Challenges

• Whilst unemployment has been decreasing, it remains higher than the Staffordshire average. Youth unemployment is a particular challenge for the district. Just over a third of those unemployed are under 25. Gross average weekly earnings are similarly below the national average.

• The district suffers from lower levels of investment within businesses than elsewhere. It has the lowest levels of Manufacturing Gross Value Added per capita in Staffordshire and way below the average for Great Britain.

• In 2006 just over half of pupils within the district achieved 5 A* - C GCSEs which is below that of Staffordshire. Whilst attainment in Cannock Chase continues to rise, it remains below Staffordshire and national averages. This in turn can lead to low aspiration among school leavers, which has a detrimental effect on the district’s economic future. Indeed, the district has the highest level of people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) in the County.

• In 2005-6 the proportion of young people achieving a level 2 qualification by the age of 19 was 63%. This is 6% below the Staffordshire average.

• The number of adults in Cannock Chase qualified to degree level is below the national average and the skill set of adults does not reflect the growth of business sectors in the local economy.

• The skills level of the district, across all NVQ levels, is below the West Midlands average. Indeed, 22% of the working age population has no formal qualifications compared to 14% for Great Britain.

• The district continues to suffer disadvantage compared to other authorities in Staffordshire regionally and nationally. When looking at income, employment, education, skills and training and health and disability, Cannock Chase does not compare well with some areas in the UK. It is the most deprived area in Staffordshire with people likely to earn less, be less healthy and have fewer qualifications than most.

• If we are to reduce levels of deprivation in the district, we must focus our efforts on those areas which are most disadvantaged.
Our 2020 Vision for the District

By 2020, Cannock Chase will have a vibrant local economy with opportunities for all, in a clean, green and safe environment.
10. Vibrant Local Economy

- By 2020, the local economy will have seen an increase in the number of skilled knowledge based jobs available for local people, in both manufacturing and services.

- There will have been some movement into the area by people with high-level skills, but local training opportunities will also have created new career pathways for local people to improve their earning capacity.

- There will also have been an increase in the proportion of the population who are economically active and a reduction in those dependent on long-term income support such as incapacity benefit.

- Cannock Chase will have developed a strong culture of self-employment and entrepreneurship. Excellent business startup support and physical facilities, such as affordable serviced offices, will be available.

- The districts’ vibrant town centres will provide the ideal places for businesses to thrive.

- By 2020, the district will have become an even more popular destination for visitors and tourists alike. There will be a wider range of shops and attractions, and a programme of local activity based around our excellent green spaces will have added to the traditional local heritage of museums, theatre and parks. The high quality, award winning leisure facilities will continue to draw people into the district and provide people with healthier ways to enjoy and relax.

- The visitor economy will have been developed to establish the required infrastructure of places to stay and conference facilities to allow the district to play a full role as a destination in it’s own right.

- The districts’ vibrant town centres will provide visitors with a pleasant environment to shop, eat, drink and relax.
11. Opportunities For All

• By 2020, Cannock Chase’s reputation as the place to live within the West Midlands region will be growing. There will be a wider and more balanced range of housing available to meet the needs of both high and low earners in the form of affordable and aspirational housing which is sustainable.

• New properties will be built to more energy efficient standards and will be safe by design, and similar improvements will have been made to many of the older existing housing stock, because homeowners will have had the confidence to invest in their own homes.

• Tackling homelessness within the district will be a priority for the CCP. We will try to reduce levels of homelessness and provide effective and efficient services to minimise the effects of homelessness when it does occur.

• Better educational attainment by local people will have been critical for our economic success. Achievement in schools will compare well with results across Staffordshire and the UK.

• Better educational attainment needs to start at the early stage foundation level. The partnership will ensure that children are starting school equipped with the skills to learn.

• The partners will be able to look back on actions they have supported to improve educational achievement. The new college and Community Learning Partnerships will be established and will provide a range of opportunities for education, cultural and sports facilities. This will have a growing reputation in a number of areas, and will help to create a skilled workforce in support of the growing local economy.
The investment in schools for the future will have taken careful account of the social patterns in Cannock Chase, and the education sector will have played a vital role in creating better life chances for residents of the district.

The gap in educational achievement will have been narrowed between young people from low income and disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers.

