

# **Wolverhampton City Strategy 2011-2026**

and implementation plan for delivery

**Prosperit**

# ty for all

creating opportunities that encourage enterprise,  
empower people and re-invigorate our city

# Introduction

## Overview

Welcome to Wolverhampton's City Strategy. This is the refreshed overarching strategy for the city, together with a plan for implementation. It has been developed by city partners working together through the Wolverhampton Partnership – the city's Local Strategic Partnership. It consists of four parts:

1. Introduction: which introduces the context and the information that has been used to formulate the strategy.
2. Strategic direction: which sets out our vision, our goal, the key concepts and the outcomes we seek.
3. Implementing the strategy: which includes the key themes, priorities and supporting actions. It also includes the lead roles that have been agreed with partners.
4. Communicating success and aspiration: which explains how we will measure our performance and how we will promote success.

## Why we need a strategy

Since 2006, local authorities have been required to publish a Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS), with the aim of improving the social, environmental and economic well-being of their area. The Strategy provides a roadmap, and gives us a clear sense of direction. In developing this City Strategy (our refreshed SCS) we have sought to:

- Tackle the biggest challenges the city faces
- Learn from our past work
- Use the process to fully discuss what we can, and cannot do
- Agree new priorities, actions, roles, responsibilities and ways of working
- Create a plan of action, based on what local people want and evidence of what works best.

**Statistical analysis:** The strategy has been informed by the available data which was summarised in four Needs Assessments that can be found on our website - [www.wton-partnership.org.uk](http://www.wton-partnership.org.uk). These assessments highlight the city's over reliance on public sector employment, lack of private sector jobs, and the gap between our skills levels and those required by the emerging knowledge economy. The assessments also reinforce the high levels of income inequality and child poverty, the poor health of the city, and the links with poor lifestyles particularly in relation to drinking and smoking.

Nevertheless despite these difficulties, there have been some very significant improvements. Young people's attainment levels have risen to the national average at GCSE whilst teenage conception rates have fallen markedly. Crime rates have fallen fast and there has been important improvements in the health of Wolverhampton residents. National awards have been won for the work on obesity, 14 -19 learning, adult social care (including dementia services) and partnership working.

**Review of past performance:** We have taken stock of our progress towards the priorities set out in the previous Sustainable Community Strategy and supporting Local Area Agreement. There have been some notable successes. Despite the recession, neighbourhoods are cleaner, more young people are achieving in school, infant mortality has fallen to national levels and crime has been reduced. Achievements are presented in more detail in a partnership report and an evaluation of the Working Neighbourhoods Fund which are available on our website - [www.wton-partnership.org.uk](http://www.wton-partnership.org.uk) <sup>2</sup>

This review also highlighted the need to make a step change in worklessness. Fresh thinking is needed particularly in respect of job creation.

**Feedback from local people:** Feedback from local people has also contributed to the development of this Strategy. Local people's perceptions match the statistics. In last year's annual resident perception survey, local people gave strong satisfaction ratings for the improvement of health services (79%), improving children's educational attainment (76%) and recycling (83.5%). The majority of local people felt they had more opportunity to improve their skills (65.5%) and the response to crime had improved (63%).

However, although the majority of residents recognised the support being provided by city partners to get local people back into work (61%), they were concerned about the lack of job opportunities, with only 46% saying the city was creating the right opportunities for local people.

