

THE WOLVERHAMPTON STORY

WOLVERHAMPTON'S LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT

Final – 30 January 2008

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A City for the Millennium

Since Wolverhampton became the Millennium City in 2001, the City has improved substantially: as a place in which to live, work, play and invest. For example, in 2006-07 the Audit Commission placed Wolverhampton 19th out of 388 areas in terms of improvement in all performance indicators. Local public service organisations with partners in the voluntary, community and private sectors are working hard to overcome many of the ravages caused by the collapse of the local economy in the last quarter of the twentieth century and build an ethnically diverse and ambitious city with a clear sense of direction. Our Local Area Agreement forms part of our journey and focuses on the major challenges we still face.

Demography of the City

Wolverhampton's current population stands at 236,600, a fall of almost 5% (12,000 residents) since 1991. This was the highest decrease in the region and in contrast to a 2.5% regional increase. Despite the reduction in population, the City remains one of the most densely populated places in the country, with nearly 9,000 residents per square mile (34 people per hectare) the second most densely populated within the ex-West Midlands County.

Wolverhampton is an ethnically diverse City, with just under a quarter (22%) classifying themselves as being of a non-white ethnic origin (9.5% nationally). The largest non-white category was Indian at 12% (this is twice as high as the West Midlands average of 6%). Sikhs account for 7.6% of Wolverhampton's population – the 4th largest Sikh community in England and Wales. Measured by National Insurance Registrations, migrant workers represent 2.03% of the City's workforce population. "The overwhelming majority are in employment". In October 2007, there were 815 asylum seekers in receipt of accommodation and support in the City and a further 167 failed asylum seekers. This is broadly consistent with the numbers over the past eighteen months.

The proportion of people under the age of thirty (39%) has decreased by around a tenth since 1991. In contrast, the proportion of older people aged sixty or over (22%) increased by nearly a fifth. This rise was most noticeable amongst those aged seventy-five and over. People in this age group now account for nearly 8% of the City's population.

The Challenges We Face

Wolverhampton ranks 28th (out of 354) in the Government's Index of Multiple Deprivation (2007) and almost half of the City lies within the 20% most deprived in the country and 22% of the population is classed as income deprived. Only 67% of the population is in employment and the average income for the City is £19,795. 40% of households Wolverhampton have an annual income of less than £10,000 and only 3% with an annual income of over £50,000

The unemployment rate for Wolverhampton stands at 4.7% (November 2007), the 2nd highest in the West Midlands. In 2006, 74% of the working age population was economically active. 6.3% of the working age population are seeking employment. Nearly a quarter of dependent children live in households where none of the adults are in employment. Between 1996 and 2006, there was a 15% increase in VAT registrations.

Between 1995 and 2005, there was a 6.5% net increase in jobs in the City. The 53% reduction in manufacturing jobs has been more than offset by the increase in service sector employment – the biggest increase being in education, health and other public service. However, often these jobs are not being accessed by local people.

The lack of accessible employment and the accompanying lack of income amongst so many of the City's communities impacts right across the socio-economic agenda and underpins every challenge faced by the City. Developing a thriving, sustainable economy is fundamental to resolving the issues faced by Wolverhampton.

The health and well-being of the City needs improvement. Wolverhampton is a Health Spearhead authority because life expectancy is in the bottom 20% nationally. Life expectancy for women has not improved for 3 years. Nearly eight out of every thousand babies in the City are likely to die before they are one-year old. However, there is a four-fold variation across the City. Most of our health problems are related to poor lifestyle choices. Smoking causes over 450 deaths per year. It is the direct cause of the very high infant death rate in the city and also the high rates of heart disease and stroke.

Variations in health experience in the city are strongly linked to socio-economic factors which are closely linked to lifestyle choice. Nearly 20% of females will conceive before they are 18 years of age. 10% of children aged 11 years are obese. Take-up of sporting activities amongst both young people and adults remains low compared to the national average.

