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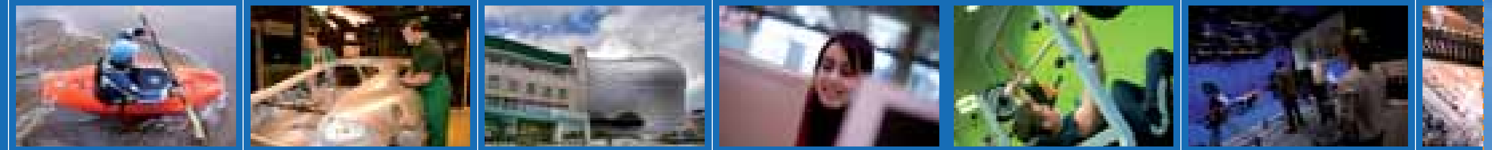

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Delivering Advantage

The West Midlands Economic Strategy and Action Plan

Progress Report 2006–2007

Contents

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West Midlands Regional Assembly
Speaking out for the region

1. Executive Summary

This is the third progress report for the Action Plan of the current West Midlands Economic Strategy, 'Delivering Advantage'. It is a continuation of the commitment of Advantage West Midlands and partners to produce an annual report on progress being made in delivering the Strategy. The progress on the actions is based on information provided by the lead partners listed against the Priority Actions, and is in response to a questionnaire template sent to them to capture their assessment. This report covers the period from beginning of July 2006 to the end of June 2007, and includes a summary of trend over the three years since Delivering Advantage was launched.

This year, the work on the progress report coincides with the work on the overall review of the West Midlands Economic Strategy. This presents us with an opportunity to identify the completed actions and the actions to be continued, which may be taken forward under the revised strategy. In a number of cases, although the specific action may not need to be carried forward, the general theme may well continue to be represented in the revised strategy.

Again as with the last two years' responses Diagram 1 gives a strong indication of most actions making steady progress. 41 of the actions have been rated A or B, meaning that they are either completed, are progressing smoothly or are largely on track but with some issues to resolve. 4 actions have been rated C, meaning that they are experiencing some difficulties but progress is being made. No actions have been rated D, meaning that they are experiencing extreme difficulties.

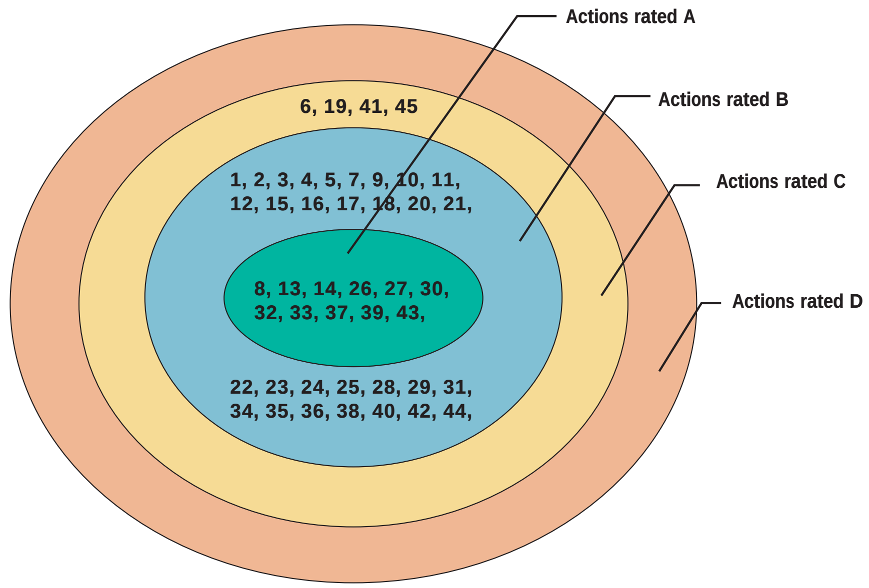
Diagram 1 is a summary of progress made in delivering the 45 Priority Actions of the West Midlands Economic Strategy.

Actions rated A – for Actions progressing smoothly;

Actions rated B – for Actions on track but manageable issues to be resolved;

Action rated C – for Actions experiencing difficulties but progress is being made moving forward

Actions rated D – for Actions with extreme difficulties and unresolved issues.



2. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to review progress on 'Delivering Advantage' identifying any issues to be addressed to expedite delivery of the Actions. The first two reports completed over the past two years, respectively, were well received by partners as an indication of progress. This third report, as with the last two, indicates a broad continuation of progress and does not identify any major changes.

The simultaneous work being undertaken on the overall review of the West Midlands Economic Strategy means that the Actions are being scrutinised more closely than before. The revised strategy and action plan will present the necessary actions to deliver the objectives of the new strategy. Work is currently ongoing to determine which of the current 45 Priority Actions from 'Delivering Advantage' have been satisfactorily completed and which ones should be updated and carried forward into the revised action plan. The summary of the responses against actions, Annex B, also indicates actions completed or revised going forward.

Again the report focuses on a qualitative assessment of progress on the 45 Actions set out in 'Delivering Advantage'. The report is compiled from a self assessment made by partners charged with delivery of the actions and as such does not make a judgement on the achievement of the Strategy but, rather, looks at whether the right steps are being taken to deliver the Strategy, identifying what is working well and where further support may be needed to achieve successful results.

The wealth of information gathered during the development of the evidence base to inform the current West Midlands Economic Strategy review, and the consultation responses received through the review process, have provided further sources of information. This has made it possible to include a meaningful and well informed summary of trend over the last three years reporting.

3. Overall Progress Against The Vision

'Delivering Advantage' the current West Midlands Economic Strategy (WMES), sets a vision that by 2010, "The West Midlands is recognised as a World Class region in which to invest, work, learn, visit and live and the most successful in creating wealth to benefit all of its people."

To assess progress against this vision and to understand the current context of the region, a suite of indicators were assembled under each of the five dimensions: invest, work, learn, visit and live.

The following summaries highlight the changes in the indicators since the production of the previous 'Progress Report 2005 – 2006' and the latest comparable data available[1]. The 'Headline Indicators' table in Annex A provides more detail on each indicator. Please note that in the short-term it is not possible to determine whether these changes are unique, cyclical or whether they represent a lasting shift in the economic characteristics of the nation or region.

3.1 Invest

- The most well known measure of regional economic productivity is Gross Value Added (GVA) per head. In the West Midlands, GVA per head of population has grown by 3.2% since the last update, compared to an increase of 3.4% in UK levels.
- Business survival rates reflect entrepreneurial activity in the formation of new companies and their ability to survive their first three years of trading. Business survival rates have been rising steadily for both the UK and the West Midlands. Levels for the West Midlands (70.6%) linger slightly behind the national level (71.3%).
- Female entrepreneurship at 3.0% is slightly below the UK average of 3.6%. The fall in total entrepreneurial activity for both men and women in the West Midlands is in line with national trends. Although, since the last update, this decline has been experienced to a greater extent in the West Midlands when compared to national figures.

3.2 Work

- Using the ILO definition of unemployment (those people of working age not in work but available for and seeking work) the latest figure for the region is 6.2% of the potential working population (an increase of 19.2% since the last update). This compares to the national figure of 5.5% (an increase of 10% since the last update).
- The West Midlands has a claimant rate of 4.1% – slightly higher than figures noted in the last update (an increase of 2.5%). The national claimant rate has remained steady at 3%.
- The length of time spent unemployed can be used to assess whether certain groups of unemployed people face greater barriers to employment than others. Long term unemployment figures in the West Midlands have risen at a greater rate and now stand at 39.24% compared to 33.65% nationally.

[1]The data for the 2005 – 2006 report (see Annex A) was collated and published in October 2006. Most of the data sources used are updated at best on an annual basis and in some cases at less regular intervals; therefore it has not been possible to update certain indicators since the last report. In the table, these cells have been left blank.

3. Overall Progress Against The Vision

3.3 Learn

- A key factor underpinning the skills gaps and shortages faced by employers is the low level of human capital in the region. Success at school is a key factor in determining the likelihood of further investment in skills and employment chances in later life. Qualification attainment amongst young people is below average (56.4%). The rate of increase in attainments levels in the West Midlands (20.8%), since the last update, has been comparable to growth nationally (20.3%).
- The percentage of students completing University who are now either employed or in further study ('Work destinations of graduates') in the West Midlands has remained in line with national figures (88% and 87.7% respectively).

3.4 Visit

There has been no update to the three indicators used since 2005 data.