Cannock Chase will be an area where health inequalities are less marked. There will be a reduction in the number of people smoking. More people will take regular exercise, and enjoy the wide range of sporting and cultural activities available to them. There will be more opportunities to incorporate exercise and culture into everyday life and school children will be positively encouraged to take part in sport or other physical activity.

Cannock Chase will be a place where older people stay active for longer, and more people will be able to remain at home while in receipt of care.
12. Clean, Green and Safe Environment

- There will be no housing areas in Cannock Chase that are troubled by serious problems of crime and disorder.

- There will be more moderate use of alcohol, and problems caused by drug misuse will have been significantly reduced.

- Teenage pregnancies will be far less common and the prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases will have continued to fall.

- Local roads will be much safer, thanks to the work of the Cannock Chase Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and the Staffordshire Casualty Reduction Partnership.

- By 2020, Cannock Chase and its neighbourhoods will be regarded as well cared for and increasingly attractive places to live and work. However this will not only be due to the work of public services. There will be a greater sense of personal responsibility and action. A greater sense of civic pride will mean people will take greater care of their surroundings and will be less likely to litter and commit criminal damage.

- We will build on the success of the ‘Own Your Streets’ scheme as one of the ways to get residents involved in caring for their neighbourhood.

- We will work to protect and enhance the best of the district’s natural and historic built environment. Tackling issues of climate change are important for us all and the CCP will look at ways to reduce unnecessary journeys, improve public transport and reduce reliance on private cars.

- The people of Cannock Chase will feel pride in the area they live in and respect and care for their local environment. We will continue to build on civic pride events such as ‘Own Your Streets’ to enable people to get involved in their community.

- It will be a place to be proud of; somewhere to settle and raise a family; somewhere to enjoy a rewarding and healthy life as part of a vibrant community. More and more people will be choosing Cannock Chase District as a place to live, work and play.
How do we get there?

To make the 2020 vision a reality, this strategy will be underpinned by a partnership delivery plan. The plan will describe in detail the actions we will take to achieve the agreed Local Area Agreement targets alongside the community priorities which have been identified throughout this strategy.

The five thematic partnerships are already working to deliver the Local Area Agreement targets and therefore our partnership delivery plan will identify how these established partnerships will deliver this vision and priority areas for improvement.
13. Improvement Priorities for The District
Childrens’ Trust Board

• Improving the physical, emotional and mental wellbeing of children and young people.

• Improving the life chances of children and young people who are at risk.

• Improving standards of enjoyment and achievement for children and young people.

• Increasing opportunities available for children and young people to make a positive contribution.
14. Improvement Priorities for the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership

• To reduce levels of violent crime, and in particular domestic violence and alcohol fuelled violence.

• To reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour including criminal damage.

• To reduce peoples fear of crime and anti-social behaviour.

• To engage and empower local communities.
15. Improvement priorities for the Health, Housing and Wellbeing Partnership

- Increase the supply of affordable housing and provide dwellings that meet the needs of the local population.

- Work with providers of housing from the public, private and voluntary sectors to provide seamless services to the public.

- Support the independence, inclusion and wellbeing of the most vulnerable members of the community.

- Work with individuals and families who have health and social problems.

- Increase the number of homes in the district which meet decent homes standard.

- Promote healthier lifestyle choices for all.

- Promote positive mental health.

- Reduce health inequalities.
16. Improvement priorities for the Learning, Education, Employment and Prosperity Group

- Develop vibrant and sustainable town centres which reflect the needs and aspirations of the community.
- Improve skill levels to support growth in high value added businesses.
- Increase the levels of new business start-ups and support their sustainability.
- Reduce the number of people out of work.
- Enhance educational performance.
17. Improvement priorities for The Sustainable Environment Group

• Enhance and ensure access for all environments that are valued, protected and enjoyed.

• Reduce the reliance on the car by encouraging the use of public transport.

• Maintain parks and open spaces that are valued by residents and visitors.

• Reduce the volume of waste to landfill and increase recycling rates.

• Improve the cleanliness of our streets.

• Reduce carbon emissions.

• Protect bio diversity.
Appendix 1
Members of the Chase Community Partnership (CCP)

• Cannock Chase Council

• Staffordshire County Council

• Staffordshire Police

• South Staffordshire Primary Care Trust

• Cannock Chase Technical College

• Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service

• Chase Council for Voluntary Service

• Plus many other organisations with a stake in the district