

Delivering Advantage

[West Midlands Economic Strategy and Action Plan | 2004-2010](#)

Progress Report 2007-2008



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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the fourth and final progress report for the Action Plan of the West Midlands Economic Strategy, 'Delivering Advantage,' originally launched in 2004. 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 the beginning of July 2007 to the end of June 2008, and includes a summary of trend over the four years since *Delivering Advantage* was launched.

This year, as part of the final year reporting, ECOTEC Research and Consulting Limited were commissioned to carry out a third party verification of the progress that has been made and reported by delivery partners over the four years. A summary of the ECOTEC findings is presented in Section 6. More detail is provided in their full report, which is separately available. This final progress report also follows the recent launch of the new West Midlands Economic Strategy, *Connecting to Success* and its associated *Delivery Framework*. Section 5 of the new WMES Delivery Framework indicates how progress will be monitored in the future for the new Strategy and Delivery Framework. Lessons learnt from the current monitoring process will inform the new approach.

As has been the case since *Delivering Advantage* was launched, the responses provided by partners give a strong indication overall that steady progress is being made against most actions. This year, all of the actions have been rated A or B, meaning that they are either completed, progressing smoothly or are on track but with manageable issues to be resolved.

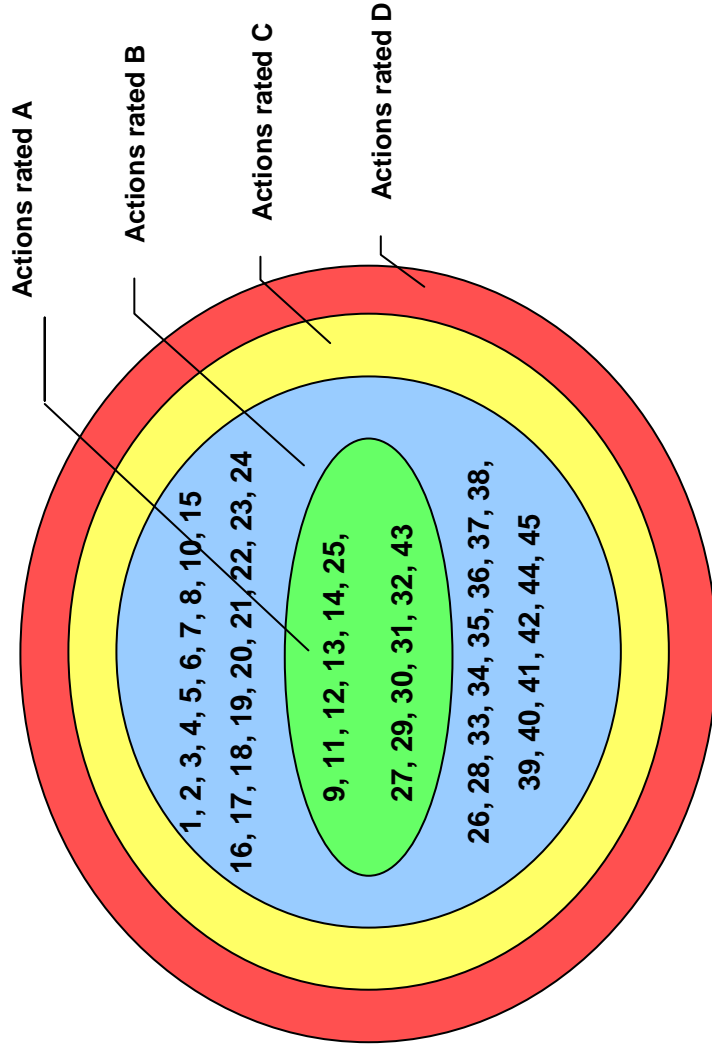


Diagram 1 is a summary of progress made in delivering the 45 Priority Actions of the West Midlands Economic Strategy. **Actions rated A (Green)** - for Actions progressing smoothly; **Actions rated B (Blue)** for Actions on track but manageable issues to be resolved; **Action rated C (Yellow)** for Actions experiencing difficulties but progress is being made moving forward; and **Actions rated D (Red)** for Actions with extreme difficulties and unresolved issues.

2. INTRODUCTION

This final progress report brings to a close the annual reporting of progress against *Delivering Advantage*. It also presents an opportunity to reflect on and learn from the four year monitoring process. The previous reports, completed over the past three years, were well received by partners as an indication of progress. The timing of the second and third report, completed in July 2006 and July 2007, meant that they could inform the review of the WMES that commenced in March 2006 and culminated in the launch of the revised strategy, *Connecting to Success*, in December 2007 and the associated Delivery Framework in June 2008.

Again, as with the previous three reports, this 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.

It is worth noting that Advantage West Midlands has recently commissioned a series of evaluations of the impact of its activities across a wide range of interventions. The results from this work, which will shortly be available, will demonstrate the impact of the Agency's contribution to delivering major elements of the West Midlands Economic Strategy.

As part of completing the reporting process for *Delivering Advantage*, a third party verification of reported progress over the last four years was commissioned. ECOTEC Research and Consulting Ltd has reviewed the information provided by partners since the first progress report. To validate the reported progress ECOTEC reviewed the past reports, examined the evidence for a sample of 22 partners; reviewed files, data and interviewed delivery partners. The findings from this exercise have been very encouraging. Partners participated with enthusiasm and optimism providing very favourable and supportive responses in relation to the process so far. Partners felt confident in their role to deliver the West Midlands Economic Strategy and spoke highly of a very much improved working partnership/relationship with Advantage West Midlands in its role to lead the implementation of the Strategy. Full details of – and the results from – the verification process undertaken by ECOTEC is available in a separate report. It has been used to inform the future monitoring process for the new WMES, *Connecting to Success*.

The remainder of this report is structured in the following way. Section 3 provides a snapshot of the progress made against the vision, both in 2007/08 and over the four years since *Delivering Advantage* was published. Section 4 summarises the progress made against the 45 actions during 2007/08. Section 5 then goes on to look at the trend in progressing the actions over the whole period since 2004. Section 6 summarises the findings from the verification exercise. Finally, section 7 outlines the approach to future progress monitoring against the new WMES, *Connecting to Success*.

3. OVERALL PROGRESS AGAINST THE VISION

Delivering Advantage set 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 that vision a suite of socio-economic 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 2006 - 2007’ and the latest comparable data available. Where relevant, performance over the entire period (since the data reported in 2004) is also described. The ‘Headline Indicators’ table in Annex Aⁱ 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 4.7% since the last update, compared to an increase of 4.5% in UK levels. In contrast, compared with the position reported back in 2004, West Midlands GVA per head has grown more slowly (18.5%) than UK levels (20.4%).
- There has been no update to business survival rates since the last progress report.
- Expenditure on research and development performed within businesses continues to grow and has increased by a higher proportion in the West Midlands (26.9%), than the UK (6.7%) since the last progress report. The region also outperforms the nation over the entire reporting period (growth of 58.9% compared with 11.9%).
- Female entrepreneurship has increased since the last progress report and at 3.9% is now slightly above the UK average of 3.7%. Male entrepreneurship has also increased in the region at 8.7% whereas nationally this has decreased slightly.

ⁱ This data for the 2007-2008 progress report was collated and published in June 2008. 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. Also where historical data presented in past progress reports have been revised, we have updated the historical data in this report.

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 6.0% of the potential working population (an increase of 5.3% since the last update). This compares to the national figure of 5.4% (which has decreased by 1.8% since the last update). Over the longer period, since *Delivering Advantage* was launched, the region has performed slightly better than the UK with ILO unemployment rising by 5.3% compared with 8.0% nationally).
- The West Midlands has a claimant rate of 3.0% – lower than the previous year decreasing by 11.8%. The national claimant rate has also decreased to 2.2%. Over the period since 2004 the claimant rate has fallen regionally and nationally (by 6.3% and 18.5% respectively).
- 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 decreased and now stand at 33.8% but the rate of decrease is slower than national trends where the figure stands at 29.0%. The same pattern holds looking at the period since 2004.