3.5 Live

- Analysing affordability provides information about the accessibility of particular types and locations of housing to local people. Housing affordability compares average house prices with average earnings. According to this index, the improvement of housing affordability has continued in the West Midlands. In comparison, nationally housing has become less affordable (an increase of 2.6% since the last update).

4. Progress On Actions

4.1 Overall there has been excellent progress made in delivering most of the priority actions, with 41 of the 45 actions scoring either a grade A or B, which means that they are hitting the mark and that the steps to achieve the objectives of the Strategy are being accomplished. Five of these actions; 4, 16, 17, 38 and 45, have been identified as needing revision going forward. This is a result of actions and priorities having moved on since the publication in 2004 of the current Strategy. However, it is important to note that while the next steps in the delivery of some priority actions may have been completed, the themes or policy areas which they relate to may well be taken forward in the revised strategy and action plan. It is also fair to say that many of the themes in the current Strategy, which the actions are referenced to, will be taken forward in one shape or another in the revised strategy.

4.2 Progress on actions by Pillar

A summary of the information presented in Annex B, by Pillar, reveals the following progress:

- **Pillar 1: Developing a Diverse and Dynamic Business Base.**
  This pillar covers actions 1 to 16. It shows a continuation of organisation of the structures and activities under the Enterprise Board to meet the challenge of developing an enterprise culture across all segments of the economy and the different parts of the region, with added momentum on developing an enterprising culture amongst women. Modernisation and diversification continues for Manufacturing and best practice is being adopted across the region. Our Access to Finance initiatives and services continue to perform well. Momentum is also being gained in the work to deliver the five (technological) priority areas identified by the Innovation and Technology Council, and Clusters continue to show strong achievement. The High Technology Corridors also continue to be successful in playing a role in the delivery of key infrastructure projects. A new International Business Framework is being developed to address future inward investment actions, and each Cluster now has an established International Action Plan. The successful implementation of the Visitor Economy Strategy has now resulted in changes to the governance and delivery structures, as a result of evolving tourism priorities.

- **Pillar 2: Promoting a Learning and Skilful Region.**
  This pillar covers Actions 17 to 25. All Actions under this pillar, with the exception of the ICT Skills action, have been graded B. Lead responsibility for all actions under this pillar now lies with the Regional Skills Partnership. The creation of the RSP in mid 2004 set an entirely new context for the skills actions identified in the WMES. The latest prioritisation for the Regional Skills Partnership was published in 2006 and discussed at the Skills Summit held on the 2nd of March 2007, and is being embedded within the revised West Midlands Economic Strategy.

- **Pillar 3: Creating the Conditions for Growth**.
  This pillar covers Actions 26 to 35. All actions under this pillar have been graded either A or B. Excellent progress has been achieved in the delivery of actions relating to transport, ICT, land use, design standards, planning and housing. The transport agenda continues to expand. The Rural Broadband Access Project has delivered 100% access to broadband across the region, for businesses and domestic premises. During 2005/06, 82% of the Region's employment land development took place on brownfield sites compared to 66% over the pervious year. The £50m revamp of Fort Dunlop which had stood empty for over two decades began in the spring of 2005. The Water Resource Strategy is now being updated and refreshed and in July a document will be published outlining the pressures and challenges we face with managing water resources.

4. Progress On Actions

- **Pillar 4: Regenerating Communities.**
  This pillar covers Actions 36 to 41. Regeneration Zones continue to show progress under clear guidance and a workable timetable. The Market Towns Group 1 and Group 2 programmes have now been completed, with a portfolio of project activity having been delivered and an appropriate market town partnership having been formed in each town. The Group 3 programme is now mid-way through the third of a four year programme; each one has a solid portfolio of activity and strong partnership. On the issue of support for Social Enterprise, we are on target to achieve this action through a range of activity to be delivered through the West Midlands Social Enterprise Network project. The Regional Health partnership is working well, and the draft of the Regional Health and Well-being strategy is out for consultation. On the engagement of the voluntary and community sector in regeneration (Action 41, graded C), the issues of engagement during the year have focused on the capacity of RAWM and the demise of Embrace. The evaluation of Regeneration Zones also suggested that the changed focus towards capital projects contributed to a reduced engagement with the VCS. Government Office, the West Midlands Regional Assembly and Advantage West Midlands are working with RAWM to develop a more coherent overall approach to supporting the strategic engaging capacity of the VCS, and Advantage West Midlands is committed to producing its own VCS engagement strategy. The capacity of RAWM to engage at the strategic level may be enhanced through additional funding form the National Lottery. VCS engagement in regeneration at the local level will increasingly be through their role on local strategic partnerships.

- **Providing a Powerful Voice for the Region.**
  This pillar covers Actions 42 to 45. Since the launch of the Governing Idea and the first Regional Marketing Campaign (business) launched in 2004, subsequent regional image building activity has developed well against business, media and government audiences. Future actions and delivery will be informed by the current review of the Regional Marketing Strategy. The Annual State of the Region update in 2006 was well received and plans are in place to produce the 2007 update. A number of studies are being undertaken to inform effective working with other regions, and on the European agenda (Action 45, graded C), following on from the Regional Assembly's strategic review of European working, endorsed by the Assembly in April 2007, a new document is being prepared, led by Advantage West Midlands.

5. Summary Of Trend Over The Last Three Years Reporting

5.1 This is the third progress report produced against the Action Plan of 'Delivering Advantage' since its publication in 2004. Of the forty-five Priority Actions the first report showed thirty-six actions on target, eight actions making good progress and one, Action 39, as experiencing serious difficulties. By the second report, remedial steps taken had moved Action 39 up, to join six other actions as making good progress, while thirty-five actions were on target and no update was available for Actions 32, 34 and 38. This third report now shows that 41 actions are on target (graded A or B). The other 4 actions (graded C) are experiencing some difficulties but are making progress. Over the last three years, therefore, we have seen a generally positive trend in delivery of the actions.

5.2 The first progress reporting period included the creation of key strategic partnerships that would assist in the effective delivery of the actions. Since then we have seen the establishment of the Enterprise Board, the Regional Skills Partnership, The Innovation and Technology Council, Tourism West Midlands, and most recently the Economic Inclusion Panel, for taking relevant actions forward. These bodies have all made a tremendous impact, with great success in ensuring that their relevant actions are on target and progressing smoothly. The effectiveness of this approach has prompted discussions for similar arrangements around other important areas where more effective delivery is needed, such as in the area of the marketing and image of the region, where the creation of a Regional Marketing Board is being proposed.

5.3 The Evidence Base work undertaken during the latter half of 2006 for the review of the West Midlands Economic Strategy included an evaluation of the Key Delivery Mechanisms (KDM); Regeneration Zones, Business Clusters and the High Technology Corridors. The study by GHK Consulting Ltd, "Evaluation of the Key Delivery Mechanisms" and the National Audit Office's Independent Performance Assessment of Advantage West Midlands both concluded that Clusters, Zones and Corridors are adding value, building capacity and strengthening partnership working across the region. However there are opportunities for improvement, identified both by GHK, Agency staff and by partners' feedback on the consultation on the draft WMES. Also the recently published (July 2007) outcome of the Sub-National Review of Economic Development and Regeneration (SNR) will have implications for the future delivery of Zone, Cluster and Corridor programmes.

5.3.1 For Regeneration Zones, progress has been made in the past five years, though more in terms of discrete physical regeneration projects rather than holistic regeneration programmes. This has largely been due to Advantage West Midlands funding for Zones being capital-biased. Many Zone partnerships found it difficult to lever revenue from other sources to engender a broader sub-regional delivery portfolio. Feedback from the WMES consultation demonstrates that there remains strong regional support for the continuation of Regeneration Zones. The "Evaluation of the Key Delivery Mechanisms" report by GHK and the National Audit Office's Independent Performance Assessment of Advantage West Midlands also point to the increasing impact and strength of partnership working achieved by the Zone programme.

5.3.2 A programme, with three year plans for each cluster, began from April 2005. This programme is now largely contracted, delivery is well under way, business confidence has grown, and industries are winning new orders. The “Evaluation of the Key Delivery Mechanisms” report by GHK has confirmed that clusters have made a good start in delivering strategic advantage and have the capacity to do so in future. They have grown networks, and developed programmes for market exploitation and technology and innovation take-up. They have won high private sector engagement, and have engendered significant business confidence amongst participating businesses. “Actual benefits of involvement were an almost across the board level of increased confidence in the firms’ area of business due to the various clusters existence.” The IPA assessment was also positive about cluster impact.

