TAMWORTH AND LICHFIELD ECONOMIC STRATEGY 2011

FOREWORD

It has always been envisaged by the Business and Economic Partnership (BEP) that the key to improving the economic prosperity of the area was a well defined and agreed strategy for both the Public, Private and Third sectors.

In the past we have relied too heavily on public bodies identifying issues without necessarily ensuring that the private sector has bought into them and the corrective action identified. This may well have led to misunderstandings and possibly a waste of valuable resources.

We now have the opportunity to correct this with the strategy you will find enclosed. The development of this paper has been carefully constructed using expertise from both the private and public sectors.

This economic strategy is the missing link that will join together a number of important initiatives that the BEP has already identified. These include the Business Networks Forum (a voice for local businesses) and the formation of the Business Coordination Group (a voice for public bodies). Both of these will play an integral part in the future delivery of the actions that will be developed as result of this strategy.

It will also be the fundamental cornerstone that underpins a number of the key objectives for both the Tamworth Strategic Partnership (TSP) and Lichfield Local Strategic Partnerships (LLSP).

We have a unique opportunity to make a difference to the area where we both work and live. This strategy will not be easy to implement but if we work together we are already half way there.

Peter Farmer

Peter Farmer (Chair of the BEP)

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1. Introduction

This strategy has been formulated by The Business and Economic Partnership (**BEP**) in Tamworth and Lichfield following the extensive involvement of businesses and key partners within the BEP and a wider consultation exercise with local businesses and partners. The BEP is a group of public, private and voluntary organisations and businesses that has been established to support and develop the economy across the Borough of Tamworth and District of Lichfield.

Founded in April 2009 following the establishment of a shared service in economic development between Tamworth Borough Council (**TBC**) and Lichfield District Council (**LDC**), the BEP articulates the priorities, needs and economic significance of the Tamworth and Lichfield area. It acts as the primary vehicle through which public sector agencies engage with businesses in a coordinated fashion and conversely through which businesses can influence agendas, policies and activities to support businesses and the local economy.

The BEP is unashamedly business led. It benefits from the active participation of a wide variety of local businesses across the Tamworth and Lichfield area, which includes the offices of the Chair and the 2 Vice Chairs being held by local business people. The agenda and direction of the BEP are therefore geared towards meeting the priorities and needs of the business community and a variety of mechanisms have been designed to ensure that this is the case.

As a result, the focus of this strategy is on the overarching objective of supporting sustainable business growth and development as this is going to be how economic prosperity can be most effectively encouraged. Through increasing wealth creation and job opportunities, this will naturally yield other social and community benefits and contribute to the quality of life of the area, its image and perception in the wider world.

2. The strategic and governance context

Since its foundation, and indeed before that in the guise of the former separate district based economic partnerships that then came together to form the BEP, the BEP has been coordinating activities to support the local economy within the context of the Staffordshire County based 'Local Area Agreement' (**LAA**), as well as the two district based Local Strategic Partnerships (**LSP**), which set a rigid framework of targets and objectives.

In addition to that, before the new localism agenda introduced by the present government, there existed a whole tier of economic development at the regional level, in particular in the form of the Regional Development Agency (**RDA**), Advantage West Midlands (**AWM**).

Since the coalition government came into office in May 2010, this landscape has been drastically changed. Firstly, the requirement for areas to produce LAAs has been removed, which left the BEP without any clear performance framework within which to operate. The two district LSPs, the Lichfield Strategic Partnership and Tamworth Strategic Partnership, are still in existence, but with the demise of the LAA, LSPs have greater freedoms to direct partnership activities according to more locally driven priorities and targets. As far as both LSPs are concerned, the BEP is acknowledged as the main strategic body for coordinating actions to support the local economy and lead business engagement across the 2 districts.

Perhaps more importantly though, the whole regional tier of governance has been swept aside, with RDAs, and therefore AWM, in the process of being phased out. In their place, the government has asked more locally defined areas beneath the former regional level to come together to form Local Enterprise Partnerships (**LEPs**) across England, based on real ‘functioning economic areas’.

