



The future of  
**Cannock Chase**  
Sustainable Community Strategy

2011-2021

In 2008 Chase Community Partnership published “The Future of Cannock Chase 2008-2020”, the Partnership’s Sustainable Community Strategy for the District of Cannock Chase. In that document the Partnership set out its intention to regularly review the Strategy and refresh priorities to ensure that it is focused on the right outcomes for local people and businesses.

We are pleased to publish this refreshed Sustainable Community Strategy which will drive forward partnership working across Cannock Chase.

The Chase Community Partnership brings together key public and voluntary sector service providers alongside representatives from our business and residential communities.

We have achieved a great deal since the publication of the previous Sustainable Community Strategy in 2008. However new challenges have emerged in that time; in particular the global economic situation has had a significant impact on the economy and local employment in the District. These emerging challenges have informed the development of this Strategy and will direct the work of the Partnership over the coming years.

The changing national environment for the public sector has also been an important factor in determining refreshed priorities and establishing principles of working. With fewer resources it has never been more important to ensure that we are focussed on a small number of the right priorities to make sure that we can concentrate time and resource on the most important issues for Cannock Chase.

In refreshing this Strategy the views and priorities of local stakeholders have been taken into account and through ongoing partnership consultation since 2008 we have been able to identify community priorities to inform this Strategy. A number of other Strategies are closely linked to the Sustainable Community Strategy and have been taken into account in drafting this document.

Alongside the refresh of priorities we have also taken the opportunity to review our partnership working and existing structures. Feedback during various partnership workshops has suggested that we need fewer formal meetings and theme groups and a greater focus on action against a smaller set of priorities. A set of principles, or ways of working, has been adopted by Chase Community Partnership. These principles set the scene for all partnership work in the District and will be an important tool to refer to throughout the life of this Strategy. More details about the principles are included in this Strategy.

We will be working hard to achieve the priorities in this Strategy to ensure that, as partners, we will improve opportunities and reduce disadvantage for local people, businesses and visitors to Cannock Chase.

# > drive forward partnership working across Cannock Chase

## What is Chase Community Partnership?

The Chase Community Partnership is Cannock Chase’s Local Strategic Partnership, which is made up of organisations from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors. A full list of Members can be seen in Appendix 1.

## Our Vision

Cannock Chase will be a place where people have improved opportunities to enhance their quality of life and achieve economic prosperity.

## About this Strategy

Chase Partnership is committed to delivering against the priorities set out in this Strategy. In order to achieve this it is important to understand:

- What are the priorities for Cannock Chase?
- What outcomes do we want to achieve in partnership?
- How can we ensure that the partnership is structured to deliver against these priorities?

This Strategy considers the answers to each of these questions and informs the delivery planning which the Partnership has undertaken and will continue to review during the course of this Strategy.

## Successes

Chase Community Partnership has been working hard to achieve success against the themes set out in the previous Community Strategy. A number of improvements and successes in the District have been achieved, these include:

### Sustainable environment

A number of initiatives have been undertaken in Partnership within this priority including Forest Schools and efforts to increase recycling rates within the District. In 2003/4 the District only diverted and recycled 8% of its waste compared to the figures for February 2011 which highlight a 50% recycling rate.

The Green Flag award scheme provides an independent assessment of Parks and Open Spaces against a set of nationally prescribed criteria which include 'Sustainability' and 'Healthy, Safe and Secure'. Cannock Chase is very proud to hold more Green Flags than any other district in the West Midlands region.



### Community safety

The Responsible Authorities Group uses the annual Strategic Needs Assessment to focus effort on key community safety priorities for the District. A number of successes have been achieved since 2008 including a 14% reduction in recorded incidents of anti social behaviour in 2009/10. Partnership campaigns such as 'Take Care, Be Aware' which targeted anti social behaviour over the Halloween and Bonfire period have been key initiatives in helping to secure this reduction. Business crime, which includes shoplifting, criminal damage to business premises, burglary and robbery of a business and making off without payment, was reduced by 27% during 2009/10.

### Economy

The Partnership worked together to secure Department for Work and Pensions funding for the 'Future Jobs Fund'. This scheme has directly helped to address the higher than average number of young people not in employment, education or training within the District. The initiative provided opportunities for unemployed young people to gain work experience across a range of partner organisations and resulted in over 70 placements being offered to local young people.

The Partnership also provided financial support in relation to work to respond to the recession through the provision of advice and guidance to local people and businesses. The guidance emphasised the availability of rate relief to small businesses and explained the relief available to businesses which served social and community needs in the District.

## What is a Sustainable Community?

Sustainable communities are places where people want to live, work and visit, both now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe, clean and inclusive, well planned, built and run and offer equality of opportunity and good services for all. (Source: DCLG)

We need to protect our environment for future generations and ensure that they too can enjoy the same, or improved social, environmental and economic benefits as we do today. We also need to work in partnership to improve outcomes for people living and working in the District today to ensure that people in Cannock Chase are not disadvantaged through poorer health and/or economic outcomes when compared regionally and nationally.