5.3.3 The initial focus of the Corridors was on their ‘Rover Task Force-funded’ spend and output targets. All three Corridors performed very well in this respect. From 2005 Corridor partners took on a more strategic role – shaping and leading the development of the programme in their sub-region. The “Evaluation of the Key Delivery Mechanisms” report by GHK confirmed that, “in terms of their remit at inception, the Corridors have delivered on the objectives and targets set and are starting to deliver on refreshed objectives and targets.”

Annex A

Highlights changes in the indicators since the production of the previous ‘Progress Report 2005 – 2006’ and the latest comparable data available. This data for the 2006 progress report was collated and published in October 2006. Most of the data sources used are updated at best on an annual basis and in some cases at less regular intervals; therefore it has not been possible to update certain indicators since the last report. In the table, these cells have been left blank.

	Headline Indicators	Initial Reported in 2004		Update 1 Reported in 2005		Update 2 Reported in 2006		Update 3 Reported in 2007		Data source and time period to which most recent data relates[†]
		WM	National	WM	National	WM	National	WM	National	
Invest	Levels of Business Innovation – companies reporting innovative activity	52%	47%	52%	47%	55%	57%	55%	57%	Data source: CIS4 Latest data relates to: 2002–04
	Direct Inward Investment Levels – Total project successes	52	709	67	1070	81	1220	97	-	Data source: AWM Latest data relates to: 2006–07
	Total exports – % of national value	7.10%		7.20%		7.20%		7.43%	-	Data source: www.uktradeinfo.com Latest data relates to: 2006 Provisional data
	Productivity – GVA per head	£13,891	£15,682	£14,566	£16,549	£15,325	£17,451	£15,812	£18,051	Data source: ONS Latest data relates to: 2005 (data for earlier years also revised since last report)
	Environmental Management Standards – businesses with ISO 14001 standard	355	2917	355	2918	355	2918			Data source: ISO14001 Register (Eco-management and Audit Scheme) Latest data relates to: 2005
	Business Survival Rates – % of companies founded which survived for the three years	69.3%	69.3%	70.70%	69.5%	68.5%	68.9%	70.6%	71.3%	Data source: www.sbs.gov.uk (Small Business Service) Please note this data is not going to be available in the future Latest data relates to: Companies formed in 2002
	Research and Development performed within businesses	587	12,786	-	-	-	-	735	13,410	Data source: BERD Latest data relates to: 2005
	Total Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA) Amongst Women			3.50%	3.80%	3.50%	3.80%	3.00%	3.60%	Data source: Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Latest data relates to: 2006
	Total Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA) Amongst Men			9.50%	8.90%	9.50%	8.90%	7.40%	7.90%	Data source: Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Latest data relates to: 2006

[†]Where data has not been presented (cells left blank) this is due to a lack of either initial data to make comparison with current data or a lack of updated current data to allow for comparison with initial data.

Annex A

	Headline Indicators	Initial Reported in 2004		Update 1 Reported in 2005		Update 2 Reported in 2006		Update 3 Reported in 2007		Data source and time period to which most recent data relates†
		WM	National	WM	National	WM	National	WM	National	
Work	% of 19–21 year olds qualified to level 2+*	76.20%	76.60%	74.40%	68.60%	67.40%	69.50%			Data source: Annual Population Survey Latest data relates to: 2006 Note: National figure is for England, rather than UK; Population denominator recalculated for 2006 and not comparable to previous years.
Work	% of working age with NVQ 1*	15.20%	15%	15.70%	14.90%	14.60%	14.20%			Data source: ONS Annual Population Survey Latest data relates to: Jan to Dec 2005 Note: National figure is for England, rather than UK.
Work	% of working age with NVQ 2*	15.70%	15.30%	15.10%	15.30%	17.20%	15.90%			Data source: ONS Annual Population Survey Latest data relates to: Jan to Dec 2005 Note: National figure is for England, rather than UK.
Work	% of working age with NVQ 3*	14.30%	14.40%	14.60%	14.70%	14.60%	15.00%			Data source: ONS Annual Population Survey Latest data relates to: Jan to Dec 2005 Note: National figure is for England, rather than UK.
Work	% of working age with NVQ 4+*	20.70%	23.90%	21.10%	25%	23.0%	26.4%			Data source: ONS Annual Population Survey Latest data relates to: Jan to Dec 2005 Note: National figure is for England, rather than UK.
Work	% of working age without qualifications*	18.70%	15.40%	18.70%	14.80%	17.70%	14.50%			Data source: ONS Annual Population Survey Latest data relates to: Jan to Dec 2005 Note: National figure is for England, rather than UK.
Work	ILO unemployment rate Mar – Feb	5.70%	5%	5.20%	4.80%	5.20%	5.00%	6.20%	5.50%	Data source: ONS Latest data relates to: Realigned – Mar to Feb 04/05, Jan to Dec 05, Dec to Jan 07

	Headline Indicators	Initial Reported in 2004		Update 1 Reported in 2005		Update 2 Reported in 2006		Update 3 Reported in 2007		Data source and time period to which most recent data relates†
		WM	National	WM	National	WM	National	WM	National	
Work	Claimant Rate in June	3.20%	2.70%	3.50%	2.70%	4.00%	3.00%	4.10%	3.00%	Data source: NOMIS, ONS Latest data relates to: March 2007 (data realigned)
Work	Long Term unemployment – proportion of claimants unemployed for more than 6 months	34.19%	32.56%	32.11%	30.07%	36.56%	32.16%	39.24%	33.65%	Data source: NOMIS, ONS Latest data relates to: March 2007 (data realigned)
Work	Self-employment levels – % of those 16+ self employed	10.30%	12.10%	11.00%	12.70%	11.60%	12.60%			Data source: ONS Latest data relates to: June to May 05
Work	Wage/income levels – Gross weekly pay	£442.3	£487.1	£455.20	£498.20	£474.90	£516.40	£493.90	£537.30	Data source: New Earnings Survey/Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings Latest data relates to: 2006 Note: Data re-aligned to account for change from New Earnings Survey to Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings
Learn	Educational Performance – % of 15 year old getting A* to C	49.70%	52.90%			46.70%	49.20%	56.40%	59.20%	Data source: DfES Latest data relates to: 2005 Note: National Figure is for England, rather than UK.
Learn	Work destination of graduates – % of students completing University who are now either employed or in further study	85.50%	85%	85.80%	85%	87.2%	87.5%	88.0%	87.7%	Data source: DES, HESA Latest data relates to: 2004/05
Learn	Proportion of school leavers staying on to FE/structured training	83.60%	84.40%	83.60%	84.40%					Data source: DfES Latest data relates to: 2005
Learn	Overall Academic Rating of Universities – number of universities in top twenty of teaching rankings			2		2				Data source: Research Assessment Exercise Latest data relates to: 2001
Learn	Overall Academic Rating of Universities – number of universities in top half of teaching rankings			4		4		5		Data source: Research Assessment Exercise Latest data relates to: 2001 Note: Includes Newman College

Annex A

	Headline Indicators	Initial Reported in 2004		Update 1 Reported in 2005		Update 2 Reported in 2006		Update 3 Reported in 2007		Data source and time period to which most recent data relates†
		WM	National	WM	National	WM	National	WM	National	
Learn	RAE ratings – number of universities in top twenty of rankings			1		1		No further RAE updates		Data source: Research Assessment Exercise Latest data relates to: 2001
Learn	RAE ratings – number of universities in top half of rankings			4		4				Data source: Research Assessment Exercise Latest data relates to: 2001
Learn	RAE ratings – % of departments achieving 5 or 5* rates			**38.10%**	**38.50%**	**38.10%**	**38.50%**	No further RAE updates		Data source: Research Assessment Exercise Latest data relates to: 2001 Note: National Figure is for England, rather than UK.
Learn	% of establishments with Skill shortage vacancies*			4%	4%	6%	5%			Data source: NESS Latest data relates to: 2005 Note: National Figure is for England, rather than UK.
Learn	% establishments with skill gaps*			22%	24%	15.9%	16.4%			Data source: NESS Latest data relates to: 2005 Note: National Figure is for England, rather than UK.
Learn	Number of skill gaps*	268,400	2,315,978	176,582	1,540,143	110,248	1,264,929			Data source: NESS Latest data relates to: 2005 Note: National Figure is for England, rather than UK.
Learn	Skill shortage as a % of employment*	24.0%	19.9%	21.7%	17.5%	21.3%	17.3%			Data source: NESS Latest data relates to: 2005 Note: National Figure is for England, rather than UK.
Visit	Overseas residents visits: holiday nights (000)	1,830		1,912		1,963				Data source: International Passenger Survey Latest data relates to: 2005
Visit	Overseas residents: total holiday visits (000)	361		335		332				Data source: International Passenger Survey Latest data relates to: 2005