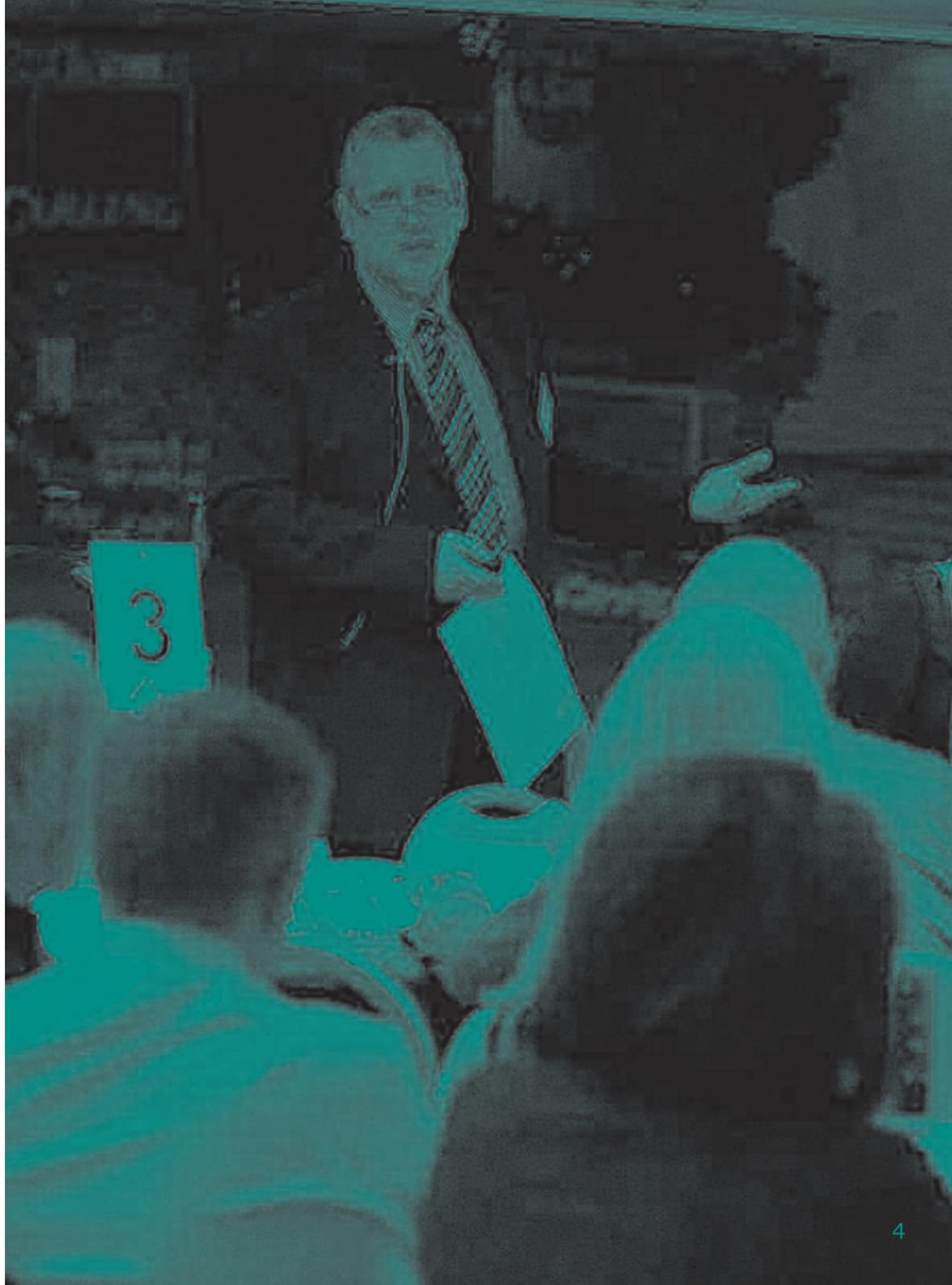
<sup>2</sup> Improving outcomes for our residents and our city – Executive Board report to Stakeholder Board, Autumn 2010 and an Evaluation of Working Neighbourhoods Fund report, March 2011

**Contributions from partners and stakeholders:** The Wolverhampton Strategic Partnership has involved partners, stakeholders and community representatives (both geographical and interest), throughout the development of the Strategy. We have held two Stakeholder Board meetings in the latter part of 2010, facilitated a series of specific sector workshops and task and finish groups, had dialogue with each thematic partnership and individual partners, run seminars with elected members and conducted a formal 12 week engagement process (12 November 2010 – 31 January 2011).