LEPs are a partnership between local businesses, local authorities and other organisations to act as the driving force in local economies. 33 LEPs have since been formed, with 6 in the West Midlands, including one for Greater Birmingham and Solihull (**GBS**) which includes parts of Southern Staffordshire, including Tamworth Borough and Lichfield District. A further LEP has been formed in Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire, although only Lichfield District Council has been an active part of that LEP up until now. The existence of 2 LEPs covering the Tamworth and Lichfield area in part reflects the complex economic geography of Southern Staffordshire as an area that lies on the edge of a major urban conurbation but which also forms part of a shire county.

The BEP sees itself playing a critical role in contributing to both local LEPs, particularly in terms of articulating the economic significance of the Tamworth and Lichfield area, representing the views of local businesses, influencing emerging Economic Strategies and facilitating delivery of programmes and actions that will encourage wider economic prosperity.

3. Why do we need a strategy and what are its principles and aims?

In order to be able to effectively respond to the economic situation of the area, as well as rise to the opportunities created by the new partnership landscape and the removal of previous more rigid delivery frameworks, it is clear that Tamworth and Lichfield needs to establish a clear sense of direction for its local economy.

The overall aim of this strategy is to promote a stronger, more resilient local economy through sustainable business development and growth, which reflects both the urban and rural dimensions to the Tamworth and

Lichfield area. In order to achieve this, this first stage of the strategy will:

- set a strategic economic vision for the Tamworth and Lichfield area which is more focussed on identifying and developing key business sectors of importance to the local economy,

- exploit and develop the main attributes of the area in terms of being a place that is good for business development and enhance the overall reputation and image of the area,

- influence the immediate priorities of the two local LEPs and directly contribute to LEP workstreams,

- be based on an assessment of the state of the local economy and the collective knowledge of local businesses and partners regarding economic and business issues and priorities,

- highlight key themes around which issues and priorities can be grouped based on the acknowledged strengths and weaknesses of the area, along with an assessment of the current and future economic opportunities that have been identified,

- focus businesses and partner organisations to work together on common areas of priority and need where coordination of effort at the local level will be desirable and feasible. This will lead to more efficient use of resources, removal of duplication and ultimately decreased confusion amongst the business community.

A second stage of the strategy will then be developed, focusing solely on how the BEP will be able to influence, facilitate and develop programmes of activity to addresses the identified key priorities.

4. The economic context

A thorough assessment of the local economy has been carried out, based on available economic data sets and statistics, as well as the local knowledge of BEP partners. A summary of key economic headlines is included below. (Key statistics can be found in Appendix 1 on page 20.)

- Education attainment levels in all qualification ‘levels’ are lower than the West Midlands and UK average apart from in NVQ1 or equivalent.
- Residents’ weekly wages are higher than the West Midlands average but lower than the UK as a whole.
- Workplace weekly wages in the area are marginally lower than the West Midlands average and significantly lower than the UK average.

- The percentage of people claiming Jobseekers allowance is 2.8% of the working age population. This is better than the West Midlands average of 4.7% and the UK average of 3.7%. (May 2011, Nomis)
- The percentage of people claiming Employment Support Allowance, formerly incapacity benefit, is 5.3% of the working age population. This is better than then West Midlands average of 6.8% and the UK average of 6.6% (November 2010, Nomis)

- The area has approximately 7300 businesses.
- The majority of businesses, 64%, employ between 0-4 people.
- 3% of the business population employ more than 100 people, though 35% of the total number of employees work in these businesses.
- The key business sectors located in the area are:

    - Construction
    - Warehouse, distribution and logistics.
    - Manufacturing and engineering.
    - Professional services (e.g solicitors / accountants)
    - Tourism and hospitality

5. Vision and Key Themes

Through a workshop with members of the BEP and based on the above economic analysis, the following economic vision was agreed:

"Building on the excellent location to live and work, communication links with the whole country and a local skilled workforce, we will provide an environment that encourages and actively supports all new and existing businesses, with a view to developing areas of excellence."