Sustainability isn't just about traditional environmental concerns; it is also about promoting a safe and just society with a sustainable economy and excellent public services.

All of the work we undertake in partnership is underpinned by the principle of sustainability. That means that we aren't just about setting up one-off projects which only make a positive impact for a short time, instead we are committed to long-term improvements against the outcomes set out in this document.

## Equality and Diversity

The Chase Community Partnership set out its commitment to equality and diversity in the previous Sustainable Community Strategy and this continues to be an important principle for partnership working. Chase Community Partnership is committed to:

Working in a way that is inclusive and provides equality of opportunity and involvement from all sectors regardless of age, gender, ethnic origin, race, sexual orientation, religion, disability, social status or geographical location.

Establishing effective ways of communicating and consulting, using and developing wherever possible, common structures and processes, so that there are ways for all groups and interests to have a voice in the services that we deliver.

Equality and diversity impact on every decision partners take. Equality is about creating a fairer society where all people have an equal chance to contribute and participate. Equality issues are reinforced in law which is designed to address and eliminate discrimination and the resulting inequality for individuals of particular groups. Diversity recognises people as individuals with valuable differences that should be acknowledged and accepted. There are nine legally recognised equality strands or 'protected characteristics' - race, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity and marriage and civil partnership but we also need to consider other groups such as social status or geographic location.

## How do we know that our priorities actually reflect the needs of the District?

Chase Community Partnership produces a District report which provides a range of information including the physical health of residents, their economic prosperity, performance in schools and types of crime in the District. The Partnership also produces a Strategic Assessment for Community Safety annually and in November 2010 a detailed needs analysis was drafted which considered a wide range of information and statistics relating to Cannock Chase. These important documents underpin this Strategy.

In order to identify and agree the most important issues to come out of the needs analysis a series of partnership workshops were held from December 2010 - February 2011. Using fictional case studies based on local statistics and information the Partnership considered which issues were the most important as priorities for action from April 2011. Having agreed that Chase Partnership would be adopting a smaller number of priorities the workshops identified these as follows:

- Improved Health
- Increased Economic Opportunity



These priorities were used to set the scene for the development of a detailed delivery plan in February and March 2011. This plan set out exactly how the Partnership will seek to achieve success in respect of these priorities.

In addition to these two priorities, which are informed by statistical information, it is recognised that community safety will continue to be an important part of partnership working. Ongoing consultation with local people highlights the value placed on safer communities in ensuring a good quality of life and therefore we will continue to work together to ensure Cannock Chase is a safe place to live, work and visit.

Many of the actions against the two priorities have links to community safety; for example if we work to reduce substance misuse through the health outcome we would anticipate a reduction in hospital admissions and town centre violence linked to alcohol consumption.

## Who does what?

It is important to acknowledge that in refreshing this Strategy and undertaking delivery planning, the Partnership has committed to a 'form follows function' approach to structuring partnership work. For this reason it has detailed the functions of the Partnership at various levels rather than develop a revised structure which can often dictate a series of meetings as opposed to 'on the ground' action.

### LSP Strategic Board / Responsible Authorities Group (RAG)

Meets quarterly to set the strategic vision and ensures that each organisation considers partnership priorities in their business planning. Approves the allocation of Partnership funding and other resources to ensure we meet the targets set out in the Delivery Plans.

### Executive Advisory Board

Meets quarterly to manage performance, manage the development and implementation of the Delivery Plans, ensure that the Strategic Board/RAG has the information required to set the strategic vision and recommend the allocation of Partnership funding to the Strategic Board/RAG.

The Partnership will be far more flexible than it has been in the past which allows relevant organisations to be involved in a more targeted way. This means that not all partners will be involved in all aspects of delivery plan implementation; this more targeted approach to partnership work will improve efficiency and ensure that the 'commitment to action' is realised. For the same reason, it may be necessary for the Executive Advisory Board to establish Task and Finish Groups to support particular projects which will deliver against the priority outcomes.

The local structure links into the County-Wide Local Strategic Partnership Structure at both a strategic and thematic level. Cannock Chase is also represented at both the Staffordshire and Birmingham Local Enterprise Partnerships and local structures will take account of, and feed into, these important partnership arrangements.