Wolverhampton has the highest rate of problematic drug users across the West Midlands at 2929 (a third of whom are aged 15 to 24) and the 18th highest in England. Drugs use amongst 15 to 24 year olds is the highest in the West Midlands. We also have the highest prevalence of crack cocaine use across the region. Drugs Services are well integrated with the criminal justice system, with over half of drug service users coming from CJS referrals, compared with one third nationally. Alcohol is a significant health issue in Wolverhampton with high rates of deaths due to alcoholic liver disease. There are widespread concerns regarding the prevalence of alcohol-related crime, particularly violent crime in relation to domestic violence and the night time economy. An Alcohol Action Plan is being developed to address both health and crime issues.

Since 2003-04, crime has fallen by 21%. This figure represents a consistent overall downward trend since 2005, with a flattening and slight increase in some categories this year. From a total of 19,449 PSA offences in 2003/4, the last 12 month period shows a total of 15,457.

Between April 2007 and September 2007, violence against the person has decreased by 5% since the same period last year (2520 this year, 2655 last year). The number of

domestic violence (DV) incidents reported to the police has increased with 1670 reports in the year to date (83% increase on last year). One of our current LAA aims is to improve services to victims of domestic violence. Our measures for this include increasing reporting (of what is agreed to be an under reported crime), reduce repeat victims and increase the number of offenders brought to justice. We have achieved a significant increase in reporting (83%) in the first part of the year – and an increase in offences brought to justice. However we are off-track in relation to the repeat victimisation target (by 29%).

Housing – both in terms of affordability and decency – remains a key issue for the City. Low income levels combined with the increase in house prices mean that there is unlikely to be an easy resolution to the 6267 concealed homes in the City. Annual affordable housing shortfall has doubled in the last 3 years. 44.2% of vulnerable people live in homes that are not 'decent'. In each of the last four years, there has been approximately 1500 homelessness applications made, of which about one third had a statutory right to be housed.

Strengths and Opportunities

Despite these challenges, often substantial progress has been made across the board – this has been particularly evident in crime, education, cleanliness, public housing and social care. Nevertheless, such was the City's economic and social plight all too often this progress has neither narrowed the gap between the City and the region or within the City itself.

However, in the ABCD (the City's New Deal for Communities) area, the gap has been narrowed across a range of issues most notably employment and crime, the latter being as a consequence of focused, area-based activity. In other cases – health and skills, for example – the inherited cultural issues and the legacy of the City's industrial past are still leaving their mark. The ABCD programme will see substantial investment in the future and the evaluation of the programme's impact as a source of learning for the City.

The City's strong partnership culture, close cross-sector relationships and a nationally recognised engagement structure create a very effective framework for taking a focused causal approach to our LAA. At its July meeting, the Partnership Board agreed to use these established structures as the primary means of developing the LAA supplemented with 'one-off' events to ensure wide third sector engagement.

We want to use recent developments to address the priorities within the LAA. Following the successful inspection of Wolverhampton Homes in September, there will now be a £300m investment in the public sector stock to meet Decent Homes standards. In addition, Wolverhampton is one of fourteen national pilots for the development of a Local Housing Company announced in November aimed at securing more affordable homes in the City.

The City's strong track record of planning and delivering services for older people extends well beyond health and social care. The internationally recognised 'very supported' housing schemes developed in partnership with older people and the third sector has

been complemented by an increase in those supported to live at home (up to 84 per 1000 population in 2006).

The City has well advanced and credible plans to transform its local economy over the next decade. The i54 has been designated as the Regional Investment Site and will create in the region of 6000 new high value jobs. In addition, the Summer Row retail development and the Transport Interchange are set to commence in 2008 and 2009 respectively. Both these major regeneration projects will support the transformation of the City centre, acting as a magnet for further investment. We want to capitalise on these very major developments to ensure that direct across-the-board benefits accrue to local residents. These transformational developments, particularly when taken together will change the City fundamentally and, in the longer term, make a significant contribution to the delivery of the Regional Economic Strategy and its targets to raise income levels and reduce worklessness.

There are major infrastructure programmes being embarked upon in the City: Building Schools for the Future, LIFT and PFI Health Improvement Projects, which will impact both on the nature and quality of the services accessed by residents and provide further stimulus to the City's regeneration. When taken together and in conjunction with the implementation of the BERR priorities, Wolverhampton will be a City of enterprise built on its traditions of innovation and excellence.

