all levels.</p>
<p>Black Country Visitor Economy Strategy</p> <p>Black Country Consortium</p> <p>More information available at: www.blackcountryconsortium.co.uk</p>	<p>Developed by the Black Country Consortium, the Black Country Visitor Economy Strategy sets the Vision for the development of the visitor economy. The Strategy identifies three strands of action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Making Connections ▪ Establishing the Destinations (in Dudley the destinations are Dudley Town Centre and Castle Hill and Brierley Hill/Merry Hill) ▪ Beautification <p>Based on the interventions contained within the strategy it anticipates the creation of around 5,000 new jobs in the visitor economy by 2008. Action plans for the Black Country and each of the local authorities have been prepared and identify a number of key priorities for action to deliver the Black Country Strategy.</p>
<p>Dudley Community Strategy 2005-2020</p> <p>Dudley Community Partnership</p> <p>More information available at: www.dudleyslsp.org</p>	<p>The Dudley Community Strategy sets a 15 year vision for Dudley Borough and the core of this vision is the promotion of stronger communities. The Strategy identifies 6 key priorities to assist the creation of stronger communities. The key priority of Creating a Prosperous Borough directly impacts on the Economic Strategy. Key actions within this priority include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing wage levels • Increasing the proportion of working-age population that is in employment • Reducing the percentage of the population of working age that is claiming key benefits

Title	Brief Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing employment levels in specific disadvantaged communities compared to overall borough level and narrowing the gap • Increasing the number of children and young people who move into employment or further training on leaving school • Increasing the skill/qualification levels of the population of the borough • Increasing the number of new businesses starting in the borough and reducing the number of businesses that fail or leave the borough. <p>The other 5 priorities within the Community Strategy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promoting a sense of well-being and good health for everyone ▪ Celebrating our heritage and local cultural life ▪ Safeguarding and improving our environment ▪ Promoting individual and community learning ▪ Making Dudley a safe and peaceful place in which to live
<p>Local Area Agreements Dudley Community Partnership</p> <p>More information available at: www.dudleylsp.org</p>	<p>The Local Area Agreement (LAA) is an agreement between Government departments and Local Strategic Partnerships, which forms a 3 year plan of activity, with targets and outcomes, for improving the quality of life for local people. There are four blocks to a LAA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and young people • Safer and stronger communities • Healthier Communities and Older People • Economic development and enterprise <p>Dudley's current LAA was agreed by Government Office in April 2007. The Next Generation LAA is currently being developed for agreement by June 2008.</p>
<p>Dudley Council Plan Dudley MBC</p> <p>More information available at: www.dudley.gov.uk</p>	<p>The Council Plan supports the Dudley Community Partnership's vision and focuses on the key issues of concern to residents and users of Council services. To achieve this, the Council Plan has six key themes, which are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Caring Matters ▪ Environment Matters ▪ Learning Matters ▪ Safety Matters ▪ Regeneration Matters ▪ Quality service Matters

Title	Brief Description
<p>Dudley Unitary Development Plan Dudley MBC</p> <p>More information available at: www.dudley.gov.uk</p>	<p>The Dudley Unitary Development Plan (UDP) was adopted in October 2005 and contains policies and proposals for the physical development of land in the Borough for the period up to 2011. It is also concerned with other uses of land including measures to improve the environment, manage the impact of traffic and also has a particular emphasis on regenerating the Borough.</p> <p>From an economic regeneration perspective, the main policy content of the Plan includes an increased emphasis on regeneration and designation of a Central Employment Zone to compliment Regeneration Zone designation, the regeneration of town centres and continued protection of valuable employment land and promotion of knowledge based industry. It also includes new environmental protection policies, integration of access and movement policies with land use proposals and recognition and provision for improved community services. The following strategic policies have direct relevance to the Economic Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> S.1 Social Inclusion, Equal Opportunities And Social Well Being S.2 Creating a More Sustainable Borough S.9 Economic Vitality S.11 Urban Renewal S.12 Central Employment Zone S.13 Role of Centres S.16 Access and Movement
<p>Dudley Borough Cultural Strategy Dudley MBC</p> <p>More information available at: www.dudley.gov.uk</p>	<p>The Council's Cultural Strategy was approved in December 2006 and plays an important role in a regeneration context. The Cultural Strategy is based on the Cultural Vision for the Borough as articulated in the Dudley Community Strategy 2005 – 2020. The Strategy has 3 key aims, which are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To increase access to and participation in cultural activity 2. To improve the quality and extend the range of cultural choices in the Borough 3. To stimulate economic and social regeneration within communities <p>The Strategy contains a 3-year action plan to deliver these three strategic aims. The Cultural Strategy embraces activities such as sport, the arts, tourism, libraries, museums, and heritage - activities with an economic as well as cultural and recreational dimensions. Key assets in this respect include international heritage assets, such as glass and geology – including Wrens Nest, Castle Hill and Dudley's impressive canal network. The establishment of 'Geopark' status for such key heritage assets would help establish the area within the global visitor economy, and have a potentially dramatic impact upon the borough's visitor economy.</p>

Appendix 3 - Key Partnerships and Agencies Influencing Economic Strategy Implementation

Partnerships	Agencies		
<i>Strategic Partnerships</i>	<i>Regional Agencies & Organisations (West Midlands)</i>	<i>Sub-Regional Agencies & Organisations (Black Country)</i>	<i>Local Agencies & Organisations (Dudley)</i>
Black Country Consortium	Advantage West Midlands	Black Country Chamber of Commerce	Dudley College
Regeneration Zone Board	CENTRO	Black Country Investment	Halesowen College
Dudley Community Partnership	Government Office for West Midlands	Black Country Learning & Skills Council	Stourbridge College
Dudley Economic Development & Regeneration Partnership	The Prince's Trust	Black Country Connexions	Dudley Council for Voluntary Services
Safe & Sound Partnership	West Midlands Local Government Association	Black Country Tourism	Centre for Equality & Diversity
Health & Well Being Partnership	West Midlands Regional Assembly	Federation of Small Businesses	Dudley Primary Care Trust
Brierley Hill Regeneration Partnership	Tourism West Midlands	Groundwork Black Country	
	Heart of England Tourism	Jobcentre Plus	
	Business Link West Midlands	University of Wolverhampton	
		Black Country Housing Group	
		Black Country Re-Investment Society	

Appendix 4 - Equality and Diversity

The Council's Equality and Diversity Policy presents the overall policy framework for equality and diversity for the Authority. The policy covers the Council's own employment policies and practices, the provision of services and its wider community leadership role. The Council's Equality Scheme, incorporating the Race, Disability and Gender Equality schemes required by legislation, sets out in more detail the Council's approach to promoting equality in these areas.

The Equality and Diversity Policy requires each Directorate to produce, on an annual basis, both an action plan (which identifies key corporate and Directorate equality and diversity targets) and an annual report (relating to the achievement of objectives outlined in the previous year). The action plan and annual report do not stand in isolation, but are contributory documents to be utilised as part of the business planning process, to ensure that equality and diversity are mainstreamed into service provision.

In accordance with the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy, the Directorate will seek to ensure that none of its employees or service users will receive less favourable treatment on any grounds which cannot be shown to be justified, regardless of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, gender, marital status, responsibility for children or other dependants, disability, sexual orientation, trans-sexuality, age, trades union or political activities, social class, where the person lives, or spent convictions. In addition, when working in partnership with other organisations, the Directorate will encourage such other organisations to adopt the same commitment.