In addition to, and based on the key economic issues identified via the economic analysis and the collective knowledge of local businesses and partners, 5 key themes were identified as priority areas for action:

1. Supporting our Businesses
2. Place Promotion
3. Infrastructure to support business
4. Town Centres
5. Workforce Development

These themes reflect a desire expressed by BEP partners and businesses to focus on the key determinants of business growth and success, alongside those positive or attractive attributes and features of the Tamworth and Lichfield area as a place which, if further enhanced, will lead to the following:

- Greater inward investment into the area, with an accent on attracting high growth / value added sectors and new industries.
- An enhanced ‘enterprise culture’, leading to higher rates of new business formations, survival rates and new job opportunities.
- Further growth amongst indigenous businesses and a resultant growth in employment opportunities for local people.
- An enhanced reputation for Tamworth and Lichfield as a place in which it is ‘easy to do business’, with a well connected and supported, thriving business community which offers a multitude of business opportunities and is sustainable as a strong economy for the foreseeable future.

In identifying the 5 key themes for the Tamworth and Lichfield Economic Strategy, careful thought has been given to ensure that they are compatible with the priority programme areas of the local LEPs and will contribute to the wider economic ambitions of the LEP areas. However, the 5 themes are also reflective of the distinctive characteristics of Tamworth and Lichfield as a more local economic area, as well as the more specific needs of the local business community and the different level of resources available to partners.

6. Theme Structure

In formulating the 5 theme papers, it has remained a principle desire to make the strategy as easy to digest and engage with as possible, with a particular accent on identifying clear priorities and outcomes. For this reason, each paper follows the same, clear structure and deliberately avoids going into large amounts of detail and explanation.

Each paper starts with a simple definition of its main theme. This is then followed by a SWOT analysis relating to that theme, which acts as the context setter, succinctly painting the picture of the situation for Tamworth and Lichfield as things stand at the present time. Based on each SWOT analysis, a list of the key priority issues has been drawn out, around which some form of collective action is deemed desirable in order to enhance the local economic situation.

Finally, and based on these priority issues, a set of key outcomes has been formulated on which future **actions** will be based. It will then become the job of the BEP to identify how partners and business can work collectively to deliver these outcomes and draw up more detailed action plans for each theme.

Theme 1: Supporting Our Businesses

1. What do we mean by Supporting our businesses?

This theme will focus on business support services, which means any kind of service whose objective is to assist businesses in their day to day operations, to start up, grow and develop. This will include services provided by both the public and private sectors and those that are provided free of charge or are paid for.

2. SWOT analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Think Local 4 Business offers a platform to coordinate services • Development of the BEP as the coordinator of the local business voice, particularly via the Business Networks Forum • Business Brief as a means to disseminate information on business support • Clear commitment by public sector to coordinate activities through the BEP • A coordinated shared service across two local authority areas, focusing on Economic Development • Role of the BEP in representing local Business views and needs	• Previous regional business support service (Business Link) is disappearing without any replacement local service • Fragmented, dispersed and confusing array of services. • No centralised business advisor or facilitation service • Lack of knowledge and understanding of general local business needs & drivers • Lack of knowledge and understanding of specific sector based needs within the local business community • Lack of engagement with local higher education institutions such as universities and colleges, and a consequential poor innovation offer • Lacking physical infrastructure to support businesses, e.g. start up units / centres, appropriate conference centres
Opportunities	**Threats**
• To tailor make a local business support service based on local business needs • Ability to further develop www.ThinkLocal4Business.co.uk to become a business support and engagement hub • Development of LEP wide business support programmes • Harnessing of local business expertise to support other local businesses • Potential creation of a Social Enterprise to deliver appropriate Business Support and advice • Coordination role of BEP in identifying and defining local	• Very diverse business population with equally diverse needs • Poor reputation of Business Link brand • Uncertain, irregular and Insufficient funding for Business support activities • Political change leading to a shift in central government policy and approach to Business Support • Varied, uncoordinated agencies attempting to access funding to deliver Business Support in varying forms across the Region

Business Support delivery •	

3. Key issues and priorities

1. Lack of understanding of business support needs and how these differ across different business sectors and types.
2. Confusion amongst businesses about the services on offer and where to go to for assistance.
3. Lack of coordination of business support between organisations and providers.
4. A face to face on the ground local business advisor service is no longer available.
5. There is a need to shape emerging proposals for LEP wide business support programmes to ensure they meet local needs, as well as ensure that the LEPs provide comprehensive and readily accessible information on business support and are able to signpost businesses to appropriate programmes and organisations.
6. There is a perception by a significant number of businesses that Business Support of varying forms should be free of charge.
7. Lack of appropriate physical infrastructure to support business, such as by encouraging the development of flexible workspace, conference facilities or business incubation units.