As a result, this Strategy was revised to give equal prominence to economic, people and place outcomes. Stakeholder contributions helped in forming the initial ideas for specific themes and new ways of working. Partners and stakeholders have also influenced how we prioritised the most important things the city should focus on and shaped our actions – what we will do, and how we will do it to achieve our goal of **prosperity for all**.

**Equality analysis:** As part of the process of developing the City Strategy and its supporting implementation plan we have conducted an independent equality analysis to help shape and refine its content. This is not just about meeting our statutory duty as a provider of public services <sup>3</sup>. The analysis can also help to ensure that the opportunities we seek to create are open, and relevant to all.

<sup>3</sup> The Partnership through facilitating joint working effectively acts as a provider of public services and is therefore required to meet its statutory duty as a provider of public services - Equality Act 2010.





## Towards a new vision for the city

We want to create opportunities that encourage enterprise, empower people and re-invigorate our city. This means:

A city that has fully capitalised on its spirit of competitiveness and innovation. A city that makes things happen.

A city where there are high levels of employment and opportunities for all types of learning throughout life.

A city which celebrates and builds on the diversity and achievements of its residents.

A city with a modern infrastructure that supports enterprise and promotes our proud heritage, our diverse culture and cutting edge levels of creativity.

A principal city that takes its place on the regional, national and international stage and welcomes all that visit.

A city of safe, strong and popular neighbourhoods where people have a sense of place and are proud to say they live in Wolverhampton.

A city where people benefit from good health and live longer.

A city where it is a great place to be a citizen, a business or a visitor.

# Strategic Direction

## Our vision and goal

Our vision has not significantly changed in its sentiment since Wolverhampton first became a city in 2000. The box on the opposite page seeks to capture the current thoughts and comments from leaders, partners and stakeholders. We will continue to refine and develop our vision with our partners and stakeholders.

What people are clear about is that both the vision and strategy should strongly reflect Wolverhampton's values: the need to support and empower local people. This means we need to create better opportunities for local people to obtain and progress in work, coupled with social, economic and cultural benefits that arise from good personal health, attractive neighbourhoods, supportive communities and a thriving city.

Although we recognise our vision needs more work, we also recognise that this should not hold us back from focused action. In order to maintain momentum, this Strategy focuses on one overarching goal: **Prosperity for all** and we aim to achieve this by **creating opportunities that encourage enterprise, empower people and re-invigorate our city**.

This Strategy is seeking to achieve:

**Prosperity:** With a stronger focus on economic recovery, growth and job creation than before. As new job opportunities need to be created outside of the public sector, the city must do all it can to attract new companies, support existing businesses and encourage new forms of local entrepreneurship. This means developing a collective understanding across all sectors of the city on how to create local markets and best exploit national and international connections. With modern day technology any size of business has the ability to collaborate and trade internationally; just as a more targeted approach to promoting the city as an attractive place to visit, can increase the footfall we need to support and grow our retail and hospitality sector.

**For all:** It is vital that the most vulnerable people in our community benefit from our goal. That is what a civilised society means. We want to **close** gaps in skills, health and well-being – not widen them. This means identifying and unlocking the key barriers at the right time so that people are not held back or discouraged. At a community and neighbourhood level, support still needs to be provided to communities and groups that do not yet have the skills and capacity to be self-sustaining. In addition, those who are not in a position to work also need to be safeguarded and protected, such as older people, the young and those living in poverty.

**Opportunity:** Whilst **prosperity for all** is our goal, the way that we will get there will require a concerted effort to empower people and support business and entrepreneurs to succeed. This needs to be underpinned by the re-energising and renewal of the very fabric of our city. In a modern world, the physical environment needs to provide the infrastructure that supports the functioning of global companies, small business, neighbourhoods and people of all ages and backgrounds. But place-making is not only about the technical and management aspects of the environment, it is also about creating a sense of place. How we collectively decide to promote the city of Wolverhampton should reflect our diversity, our creativity, our culture and heritage. It should help to foster pride and aspiration among citizens, as well as communicate the opportunities Wolverhampton has to offer the people who live, work and visit the city.