	Headline Indicators	Initial Reported in 2004		Update 1 Reported in 2005		Update 2 Reported in 2006		Update 3 Reported in 2007		Data source and time period to which most recent data relates†
		WM	National	WM	National	WM	National	WM	National	
Visit	Overseas residents' expenditure (£m): holidays	89		93		97				Data source: International Passenger Survey Latest data relates to: 2005
Live	Housing affordability, price/earnings index – average house price compared to average salary*	**7**	**8**	**7**	**8**	**6.9**	**7.6**	**6.8**	**7.8**	Data source: Department for Communities and Local Government, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings. Figure calculated internally. Latest data relates to: 2006 Note: National Figure is for England, rather than UK.
Live	Accessibility to broadband – % of households and businesses with access to broadband	80%	80%	91%	90%	99%	99%			Data source: British Telecom Latest data relates to: 2005
Live	Congestion/Journey times – Mean travel time to work (minutes)	23	25	23	26	24	26			Data source: Labour Force Survey Latest data relates to: 2005
Live	Congestion/Journey times – % of average trunk road speed achieved at AM peak	90%	92%	91.20%	90.60%					Data source: Trunk Road Speeds Survey Latest data relates to: 2003
Live	Population Change between 1991–2001	0.70%	2.40%	…..	…..	…..	…..	….	….	Data source: ONS Latest data relates to: 2001
Live	Indices of Deprivation – % of SOAs in bottom 10% of England	8.70%		13.60%		16.60%				Data source: ONS Latest data relates to: 2004 Note: Previously at Ward level so national comparison not possible

Annex B Summary of the responses against Actions:

Action Number	Lead Partners	Grade as given by Lead Partner	Summary of Comments	Major Change
1 **Develop an Enterprise Culture**	Regional Entrepreneurship Group Minority Ethnic Business Forum Regional Women and Enterprise Group	**B** **n/a** **n/a**	The Enterprise Board is the current lead on this action. The biggest issue is to ensure that activity around developing an enterprise culture is coordinated at a strategic level to ensure that capacity is sufficient, delivery effective and that activities are not duplicated, this is especially prominent in the young person's enterprise agenda. Many different organisations from both the public and private sector are developing and delivering activity which aims to promote and encourage enterprise, this needs to be identified and coordinated at a regional level. In addition to this the term 'enterprise' needs to be viewed in its wider context – in some corners it is still seen as just 'starting businesses' The meaning of enterprise needs to be promoted in its wider context i.e. encouraging enterprising behavior in all 'walks of life' and the strategic approach to coordinating, building capacity at the grass roots levels and overseeing the delivery of programmes needs to encouraged further to ensure that a number of high level objectives around business support and enterprise are achieved.	Since this action was developed both the Regional Women's Enterprise Group and Regional Entrepreneurial Group are no longer operational. The former was disbanded following the successful launch of the Regional Women's Enterprise Unit which was launched in June 2006 and has been successful in helping more women into business and most importantly developing an enterprising culture amongst women and helping women to develop high growth businesses. This project has received national acclaim and will continue to run until March 2008 as it gradually becomes integrated into the services brokered by Business Link. The Minority Business Forum has ensured that the needs of ethnic minority businesses are seen as a priority in terms of business support and have produced research which highlights the economic benefits from encouraging enterprise within different communities but highlighting the different barriers there are amongst the existing and new diverse ethnic minority groups that live within the West Midlands. This research has helped the development of policies and in particular Business Link initiatives in ensuring that an enterprising culture continues to develop within ethnic minority communities. Many of these initiatives will become effective during 2007/08 and will continue to be reviewed.

Mark signify: **A**, Action progressing smoothly; **B**, Action is on track with a few manageable issues still to be resolved;
C, Difficulty is being experienced but progress is being made in taking action forward; **D**, Experiencing extreme difficulty to progress action with critical issues unresolved.

Action Number	Lead Partners	Grade as given by Lead Partner	Summary of Comments	Major Change
2 **Manufacturing**	The Beacon Manufacturing Group	**B**	The region has already contracted its Manufacturing Advisory Service (one year ahead of other RDAs) and the service provided already meets requirements planned by DTI for new contracts. Other centres of excellence developed are Casting Technology and Process Modelling. Another is the materials solutions – Longbridge Nanomaterial Centre opened in response to the DTI – Micro and Nano Technology Executive. The region is adopting manufacturing best practice. MAS BL, CIF, Accelerate, Lift Off, plus other AWM funded programmes are raising the competitiveness of manufacturing companies. Business Support Transformation will provide greater numbers and deeper intervention.	Modernisation and Diversification has been extended to all clusters notably aerospace, furniture, and building technologies are all embracing modernisation. Diversification had assisted 372 companies and created or safeguarded 1462 jobs in the last 12 months.
3 **e-Business uptake**	ICT Steering Group	**B**	This action is now being led by the Enterprise Board and the Regional ICT Operational Group.	E-skills UK have highlighted ICT skills as a key issue for businesses across all market sectors. To address this, a project on Strategic IT Management is being developed with Wolverhampton University with support from the ICT Operational Group to assist SMEs in making better use of the subject.

Annex B Summary of the responses against Actions:

Action Number	Lead Partners	Grade as given by Lead Partner	Summary of Comments	Major Change
4 **Rural Renaissance support**	Regional Rural Affairs Forum Rural Accord Partners Rural Business Advisory Group	**A** **n/a** **B**	**Regional Rural Affairs Forum:** The forum has been active in undertaking 'rural proofing' of the business transformation network and is deeply involved in the review of the West Midlands Economic Strategy. Members of the AWM rural team are also key players in the forum. **Rural Business Advisory Group:** The objectives identified are delivered through a wide range of actions carried out by AWM and other partners. The complexity however of development of programmes and their delivery means that communication and subsequent implementation is through a similarly wide range of partners & stakeholders leading to the risk of mis-information and mis-communication. AWM have strengthened their delivery capacity accordingly.	The objectives as set out in the current strategy are now rather out of date.

Action Number	Lead Partners	Grade as given by Lead Partner	Summary of Comments	Major Change
5 **Business Crime**	Regional Business Crime Partnership	**B**	As indicated in last year's report, provided by GOWM, the action has been taken forward in a different way with the establishment of the West Midlands Regional Business Crime Forum. The Forum has operated (and expanded) throughout the year, meeting regularly and expanding its membership. The Forum is serviced by the West Midlands Business Council. The Forum is operating well as an information exchange body, involving a wide range of stakeholders. However it appears to be struggling to develop actions in its own right. It has struggled to establish links with Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) and consequently influence LSPs and LAAs.	
6 **Business start ups and Incubation**	Regional Business Start Up Group Regional Incubation Group (Innovation & Technology) Council)	**n/a** **C**	Business Links and the Enterprise Board are the current lead partners on this action.	In light of the new Regional Business Link Structure, the Regional Business Start-up Group has now disbanded.

Annex B Summary of the responses against Actions:

Action Number	Lead Partners	Grade as given by Lead Partner	Summary of Comments	Major Change
7 **Sustainable Social Enterprise**	Regional Social Enterprise Network Regional Finance Forum	**B** **C**	**Regional Social Enterprise Network:** This action will depend in part on the success of the new Business Link Brokerage Service to secure adequate coverage for social enterprise support across the region. This will become more evident once the tenders have been considered and any gaps addressed. WMSEN hopes to work in partnership with the Business Link Brokerage Service through the Centre for Expertise for Social Enterprise to continue to achieve against this Action. **Regional Finance Forum:** The main action in this area has been tailored support for social enterprises under the R2i Investment Readiness programme. During 2006/7 a specific link to sources of finance for social enterprises was added to the front page of the westmidlandsfinance.com site. A number of regional based CDFIs provide loan finance to Social Enterprises and there are a significant number of nationally based providers of finance for social enterprises. The Access to Finance Team will continue to work closely with the West Midlands Social Enterprise Network and others to develop appropriate interventions to address finance issues for Social Enterprises.	An evaluation of Investment readiness services currently provided identified an ongoing need for support to businesses of the type that are not traditionally well engaged with Business Links (BL) such as social enterprises and action will be taken during 2007/8 to improve the take up of business support services via BL. Advantage West Midlands has recently commissioned a review of market failure in the provision of debt based finance, including finance for social enterprises and an evaluation of CDFIs to inform future action. One aspect of the review will look at ways of how better linkages can be developed with all existing providers so that West Midlands based social enterprises and those involved with advising them are aware of these and maximise their take up of funding from these sources.