Educational attainment at Key Stage 4 has improved significantly faster than the national rate and the number of pupils achieving 5 GCSEs A*- C now stands at 60%, whilst the 'staying-on' rate now exceeds the national average. However, the numbers attaining 5 GCSEs including English and Maths is only on a par with our statistical neighbours. The numbers of young people aged 16-19 years who are not in education training or employment (NEET) has been steadily decreasing, with the rate for the City currently standing at 10.8%. However, the indications are that this rate is substantially higher in priority neighbourhoods. 53.3% of young offenders are NEET – significantly worse than the national and regional averages.

Historically, the City has been a "low qualification" area and despite recent improvements, 25.1% of residents still have no qualifications. However, the successes at Key Stage 4 will start to have an impact on the numbers of adults with qualifications and, it is to be hoped, impact on the City's learning culture. 23,000 students attend the University of Wolverhampton, 46% come from the lowest socio-economic classes and over half come from the local region. The University's and the City Council's development of Wolverhampton Science Park and SPARK, the creative industries incubator for start-up businesses, are becoming significant elements in our economic landscape. The University provides support to between 800 and 1000 small businesses each year.

Between them, Wolverhampton College and the Adult Education Service provide learning for in excess of 25,000 learners a year. In the last year, through the College, there was a 50% increase in residents achieving level 2 qualifications and a 25% increase at Level 3. In all forms of learning the achievements of BME learners have improved at a faster rate than the national average.

Many of the very significant improvements in educational and skills attainment in the City can be attributed to the partnership working through the City's 14-19 arrangements and through those fostered by the Learning Partnership between Wolverhampton College, the University and the Adult Education Service. This has enabled the development of the City Learning Quarter, the further development of the Science Park with iCentral as well as a range of innovative learner-focused curricular, including community learning work within the LANA structures to address worklessness and low skill levels within priority neighbourhoods.

A particular strength of the City is the role the Third Sector plays in both developing strategy and delivering outcomes. "The relationship between the Sectors is supported by the development of our local Compact. Work on this has been nationally recognised for good practice in partnership working, most recently for our success in embedding the Compact within our LSP. There is a strongly cohesive nature to the City: a City which prides itself on its dynamic ethnic mix. The Third Sector has played a significant role in the development of the LAA – not just through its membership of all the Theme Partnerships, but also through its own groupings. In this context of cross-sector working, the LAA provides an opportunity to move commissioning further forward in a way which supports the sectors in making their contribution to the City's renaissance.

What Does the Evidence Tell Us?

Based on the local data above and comparisons with national and regional data, the following issues appear to be emerging as "stand-out" priorities:

- Low income levels
- Worklessness
- NEETs
- Teenage Conception
- Infant mortality
- Alcohol and drug misuse
- Violent crime including domestic violence
- Non-decent housing
- Affordable housing
- Adults without qualifications

The majority of these issues are not stand alone and we will use the LAA as means of addressing the interdependencies across the City's partnership family.

Listening to Residents

The City is an acknowledged leader in community engagement through its Local Area and Neighbourhood Arrangements, giving residents and communities a clear and powerful voice with service providers and commissioners. This has led directly to improvement in, for example, environmental services and crime. Resident involvement led to the creation of the award-winning Bereavement Service and older people's residential care and young people's engagement, described as "outstanding" in the recent Joint Area Review, has had a direct impact on raising educational attainment. This close relationship with the City's residents is further evidenced by the 2006-07 Resident Survey

data which places Wolverhampton in the national top quartile for eight of the fifteen satisfaction indicators.

Each Local Neighbourhood Partnership has drawn up an Action Plan which together will underpin the new Sustainable Communities Strategy and by extension the new LAA. What these Action Plans together with residents' surveys tell us is that the following are the most important issues for our citizens:

- Crime levels/fear of crime
- Anti-social behaviour
- Clean streets and open spaces
- Traffic management and transport
- Activities and provision for young people and children
- Training and employment opportunities
- Decent housing
- Accessible and available health services

There is a generally close fit between these resident concerns and those issues arising from the data, which provide us with an opportunity to take a focused, causal approach to the LAA.