These three are totally dependent on one another. That's why our goal is prosperity for all - creating opportunities that encourage enterprise, empower people and re-invigorate our city.

The diagram opposite sets out the City Strategy framework.

Our goal

**Prosperity for all**



How we will achieve the goal

Creating opportunities that encourage enterprise, empower people and re-invigorate our city



Our planned results

Increase net jobs

High employment rate

Longer, healthier lives

Reduce child poverty



How we will measure success

By 2026 the number of jobs per head of the population will have grown from 0.77 to 0.85

By 2026 we will have an employment rate of at least 70% from a baseline of 61.3% in 2010

By 2026 life expectancy at birth will be 80.0/83.0 (males/females) from a baseline of 76.3/81.0

By 2026 we will have no more than 10% of our families living in poverty

# 3 Implementing the Strategy

## 3.1 Delivering during a period of change and austerity

**Prosperity for all** is a long-term goal, and this section sets out how we will go about realising it through working in partnership.

We recognise partnership working in the city is going through a significant period of change. Some organisations that have made significant contributions in the past are consolidating, or in some cases are being wound up. This means that the delivery part needs to be a living document, that will be refined to take account of these changes as they continue to take place. For example, during the course of this year we will discuss with communities and businesses, how they can increasingly take a stronger role, and every year we will refine the action plan so that everyone's contributions are recognised. The diagram opposite sets out how this works.

## 3.2 Key Themes

There are three themes for action and on the following pages we explain how the theme was chosen and the priorities for action. An implementation plan for delivering these actions for each theme can be found at the back of this document.

Our three themes are:

1. Encouraging enterprise and business
2. Empowering people and communities
3. Re-invigorating our city

**Empowerment and Support**



Working together to re-invigorate our city



Creating opportunities for entrepreneurs and business

Creating opportunities for people and communities



**Prosperity for all**



## **Key theme 1**

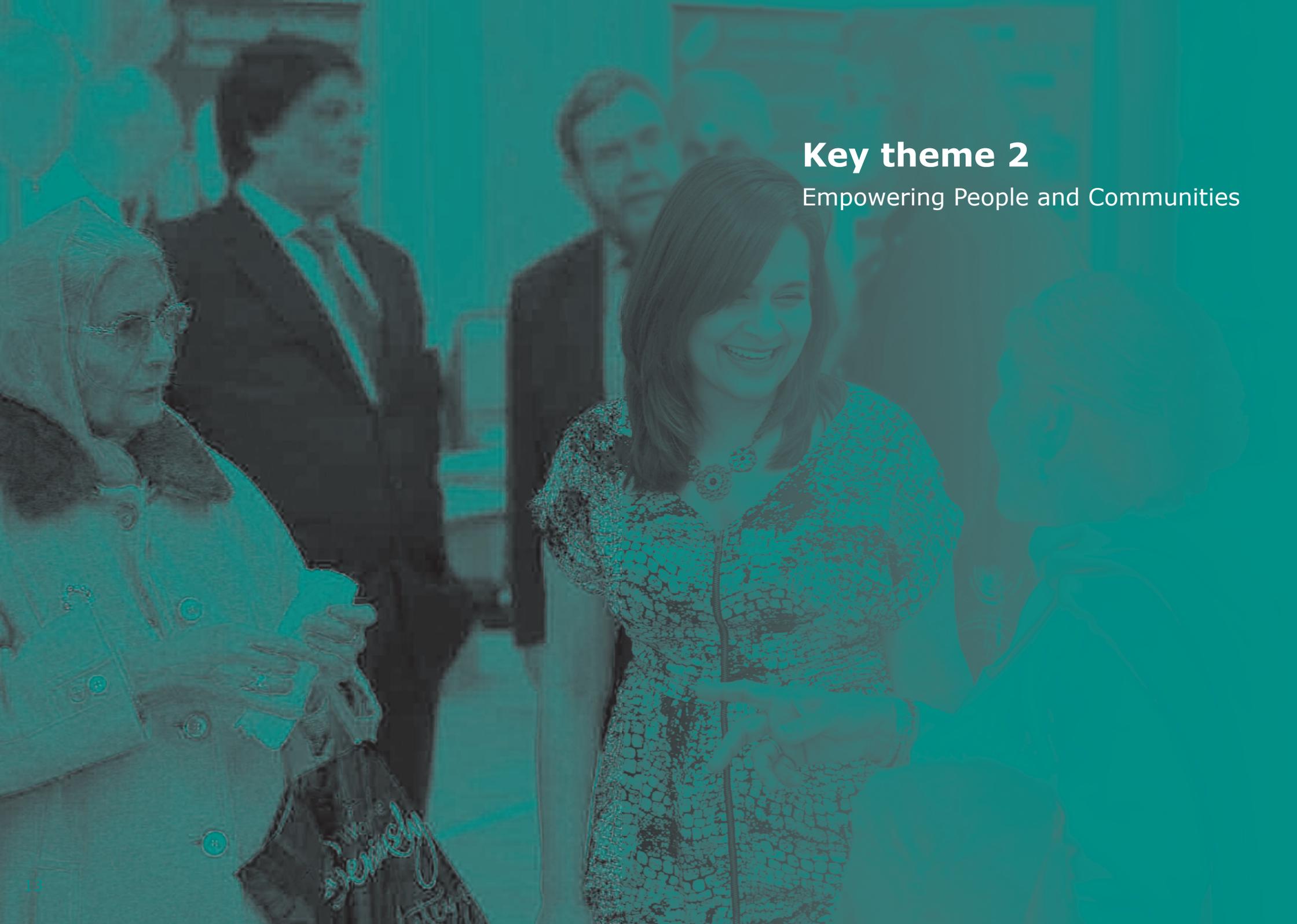
Encouraging Enterprise and Business

# Encouraging Enterprise and Business

Since 2000, the gap between Wolverhampton's economic performance and other areas of the Midlands and UK has widened and the recent recession hit the city badly. Nearly 4,000 jobs have been lost since 2007, and the city remains over-dependent on the public sector for employment, with further losses predicted over the next five years. We need to do all we can to support new private sector job opportunities and equip local people to compete for those jobs. We also need to address our low waged economy, which significantly contributes to child poverty and ill-health. The city was the only area in the UK to experience a fall in average weekly pay for residents since 2008.

## Priorities for action

- **Attracting new businesses** – because attracting strategic companies and businesses with high growth potential will bring with them new job opportunities, supply chain opportunities, and raise the national and international profile of Wolverhampton in terms of inward investment, innovation and trade. We also need to grow our own new companies by supporting local entrepreneurship and business start up.
- **Supporting businesses to develop and grow** – because we need all forms of businesses to be competitive and flourish, including social enterprise, co-operatives, mutuals and not for profit organisations. Currently, Wolverhampton has amongst the lowest levels of social enterprise in the West Midlands.
- **Supporting our priority sectors to innovate and compete internationally** – because there are key industry clusters that will determine the city's ability to produce greater numbers of high-quality jobs. Currently these industries lack the critical mass and are not yet creating large volumes of jobs. To do this we need in-depth understanding of the inter-relationship between high growth sectors, to reveal how firms operate, expand and contract, and the impact of this on supply chains and the overall economy.
- **Improving critical business infrastructure** – because business competitiveness is highly dependent on having the right modern infrastructure, such as transport, flexible accommodation and high speed broadband.
- **Developing and growing a skilled workforce** – because this is critical with the global shift towards a knowledge economy, to meet the needs of existing and future employers, and equip local people to compete in the jobs market. Currently 23% of the city's workforce has no qualifications. A cradle to grave approach to education is fundamental to obtaining and retaining a job and earning a decent living.