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. GCSE attainment amongst young people is slightly below average (59.1%) compared to the national average of 60.8% but has increased in line with national trends over the 4 years and the gap between the national average has narrowed.
- The region's skills performance overall has improved since 2004. Although developed after *Delivering Advantage*, the Regional Skills Performance Index has become a central measure of progress. In 2005 the West Midlands was the worst performing region in England on this measure. By 2007, the region had moved to 6th place, with further upward progress expected.

3.4 Visit

- The number of domestic overnight visits to the region was largely static during 2006, however expenditure rose by 3% during this period – compared to an average of 2% England-wide (source: UKTS). The value of business tourism and major events also rose by 3% between 2005 and 2006 to an estimated £6.8billion (KPMG, Oct 2007).

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 (although the latest data relates to 2006), housing continued to be less affordable in the West Midlands with an increased house price to earnings ratio of 9 but was still more affordable than the national average of 10.

4. PROGRESS ON ACTIONS IN 2007/08

4.1 Overall there has been excellent progress in delivering the priority actions, with all of the 45 actions scoring at least B, which means that they are either completed, progressing smoothly or are on track but with manageable issues to be resolved.

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 (and 25 in relation to Pillar 1). All actions were graded at least a B, and 5 actions (actions 9, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 25) were graded A. The majority of actions (actions 1-9 and 13) cover the themes of the Enterprise Framework, which is overseen by the Enterprise Board. The structures and activities under the Enterprise Board have continued to develop and evolve. Notably the re-contracting of the Manufacturing Advisory Service and Business Link in April 2007, allied with the Business Support Transformation Agenda has been associated with change in provision of business support. Future activity will need to take account of the Business Support Simplification Programme. Centres of Expertise have, and continue to be, established to aid the development of an enterprise culture amongst groups such as women, young people and BME groups. Initiatives and services in relation to Access to Finance continue to perform well, but further intervention will be required to address the ongoing market failure in this area and particularly to ensure social enterprises have access to finance. There has been clear progress in relation to increasing innovation and knowledge transfer, for example through the Technology Corridor activity and Science City, and this is one of the areas where new approaches are being piloted. The International Action Plans previously developed by each Cluster are now being implemented and excellent progress is being made.

- **Pillar 2: Promoting a Learning and Skilful Region.**

This pillar covers Actions 17 to 25. All the actions have been graded B (and A in the case of action 25, on implementing an entrepreneurship strategy). The Regional Skills Partnership (RSP) has lead responsibility for all actions under this pillar. The RSP was established in 2004 to lead the skills agenda in the West Midlands and has established a reputation as one of the better performing partnerships – with leading edge work on the development and use of data and labour market intelligence and supply, demand-side measures of success. As a result, partners have, for the first time, a clear understanding of the size and nature of the skills challenges in the region and projections of future performance.

Partners have used the data and evidence to inform priorities for investment including integrating the brokerage service, integrated employment and skills services (through JCP and LSC) and innovative programmes to improve business performance through leadership and management development and to employ more people with graduate-level skills in the private sector.

The evidence base has also been used by partners to establish a clear regional framework for the investment of European Social Funds. The evidence base has had a strong influence on the skills investment decisions by the public sector and this has contributed to the narrowing of the skills gap as measured by the Skills Index from a 7 point gap in 2003/4 to a 3 point gap in 2007/8.

Partners have increasingly worked together with a number of key employers to develop coherent packages of support to secure new investment into the region. Key employers have been very impressed by the strong partnership working and willingness to develop business-based solutions that deliver real business improvements.

The revised West Midlands Economic Strategy 2007-2020 and Skills Action Plan 2008-2011 reflect the RSP's prioritisation. The priority skills issues are now being taken forward through a range of mechanisms. For example: a draft framework for action has been developed for higher level skills and a number of specific actions are now being taken forward; the Train to Gain programme is playing a key role in addressing Skills for Life issues and providing training brokerage support to employers; the ICT cluster has developed a Skills Action Plan to address the need for ICT skills; Cluster Skills Plans have been produced for all business clusters and key actions are now being taken forward; and the leadership and management work continues to deliver on key actions through the strategic guidance of the RSP Leadership and Management Group and investments of the Agency and partners. Enterprise education will now be taken forward by the Centre of Expertise for Young People as part of the Enterprise Framework.

- **Pillar 3: Creating the Conditions for Growth.**

This pillar covers Actions 26 to 35. These are a diverse set of actions, and good progress has been made in the last year with five of the actions having been graded B, and five having been graded A. Action 32 in support of the development of the potential of the West Midlands canal network is now completed, in its current form. The transport agenda continues to evolve and expand, and will be affected by both the Sub-national Review and Local Transport Bill. Increasingly attention is being paid to design standards to improve the built environment in urban and rural areas. Following the opening of Fort Dunlop, the Eastside and Royal Shakespeare flagship projects are progressing well; the Design Framework continues to be taken forward and RegenWM's role in promoting innovation in design is also developing strongly. The pace and coordination of delivery in the Regeneration Zones has increased as their structures and activities have been aligned to meet sub-regional and regional strategic objectives and priorities. Considerable effort has been made to ensure alignment and delivery of the Regional Housing Strategy to create mixed and balanced communities, and specifically the housing challenges within the Housing Market Renewal Area

Pathfinders are being tackled. More needs to be done to develop distinct approaches to rural affordable housing. Progress in managing water resources is ongoing, with the Environment Agency working with the Regional Assembly to include policies in the West Midlands RSS to incorporate improved water efficiency in new developments.

- **Pillar 4: Regenerating Communities.**

This pillar covers Actions 36 to 41. Steady progress has been made and all actions graded B. The progress in the Regeneration Zones has continued. Specifically, the pace of delivery in the North Black Country and South Staffordshire Regeneration Zones has been significantly improved by the merger of the secretariat functions of the zones and alignment of structures. Zone Implementation Plans have proved a useful mechanism for taking stock of progress and informing decisions about the future. Now that the Market Towns Initiative has completed, attention has turned to three towns – Hereford, Telford and Burton-on-Trent – which were identified as being in need of economic intervention to address identified difficulties. Different approaches have been adopted, for example in Telford 'Transforming Telford Ltd (an Economic Regeneration Company +)' has been established whilst in Burton investment continued in 2007 via the SRB programme, and good progress is being made. The Regional Health Partnership continues to work well; the Investing for Health Strategy was published at the end of 2007, followed by the Regional Health and Wellbeing Strategy in January 2008. One area which is a current focus of attention is local procurement, as part of developing the role of the NHS.

- **Providing a Powerful Voice for the Region.**

This pillar covers Actions 42 to 45. Good progress is being made, with three actions being graded B and one (action 43, concerning the sharing of information and intelligence) being graded A. The State of the Region report has been key to the success of information/intelligence sharing though further improvements are sought for the 2008 report. The Sub-National Review and the proposed Single Integrated Regional Strategy (SIRS) means there is greater need than previously for a robust evidence base. A stronger signature (branding device) '*the Heart of England*, *West Midlands Region*' has been developed and is now being rolled out across regional communications. A Regional Marketing Board has been convened which is supporting the development and implementation of a revised Regional Marketing Strategy. Alongside this, marketing activity continues both in the region and targeting the European business audience. The Smart Growth Midlands Way Action Plan has been developed as part of the approach to address the region's key economic issues, though further alignment is required. The European Strategy has been re-written and focuses on four priorities: the single market, social cohesion, research and innovation, environment and climate change.