Action Number	Lead Partners	Grade as given by Lead Partner	Summary of Comments	Major Change
8 **Increase Regional Risk Capital and improve access to finance**	Regional Finance Forum	**A**	Up to 31st March 2007 Investment readiness services were provided to businesses via the Business Link managed R2i programme and the continuation of the Connect/InvoRed programme. These focused support on businesses in the Objective 2 areas. During 2006/7 an evaluation of investment readiness services was carried out to inform decisions regarding ongoing provision of services as part of the new Business support model from 1 April 2007. This recommended that the focus of the services should be to support businesses with the potential for high growth but also to provide enhanced support to businesses that face barriers to accessing finance, not least because they have not been sufficiently engaged by business support providers (e.g. some minority ethnic businesses, women, social enterprises etc.) Action is now being taken by the new Business Link to address these issues and also widen coverage beyond the Objective 2 boundaries. The success of the Advantage Transition Bridge Fund (ATBF) in providing loan finance to businesses severely affected by the demise of MG Rover that had viable business plans to address the situation, but an inability to raise sufficient finance from conventional sources has led to proposals to establish a similar Fund to address a broader range of transitional situations. The Agency is currently gathering evidence of the extent of market failure in the provision of debt based finance to businesses. This is part of the process of identifying the need for public sector intervention to assist businesses in transition access appropriate finance.	There is a comprehensive range of venture capital funds providing equity based finance of up to £2m. During 2006/7 additional funding for the Mercia Seed Technology Fund has led to increased provision of seed capital for technology businesses. A new package of support towards business angel activity was also approved following a review of existing support. CDFIs continue to be supported through the Advantage Small Loans Programme. The Agency has recently commissioned a review and evaluation of CDFIs and of market failure in the provision of debt finance to help inform it and the Regional Finance Forum regarding future support for this type of activity. The launch of the local business exchange (Investbx) continued to be delayed by State Aid issues that were not resolved until the end of 2006. Now these have been resolved preparations are being made to formally launch Investbx in summer 2007.

Annex B Summary of the responses against Actions:

Action Number	Lead Partners	Grade as given by Lead Partner	Summary of Comments	Major Change
9 **Implement updated Regional Innovation Strategy**	Regional Innovation Strategy Group Innovation and Technology Council	**B**	There is still a need for universities to concentrate on applied research and transfer the results in usable form to the business community. Communication between academia and commerce remains a big issue for the Region.	The innovation and technology council has identified five (technological) priority areas and its work is gaining momentum across all five priority areas.
10 **Implement Cluster Action Plans**	Ten Cluster Opportunity Group	**B**	Three year cluster plans started to operate from April 2005. They set out for each cluster a vision, strategic opportunities and some long-term changes needed to exploit these. The budget approved for the three year cluster programme 2005–08 was £51M. Cluster projects in this three year programme are now largely contracted and delivery is well under way. In 2006–07 Cluster projects spent 92% of budget. By March 2007 83% of cluster budgets for 2007–08 were committed. There is a growing view that there should be a sharper focus on winning target markets to concentrate decision making, assist in prioritisation, and focus more explicitly on higher GVA to force strategic change. The development of major cross-cutting market opportunities involving multiple clusters would be facilitated by this approach.	There is a long and growing list of achievements from individual clusters. A few recent examples are: • Major business for Converteam for a new design of wind turbine generators; • Advanced Materials project winning first commercial orders from Rolls Royce; • Collaborations on 5 separate aerospace technology innovations by 17 companies and 3 universities; • SMEs working with architects and design teams on 8 public buildings to develop products for climate change; • The successful piloting of smoothie bars and healthy vending in schools; • 5 sub-regional professional networks of which 2 are self financing; • Pixel Learning securing a serious games contract with one of the big 5 USA consultancies; • Increasing profile for the furniture and interiors sector through successful design collaborations;
			The existing clusters would focus primarily on a few large attractive markets. Within each market they will focus on those market segments with the greatest opportunities where the Region is strong, many of which are currently focuses of cluster policy. Each cluster will focus primarily on one of these markets, and collaborate increasingly with other clusters and partners also focussing on these markets.	• An Energy Efficient Motor Sport programme contracted; • AWM the lead RDA on the Environmentally Friendly Vehicle, with projects in low carbon and telematics in advanced development • AccredIT UK piloting in the region as a national accreditation scheme for ICT suppliers; • AWM the lead RDA on the innovation platform in Assistive (medical) Technologies • Co-ordinated skills development in the construction industry; • Support for region-wide Better Access to Canals and other infrastructure projects; and • Rail companies linking to a European network of excellence to develop new products.

Annex B Summary of the responses against Actions:

Action Number	Lead Partners	Grade as given by Lead Partner	Summary of Comments	Major Change
11 **Implement Programme for Corridors**	Three High Technology Corridor Partnerships	**B**	Annually, all Corridors produce rolling 3-year strategic plans. These incorporate a standard 'Project Implementation Schedule', which sets out project expenditure, outputs and timing in a consistent format. Corridor secretariats review and refine these project schedules in close collaboration with the relevant Agency Sponsor and Partnership Director, to monitor and plan activity over time. CTB has been working to deliver much more than WMES Action 11. This is due to the desire of the partners within CTB to see a mutually supporting set of objectives delivered within the Corridor, namely: • Action 6 Business Start ups and incubation • Action 9 Technology Transfer • Action 21 Skills (reference HTCs) • Action 28 Strategic Land use • Action 42 Marketing and image These actions are explicitly captured in the CTB Business Plan 2006 – 09. In order to keep the delivery on track, we would like consideration to be given to allowing CTB more capacity to influence the project approvals process or perhaps allowing CTB to become an investment planning vehicle as recommended during the WMES review process. Although CTB continues to work closely with all partners to ensure that projects are delivered within the timeframe set out, it needs to be recognized that delays occur which are outside CTB's control.	The first phase of Corridor activity, underpinned by Rover Task Force funding, saw the initial tranche of projects completed successfully in terms of delivery of spend and output targets. The Corridors' role subsequently changed fundamentally from one of project management and delivery to one of strategy development and investment planning. Whilst this initially slowed progress in some instances, there is now evidence to suggest that the Corridors are increasingly delivering added value at both the strategic and operational levels. This view has been confirmed by two independent studies – the review of the region's delivery vehicles by GHK Consulting to build the evidence base for the West Midlands Economic Strategy review, and the National Audit Office's Independent Performance Evaluation of the Agency. The CTB Strategy and Action Plans are now fully developed and being implemented. The existing Business Plan covering the period 2006 – 2009 remains extant and is due for a complete overhaul post WMES publication on 9 November 2007. CTB used additional revenue funding in the financial year 06/07 to improve the performance of some of its key projects: this has been largely successful.

Action Number	Lead Partners	Grade as given by Lead Partner	Summary of Comments	Major Change
				CTB has been successful in playing a role in the delivery key infrastructure projects along the Corridor, these include: Pebble Mill, Longbridge Technology Park, Bromsgrove Technology Park, and Malvern Hills Science Park. As these major projects mature, CTB is looking to develop its role of 'connecting technology with enterprise' as well as continuing to deliver new and existing infrastructure improvements along the Corridor. Securing of the Malvern Hills Science Park revenue funding goes some way towards achieving the original vision of self-sustainability beyond the funding period.
12 **Implement Inward Investment Strategy**	Advantage West Midlands Sub-regional Investment Partnerships	**B**	Future inward investment actions will be addressed via a new International Business Framework to be developed following completion of the current West Midlands Economic Strategy consultation process.	In relation to the rural issue the SQW project identified that there is actually very little which can be undertaken proactively to promote the rural areas as a location for inward investment. It is therefore suggested that this action be deleted.