The reduction in crime rates in priority neighbourhoods compared to the rest of the City has been a considerable success, in large part attributable to the close working relationships between Local Neighbourhood Partnerships, the Safer Wolverhampton Partnership and the police through their neighbourhood policing strategy. This approach has enabled the police to directly address both criminality and people's perceptions of crime and anti-social behaviour.

Along with crime, environmental issues represent a key concern of residents. By working closely with Local Neighbourhood Partnerships and through the development of an Integrated Environmental Enforcement Service, dramatic progress has been made – all the key Best Value indicators have improved, the current LAA stretch target (to March 2009) on street cleanliness (BV199a) is being met and there is national top quartile performance for resident satisfaction with waste services. The Black Country Urban Park and current programme of local environmental improvements provide the opportunity to build on these successes and address issues such as air quality, climate change and the quality of the constrained green public space in the City.

A Partnership Workshop on the Wolverhampton LAA was held on 30 October, at which there were over seventy participants. Partners were asked to identify how they and their partnership could contribute to each of the five resident outcomes identified above. This focused on practical actions and will have a strong influence on the development of LAA delivery plans.

Principal Aspirations for the City

The four LSPs that comprise the Black Country sub-region – together with the Black Country Consortium – recognise the significance of their respective LAAs in driving

forward a range of sub-regional agendas critical to the future of the area and in turn the success of their Sustainable Community Strategies and LAAs.

The Black Country Strategy for Growth and Competitiveness focuses on *two major drivers of renaissance of the Black Country sub-region* of 1 million people and 450,000 jobs, namely: lifting educational and skills performance, and a radical transformation of the environment. It sets out a clear spatial strategy of focusing growth in four strategic centres and along corridors served by high quality public transport.

The vision-led Strategy was developed to achieve four key objectives of population growth to 1.2m; raising incomes to the national average; achieving a better balance of resident households reflecting national average; and transforming the environment. Key outcomes are the elimination of the sub region's current output gap of around £3.5 billion (which represents around a third of the West Midlands regional economic underperformance compared to 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:

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

In making its contribution to both the Black Country Study and the Regional Economic Strategy, the City will see substantial further development of its retail sector; a further 90 hectares of employment land and an additional 21,000 dwellings by 2011. The two strategic growth corridors of the City Centre-Stafford Road and Bilston-Wednesfield will provide the focus for much of this development. Engagement in Black Country Challenge provides a complementary skills and learning dimension to these developments.

The SCS will focus on the following two overarching aims: 'Transforming the Local Economy' – through physical regeneration and up-skilling local people – and 'Closing the Gap' between those individuals and communities at risk of falling further behind the rest of the City.

With this in mind, the LAA identifies five key resident outcomes for the next three years:

- **We have more job opportunities**
- **We like where we live**
- **We have access to the skills we need**
- **We will live longer and healthier lives**
- **We feel safer and more involved**

These provide a focused and considered response to:

- What residents tell us they want and require

- What the data tell us the City needs to address
- Existing LAA performance
- Recent external inspection reports
- Creating the environment for economic success for all
- What is appropriate for inclusion in the LAA (rather than the SCS or individual organisational plans)

Additional important issues – preventing violent extremism – will continue to engage partners through the Theme Partnerships or, for example, in the case of transportation will continue to be addressed through a regional and sub-regional approach. The aim of Wolverhampton's new three-year LAA is to provide a focused way forward firmly based on our residents' requirements.

Key Aims and Principles

Within the context of a sustained improvement path, as demonstrated by the mid-year out-turns of the current LAA, the City faces significant challenges. The interdependence of the challenges facing the City requires a focused and collective response well beyond the customary bounds of professional silos. We see the new LAA as an opportunity to build on a history of successful partnership working and challenge the City's economic legacy which still damages too many residents' lives. This is a mission from which we will not be deflected. This explains why the priorities we are setting ourselves in the LAA are the same as those within the Sustainable Communities Strategy. In effect, the LAA is the delivery plan for the first three years of the SCS.