4. Objective

To support business through the creation of a powerful network that promotes use of local resources and expertise, and provides clear easy access to business support provided through other organisations, such as the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP.

5. Desired Outcomes

1. Better intelligence on the needs of the local business community.
2. A clearer, more easily accessible system for businesses to receive the business support they need.
3. A stronger and wider offer of flexible workspace, incubation units and conference facilities.
4. A localised, on the ground and coordinated “business mentor” offer.

Theme 2: Place Promotion

1. What do we mean by Place Promotion?

This theme will focus on how the area is marketed both to inward investors and indigenous businesses, highlighting why Tamworth and Lichfield is a good place to do business.

2. SWOT analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Excellent physical location in close proximity to a variety of large urban centres • Excellent transport links, M42, A5, M6 Toll, A38, West Coast Main Line etc. • Strong heritage and tourism offer which links to the tourism offers in both the Birmingham conurbation and Staffordshire. • Strong Destination Management Partnerships and inward investment agencies in both Birmingham and Staffordshire • Increased level of development activity locally (Defence Medical Services, Ventura Park, Lichfield City Centre etc.) • Proximity to Birmingham and the Black Country, whilst offering the advantages of a rural area • BEP well placed to champion the area and promote its benefits to businesses, through its business ambassadors and the Business Brief • Comparatively low overhead costs for businesses when compared to other locations in the region • Diversity of business population and types of business units available. • Availability of development land	• No coordinated message as to what the area offers for business. • No development of a distinctive 'USP' • No clear idea why businesses (might) want to locate and grow in the area • No clear sectoral strategy • Lack of understanding and knowledge of which type of companies we wish to attract to the area • Lack of engagement with land and property owners and commercial agents • Dated commercial premises stock in certain areas • Poor current town centre offer • Lack of information on available land and property • Lack of funds to invest in promoting the area • Lack of system to identify inward investors and growing / potential high growth companies • Lack of any 'after care' service for businesses locating here • Fragmented approach to Tourism across the area • Lack of clear promotional messages to businesses.
Opportunities	**Threats**
• Link to LEP initiatives to promote the LEP areas • Key development sites to come forward (Gungate, Bitterscote, existing industrial estates, Fradley Park etc.) • Enterprise Zone status (Enterprise Belt) • Availability of development land. • Further development of the Town Centres and Tourism offer	• Strong competition from other areas • Lack of confidence in the market and access to finance to stimulate investment

3. Key issues and priorities

1. Lack of understanding of different types of investor and business needs and the key motivations that drive investment decisions.
2. Lack of knowledge and understanding around the key sectoral strengths of the area, the potential for targeting certain sectors and matching the locational advantages the area could offer to these sectors.
3. Lack of a clear and coordinated marketing message to those businesses seeking to invest, grow or develop in the area.
4. Lack of communication with local landowners, developers and agents to ensure that information on developments and opportunities is understood and readily available and their needs are represented.
5. Role of the LEP to ensure that the benefits of the area are incorporated in any LEP wide promotional initiatives.
6. Maximise the potential benefits of enterprise zone status, including opportunities to leverage in new sources of funding to support investment.
7. Dated and unsuitable commercial stock in some areas.
8. Lack of a strong representation to champion the area as a great place to locate and grow a business

4. Objective

To maximise inward investment and local business growth, particularly in key priority sectors, based on the key locational advantages of the area, (Note: priority sectors will be identified based on analysis of business, economic and demograhic intelligence)

5. Desired Outcomes

1. A more attractive area for business to locate to alongside a better image and profile.
2. A clear and coordinated marketing message promoting the area.
3. A clear understanding of the target investor market for the area.
4. Better availability of information about Tamworth and Lichfield as a place to do business.
5. Improved channels of communication between the key people involved in influencing and affecting the local economy.
6. Further promotion of tourism as a direct benefit to business.
7. Maximisation of opportunities offered by enterprise zones to promote the area presented.

Theme 3: Infrastructure to support business

1. What do we mean by Infrastructure to support business?

This theme refers to all of the physical support that needs to be in place to support local business start ups, growth, development and investment. This would include such things as appropriate facilities, physical environment, housing, transport links, commercial buildings, communication and utilities.