5. SUMMARY OF PROGRESS ON ACTIONS OVER THE LAST FOUR YEARS REPORTING

This is the fourth progress report produced against the Action Plan of *Delivering Advantage* since its publication in 2004. Of the 45 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. The third report showed that 41 actions were on target (graded A or B). The other 4 actions (graded C) are experiencing some difficulties but are making progress. This fourth and final report for *Delivering Advantage* shows that all of the actions were on target (graded A or B). There has been some variation in trend within and across Pillars:

- 5.1 Within Pillar 1 – developing a diverse and dynamic business base – there were a small number of actions (3 of the 16) that experienced difficulties in the first year. Broadly speaking however, the majority of actions made good progress with only a small number of actions experiencing difficulties in one year which were rapidly addressed moving forward. The action relating to delivery of the International Trade Strategy is notable for having received an A grading in all four years. And 10 of the 16 actions received an A grading in either 1 or 2 years of the action plan.
- 5.2 Almost all of the 9 actions under Pillar 2 – promoting a learning and skilful region – made good progress throughout the four years of the action plan. Though there was an initial difficulty in relation to addressing higher level skills shortages and gaps, this was addressed early on and subsequently the action was on track. And in the latter two years of the action plan there were difficulties experienced in relation to ICT skills shortages and gaps.
- 5.3 Pillar 3 – creating conditions for growth – had a very strong start, with 4 of the 10 actions receiving an A grading. This continued, with the majority of actions continuing to make good progress in the following and subsequent years. In 2005/06 there were 3 actions which experienced difficulties, though these were rapidly addressed and were back on track the following year.
- 5.4 Pillar 4 – regenerating communities – had the most difficult start with all but one of the 6 actions experiencing difficulties in the first year. By 2005/06 though, and following various remedial steps, only two actions remained in difficulty. By the third year, it was only in the area of engaging the region's voluntary and community sector that difficulties persisted. Measures to strengthen delivery in this area have since been taken. Overall then, the actions under Pillar 4 evolved in such a way that they achieved the necessary progress and contributed to the strategy.

5.5 Powerful Voice - The actions that were developed with a view to providing a powerful voice for the region have, almost without exception, made good progress throughout the four years. There was only one action that experienced difficulties – Implementation of the European Strategic Framework and Strategy – and these issues were overcome in the following, and final, year of the action plan.

We can therefore conclude that overall, over the last four years, we have seen a generally positive trend in delivery of the actions.

6. VERIFICATION OF REPORTED PROGRESS AGAINST DELIVERING ADVANTAGE

As part of the completion of the reporting process against *Delivering Advantage*, Ecotec were commissioned by Advantage West Midlands to verify the self-assessed reported progress against the 45 actions for 2007/08 and for the previous three reports, covering 2004/05, 2005/06 and 2006/07. In addition, the research aimed to identify any lessons that could be learned to inform the approach to future progress monitoring against *Connecting to Success*. The main findings from the Ecotec work are summarised here. More detail is provided in their full report, which is separately available.

The verification/validation exercise comprised three main elements. First, and in common with the process adopted in each of the three preceding years, for 2007/08, partners were asked to complete a self-assessment of progress made in 2007/08 against the actions for which they were responsible. Second, structured interviews were undertaken with a number of the partners and Agency staff involved in the reporting process. Finally, for a selection of actions, a review was undertaken of the documentary evidence available to support the reported progress.

The Action Plan has evolved significantly between 2004 and 2007. Some changes were made to achieve greater strategic alignment at local, sub-regional and regional levels. Structural/organisational changes and the maturing of partnerships have been important change factors too. Actions also developed as and when the need for change was identified, including in order to meet new Agency requirements or to address limitations in actions. In this dynamic environment, partners assessed progress against the plan for that year, rather than referring back to initial plans.

Though annual self-assessment is an Agency requirement, partners recognise its value in assessing progress, reviewing the effectiveness of partnership and governance arrangements and in informing future direction. There are three main sources of evidence for partners' self-assessments: AWM project/programme reporting mechanisms; strategic regional and policy documentation and reporting; and 'external' project reporting. The quality of data and information has improved over the four years of *Delivering Advantage*.

Reported progress against the 45 actions set out in *Delivering Advantage* has been good and shows a generally positive trend. In each of the four years, progress against the majority of actions has been reported to be either "progressing smoothly" or "on track with manageable issues to be resolved". A minority of actions initially encountered difficulties in delivery and/or experienced difficulties in latter years; however in all cases these had been overcome by the fourth reporting year. The verification/validation exercise undertaken by ECOTEC supports the self-assessments of progress and gradings given to each action over the period since 2004. The four annual progress reports can be regarded as broadly accurate summaries of the progress made in delivering the 45 actions set out in *Delivering Advantage*.

Going forward, a number of lessons can be learned and should be used to inform the approach used to monitor progress against the new WMES, *Connecting to Success*. In summary:

- Undertaking at least an annual self-assessment of progress against the actions set out in the Strategy is seen to be a worthwhile and valuable process. This approach should therefore continue.
- Those involved in progress reporting would welcome greater clarity about the process and how it relates to other, related, monitoring and reporting activity. The feedback loop in terms of feeding back the overall progress report to all those involved in the process could also be strengthened.
- Related to the previous point, there is scope to rationalise and ensure greater consistency between a number of related monitoring and reporting processes, of which WMES progress reporting is one. Partners would welcome involvement in work to rationalise/clarify reporting mechanisms.
- There is potential for the information collected through the monitoring process to be more effectively used. As mentioned previously, it could be better fed-back to improve activity on an ongoing basis. It could also be used more effectively as a way of identifying and collecting information about successes that help to boost the profile of the region.
- Finally, an inclusive approach that nurtures and engages partners has underpinned progress against the economic strategy. This will remain important in the future, and will ensure partners are responsive to the region's agenda.

7. FUTURE PROGRESS MONITORING

The new West Midlands Economic Strategy, *Connecting to Success*, launched on 10 December 2007 replaces *Delivering Advantage*. The accompanying Delivery Framework, published in June 2008, outlines how progress will be monitored against the new strategy. The monitoring process will be expanded and used to inform annual updates of the Delivery Framework. This will allow the Delivery Framework to be more of a 'living' document, sufficiently flexible to take account of changing needs and circumstances.

Taking into consideration the lessons learnt from the monitoring of *Delivering Advantage* and the ECOTEC findings and recommendations, a more robust monitoring process is being developed. This will comprise three main elements:

- I. **An annual assessment of the progress made against each action** – This will be overseen by the strategic lead partner(s) for each action.
- II. **An annual review of progress against the relevant outcome indicators identified in relation to each priority and the headline indicators for the Strategy overall** – wider contextual monitoring will also take place through the annual State of the Region Report process.
- III. **Ongoing evaluation of programme and project impact** – WMES Action Plan progress reporting to date has tended to focus on process rather than impact. In future, the monitoring process will also include results from evaluation of the impact of relevant programmes and projects. This information will be used to feed into an overall evaluation of progress against the strategy.

Annex A

Headline Indicators

	Initial Reported in 2004		Update 1 Reported in 2005		Update 2 Reported in 2006		Update 3 Reported in 2007		Update 4 Reported in 2008		% change between update 3-4: 2007-08 (Initial - 4: 2004 - 2008)		Data source and time period to which most recent data relates†
	WM	National	WM	National	WM	National	WM	National	WM	National	WM	National	
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	23**	709	36**	1070	42**	1220	61**	No data	76	No data	24.6% (230%)	No data	Data source: UK Trade and Investment Latest data relates to: 2007-08
Total exports - % of national value	7.10%	....	7.20%	....	7.20%	....	7.36%**	....	7.00%	....	-4.9% (-1.4%)	....	Data source: www.uktradeinfo.com Latest data relates to: 2007: previous year updated
Productivity – GVA per head	£13,996**	£15,853**	£14,652**	£16,759**	£15,355**	£17,672**	£15,841**	£18,267**	£16,583	£19,082	4.7% (18.5%)	4.5% (20.4%)	Data source: ONS Latest data relates to: 2006
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	69.30%	69.3%	70.70%	69.5%	68.9%	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