## Key theme 2

Empowering People and Communities

# Empowering People and Communities

Too many children in Wolverhampton are born into poverty and do not have the support they need to succeed later in life. In 2007, nearly one in three children and young people were growing up in poverty – the second highest level in the West Midlands. Not only does poverty hold people back, it is also costly for the whole local community, and is estimated to cost the public purse at least £30million per year. Coupled with poverty are problems of ill-health and life expectancy, for which the city is in the lowest 20% nationally. Obesity, alcohol misuse, smoking and poor lifestyles all make significant contributions to the poor health of the city's population, and one in three people are in receipt of incapacity benefits because of poor mental health – the highest rate in the Black Country.

## Priorities for action

- **Undertaking early intervention and prevention** – because we recognise that the foundation for success is laid in early childhood we need to invest in good quality early years provision and early intervention to support families in challenging circumstances. For example, still too many children in Wolverhampton arrive at school already at a disadvantage. Early intervention is also required to support vulnerable adults.
- **Supporting financial inclusion** – because financial inclusion underpins a sustainable economy. Reducing debt, improving access to bank accounts and affordable credit, improving financial capability and a living wage all help to address barriers to employment, can improve mental and physical health and result in more spend within the local economy.
- **Encouraging healthier lifestyles and independence at all stages of life** – because if we get this right, people will live longer and healthier lives, be more productive in work, and live independently for longer and with modest levels of support.
- **Supporting more people to be active within their communities** – because we want more people to take the opportunities that will become available from the decentralisation and localism agenda, as it will open the door to new forms of social entrepreneurship, whilst existing opportunities such as volunteering enable people to gain new skills and experiences and can provide a route into employment. Local people's participation in networks such as Local Neighbourhood Partnerships help to ensure that public services are tailored to meet local needs.
- **Encouraging the voluntary and community sectors** – because we want to support the sector to attract new resources that are being made available at the national level and to take advantage of the opportunities that arise from the decentralisation and localism agenda.

## Key theme 3

Re-invigorating the City



# Re-invigorating the City

As the search for quality places grows in importance, for Wolverhampton to be competitive it needs to have developed a distinct and attractive lifestyle offer based on the quality of its housing, culture, recreation and leisure facilities. This should be underpinned by safe, strong and welcoming communities. These factors are what gives the city its distinctiveness, and turns physical spaces into places. These components also play an important role in health, well-being and enabling people to learn, develop and prosper.

## Priorities for action

- **Developing diverse and welcoming neighbourhoods with good quality housing** – because housing choice needs to keep pace with rising aspirations if the city is to retain younger people and also address homelessness. Where we plan to build or make improvements, we should create neighbourhoods that are desirable, well integrated, environmentally friendly, safe and well managed. High quality sustainable housing design can also help mitigate the effects of climate change and support green lifestyles.
- **Improving the physical fabric and infrastructure of the city centre** – because we need to significantly revise and develop our plans for the city centre. This means that Wolverhampton must develop and promote a strong, confident and distinct offer if we are to attract the investment we are seeking.
- **Addressing crime and perceptions of crime in the city centre and across the city** – because these factors have a strong influence on whether people want to invest, live, work or visit the city. They also impact significantly on everyday life.
- **Marketing and promoting the city's cultural and creative sector to increase vibrancy and footfall** – because a good retail, cultural and lifestyle offer is critical for any city seeking to promote itself in a globally competitive knowledge economy. Cultural festivals and events, alongside the entertainments programme offered by city venues have a particularly key role to play, as they create much needed footfall in the city, as well as promoting a positive and vibrant image of Wolverhampton.
- **Increasing local ownership of place** – because it is important to take into account how people perceive and experience the place in which they work, live and socialise, as well as paying attention to the design and quality of the physical environment.



## Principles for Partnership Working

### Principles for Partnership Working

#### 1. We will empower and support:

By encouraging and welcoming new players, who bring other insights, energy and contributions and by enhancing existing partners' contributions.

By providing opportunities for participation and learning throughout all that we do.

#### 2. We will make best use of our resources and add value:

By making use of all our assets – economic, intellectual, environmental, social, cultural, democratic and financial.

By bringing together the right people, at the right time, to develop the best solutions that address difficult problems.

By focusing our effort on joint activities that have the greatest impact.