2. SWOT analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Good selection and choice of commercial areas • Good connectivity to road and rail networks • Strong heritage and visitor economy offer • Strong leisure offer • Good availability of potential development land • Comparatively low overhead costs for businesses when compared to other locations in the region	• Poor Rural access to broadband for businesses • Dated and inadequate commercial property offer in some areas • Lack of consistency in quality of industrial areas due to organic development over a period of years e.g. poor roads, security and signage • Housing affordability across the area • Lack of public transport to commercial and other key employment areas • Sporadic mobile broadband coverage
Opportunities	**Threats**
• Development of Whittington Barracks as the Defence Medical services headquarters for all of the Armed Forces and supporting businesses including the medical sector • Further development of heritage and visitor economy due to Staffordshire Hoard and Mercian Trail • Redevelopment schemes in town / city areas • Development of shared ownership schemes to meet affordable housing demand • Increased business home working • Flexibility offered by housing rental market • Enterprise Zone status (Enterprise Belt) • Development of conference facilities and incubation units / flexible workspace • Development of more sustainable transport options e.g. electric vehicles • Implications of and coordination of	• Decline and stagnation of town / city centres and villages across the area. • Housing affordability across the area • Government funding cuts. • Delay in physical development schemes, due to recession and commercial viability • Ability to attract investment due to continuing caution in market place • Increased congestion and traffic on the road network • Costs of energy and utilities. • Ageing utilities network • Implications of local and national infrastructure projects

local and national infrastructure projects	

3. **<u>Key issues and priorities</u>**

1. Inconsistent quality and suitability of commercial units and varied quality of available development land.
2. Mixed quality of some industrial areas, with poor signage, security, maintenance and general appearance.
3. Difficulties for locally employed workforce to buy local properties due to difference in wage levels, house prices and affordable housing.
4. Significant decline in local urban centres and lack of forthcoming investment.
5. Poor broadband access in rural areas.
6. Pressures on commuters and businesses of travel costs, congestion and environmental issues.

4. **<u>Objective</u>**

A consistently good quality of business related infrastructure that directly supports the needs of the local business community and its workforce, and underpins the sustainability that is needed for growth.

5. **<u>Desired Outcomes</u>**

- A coordinated register of available land for development and available commercial premises.
- An improved communications network, with faster speeds, wider rural coverage and better access to broadband networks, including mobile.
- Improved quality of commercial areas
- Increased availability and improved transport links to existing and future employment.
- Increased balanced supply of housing of different types and tenures with appropriate prices, affordable to the maximum amount of people.
- Maximisation of opportunities for increased employment and business development from enterprise zone status.

Theme 4: Town Centres

1. What do we mean by Town Centres?

This theme focuses on the key issues facing all of the main town / city centres in the area, including Tamworth, Lichfield City and Burntwood.

2. SWOT analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Compact centres with good flexible parking • Good heritage and visitor economy offer • Good locations and links to transport networks • Good network of local independent traders • Reputable, strong markets including speciality and farmer markets • Affluent and widespread catchment area • Good leisure and open space facilities within or close to centres	• Low spending in centres by residents • Declining retail offer in centres. • Perceived high rents & business rates • Demise of traditional town centre shops and brands. E.g. Woolworths, TJ Hughes • Competing with out of centre shopping parks • Lack of appropriate units to attract key national retailers • • Redevelopment schemes delayed due to viability and inability to obtain commercial funding • Lack of coordination with variety of owners of town centre properties and land • Poor reputation of centres due to current retail offer • Lack of engagement with town / city centre businesses • Poor signage and lack of public facilities
Opportunities	**Threats**
• Further development of leisure offer • Further development of heritage and tourism offer • Identified redevelopment schemes in place • Opportunities for mixed use development: housing, retail, office and leisure • Further enhancement of public realm. (physical environment such as, signage, lighting, benches, public toilets etc.) • Further development of the night time economy • Potential to generate new sources of funding to support town / city centres, such as Business Improvement Districts (BIDS) • Further development of town	• Delay in physical development schemes, due to recession and commercial viability • Inability to attract investment due to continuing caution in the market place • Government funding cuts. • Government changes to planning policy • Competition and opposition to regeneration and development from other local centres • Difficulty in assembling land for development due to ownership issues • Increase in internet based shopping.

centre management schemes	

3. **Key issues and priorities**

1. Lack of interaction with and understanding of the needs of businesses based in centres.
2. Lack of interaction with and understanding of the needs, plans and desires of land and property owners, investors and potential developers.
3. Change in focus for larger retailers from smaller town centre units to larger units on retail parks or edge of centre locations.
4. Decline of traditional town centre retailers.
5. Market caution in investment due to difficulties with access to finance and the commercial viability of local town centre "regeneration" schemes.
6. Change in Government policy on planning, focusing on creating jobs, which won't necessarily be specific to the needs and development of vibrant town / city centres.
7. Limited links between tourism activities and town / city centre businesses.