Invest

Headline Indicators	Initial Reported in 2004		Update 1 Reported in 2005		Update 2 Reported in 2006		Update 3 Reported in 2007		Update 4 Reported in 2008		% change between update 3- 4: 2007 -08 (Initial – 4: 2004 - 2008)		Data source and time period to which most recent data relates†
	WM	National	WM	National	WM	National	WM	National	WM	National	WM	National	
Research and Development performed within businesses (£mil)	587	12, 786	....	....	....	....	735	13,410	933	14,306	26.9% (58.9%)	6.7% (11.9%)	Data source: BERD Latest data relates to: 2006
Total Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA) Amongst Women	....	....	3.50%	3.80%	3.50%	3.80%	3.00%	3.60%	3.87%	3.66%	29.0%	1.7%	Data source: Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Latest data relates to: 2007
Total Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA) Amongst Men	....	....	9.50%	8.90%	9.50%	8.90%	7.40%	7.90%	8.72%	7.52%	17.8%	-4.8%	Data source: Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Latest data relates to: 2006
% of 19-21 year olds qualified to level 2+ *	76.20%	76.60%	74.40%	68.60%	67.40%	69.50%	....	....	....	....	....	....	Data source: ONS 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

Headline Indicators	Initial Reported in 2004		Update 1 Reported in 2005		Update 2 Reported in 2006		Update 3 Reported in 2007		Update 4 Reported in 2008		% change between update 3- 4: 2007 -08 (Initial – 4: 2004 - 2008)		Data source and time period to which most recent data relates†
	WM	National	WM	National	WM	National	WM	National	WM	National	WM	National	
% of working age with NVQ 1*	15.20%	15%	15.70%	14.90%	14.60%	14.6%**	....	....	14.30%	14.30%	....	....	Data source: ONS Annual Population Survey. Latest data relates to: Jan to Dec 2006 Note: National figure is for England, rather than UK.
% of working age with NVQ 2*	15.70%	15.30%	15.10%	15.30%	17.20%	15.90%	....	....	17.20%	15.90%	....	....	Data source: ONS Annual Population Survey. Latest data relates to: Jan to Dec 2006
% of working age with NVQ 3*	14.30%	14.40%	14.60%	14.70%	14.60%	15.00%	....	....	14.90%	15.20%	....	....	Data source: ONS Annual Population Survey. Latest data relates to: Jan to Dec 2006
% of working age with NVQ 4+*	20.70%	23.90%	21.10%	25%	23.0%	26.2%**	....	....	23.9%	27.1%	....	....	Data source: ONS Annual Population Survey. Latest data relates to: Jan to Dec 2006
% of working age without qualifications*	18.70%	15.40%	18.70%	14.80%	17.70%	14.1%**	....	....	17.50%	13.60%	....	....	Data source: ONS Annual Population Survey. Latest data relates to: Jan to Dec 2006

Headline Indicators	Initial Reported in 2004		Update 1 Reported in 2005		Update 2 Reported in 2006		Update 3 Reported in 2007		Update 4 Reported in 2008		% change between update 3- 4: 2007 -08 (Initial – 4: 2004 - 2008)		Data source and time period to which most recent data relates†
	WM	National	WM	National	WM	National	WM	National	WM	National	WM	National	
ILO unemployment rate Mar- Feb	5.70%	5%	5.20%	4.80%	5%**	4.8%**	5.7%**	5.50%	6.00%	5.40%	5.3%	-1.8% (8.0%)	Data source: Annual Population Survey Last three years realigned to October to September year, most recent data refers to October 06 to September 07
Claimant Rate in March*	3.20%	2.70%	3.50%	2.70%	4.00%	3.00%	3.4%**	2.5%**	3.00%	2.20%	-11.8%	-12.0% (-18.5%)	Data source: NOMIS, ONS Latest data relates to: March 2007 (data realigned)
Long Term unemployment – proportion of claimants unemployed for more than 6 months	34.2%**	32.6%**	32.1%**	29.8%**	36.6%**	32.4%**	39.2%**	34%**	33.8%	29.0%	-13.8%	-14.7% (-11%)	Data source: NOMIS DWP Claimant Count Latest data relates to: March 2008
Self-employment levels - % of those 16+ self employed	10.30%	12.10%	11.00%	12.70%	11.7%**	13.1%**	11.9%**	13.2%**	11.80%	13.30%	-0.8%	0.8% (9.9%)	Data source: Annual Population Survey Last three years realigned to October to September, latest data relates to October to September 2007
Wage/income levels – Gross weekly pay	£446.40**	£499.00**	£457.80**	£509.60**	£475.30**	£527.40**	£492.00**	£545.6**	£504.80	£561.10	2.6%	2.8% (12.4%)	Data source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings Latest data relates to: 2007 Note: Data refers to mean gross weekly pay of full time workers

Headline Indicators	Initial Reported in 2004		Update 1 Reported in 2005		Update 2 Reported in 2006		Update 3 Reported in 2007		Update 4 Reported in 2008		% change between update 3- 4: 2007 -08 (Initial – 4: 2004 -2008)		Data source and time period to which most recent data relates†
	WM	National	WM	National	WM	National	WM	National	WM	National	WM	National	
Educational Performance - % of 15 year old getting A* to C*	49.70%	52.90%	....	....	46.70%	49.20%	....	....	59.10%	60.80%	....	....	Data source: DCFS Latest data relates to: 2006/07 Figures for 2006/07 refer to 5 passes in any subject
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%	....	....	***	89.9%	....	....	Data source: DES, HESA Latest data relates to: 2004/05
Proportion of school leavers staying on to FE/structured training	83.60%	84.40%	83.60%	84.40%	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	Data source: DfCFS Latest data relates to: 2005
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
Overall Academic Rating of Universities – number of universities in top half of teaching rankings	....	....	4	....	4	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	Data source: Research Assessment Exercise Latest data relates to: 2001 Note: Includes Newman College

Learn

Headline Indicators	Initial Reported in 2004		Update 1 Reported in 2005		Update 2 Reported in 2006		Update 3 Reported in 2007		Update 4 Reported in 2008		% change between update 3- 4: 2007 -08 (Initial – 4: 2004 - 2008)		Data source and time period to which most recent data relates†
	WM	National	WM	National	WM	National	WM	National	WM	National	WM	National	
RAE ratings – number of universities in top twenty of rankings	....	....	1	....	1	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	Data source: Research Assessment Exercise Latest data relates to: 2001
RAE ratings – number of universities in top half of rankings	....	....	4	....	4	....	No further RAE updates	....	....	....	....	....	Data source: Research Assessment Exercise Latest data relates to: 2001
RAE ratings – % of depts achieving 5 or 5* rates*	....	....	38.10%	38.50%	38.10%	38.50%	....	....	....	....	....	....	Data source: Research Assessment Exercise Latest data relates to: 2001
% of establishments with Skill shortage vacancies*	....	....	4%	4%	6%	5%	....	....	4%	5%	....	....	Data source: NESS Latest data relates to: 2007
% establishments with skill gaps*	....	....	24%**	20%**	15.9%	16.4%	....	....	14.4%	15.3%	....	....	Data source: NESS Latest data relates to: 2007
Number of skill gaps*	268,400	2,315,978	176,582	1,540,143	110,248	1,264,929	....	....	125,828	1,361,138	....	....	Data source: NESS Latest data relates to: 2007
Skill shortage as a % of vacancies*	24.0%	19.9%	21.7%	17.5%	21.3%	17.3%	....	....	16.3%	21.0%	....	....	Data source: NESS Latest data relates to: 2007. Note: The word 'employment' has been replaced with 'vacancies' as advised by the LSC.