#### 3. We will work effectively:

Through efficient partnership governance structures that support delivery and enable us to hold each other to account.

By clearly and consistently communicating our successes, challenges and our aspirations - as widely as possible.

### 3.3

#### Partnership in action

The strength of Wolverhampton's partnership working is nationally recognised. Now at a time of severe public expenditure cutbacks, we need to capitalise on this asset. That does not mean that the way we work will remain the same. The principles for partnership working that will support the delivery of this Strategy are featured left.

The actions that partners have signed up to deliver and the level at which each action is best undertaken are set out in the detailed implementation plan for each theme at the back of this document. We have identified the following delivery levels:

- Partnership at Black Country level and beyond
- Partnership at the city level
- Partnership at neighbourhood level

Over time there are likely to be several shifts in how activities are delivered. For example, with the formation of Local Enterprise Partnerships it is likely that an increasing amount of economic development, transport and physical infrastructure initiatives will be undertaken in partnership with business and neighbouring local authorities at a Black Country level. This might include collaborating, forming virtual teams and aligning resources. Conversely some activities, such as those concerned with safety, environmental improvements, child poverty and health may well be devolved to the area and neighbourhood level, as communities come forward to take advantage of new changes in legislation.

A lead organisation has been assigned to each action. They may be leading in their own right because they commission or undertake most of the work. Alternatively they may be representing or facilitating an established management or delivery group, that will collectively take responsibility for the delivery of the work.

# Communicating Success and Aspiration

## Measuring our Performance

If we want to communicate success, then we need to be able to measure and monitor progress.

We only need a few measures, too many and we will lose our focus. We have chosen four measures, which will show our overall progress towards our goal:



We have also identified a second tier of performance indicators, which will give us a good indication of how we are progressing. These are linked to our three themes.

Priorities	Indicators
<p><b>Encouraging Enterprise and Business Key Theme 1</b></p> <p>Attracting new businesses</p> <p>Supporting businesses to develop and grow</p> <p>Supporting our priority sectors to innovate and compete internationally</p> <p>Improving critical business infrastructure</p> <p>Developing and growing a skilled workforce</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active enterprises per 1000 population</li> <li>• Business survival rates</li> <li>• Number of people employed in key industry clusters locally</li> <li>• Hectares of readily available employment land</li> <li>• Percentage of 5+ GCSEs including English and Maths, grades A*- C</li> <li>• Percentage of the population with no qualifications</li> <li>• Percentage of the population with NVQ L4+ or equivalent</li> </ul>
<p><b>Empowering People and Communities Key Theme 2</b></p> <p>Undertaking early intervention and prevention</p> <p>Supporting financial inclusion</p> <p>Encouraging healthier lifestyles and independence at all stages of life</p> <p>Supporting more people to be active within their communities</p> <p>Encouraging the voluntary and community sectors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foundation Stage Profile - percentage scoring 78% in PSE &amp; CLL  <small>PSE = Personal, social and emotional development            CLL = Communication, language and literacy</small></li> <li>• Total seeking help at Citizens Advice Bureau for debt</li> <li>• Alcohol related mortality rate</li> <li>• Percentage of children obese in Year 6</li> <li>• Infant mortality rate</li> <li>• Percentage who have given unpaid help in the last 12 months</li> <li>• Value of voluntary and community sector gross income who are contracted with the council</li> </ul>

### **Re-Invigorating the City Key Theme 3**

Developing diverse and welcoming neighbourhoods with good quality housing

Improving the physical fabric and infrastructure of the city centre

Addressing crime and perceptions of crime in the city centre and across the city

Marketing and promoting the city's cultural and creative sector to increase vibrancy and footfall

Increasing local ownership of place

- Number of affordable houses built
- Percentage of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together
- Percentage of vacant units in the city centre
- Total recorded crime rate per 1000 population
- Percentage who feel safe in the day/after dark
- Number of visitors to key city centre cultural attractions
- Percentage of people who feel able to influence decisions

## Celebrating success and promoting the city

This Strategy sets out a road map for a Wolverhampton that is confident of its strengths and potential. The image of the city is essential to all stakeholders – although for different reasons. A good reputation not only draws business investment, but also attracts more people to visit, play, study, work and put down roots here. It also creates a halo effect that makes citizens feel good about where they live, protective and respectful of their neighbourhoods, more involved in their communities and hopeful about their futures.