4. **Objective**

Thriving and sustainable town / city centres that meet the needs of local residents, workforce and visitors adding to a stronger reputation and image of the area.

5. **Desired Outcomes**

1. Better intelligence on town centre land and property ownership and interaction with respective owners.
2. A coordinated approach to attracting investment and strengthening business development in town centres.
3. Better intelligence on the needs of town centre businesses, independent retailers and their customers.
4. An improved reputation and image of the centres locally, regionally and nationally.
5. An agreed long term strategy for the approach towards town / city centres.

Theme 5: Workforce Development

1. What do we mean by Workforce Development?

This theme will focus on the employment needs of the local business community, focusing on what skills and training are needed for now, the future and how local employment and enterprise can be encouraged.

2. SWOT analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Varied and diverse business population offering a variety of jobs • Good access to employment areas, locally, regionally and nationally • Good working relationships between some public sector bodies in the area • High educational attainment and qualifications levels in some areas • Both LEPs responding to the workforce skills agenda through formation of Employment and Skills Boards	• Local educational attainment levels in some wards is poor. • Low aspiration levels in some wards • Poor basic skills and lack of work readiness in some wards • Business caution in employing new staff due to, red tape, staff suitability, costs and risk to business. • The skills and training needs of every business are varied and hard to identify. • Training and skills agenda is a large and complex area, hard for businesses to understand or connect with • Training provision is not coordinated for businesses. • Lack of practical understanding about what business training needs are. • Lack of apprenticeships offered by local businesses. • Lack of understanding of Government support for unemployment and related benefits.
Opportunities	**Threats**
• Growth and take up of apprenticeship schemes • Signs of local growing development and increasing inward investment • Encouraging local procurement and local employment on development sites • Improving private sector growth and increasing business start up. • Improving and creating links with Further and Higher Education bodies • Increased relevance and understanding of self employment	• Funding cuts for training and skills providers • Lack of training provider willingness to coordinate services to businesses • Graduate migrations • Limited skills available in SMEs for business development, growth, employment and management/ leadership

• Employment and skills board to be created across the LEP area, with a Southern Staffordshire focus • Involvement of third sector employers in skills delivery and employment opportunities	

3. **Key issues and priorities**

1. Lack of knowledge and understanding of basic employment needs for individual businesses.
2. Lack of knowledge and understanding of specific needs of businesses in specific sectors.
3. Lack of knowledge and understanding of barriers to employment / employing local residents within locally based businesses.
4. Lack of coordination of all available support and training to businesses about workforce development in the area.
5. Lack of coordinated communication to local businesses about appropriate training and support opportunities and vice versa.
6. Low levels of interaction with local further and higher education establishments, particularly regional Universities.
7. Lack of knowledge and understanding by local residents of the types of employment opportunities on offer in the area.
8. Need to link to and influence the emerging LEP wide strategies and initiatives on employment and skills.

4. **Objective**

A motivated and capable workforce with the right work ethos, access to the right training and the skills to support their development and the needs of the local business community.

5. **Desired Outcomes**

1. Strong synergies and dialogue between skills and training providers and businesses
2. Better intelligence on business needs regarding skills, abilities, roles and expertise.
3. A clear, easily accessible system for businesses to receive information on the training and skills they need.
4. A clear message to local residents about local employment opportunities and the courses available to equip them to fill these.

THE NEXT STEPS - DELIVERY

The compilation of this strategy has taken several months to get to this stage and the complex nature of the original terms of reference resulted in various changes during its evolution.

Bearing this in mind, we believe that the final document is clear and concise and focuses on the priorities and issues which need to be acted upon to ensure economic development and growth. It has been deliberately constructed to demonstrate the overriding outcomes that are needed to address these issues.