Annex B Summary of the responses against Actions:

Action Number	Lead Partners	Grade as given by Lead Partner	Summary of Comments	Major Change
13 **Deliver International Trade Strategy**	Regional International Trade Strategy Group	**A**	International Trade activity in the Clusters will in future need to reflect any changes in priorities proposed in the new Regional Economic Strategy. UKTI WM are working with the Cluster Teams on this. In using the next generation of EU Funds we will need to consolidate and build on the links already established. We will also need to consider working with European Partners to exploit opportunities in new emerging markets like China and India The NEC team is firmly established and we need to continue to work with Partners to refine the services provided and concentrate on building the already excellent relations with key show organisers, trade show sponsors (like Trade Associations) and the NEC itself.	Each Cluster now has an established International Action Plan as an integral part of the overall Cluster Plan. All targets set for the project have been achieved or exceeded. The 'first phase' of the project was successfully completed with a full programme of activity rolled out with the first wave of Enlargement States including Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and the Baltic States. Work has continued with the second wave, in particular with Romania and Bulgaria and we are now preparing for the third wave working with Croatia and Turkey. The NEC Team is now fully established and is hitting all its targets for both Inward Investment and Trade work. The team has established a good working relationship with the NEC Senior Management and is regarded as an asset by the UK Exhibitions Industry as a whole.

Action Number	Lead Partners	Grade as given by Lead Partner	Summary of Comments	Major Change
14 **Environmental Business Practice programme**	Government Office for the West Midlands The Environment Agency	**A** **n/a**	The Regional Energy Strategy was created under the auspices of the Energy West Midlands partnership. Energy West Midlands continues as a partnership to oversee the delivery of Regional Energy Strategy. Progress on implementation was slower than expected and action was taken to appoint a secondee from EON to the post of Director and a steering group of regional partners was set up to oversee progress. A new Energy White Paper was published on 23 May 2007 and the Energy Strategy will need to be revisited to reflect the changing priorities in that white paper.	The Environment Business Growth Plan is now closed and support for environmental technology projects is being delivered through the Environmental Technologies Cluster Opportunities Group and the BREW Programme. The Environment Agency does not have responsibility for the preparation of the Regional Energy Strategy. The Agency works as a consultee with regional partners to inform the strategy. The Environment Agency was the accountable body for the Environmental Business Growth Action Plan, however, in early 2005 this was transferred to Advantage West Midlands.
15 **Regional Sustainable Development Framework**	Advantage West Midlands Birmingham University Business Council for Sustainable Development	**B** **B** **B**	The fuel centre action has been taken forward by Advantage West Midlands and others with arranged funding via the Science City initiative with Birmingham University.	The National Industrial Symbiosis Programme, which began in the West Midlands, has now gone national and international over the last few years, and has just relocated their national headquarters from Birmingham City Centre to Kings Norton with 40 jobs to cope with their rapid expansion.

Annex B Summary of the responses against Actions:

Action Number	Lead Partners	Grade as given by Lead Partner	Summary of Comments	Major Change
16 **Implement Visitor Economy Strategy**	Tourism West Midlands	B	Overall, the identified actions are now very dated – with tourism priorities and structures evolving over the last three years. However, the changes to the governance and delivery structures that are currently being implemented are largely a result of the successful implementation of the Visitor Economy Strategy to date, establishing a basis for the next phase of delivery.	Actions are now very dated – the Visitor Economy Strategy is due to be reviewed and updated in 2007. In addition, through an independent review of tourism governance and delivery structures in 2006, Advantage West Midlands have taken on more direct responsibility for tourism development and marketing, Tourism West Midlands Board membership has been revised, and the core funding contract to the Heart of England Tourist Board has been discontinued. However, these changes are primarily a reflection on the great deal that has been achieved through the implementation of the Visitor Economy Strategy over the last three years (such as the creation of a comprehensive network of public/private Destination Management Partnerships across the region) – with changes implemented to ensure the successful delivery of the next phase of development (building on activities to date).
17 **Develop and Implement FRESA**	FRESA Executive Group Regional Skills Partnership	B	The creation of the Regional Skills Partnership in mid 2004 set an entirely new context for the skills actions identified in the WMES. The Partnership was established to lead the skills agenda in the West Midlands [as distinct from the incoherent leadership identified in Actions 17–24] and act as a catalyst for real change.	The latest prioritisation for the Regional Skills Partnership was published in 2006 and discussed at the Skills Summit held on the 2nd of March 2007, and is now fully embedded in the revised West Midlands Economic Strategy 2007 – 2020.

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18 **Increase Basic Skills**	Skills for Life Strategy Group	B	See Action 17 – incorporated into RSP priorities.	Skills for Life issues are now being addressed through the Regional Skills Partnership Level 2 and Level 3 work, in particular through the Train to Gain Programme.
19 **ICT Skills**	ICT Learning Task Group ICT Operational Group.	C	This action is now being led by the Regional Skills Partnership and the Regional ICT Operational Group.	E-skills UK have highlighted ICT skills as a key issue for businesses across all market sectors. To address this, a project on Strategic IT Management is being developed with Wolverhampton University with support from the ICT Operational Group to assist SMEs in making better use of the subject.
20 **High Level Skills and Adult Learning**	Partnerships for Progression – "Aim Higher" Six West Midlands Learning and Skills Councils	B B	See Action 17 – incorporated into RSP priorities. Information on works and guidance and high level skills have now been picked up by the Regional Skills Partnership.	A draft framework for action is being developed by the RSP for High Level Skills and specific actions are now being taken forward; for example, Foundation Degree Forward and Advantage West Midlands investments to increase graduate employment.
21 **Skill needs in Business Clusters**	Six West Midlands Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs)	B	See Action 17 – incorporated into RSP priorities. Work ongoing.	Skills Cluster Plans are currently being developed for incorporation over the next 12 months.

Annex B Summary of the responses against Actions:

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22 **Innovation Skills in Business Clusters and HEIs**	West Midlands Higher Education Association (WMHEA) Rural Skills Leadership Group	**B**	See Action 17 – incorporated into RSP priorities. Work ongoing.	Skills Cluster Plans are currently being developed for incorporation over the next 12 months.
23 **Leadership Skills**	Regional Leadership and Management Skills Group Succession Planning Steering Group	**B** **B**	See Action 17 – incorporated into RSP priorities. The Action Plan has been developed with RSP work and taken forward over the last two years.	Pilot work has been undertaken with employers and is currently being taken forward in the new Business Support Services.
24 **Management Skills for SMEs**	Regional Leadership and Management Skills Group	**B**	See Action 17 – incorporated into RSP priorities. The Leadership and Management Skills Action Plan has been developed with RSP work and taken forward over the last two years. The regional group to champion management development was set up in 2005 and is now leading the delivery of the Action Plan, chaired by an RSP Board member.	Work on the Gateway to Management Qualifications initiative has been completed and evaluated. Voluntary and Community Sector Workforce development has been picked up in the Regional Actions West Midlands (RAWM) Actions on Skills – RAWM Learning.

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25 **Implement Entrepreneurship Strategy**	Regional Young Entrepreneurship Group Local Education Authorities	**n/a**	The Regional Enterprise Board is the current lead on this action. As with action 1 it is vital that support to young people which is a priority for a number of organisations is co-coordinated effectively at a strategic level to ensure best practice and regional coverage. It is also important to recognise that starting a business is not always the best option, especially for young people, and that early pre-pre start up support should aim at helping young people become enterprising and equip them with some skills it may lead to them seeking further education or employment within an organisation. Would question whether this action is actually a priority for the region – whilst encouraging enterprising behavior in young people defiantly is.	This action is now very much part of the overall enterprise culture action 1 which is looking to develop an enterprising culture in all individuals but in particular key groups such as young people. The original lead partners are no longer in operation and this work is being driven by the Enterprise Board. Their work has ensured that pre-start-up support programmes aimed at giving young people an awareness of the skills necessary to start a business and generate ideas are a main priority, where appropriate young people will be brokered to organisations that have credibility in delivering support to this market. However, it has also been recognised that encouraging all young people to start a business is not necessarily the most appropriate option and that being 'enterprising' in the wider context is – this is something that is continually being developed through other initiatives driven by the Enterprise Board.
26 **Deliver Regional Transport Strategy and 'Priorities'**	Regional Assembly Transport Partnership	**A**	Innovative funding relies on actions and decisions from a range of key partners including central and local government – the RTP provides support and guidance where and when appropriate – always championing alignment and consistency with regional strategies.	The Regional Transport Partnership's strength is being able to co-ordinate the wide range of stakeholder views whether we are considering matters such as rail franchises or new policy. The transport agenda continues to expand and there are many key issues which require all our partners to address – such as Climate Change and Eddington.