Headline Indicators	Initial Reported in 2004		Update 1 Reported in 2005		Update 2 Reported in 2006		Update 3 Reported in 2007		Update 4 Reported in 2008		% change between update 3- 4: 2007 -08 (Initial – 4: 2004 - 2008)		Data source and time period to which most recent data relates†
	WM	National	WM	National	WM	National	WM	National	WM	National	WM	National	
Overseas residents visits: holiday nights (000)	1,830	47,419**	1912**	53874**	1963**	55121**	....	....	2,430	61,393	....	....	Data source: International Passenger Survey Latest data relates to: 2006
Overseas residents' total holiday visits (000)	361	6889**	335**	7934**	332**	8355**	....	....	331	8,989	....	....	Data source: International Passenger Survey Latest data relates to: 2006
Overseas residents' expenditure (£m): holidays	89	3079**	93**	3499**	97**	3694**	....	....	94	4,055	....	....	Data source: International Passenger Survey Latest data relates to: 2006
Housing affordability, price/earnings index – average house price compared to average salary*	7	8	7	8	8**	9**	....	10**	9	10	12.5%	0.0%	Data source: DCLG, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings. Figure calculated internally. Latest data relates to: 2006
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
Congestion/Journey times – Mean travel time to work (minutes)	23	25	24**	26**	23**	26**	....	....	24	27	....	....	Data source: Labour Force Survey Latest data relates to: 2006
Congestion/Journey times - % of average trunk road	90%	92%	91.20%	90.60%	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	Data source: Trunk Road Speeds Survey Latest data relates to:

Headline Indicators	Initial Reported in 2004		Update 1 Reported in 2005		Update 2 Reported in 2006		Update 3 Reported in 2007		Update 4 Reported in 2008		% change between update 3- 4: 2007 -08 (Initial – 4: 2004 - 2008)		Data source and time period to which most recent data relates†
	WM	National	WM	National	WM	National	WM	National	WM	National	WM	National	
speed achieved at AM peak													2003
Population Change between 1991-2001	0.70%	2.40%	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	Data source: ONS Census Latest data relates to: 2001
Indices of Deprivation – % of SOAs in bottom 10% of England	8.70%	N/A	13.60%	N/A	.....	N/A	.....	N/A	14.96%	N/A	.....	.....	Data source: DCLG Latest data relates to: 2007

*National Figure is for England, rather than UK.

**Historical data has been revised since the last progress report

***Data must be purchased

..... no more up-to-date data is available or no data is available

Annex B Summary of the responses against Actions:

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
1 Develop an Enterprise Culture	Regional Entrepreneurship Group	B	The Next steps have in the main been completed and the 'enterprise culture' agenda has moved onto a new level. The West Midlands Enterprise Board which now leads on this has taken the view that 'enterprise culture' is separate to 'starting new businesses'. With regards to the action around 'startup' the Enterprise Board developed a Framework which has now been adopted by Business Link West Midlands and also forms part of Action 6. With the exception of the Minority Business Forum the other two groups have not been operational since 2005, therefore in taking the 'culture' agenda forward and ensuring that issues of a strategic nature are addressed for the groups identified, the Enterprise	Developing an enterprising culture is not about 'starting new businesses' this is just one action that may result from enterprising behaviors, in taking this action forward there needs to be far more joined up thinking as 'enterprise culture' crosses a number of different areas and agendas. This is something that the new Enterprise Board sub group and Centres of Expertise will aim to do.
	Minority Ethnic Business Forum	n/a		
	Regional Women and Enterprise Group	n/a		

Action Number	Lead Partners	Grade as given by Lead Partner	Summary of Comments	Major Change
			<p>Board created and launched a Centre of Expertise (COE) for Women's Enterprise, similar Centres of Expertise are being created for Young People and BME group. The Enterprise Board has also set up a sub group which will look at 'enterprising culture' with the COE's and other key partners such as Make Your Mark.</p>	
<p>2 Manufacturing</p>	<p>The Beacon Manufacturing Group</p>	<p>B</p>	<p>The Manufacturing Advisory Service is now a single point of entry for manufacturing companies needing support, which is better than having several different centres of excellence. Several pilot projects have been run through MAS relating to general manufacturing (cross cluster) and also cluster specific projects. One of these, Project Innovation Consortium is to become part of the core offer.</p> <p>This is clearly best practice in terms of business support.</p>	<p>Manufacturing Advisory Service and Business Link were re-contracted in April 2007. Changes have been made since then and MAS is now going to take on Train to Gain for Manufacturing Companies. Accelerate and the Manufacturing Foundation has been integrated into MAS and Modernisation and Diversification have been integrated into MAS and Business Link.</p> <p>The recently launched West Midlands Manufacturing Support Strategy focuses business support</p>

Action Number	Lead Partners	Grade as given by Lead Partner	Summary of Comments	Major Change
				in the region and is a vehicle for partners to eliminate duplication and fill gaps in business support.
3 e-Business uptake	ICT Steering Group and ICT Operational Group	B	<p>The action to improve the up-take of e-business in the region is led by the ICT Steering Group supported by the ICT Operational Group. The economic impact of ICT on the regional economy has been quantified in a detailed regional study commissioned by the Agency which reported in November 2007.</p> <p>Following this report an IT advisory Service as a specialist service of Business Link has been piloted to evaluate alternative ways of delivering IT support to SMEs.</p> <p>In addition a register of existing project initiatives supporting e-business adoption has been developed and is available via the West Midlands Observatory website.</p>	<p>Input has been made to the E-skills UK consultation on the ICT Skills of both the business user of ICT and the ICT professional.</p> <p>The importance of ICT in economic development has been referenced in the new regional economic strategy. The delivery of an IT Advisory Service (ITAS) has been recognised within the Delivery Framework (1.5.1)</p> <p>Following evaluation of the ITAS pilot, Business Link West Midlands will be developing a production version of ITAS to raise awareness of the benefits of increased ICT adoption and deliver specialist information, Diagnostic and Brokerage services so that appropriate ICT solutions can be delivered to the end user by private sector ICT supplier.</p>

Action Number	Lead Partners	Grade as given by Lead Partner	Summary of Comments	Major Change
4 Rural Renaissance support	Regional Rural Affairs Forum	B	<p>Rural Accord Partners has been disbanded. The relevant group now is the Rural Affairs Forum.</p> <p>The Rural Business Advisory Group which is a sub-group of the Rural Affairs Forum; has been active in monitoring the Business Support and Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) activity in particular. The International Agri-Technology Centre (IATC), International Trade Forum, has monitored the Export activity and the Regional Environmental Economy Working Group has steered the case study work, so neither of these projects has featured strongly on the Rural Business Advisory Group agendas.</p> <p>Most of these issues have been discussed at the regional Rural Affairs Forum, with the possible exception of Export support which</p>	<p>Agricultural Export Centre of Excellence: Some progress – IATC is installed at Stoneleigh and has just won a UKTI contract for the next 3 years).</p> <p>English Rural Development Plans (ERDP): There was success in encouraging engagement of the agricultural sector in ERDP, with all available funds spent.</p> <p>The Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB): and regional partners have made significant progress and a series of case studies have been prepared that exemplify the potential of the environmental economy.</p> <p>Business support: Rural Business Connect (undertaken in the early years of the WMES) has shown the components which need to be in place. The latest Business Link Business Plan looks to implement</p>
	Rural Accord Partners	n/a		
	Rural Business Advisory Group	B		

Action Number	Lead Partners	Grade as given by Lead Partner	Summary of Comments	Major Change
			has not been a feature of Rural Affairs Forum agendas.	these findings. Biomass: The Rural Development Programme for England has made Biomass supply chain developments a priority.
5 Business Crime	Regional Business Crime Partnership	B	The West Midlands Regional Business Crime Forum has moved the agenda forward on cracking business crime and have achieved the following over this reporting period: Guidance to councils on gaining funds via LAAs to for business crime prevention work; Rural business crime prevention leaflets distributed to rural businesses; Business crime prevention booklet launched; West Mercia Police, West Midlands Police, Warwickshire Police and Staffordshire Police launch Midland Truck Watch – a new scheme to crack truck crime; Raised the profile of business crime as an issue addressed in the Regional Economic Strategy	The work of the Forum has also led to some work with Special Branch in alerting firms in the West Midlands Police Force area to undertake terrorism prevention work. Via the Forum, there is business representation on the Government Office's Regional Resilience Forum. In 2008, the Forum launched its Regional Business Crime Conference with speakers including Home Office Minister, Vernon Coaker MP and Shadow Business Minister, Jonathan Djangoly MP. An action plan is now being prepared as a consequence of this