## Where are we now?

- Although much has been achieved through partnership working since 2008, the District still faces many challenges. Understanding these challenges is essential in formulating the vision for the District and enabling a culture of continuous improvement in partnership working.
- It is important to remember that Cannock Chase is a safe, clean area which has numerous benefits for people who live, work and visit the District. We are well-placed in the centre of the country with access to a wide variety of road networks and enjoy a natural landscape which people travel from far and wide to visit. However we do have some key challenges which we are committed to overcome through partnership working; these include:
  - Although GCSE attainment (including Maths & English) has improved from 2007 to 2010, it has not reduced the overall gap between District and County performance, which remains around 8%.
  - The percentage gap for Cannock Chase pupils receiving Free School Meals (FSM) who achieve 5+ GCSEs including English & Maths and non FSM pupils is over 20%, highlighting the impact of inequality.
  - The winter average for NEETs (16-18 year olds not in education, employment or training) during 2009/10 was 8.5%, the highest in Staffordshire. This inequality is more profound in "hotspot" wards.
- Data indicates that pupils in Cannock Chase are less likely to enter Higher Education than the county average, with the gap widening between 2008 and 2009.
- Youth unemployment (measured by JSA claimants) is substantially above county, regional and national averages. Levels of youth claimants are disproportionately high even in wards with low levels of overall claimants.
- Qualification levels for the working age population in the District are substantially behind comparators, with the gap widening further up the qualifications scale. Only 12.8% of the District's population is qualified to degree level, approximately half the ratio for county and regional analysis and over 17% below the national average.
- Occupation types in the District indicate an over representation of skilled trades, service and elementary occupations; whilst professional, management and administrative employment is under represented in comparison to regional and national averages. Levels of income in the District are also below average.
- Incapacity Benefit levels in Cannock Chase exceed the rates at regional and national level. Several wards in the District have claimant levels for incapacity of around 10% of the working age population.
- Income and lifestyle inequality and the impact on health and wellbeing – historical and continuing issues of premature mortality, circulatory and coronary disease, and obesity.
- Life expectancy at birth in the District is significantly lower than the England average for both men and women. Healthy life expectancy is also a problem in Cannock Chase, with males and females both expected to spend significantly more time in ill or poor health compared to regional and national averages.
- Poor health caused by circulatory diseases, cancer, and respiratory disease are significant factors in rates of premature mortality. Estimates of smoking prevalence indicate that, although numbers of smokers are decreasing, the percentage of people who smoke in Cannock Chase (25.9%) remains higher than County (20.4%) and National (22.2%) averages.
- Health profiling also indicates that the issue of obesity remains significant amongst children and adults in the District. The Health Survey for England 2008 found that the District also has a significantly lower rate of healthy eating adults (21.2%) than the England (28.7%) average.
- The number of incidents of both recorded crime and ASB incidents has declined over several years. However, the rate of incidents continues to exceed Staffordshire County averages.

Cannock Chase is certainly not alone in facing these challenges as rising unemployment and increased levels of obesity, for example, are national and regional issues. The Partnership is committed to reducing the inequalities faced by some communities in the District and the use of statistical information to target resources is invaluable.

The Partnership recognises the importance of working together in relation to the wider determinants of health and attainment. GCSE results, for example, can be affected by a number of issues such as a lack of 'quiet space' to study at home or family concerns which will affect a child's ability to learn effectively when in the classroom. The Partnership will focus its effort on these wider determinants whilst individual organisations will continue to deliver specific services.

### How do we overcome these challenges?

The Partnership Delivery Plan which sits underneath this Strategy is a targeted plan which describes how the partnership will address these key challenges over the coming months and years. This plan will be continuously monitored, managed and reviewed to ensure that partnership activity is appropriately focussed to achieve key strides forward in these challenging issues.

A set of principles or ways of working has been agreed by the partnership. These principles underpin all partnership work in the District and have been developed to ensure that we focus on the right priorities and establish new ways of working given the challenging economic climate and reduced resources available.

### The Principles

The Partnership has adopted a number of 'principles of working' in the development and implementation of the refreshed Sustainable Community Strategy:

- Do fewer things extremely well;
- In carrying out its organisational duties each partner will have due regard to the vision and priorities of the partnership and consider their activities accordingly;
- Commit to action;
- Take personal responsibility and challenge each other appropriately;
- Encourage a culture of innovation and creativity and avoid a culture of blame;
- Adopt a commissioning model and ensure that all activity is based on sound planning and evidenced-based information.
- Ensure that all partnership working is sustainable and takes into account the environmental agenda;



### How will we know we are making a difference?

The principles of working set out the need to focus on outcomes (the difference we've made) rather than outputs (how many people have accessed a particular service). With this in mind the delivery planning process included a focus on performance management and each action in the plan is linked to a specific outcome which is measurable and can be reviewed regularly. Some outcomes are short-term however it is important to recognise that some of our work will be carried out over a generation and therefore it is difficult to show early outcomes. However we can put interim measures in place to ensure the direction of travel for each of our actions.

The Executive Board of the Partnership is tasked with managing performance and with the recent opportunity to develop more locally focussed and locally measurable targets the Partnership is better placed than ever to monitor, review and where necessary revise our work through improved performance management.

### How will we ensure that this Strategy is fit for purpose in the future?

The Chase Community Partnership will continue to regularly review the Strategy and delivery plans to enable partnership working to evolve and respond to emerging issues throughout the life of this Strategy.

### Appendix 1

Chase Community Partnership Members:  
Cannock Chase District Council  
Chase CVS  
South Staffordshire College  
South Staffordshire PCT  
Staffordshire County Council  
Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service  
Staffordshire Police  
Staffordshire Wildlife Trust  
The Chase Citizen's Advice Bureau

Plus a range of other organisations through projects and initiatives with a stake in the District.

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