There is a strong tradition in the City of using cross-cutting work (eg culture) to underpin and drive forward regeneration that we wish to continue and develop within the new LAA framework. Cross-partnership working has been developed within the existing LAA structures to address key and intractable challenges facing the City. Five Action Plans have been developed to address cross-cutting issues:

- The 'Beating the Threat of Guns, Gangs and Knives Action Plan' was recently supported by the Partnership Board and is engaging all the Theme partnerships in addressing this important issue.
- NEETs Action Plan, involving Learning Partnership, Children's Partnership and Economic Partnership and funded by the Learning and Skills Council.
- Worklessness Action Plan, involving the Economic Partnership and the Learning Partnership working alongside Local Neighbourhood Partnerships and linked to the City Strategy and Black Country Consortium.
- 'Adult and Community Learning Strategy', linked to the Worklessness Action Plan, is lead by the Learning Partnership and involves the Learning and Skills Council and the Economic Partnership and is aligned with the regional City Strategy.
- Alcohol Action Plan, involving the safer Wolverhampton Partnership and the Health and Well-Being Partnership.

In developing a dynamic and sustainable economy, we need to ensure that all residents and communities are able to enjoy the benefits and continue to do so. The disparities that exist both within the City and between the City and the rest of the country in income,

housing, education and health are marked. These could become exacerbated further by economic success unless we manage to ensure that everyone benefits from that success and we close the gap between the 'haves' and 'have-nots'.

Within the LAA, the two aims of the SCS will be delivered through cross-cutting programmes to which all partners can contribute and resident outcomes will be delivered. In doing so, we will draw up a delivery plan for each of the five outcomes, which draw on existing cross-cutting work, engage a full range of partners and sectors and lead to clear and measurable improvements.

These delivery plans will seek to complement and respond to the strategic assessments that are being undertaken in crime, health and housing need together with the children and young people's action plan developed post-JAR and the Black Country Core Strategy to create a focused and joined-up approach to our collective endeavours.

Establishing Our Measures

At its meeting on 6 November, the Partnership Board approved the criteria it would use in establishing our LAA measures. Firstly, the Board decided that it wanted a sharp focus to the LAA, this time round. It also agreed the following the criteria for selecting a measure in the LAA:

- Where partnership working can make an impact
- Achievable (within 3 years) by us
- Residents want it
- Able to move resources to improve it
- It improves economic prosperity
- PIs where we perform badly compared with statistical neighbours
- Supports or enhances sustainability and/or equality
- Reflects the values of the sub-partnerships
- It is evidence-based (including soft data)
- It reflects regional (especially Black Country) and national strategies

The determination of the measures and their accompanying targets will build on the priorities identified in this document alongside the continuing delivery of existing LAA stretch targets.

This LAA provides us with the opportunity to build on our long-standing work with our communities and residents to create a vibrant and successful City: a City at ease with itself: a City in which every single one of us has a stake in its development and a share in its success

Appendix 1

Duty to Co-operate Organisations

Government has provided a legislative framework to develop Local Area Agreements in partnership. This has placed a “duty to co-operate” on a range of agencies and bodies. The following list shows through which Theme Partnership each Duty-to-Co-operate organisation has been engaged in the development of Wolverhampton’s LAA.

Partner	Partnership
Police Authority/West Midlands Police	Safer Wolverhampton Children and Young People Health and Well-Being Economic Strategic Housing
Probation Service	Safer Wolverhampton
Youth Offending Team	Safer Wolverhampton Children and Young People
Wolverhampton Primary Care Trust	Health and Well-Being Safer Wolverhampton Children and Young People Strategic Housing
Hospital Trust	Health and Well-Being
Black Country Learning and Skills Country	Children and Young People Learning Economic
Jobcentre Plus	Economic Learning
Fire Service	Safer Wolverhampton
Centro	Green
Environment Agency	Green
Natural England	
Advantage West Midlands	Economic
South Staffordshire District Council	Economic