The core of the city's image is its identity – how its stakeholders think about it and most important, talk about and promote it. To match the ambitions of this Strategy, Wolverhampton needs to articulate and create a distinct identity that enables the city to compete more effectively in regional, UK and international markets.

Marketing is the process that supports the creation and management of a Wolverhampton brand to achieve a wide range of promotional objectives.

**In developing the brand, we will:**

**Engage with a wide range of stakeholder's both within and outside of the city** to establish how Wolverhampton is perceived. The perceptions of audiences in our target markets, identified in our economic and regeneration plans are of special interest as their understanding will help us maximise the city's ability to compete for inward investment and trade.

We shall also ask stakeholder's to articulate what Wolverhampton stands for, helping us to create a true identity and yet distinctive enough for the city to stand out in potentially crowded target markets.

**Agree how we position the city** by focusing on how the brand is developed, protected and deployed. This involves agreeing our objectives, key messages and how we customise and promote our brand to match the target audiences we want to reach.

**Plan to ensure we achieve the very best return from our investment in marketing by partners and stakeholders** through maximising the impact of the Wolverhampton brand. This is especially important in a period of austerity. For this reason, the planning, management and resourcing of city-wide promotions will require not just coordination of effort but also sharing of resources in a way that prioritises the marketing of the city over the marketing of partners' individual assets.

## 1.3

### Information that has been used to shape the City Strategy

**Main external influences:** the context in which we are working has dramatically shifted over the last two years, and the following factors have been taken into account:

- **Economic recovery:** The global recession has impacted badly on the city. The employment rate for Wolverhampton fell significantly from early 2006, at least a year before the first impacts of the recession were felt in other areas. During the three years between 2007 and 2010 nearly 4,000 jobs have been lost, and the city is the only area in the UK to experience a fall in average weekly pay for residents. The recession has highlighted Wolverhampton's low level of resilience to economic shocks:

“Other areas.....were better prepared to respond to the shock of the recession, due to the diversity of the business stock, the skills and educational levels of their workforce, innovative capacity and the ability to create and sustain businesses. Where work is available, the relatively low skills and aspirations of the population mean that in general, residents earn less than incoming commuters”.

- **Decentralisation and localism:** There continues to be a national drive to put citizens at the centre of public sector reform. The Decentralisation and Localism Bill currently before Parliament provides councils with a general power of competence which will enable them to take a holistic approach to their areas. The Bill also reflects policies to help people at a neighbourhood level to take a greater role in the design and delivery of public services and planning. Wolverhampton has a national reputation for local participation and neighbourhood working, and it is the right time to build on this strength.
- **Public sector change:** The public sector is facing a time of tough choices, with major cuts in public funding and enormous changes to organisational structures. Like other urban areas in the West Midlands, there is a greater demand on public services in Wolverhampton because of our high levels of worklessness and intergenerational poverty. This means public sector change needs careful management if we are to increase prosperity and prevent a further widening in inequality.
- **Innovation and creativity:** In recent years, where we have made progress, initiatives have been pump-primed by Area Based Grant and Working Neighbourhoods Funding. These funding sources are no longer available, and delivery of our Strategy needs to fully capitalise on the other types of assets such as our social and cultural capital. First and foremost, this includes making the most of our talent and creativity.

Source: Wolverhampton Economic Assessment 2010, GHK





If you want to comment on this Plan, would like further copies or a summary leaflet contact:

The Wolverhampton Partnership

Telephone: 01902 556044  
E-mail: [enquiries@wton-partnership.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@wton-partnership.org.uk)  
Website: [www.wton-partnership.org.uk](http://www.wton-partnership.org.uk)