During the coming months, consultation will take place with both the Public and Private and Voluntary Sectors, to agree the actions needed to support the the second stage of this strategy, namely its implementation and delivery.

Although the BEP has devised this strategy and will be sponsoring its implementation, in devising actions to support the delivery of the strategy, it should be recognised that the local economy is part of the collective responsibility of a wide number of organisations, partnerships and businesses and will not, and cannot, be the sole domain of the BEP. As such, it is the overall aim of this strategy to ensure that all said organisations, partnerships and businesses are working towards the same economic aspirations.

In terms of delivery, it should be noted that the BEP will have limited ability to directly deliver actions itself due to its nature as a partnership and constrained resources. That said, where it does have resources, it will ensure that these are put to the most effective use to support the aspirations of the strategy, and will also explore opportunities to work with other partners to maximise the impact of any activities that it directly delivers. Beyond that, the BEP, as the only partnership which brings together all parties with an interest in the local economy, is well placed to play a role to influence, facilitate and coordinate any activities that are required to address the economic priorities expressed in this strategy.

The BEP therefore recognises its main strength as its ability to work across all sectors, acting as a coordinating voice and central focal point for any decisions or actions related to the local economy. Therefore it will work closely with all interested parties to support the economy, including; businesses, individuals, public sector bodies, educational and voluntary sector organisations.

The actions developed as part of the second stage of the strategy will:

- Be relevant to current and existing activity – linking up current activity on projects, groups and programmes, making them more

efficient and appropriate to the Economy and partners and removing duplication.
- Be relevant to as many priorities as appropriate.
- Be achievable, deliverable and not overly ambitious.

The BEP will continue to facilitate this with the help of the Business Networks Forum from the private sector and the Business Coordination Group from the public sector. It will also ensure that the agreed strategy including its future action plans support the wider economic ambitions of both the Greater Birmingham and Stoke and Staffordshire LEPs.

It is envisaged that this coordinated response will achieve both the aspirations of the Public and Private Sectors and will help to cement a partnership for the future sustainable economic growth for the area.

Of course, any strategy and action plan can only be 'snapshots' of circumstances and aspirations at the time they are written, so with that in mind, the BEP will continue to monitor local economic circumstances and business needs and aspirations via the mechanisms just described. This will allow the strategy and action plans to be further developed and adapted to ensure that they continue to work towards the desired outcomes.

It is however important to remember that any action plan to achieve an outcome will need to be resourced. Your help in supporting this and its implementation will be crucial if we are to achieve the results we all aim for.

Appendix One – Economic Statistics

	Lichfield	Tamworth	Total	%	West midlands	%	UK	%
Total population	98700	76000	174700	n/a	5455200		60462600	n/a
Population 16-64	61400	49900	111300	n/a	3464052		39179765	n/a
Economically active	49800	35900	85700	77	2570327	74.2	29854981	76.2
Economically inactive	13100	14000	27100	24	893725	25.8	9324784	23.8
NVQ 4 and above	18000	8400	26400	24	900654	26.0	12263266	31.3
NVQ 3 and above	31400	18100	49500	44	1572680	45.4	19981680	51.0
NVQ2 and above	43800	30400	74200	67	2165033	62.5	26367982	67.3
NVQ1 and above	54100	37600	91700	82	2670784	77.1	31422171	80.2
No qualifications	4700	7800	12500	11	523072	15.1	4427313	11.3
Earnings by residence								
Full time male	£554.10	£503.90	£529.00	n/a	£503.90	n/a	£ 541.90	n/a
Full time female	£523.60	£384.10	£453.85	n/a	£401.90	n/a	£440.00	n/a
Earnings by workplace								
Full time male	£518.30	£446.90	£482.60	n/a	£502.80	n/a	£540.50	n/a
Full time female	£374.60	£376.90	£375.75	n/a	£400.00	n/a	£439.80	n/a

JSA* Claimants (May 2011)	1502	1596	3098	2.8	162810	4.7	1449651	3.7
ESA** Claimants (November 2010)	2980	2920	5900	5.3	235556	6.8	2585864	6.6

All %s are of total of working age population 16-64.
* Jobseekers Allowance Claimants
** Employment support allowance.
All figures taken from www.nomisweb.co.uk