Annex B Summary of the responses against Actions:

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27 **Co-ordinate upgrading of ICT infrastructure**	West Midlands Broadband Partnership West Midlands Networking Company	**A**	The Digital West Midlands Steering Group has taken the lead in driving the implementation and take-up of broadband across the region. The West Midlands Networking Company (WMNC) has been engaged with the steering and operational groups.	The Rural Broadband Access Project has delivered 100% access to broadband across the region, for businesses and domestic premises. The remaining few (<100) households without access to at least 512Kb broadband are being addressed in increasingly innovative ways to overcome the limitations imposed by distribution and lay of the land. The West Midlands is the only region to genuinely reach all households and not be content with 100% of exchanges enabled, or just focusing on businesses. The West Midlands Regional Broadband Network has been in place for the last four years, reliably and effectively delivering connectivity for Local Authorities, Universities, colleges and schools across the Region. Those organizations have now made the choice to move on to alternative, independent solutions and the network will be wound up in October 2007.

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28 **Implement strategic land use programme**	West Midlands Regional Assembly Advantage West Midlands	**B** **B**	The total amount of employment land developed during 2005/06 was 226 hectares, which was a slight increase from the previous year of 221 hectares. During the RSS monitoring period of 1998/99 – 2004/05, the average rate of completions was 236.6 hectares. Maintaining an adequate supply of employment land is essential for the Region's economic prosperity. The supply of employment land in the Region decreased from 3,337 hectares in 2004/05 to 3,161 hectares in 2005/06. The decline in employment land supply will need to be closely monitored over future years and ensuring an adequate supply of employment land in future is a key element of the RSS Phase 2 Revision. There are a number of gaps in existing provision with no sites currently identified for the Central Technology Belt, the West Birmingham and South Black Country Regeneration Zone or the Coventry and Nuneaton Regeneration Zone. There are also questions over the adequacy of provision within the East Birmingham/ North Solihull Regeneration Zone and CSW High Technology Corridor.	During 2005/06, 82% of the Region's employment land development took place on brownfield sites compared to 66% over the pervious year. The amount of brownfield land development increased from 158.6 hectares to 186.3 hectares. During 2005/06 no land was developed for Major Investment Site uses. Planning Permission was approved for a MIS site at Wobaston Road in Staffordshire; however this site is not yet readily available for development. Infrastructure investment and land contamination treatment is required to bring the site forward. The strategic land and property acquisitions have continued, particularly in areas of deprivation such as the Black Country and positive land uses are being sought with partners and stakeholders. To compliment this activity, Brownfield Land action plans have been progressed. The I54 site has made significant progress with the grant of consent for land reclamation and earthworks: a further planning permission for the physical development of the site has been approved in principle subject to completion of a S. 106.

Action Number	Lead Partners	Grade as given by Lead Partner	Summary of Comments	Major Change
			The current Phase 2 Revision to the RSS has identified the need to ensure additional provision of RIS in the Coventry & Nuneaton Regeneration Zone, the CSW HTC and the East Birmingham and North Solihull Regeneration Zone, as such it is anticipated that a specific policy setting out this requirement will be incorporated into the revised RSS.	Unfortunately, some delay was recorded in bringing forward actions on provision of Regional Investment Sites and Centre of Excellence in land reclamation due to resources and processes. Regional Investment Sites are now being prompted by the ongoing review of the RSS and Advantage West Midlands is actively engaged in assisting Local Planning Authorities in filling the identified gaps in provision in Birmingham (Longbridge and Aston) and in Coventry and Nuneaton. The Centre of Excellence is now funded.
29 **Implement Regional Planning Guidance**	Regional Planning Body Advantage West Midlands	**B** **B**	Both the West Midlands Economic Strategy and Regional Spatial Strategy are under review. To assist in the management of the process and act as a conduit for exchanges of views and information, a joint Working Group has been formed with officers of Advantage West Midlands and the West Midlands Regional Assembly. The Working Group has made sound progress in seeking to align the respective strategies. However, there are ongoing issues, relating to alignment that requires resolution. For example, in the language of the documents and in policy areas.	The WMRSS Partial Revision and WMES Review are running concurrently. In order to ensure a closer alignment between the two strategies the WMRA and AWM are represented on an officer Working Group, whose role is to ensure that the technical elements of the two strategies are developed in a mutually supportive way.

Action Number	Lead Partners	Grade as given by Lead Partner	Summary of Comments	Major Change
30 **Develop and Introduce Design Standards**	Advantage West Midlands RegenWM Board West Midlands Regional Regeneration Partners CABE and other Regional Design Partners	**A** **A** **B** **B**	The Regional Centre of Excellence is now taking forwards a range of built environment design initiatives including facilitating the design practitioners network Designed Environment West Midlands – which emanated from joint work with CABE and the region's architecture centres in response to the idea of a more consolidated knowledge hub for the region – highlighted in the Regional Design Framework debate. DEWM is now an operational partnership of organisations and agencies involved in the designed environment and supports enhanced networking activity by design practitioners in the region. This augments the expansive work that RegenWM has developed in regeneration excellence and good practice since its inception in 2003. The region has continued its support for design champions both directly and via the region's architecture centres. Currently the role and focus of the Agency's design Champion is being reframed as work on design in the built environment and sustainable development is taken forward in the region. University of Central England was successful in bidding to host the CABE flagship Urban Design Summer School – which took place 24–27 June 2007 and hosted a record number of delegates (over 120) in Birmingham before it moves on to Leeds and Newcastle in the next two years.	The £50m revamp of Fort Dunlop which had stood empty for over two decades began in the spring of 2005. The iconic former Fort Dunlop tyre factory alongside the M6 has been transformed into offices, retail and a hotel by Manchester-based developers Urban Splash. In October last year the historic Fort Dunlop building re-opened for business. A number of other key actions have emerged from the Design Work and from the debate in establishing DEWM in 2005 and this includes the establishment of a sub regional design review panel – formed by the sub regional architecture centre in North Staffs (Urban Vision). This has been in operation now for over 2 years and in 2006 was further augmented to include a design advisory service. Meanwhile, Midlands Architecture and the Designed Environment (MADE) the regional architecture centre, set up a regional design review panel which was launched in March 2006. A review of activities and an "audit" of how things have progressed will be undertaken this year.

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31 **Support and develop two Urban Regeneration Companies**	Advantage West Midlands Urban Regeneration Companies Regeneration Zone Boards Pathfinder Boards	**B** **B** **B** **n/a**		The North Staffordshire Regeneration Partnership (NSRP) is now established. Operational issues are systematically handled. Delegation of authority for project approval & delivery from AWM to NSRP would significantly improve pace of delivery.
32 **Develop West Midlands Canal Network**	Local Authorities British Waterways Inland Waterways Association	**n/a** **n/a** **n/a**	NO UPDATE AVAILABLE	All the next steps listed against this action have now been completed.
33 **Develop and implement Regional Housing Strategy**	Regional Housing Board Regional Housing Partnership Pathfinder Boards and other regional partners	**A** **n/a** **n/a**	Integrated approach to RES/RSS has helped take forward Regional Housing Strategy, which has a shared evidence base.	

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34 **Implement the Water Resources Strategy**	Environment Agency	**B**	Overall good progress is being made but we cannot achieve our aims for water resources on our own. We are taking some actions forward as national projects. For others we need to work with partners in the region to make sure water continues to be available for human use and that the environment is properly protected. We continue to work with water companies on AMP4. The environmental programme includes investigations into a number of sites where abstractions may be impacting the environment. We have also started developing our next environmental plan for AMP5 in discussion with water companies. We are liaising with water companies on their current water resource plans and have commenced discussions on the development of their next water resource plans covering the period 2010–2015. The Environment Agency is currently working with key organisations to develop the Water Framework Directive. We are due to publish and consult on a Summary of the Significant Water Management Issues in July 2007. Actions and measures to tackle these issues will support some of the actions within the Water Resource Strategy. The first River Basin Management Plans will be published by the end of 2009.	have been working with the Regional Assembly and relevant water companies to discuss the impact of increased housing growth on public water supplies. We have made various recommendations and suggested that the Regional Spatial Strategy should include a policy on water efficiency such as requiring all new houses to meet level 3 of the Code of Sustainable Homes, particularly focusing on the most sensitive/high risk resource zones. This level of the code requires good water efficiency to be achieved. Local Planning Authorities need to recognise that improvements to the water distribution infrastructure will be required to provide water supplies to new housing. We are now updating and refreshing our Water Resource Strategy and in July we will publish a document outlining the pressures and challenges we face with managing water resources. We plan to publish a new strategy for England and Wales by the end of 2008. This will supersede our Water Resource strategies published in 2001. We do not plan to produce regional strategies as local information will be included in the River basin management Plans for the Water Framework Directive

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35 **Promote environmentally beneficial farming**	Regional Rural Affairs Forum Regional Biodiversity Partnership	**B** **n/a**	The forum deals with wide range of issues, one of which includes environmentally beneficial farming. The issue has featured in our annual report conference and we will be holding specialist seminars in the future. However, finding time in busy agenda is an issue.	
36 **Deliver Regeneration Zones Initiative**	Six Regeneration Zone Boards Advantage west Midlands	**B** **B**	This year the process was excellent. The guidance was clear and the timetable was adhered too. The feedback was concise and welcome.	