Action Number	Lead Partners	Grade as given by Lead Partner	Summary of Comments	Major Change
			and the WMES Delivery Framework; Investments in business crime prevention work in regeneration zones; Guidance to firms to avoid cowboy security equipment installers; Warnings to business of new scams; and changes in the Regional Spatial Strategy – currently out for consultation – for secure lorry parks to be established to combat business crime. On top of this, the Forum is currently working with the Association of Chief Police Officers on new action to combat retail crime.	conference.
<p>6</p> <p>Business start ups and Incubation</p>	<p>Regional Business Start Up Group</p> <p>Regional Incubation Group</p> <p>Enterprise Board (Business Link West Midlands)</p>	<p>n/a</p> <p>B</p>	<p>Both original lead partners are no longer operational. However, the Regional Incubation Group (RIG) was reformed in 2007 with a new Terms of Reference by the Enterprise Board. The Business Support Transformation Agenda did to some extent hinder taking forward the original actions as has the Business Support Simplification Process.</p>	<p>The Enterprise Board will be leading on a similar action going forward – the focus needs to be on ensuring that:</p> <p>1. Individuals from excluded and underrepresented groups continue to receive pre-start-up support, to ensure that they are made aware of the benefits and pitfalls to starting a business;</p>

Action Number	Lead Partners	Grade as given by Lead Partner	Summary of Comments	Major Change
			<p>However, the start-up Framework that was developed by the Enterprise Board in 2006 has since gone on to influence 'policy' and 'delivery' within Business Link West Midlands. Further actions are being taken to look at the post-start-up agenda and to implement recommendations that have since been made by the Regional Incubation Group. Further work also needs to be done around high growth.</p>	<p>2. Intensive support is available to businesses which have the potential to grow and</p> <p>3. Businesses within the post-start up phase are receiving adequate support to help them become sustainable.</p> <p>In order to ensure that there is an emphasis on supporting high growth businesses, Advantage West Midlands also needs to develop an indicator that measures the true impact these types of interventions makes – as most measures focus on the 'output' i.e. the start-up itself.</p>
7	Regional Social Enterprise Network	B	The main action in this area continued to be support for social enterprises via Business Link led Investment Readiness programme, although the number of social enterprises attending Awareness and Education activities and receiving one to one support towards accessing finance	From the launch of the Social Enterprise Framework and Action Plan in 2004 it took 3 years to implement a key recommendation – the establishment of a dedicated staff team to assist in the development of the Social Enterprise Network of support agencies and businesses. This
Sustainable Social Enterprise	Regional Finance Forum	B		

Action Number	Lead Partners	Grade as given by Lead Partner	Summary of Comments	Major Change
			<p>was low.</p> <p>A number of regionally based Community Development Finance Institutions (CDFIs) continue to provide loan finance to Social Enterprises, in addition to a significant number of nationally based providers of finance for social enterprises. A review commissioned by the Agency of market failure in the provision of debt based finance and an evaluation of the performance of CDFIs confirmed an ongoing general failure in the provision of certain types and amounts of finance but provided only limited information on the specific requirements of social enterprises. Questions relating to access to finance were, therefore, also included in the mapping exercise and it has been agreed that Social Enterprise West Midlands (SEWM) in its role as the Centre of Expertise will do some follow up work to review provision of both</p>	<p>delayed the ability of Advantage West Midlands to deliver on the Action Plan recommendations and start to effectively implement government priorities for the sector.</p> <p>The establishment of the WMSEN (now SEWM) Directorate Team project (funded initially July 2007 – March 2008 & extended until Sept 2008) has created a step change in the ability for Advantage West Midlands to deliver on its objectives for the sector in the Region. In addition, the allocation of Office of the Third Sector (OTS) resources through Advantage West Midlands and provided to BL-WM has also has made a very significant impact.</p>

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			sources of finance and related support and present its findings to a future meeting of the Regional Finance Forum (RFF) for consideration of what action needs to be taken to address any gaps etc which are identified. It is intended that a new funding mechanism for CDFIs and other alternative finance providers will be put in place from 1/1/09 and that the finance provided via these should be made available to both SMEs and social enterprises. A representative of SEWM was added to the membership of the RFF to improve linkages between the 2 groups.	
8 Increase Regional Risk Capital and improve access to finance	Regional Finance Forum	B	A comprehensive range of venture capital funds providing equity based finance of up to £2m has been put in place, which at 31 March 2008 had invested over £40m in 201 businesses. During 2007/8 additional funding for Advantage Early Growth Fund led	The Regional Finance Forum has agreed to establish expert sub groups to look at specific types of finance and related activity with a view to enhancing the advice members can provide to the Agency to ensure that progress continues to be made in addressing

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			<p>to increased provision of early stage funding for businesses with the potential for high growth. A new package of support towards business angel activity also resulted in increased activity via a number of Business Angel networks. Community Development Finance Institutions (CDFIs) continued to be supported through the Advantage Small Loans Programme, through which over £3.7m of the Agency and European funding has been committed to supporting lending by CDFIs. This Programme runs to 31st December 2008 and agreement was recently given to supplementing this by a further £1m to help CDFIs meet additional demand expected to materialise as a result of the credit crunch. The Agency is developing proposals for a new funding mechanism for CDFIs from 1/1/09 which will take account of the review and evaluation of CDFIs and of market failure in the</p>	<p>market failure in the provision of certain types of finance and related support. This includes providing expert input on central government initiatives. This will build on what was done in 2007/8 with regard to lobbying Ministers regarding the need for changes to the Small Firms Loan Guarantee and the implications of the changes to Capital Gains Tax.</p> <p>Research needs to be commissioned to review the availability of equity based risk capital and the need for further interventions to address ongoing market failure as a number of funds come to the end of their investment rounds.</p> <p>Work needs to take place on developing proposals to make use of funding from the 2007-13 European Programme which has been identified for Access to Finance activity.</p> <p>The RFF and the Enterprise Board,</p>

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			<p>provision of debt finance it commissioned in 2007/8. This includes assessing options that will build on what is already in place but at the same time achieve broader coverage and achieve better VFM.</p> <p>Up to 31st March 2007, Investment readiness services were provided to businesses via the Business Link managed R2i programme and the Connect/InvoRed programme. From 1st April 2008 the new Business Link took on responsibility for the provision of investment readiness activity and began to put in place a programme of activity which took account of the findings of an evaluation of investment readiness services which recommended that the focus of the services should be to support businesses with the potential for high growth but which should also continue to provide enhanced support to businesses that face</p>	<p>with their respective Agency counterparts, need to continue to review the delivery of investment readiness activity via the Business Link contract.</p> <p>Future activity will need to take account of the Business Support Simplification Programme which is still working on refining the Access to Finance products that fall within this and the Sub National review.</p> <p>Decisions need to be made to ensure that the most appropriate long term funding mechanisms are put in place to ensure that market failure in the provision of debt based finance is addressed. This needs to be done before the current Advantage Small Loan programme ends in December 2008. This will need to include working with Business Link to ensure that finance is provided to assist the creation of sustainable new start ups, alongside the support that is provided via the BL</p>

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			<p>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.). This revised programme suffered from a slow start but during the year the Business Link contracted with a variety of providers to run awareness and education events across the region targeted at those not traditionally engaged. It also contracted with Connect Midlands to enable it to continue to provide services to high growth businesses. Over 600 participated in these with 113 businesses receiving one to one support to help them access over £4m of finance. In addition, Business Link responded to the summer floods by providing advice and support to over 300 businesses and worked in conjunction with one of the region's CDFIs to provide flood recovery loans. By 31/3/08 29 businesses had received loans of</p>	<p>funded start up programmes and with national government departments to ensure that issues holding up the creation of the Advantage Business Transformation Fund are quickly resolved.</p>

Action Number	Lead Partners	Grade as given by Lead Partner	Summary of Comments	Major Change
			<p>over £500k with a further 17 expected to receive loans of around £350k before the scheme ends.</p> <p>Delivery of Selective Finance for Investment (SFIE) and Grants for Research and Development (GRD): 88 businesses received SFiE grants totalling over £10.5m in 2007/8, a slight increase in the number receiving grants in 2006/7 (84). 26 GRD grant offers were made in 2008/9 totalling almost £2m, 20% higher in value than previous year, although the number of offers remained the same. It is expected that a national Proof of Concept grant will be introduced within the portfolio of Business Support products from 2009-10 but pending this work is progressing on establishing a regional Proof of Concept grant scheme.</p> <p>A review of the Access to Finance website, which is now managed</p>	