Action Number	Lead Partners	Grade as given by Lead Partner	Summary of Comments	Major Change
37 **Implement Market Towns Initiatives**	West Midlands Market Towns Forum, Sub-County Networks and Market Town Partnerships	**A**	An evaluation of the West Midlands Market Towns Programme is currently underway, which will include proposals for future market towns investment in the region. Without precluding that report (due July 2007) the key actions to develop and sustain the success of the market towns programme are likely to be: • recognition that many market towns have a key role to play in the prosperity of the region, as attractive places to live and work, besides their local service centre function. • Market Town Partnerships have a good track record in stimulating and developing initiatives to benefit their town, and in harnessing a range of public and private sector investment. Market Town Partnerships would benefit from investment in supporting their future activity, either through matched revenue support or capital investment in income-generating assets to benefit both the town and partnership. • Availability of further capital resources targeted at key economic development projects in Market Towns.	The Market Towns Group 1 and Group 2 programmes have now been completed, with a portfolio of project activity having been delivered and an appropriate market town partnership having been formed in each town. The Group 3 programme is now mid-way through the third of a four year programme; each one has a solid portfolio of activity and strong partnership. A key development site or flagship project has been identified for each market town in the programme. In several towns, the market town programme has provided the spur that has lead to the development of a number of significant projects with investment from a variety of sources, and boosting confidence in the town. Market Towns Forums, drawing together officer and Partnership representatives from most of the region's market towns plus other interested groups, have continued to meet on a quarterly basis. The Forums have been successful in enabling towns to network, learn from other's experience both within and outside the region. Action is underway to launch a new series of Forums, building on the success to date, with extra emphasis upon sharing local, practical knowledge and experience, including the development of a series of best practice notes.

Annex B Summary of the responses against Actions:

Action Number	Lead Partners	Grade as given by Lead Partner	Summary of Comments	Major Change
38 **Economic Intervention in Towns Study issues**	Sub-regional economic partnerships Local Strategic Partnerships Advantage West Midlands	**n/a** **n/a** **n/a**	This is not a specific action as the subregional activity is embedded across the piece.	
39 **Improve support for formation of social enterprise**	Regional Social Enterprise Network	**A**	Through a range of activity to be delivered through the WMSEN project we are on target to achieve this action.	
40 **Role of the NHS and other large public sector bodies**	Government Office for the West Midlands Three Strategic Health Authorities Local Authorities	**B** **n/a** **n/a**	The Regional Health partnership is working well. The draft of the Regional health and well being strategy is out to consultation. There is a section on the economy and health. AWM personnel attend the majority of the meetings and have played an active part in the development of the strategy. Local Procurement has been a challenge as within Trusts, there is not always the capacity to do a supply chain analysis and often it is the distributor rather than the suppliers whose address is recorded. In the local procurement of services the market needs to be grown to provide an alternative to NHS facilities. There is a further need to develop the joint work with the SHA on the procurement of local services, which includes goods but also looks at how alternative providers to NHS provision can be supported and grown.	The Government Office public health team on behalf of the SHA has set up a corporate citizen network and has focused on issues such as waste and energy in the first instance. Initial work has started on mapping local food procurement to NHS hospitals in Birmingham. The consultation draft RES is strengthening many of the above key areas. If the draft remains as it is, this will help in identifying factors that promotes health such as reducing worklessness, promoting health at work, growing the SME companies, capitalizing on the research agenda in the NHS and using the NHS as an economic driver.

Action Number	Lead Partners	Grade as given by Lead Partner	Summary of Comments	Major Change
41 **Engagement of Voluntary and Community Sector in Regeneration**	Regional Action West Midlands (RAWM) EMBRACE West Midlands Business in Communities Government Office for the West Midlands Advantage West Midlands	**C** **n/a** **n/a** **C**	EMBRACE is no longer operational. The demise of EMBRACE has made progress really slow. RAWM is experiencing capacity issues which are affecting their ability to deliver. Embrace was the Black Minority Ethnic voluntary community sector network for the West Midlands and the absence of a BME regional network has created a gap for the sector voice. A further challenge affecting this action was the closure during 2006 of the Regional Strategic Engagement fund (RSEF) a Regional Development Agency fund of £1.5M to co-ordinate thematic and geographic networks to help engage the VCS. Managed by RAWM. The R20 Programme will support sector engagement; however engagement with programme is extremely limited in terms of delivery.	A new panel to champion BME VCS engagement in regional policy and strategy was launched in 2007 and will seek to address the gap identified in the delivery of this action. Government Office, the West Midlands Regional Assembly and Advantage West Midlands are working with RAWM to develop a more coherent overall approach to supporting the strategic engaging capacity of the VCS, and Advantage West Midlands is committed to producing its own VCS engagement strategy. The R2O programme was developed with key regional stakeholders. The new programme launched in 2007 is a ground breaking Advantage West Midlands funded initiative. R2O will deliver capacity building support direct to Black Minority Ethnic third sector organisations. The programme will provide business support to 155 BME organisations and provide skills development for a further 50. RAWM welcomes the proposed development of an economic inclusion focus to inform the new WMES. This should assist future delivery in the context identified.

Action Number	Lead Partners	Grade as given by Lead Partner	Summary of Comments	Major Change
42 **Implement marketing and image programme**	Advantage West Midlands West Midlands Regional Assembly	**B** **n/a**	The Governing Idea and the first Regional Marketing Campaign (business) launched in 2004. Subsequent regional image building activity has developed well against business, media and government audiences. Campaigns and activity against other Regional Marketing Strategy (RMS) defined audiences (visitors/students/regional population) requires increased focus. Broad regional marketing work requires increased synthesis across audiences to ensure maximum return for the region. A review of the current Regional Marketing Strategy is underway to address this.	The review of the Regional Marketing Strategy will inform future actions and delivery. Key areas of focus will be; • Increased message and creative synthesis across audiences to ensure ease of alignment for partners and increased collective ROI • Future role of key partners, Ambassadors and Champions in the delivery of the revised RMS • Continual review and assessment of evidence base and impact on perceptions.
43 **Sharing of information and intelligence**	West Midlands Regional Observatory	**A**	The Annual State of the Region update in 2006 was well received and plans are in place to produce 2007 update, covering climate change and demographic change.	

Annex B Summary of the responses against Actions:

Action Number	Lead Partners	Grade as given by Lead Partner	Summary of Comments	Major Change
44 **Working with other Regions**	Advantage West Midlands Government Office for the West Midlands West Midlands Regional Assembly	**B** **n/a** **n/a**	Work is ongoing with the East Midlands on the Midlands Aerospace Alliance and on inward investment activity through the shared, 'British Midlands' brand. A memorandum of understanding has been established with Central Wales and co-operation is ongoing on rural regeneration and tourism related activities. A study was commissioned and completed on the impact of the Milton Keynes South Midlands Growth Area on the West Midlands. The results are being used to inform the review of the WMES and the revision of the WMRSS. The Smart Growth Midlands Way Action Plan has been finalised with a proposal for an initial focus on the delivery of a small number of high priority actions. These are: Advancing to a further stage of the Midlands Engineering Redeployment Initiative (MEIRG); taking forward joint working on sustainable transport technologies, particularly around fuel cells and joint work on developing international investment and trade links with a particular focus on China and other emerging markets.	This action will be taken forward into the revised WMES Action Plan.
45 **Implement European Strategic Framework and Strategy**	Regional Assembly's European and International Affairs Partnership	**C**	Some of the next steps to carry out this priority action have been overtaken by events; the European Strategy is totally out of date and has not been referred to by partners for some time.	Some of the indicated actions are out of date and the agenda and regional partnership working has moved on significantly since the action plan was originally put together. Following the Regional Assembly's strategic review of European working, endorsed by the Assembly in April 2007, a new document is being prepared, led by Advantage West Midlands.