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			<p>by the Business Link, was commissioned in 2007/8. It recommended enhancements to its content and functionality to ensure that it remains an accurate and comprehensive source of information on all types of finance. Some interim enhancements are being made pending decisions on more significant changes that are scheduled in to take place during 2008/9.</p> <p>The launch of the local business exchange (Investbx) which had been significantly delayed by State Aid issues, took place in July 2007 with the first company launch taking place in late 2007. Having secured funds it is now expanding and Investbx is now continuing to build a network of High Net Worth and sophisticated investors and building and qualifying a SME pipeline with a view to launching the next companies.</p>	

Action Number	Lead Partners	Grade as given by Lead Partner	Summary of Comments	Major Change
			<p>A review of market failure in the provision of debt based finance to businesses provided the Agency with the evidence of the need for a similar fund to Advantage Transition Bridge Fund (ATBF). This provided 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. Plans were put in place to create a new Fund which would support a broader range of transitional situations but issues relating to procurement and the availability of European funding has delayed its progress. It is hoped these will be resolved shortly to enable the Fund to be established in 2008/9.</p>	
<p>9 Implement updated Regional Innovation</p>	<p>Regional Innovation Strategy Group Innovation and Technology</p>	<p>A</p>	<p>Activity on Leadership and management driven by the skills team through their pilot and through the interventions of</p>	<p>The Innovation and Technology Council has run a number of small scale catalytic projects to complement the industry focus of</p>

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Strategy	Council		<p>Business Link are working to address the leadership issues within businesses, which are very important to help drive innovation. Over the last year significant work to run pilots of specialist advisory services has been underway. Working with Design Council we are now ready to launch Design Advantage, a process to help embed improved design techniques in businesses. This is part of a national roll out and will be implemented through Business Link. A pilot Innovation Advisory Service was developed in the last year which seeks to provide experienced advisors, either through Business Link or externally contracted companies, to enable more in-depth advice to be developed for a target set of businesses who are well placed to exploit the recommendations. This should "go live" in the first year of the new WMES. A pilot Information Technology Advisory Services was also launched in the</p>	<p>the cluster activity that help show the potential of new technology and markets. Over the last year the Innovation and Technology Council have developed a close working relationship with the new Technology Strategy Board and the West Midlands is the lead region for two of their current five "Innovation Platforms (Assisted Living and Low Carbon Vehicles) which seek to engage businesses and the knowledge base in significant new market opportunities. As well as this activity with a strong cluster focus, the Innovation and Technology Council has supported the successful pilot of the INDEX voucher scheme (recently supported in two White Papers) which provides businesses with an easy route to access the support of any of the West Midlands universities to address a key issue for their business. In the first year of the new economic strategy this scheme and a very significant</p>

Action Number	Lead Partners	Grade as given by Lead Partner	Summary of Comments	Major Change
			<p>last year with the aim of increasing the uptake of broadband and IT to increase the rate of innovation. This will also go live in the first year of the new WMES. The advisory services are all being run under the leadership of the new Business Link to reduce the complexity of offering perceived by businesses.</p> <p>The Technology Corridor activity has improved the facilities available to businesses and to stimulate new businesses e.g. Serious Games Institute, e-innovation centre, Digital Laboratory. The region has a good number of science park type facilities with the notable newer extension of the Keele Science Park and its particular interest in medical activity, and the extension of the Wolverhampton Science Park. Very significantly, since 2006, over £80m has been committed to investment, under the banner of Science City, in the</p>	<p>expansion of the successful Knowledge Transfer partnerships scheme will be rolled out in the region.</p> <p>Through the catalytic activity of the Innovation and Technology Council and importantly the strong partnership work developed under the banner of Birmingham Science City, the visibility of the importance of science and technology to business development and growth has been increased. The Science City activity over the last year has put strong emphasis on “demonstrator” approaches that act to pull technology and to develop markets e.g. low carbon vehicles, digital and wireless technology and innovative healthcare. As well as the major capital investment in the science base, a series of smaller projects aimed to stimulate markets and business interaction were launched e.g. ocular allergy, end-of-life care, etc. As well as these technical projects an IPTV channel,</p>

Action Number	Lead Partners	Grade as given by Lead Partner	Summary of Comments	Major Change
			<p>collaborative package between the universities of Warwick and Birmingham in three technology areas where they were strong and their expertise complemented each other, namely advanced materials, energy and translational medicine. One of these projects was launched during the period of this strategy on Hydrogen Energy and the others are under advanced development, with the first materials project fully approved. This investment seeks to build the strength and reputation of the underlying research base in the region and to strengthen engagement with businesses through excellent research equipment and facilities.</p>	<p>ideasforlife.tv was launched as a medium to reach a younger audience about the developments and strengths of the regions technology base.</p> <p>The Innovation and Technology Council was formed in 2004, with a private sector chair, and members from the private sector, the knowledge base and selected public sector bodies. It is now one of three key advisory bodies to the Board of Advantage West Midlands. It has chosen the five key technology themes that are now embedded in most of the funding streams managed by the agency, namely Transport and Advanced Materials (supporting the traditional strengths of the businesses in the region), Energy and Healthcare Technology (supporting markets where significant growth and niche strengths in the region can be exploited) and Digital Media (a fast changing IT based technology</p>

Action Number	Lead Partners	Grade as given by Lead Partner	Summary of Comments	Major Change
				building on particular strengths in the business and knowledge base).
10 Implement Cluster Action Plans	Ten Cluster Opportunity Group	B	<p>Good industry engagement. Positive response to cluster impact. Excellent progress on development of relationship with service providers and important cluster stakeholders. Clear prioritisation of big ideas in cluster plans, with greater emphasis on cross-clustering opportunities and setting up of market focus groups. Better integration with partners identified through representation on RSP, ITC and strategy bodies going forward.</p> <p>Some frustration over speed of project decision making and budget restrictions - but generally positive progress on tackling these issues.</p>	<p>Even better linkage with service partners will be facilitated by regular update at COG chairs meetings and presence on COG of partner representatives. Clear measures of performance being developed to aid progress monitoring going forwards. Upward communication and awareness through appointment of dedicated communication resource specialist - need to get the very positive messages of achievements out to the target audiences. Annual cluster conference recommended (first one in 2008 was a great success).</p>
11 Implement Programme for Corridors	Three High Technology Corridor Partnerships	A	The respective roles of Corridor partnerships and Advantage West Midlands have been clarified, with partners having lead responsibility	When Rover Task Force (RTF) Funding ended in 2005 the role of Corridor partnerships had to shift from strategy implementation and

Action Number	Lead Partners	Grade as given by Lead Partner	Summary of Comments	Major Change
			<p>for setting strategic direction and agreeing investment priorities and the Agency providing strategic leadership and engagement while managing the delivery phase (contracting and project management/monitoring).</p> <p>During 2007-08 Corridor partnerships achieved greater strategic alignment - ensuring that HTC activity is consistent with the 'logic-chain' flowing from RES (and now WMES) objectives - ITC priority themes - Science City agenda and HTC investment plans (e.g. projects range from aerospace and materials in the Wolverhampton-Telford Corridor, to medical technologies in the Central Technology Belt and ICT/digital media in the CSW Corridor.)</p> <p>The nature of Corridor projects - being complex, capital-based and at the leading edge of technology, means that they can take longer to</p>	<p>project management to strategy formulation and project development.</p> <p>It took time for partners to adapt to their new role and for new project activity to be developed. This meant that during 2005-7 there were fewer projects in delivery and consequently Agency investment was at a reduced level. However in 2007-08 a number of very significant projects entered the delivery phase - particularly within the CSW Corridor. Consequently in 2007-08 the Agency made its highest-ever level of investment in the Corridor programme.</p> <p>The emergence of the Science City agenda and the creation of the Innovation and Technology Council (and their work to establish more strategic sector/cluster-specific priorities) required HTCs to re-visit and realign their investment/business plans. This work was largely completed in 2007-08 with project proposals all</p>

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			<p>develop and deliver than 'more traditional' forms of economic development and regeneration activity. However, the rewards can be high - because projects have the potential to deliver greater and more sustainable impacts.</p> <p>CSW HTC has made significant progress during the period, as set out in SQW evaluation. It has improved the infrastructure to support business growth for example in 'screen image and sound' (through Serious Games Institute), 'medical technologies' (Health Design technology Institute), digital technologies (Warwick Digital Laboratory), 'building technologies' (ACT-UK) and design (Design Hub)</p> <p>The corridor has proven to be an invaluable asset in attracting and retaining invest in the sub-region, with more high-value companies seeking to invest in areas with a concentration of knowledge</p>	<p>directly or indirectly linked to ITC/Science City priorities and themes.</p> <p>A 'big win during 2007-08 has been the increasing focus of activity, with the Agency and HTC partners working to an agreed set of investment priorities/projects - those that genuinely have potential to deliver transformational, beneficial change in the sub-region/region.</p>

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			assets.	
12 Implement Inward Investment Strategy	Advantage West Midlands Sub-regional Investment Partnerships	A A	Research undertaken by SQW relating to this action (Implement a number of specific actions required to attract inward investment into our rural areas) concluded that there was little prospect of securing volumes of additional investment into the more rural parts of the region. These sub-regions had relatively limited compelling reasons to attract inward investment and most inward investment had been through the acquisition of companies already based in the locality. The study identified a limited number of actions, some of which have been delivered, others delayed but otherwise in hand.	
13 Deliver International Trade Strategy	Regional International Trade Strategy Group	A	During the year International cluster Leads have worked ever closer with Advantage West Midlands Cluster Managers to deliver the 2007/8 programme. All	During the last quarter detailed planning was undertaken to frame a project to be delivered during 2008/11 over the twelve priority clusters. An international cluster

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			<p>project targets were exceeded.</p> <p>The DISTRICT project has helped the West Midlands to study innovation and cluster developments particularly but not exclusively in the partner regions of Saxony, Vastra Gotaland and Tuscany. It is hoped that DISTRICT 2 will see an extension to Poland and Romania</p> <p>UKTI has worked with the Advantage West Midlands Head of Europe to develop the new West Midlands European Strategy and will lead on the Single Market strand of the strategy. A Single European Market Group is being established to oversee this work.</p> <p>The NEC Team is continuing to hit 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</p>	<p>plan has been established for each cluster. The plans take as their starting point the new Advantage West Midlands cluster plans for 2008/11 and in particular the market priorities section of these plans. From these market priorities 4 to 6 international strategic objectives have been developed and the programme of activities established for 2008/9 are to designed to progress these objectives. International plans drawn up in consultation with Advantage West Midlands project managers and where appropriate are approved by Cluster Executive Groups and Clusters Opportunity Groups.</p> <p>The first phase of this project was successfully completed in 2006/07. This year there have been numerous cluster related market visits into Europe in line with Cluster priorities for example a visit in March concerning waste and</p>

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14 Environmental Business Practice programme	Government Office for the West Midlands	A	Regional Energy Strategy: The WMES was created under the auspices of the Energy West Midlands Partnership. Energy West Midlands continues as a partnership to oversee the delivery of the Regional Energy Strategy. Progress on implementation was slower than expected and action was taken to appoint a seconded 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 Agency does not have responsibility for the	Delivering the Environment Business Growth Plan: The EBG is now closed and support for environmental technology projects is now being delivered through the Environmental Technologies Cluster Opportunities Group and the BREW programme.
	The Environment Agency	n/a		

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			<p>preparation of the Regional Energy Strategy. The Environment Agency acts as consultee and works with regional partners to inform the strategy.</p> <p>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.</p>	
15 Regional Sustainable Development Framework	Advantage West Midlands	B	<p>Advantage West Midlands has supported Sustainability West Midlands and their work in publishing the Regional Sustainability Framework which has been used to inform sustainability appraisals of key regional strategies. The Agency has also produced its own Sustainable Development Policy and Action Plan to influence its own activities in the delivery of this WMES. Lessons learnt from the above process have been applied</p>	<p>All three components of the action have benefited from alignment with other actions, in particular, for the fuel cell linked elements, with Birmingham Science City. The priority allocated to these actions is maintained, albeit with modifications, in the WMES and implementation will continue.</p> <p>The key remaining issue for the Industrial Symbiosis Centre is reestablishing policy alignment given the changes in the Business</p>
	Birmingham University	B		
	Business Council for Sustainable Development	B		

Action Number	Lead Partners	Grade as given by Lead Partner	Summary of Comments	Major Change
			<p>in developing the new WMES, as the UK's first low carbon economic strategy.</p> <p>Grading for Wind Supply Programme relates to Advantage West Midlands audit issues - but has hit targets. Project completed. No forward funding available.</p> <p>Grading for Environmental Business Opportunities Programme (EBOP) relates to Technology and Innovation Centre (TIC) and Advantage West Midlands delivery issues. Waste Symbiosis relates to success of project. Project complete and now taken forward by commercial company. Fuel Cell programmes, sit with Birmingham University</p>	Resource Efficiency and Waste Programme (BREW) funding and the implications of the Waste Strategy 2007.
16 Implement Visitor Economy Strategy	Tourism West Midlands	B	There has been good partner engagement with the Visitors Economic Strategy. We have completed the first review and re-launched the revised Strategy in March 2008.	We have established successful links with public and private tourism partners across the region and nationally. There have been issues regarding coherence and alignment between the regional marketing

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			<p>We have achieved improved sub-regional partnerships and front line delivery, and greater understanding of the need to coordinate tourism and inward investment marketing regionally. Projects are all on track to deliver.</p>	<p>strategy, 'Heart of England' brand and approach to marketing tourism regionally. This is now being addressed by key partners at a strategic level.</p>
<p>17 Develop and Implement FRESA</p>	<p>FRESA Executive Group Regional Skills Partnership</p>	<p>B</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>As a result of leading edge work on data and labour market intelligence and supply, demand-side measures of success partners have, for the first time, a clear understanding of the size and nature of the skills challenges in the region and projections of future performance.</p>	<p>Key employers have been very impressed by the strong partnership working and willingness to develop business-based solutions that deliver real business improvements. This work includes investments by the Agency during 2007/8 to bring training facilities closer to the workplace by developing work based learning centres.</p> <p>The latest prioritization 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 and Skills Action Plan 2008</p>

Action Number	Lead Partners	Grade as given by Lead Partner	Summary of Comments	Major Change
			<p>Partners have used the data and evidence to inform priorities for investment and establish a clear regional framework for the investment of European Social Funds.</p> <p>This has contributed to the narrowing of the skills gap as measured by the Skills Index from a 7 point gap in 2003/4 to a 3 point gap in 2007/8.</p>	- 2011.
<p>18</p> <p>Increase Basic Skills</p>	<p>Skills for Life Strategy Group</p>	<p>B</p>	<p>See also action 17. Skills for Life issues are being addressed through the Regional Skills Partnership level 2 and level 3 workstream activities, in particular through the Train to Gain Programme. By April 2009 Train to Gain brokerage service to employers will be integrated within the Business Link Service.</p>	
<p>19</p> <p>ICT Skills</p>	<p>ICT Learning Task Group (Regional Skills Partnership)</p>	<p>B</p>	<p>As reported in 06-07 this is being led by the Regional Skills Partnership supported by the</p>	<p>E-Skills UK has highlighted ICT skills as a key issue for businesses across all market sectors. To</p>

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	ICT Operational Group.		<p>Regional ICT Operational Group.</p> <p>Input has been made to the E-skills UK consultation on the ICT Skills of both the business user of ICT and the ICT professional.</p> <p>The IT Advisory Service (ITAS) being piloted with BLWM to increase the adoption and exploitation of ICT as well as providing business support on ICT issues will also provide skills support within the Information Diagnostic and Brokerage model.</p>	<p>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 ICT.</p> <p>The ICT cluster has developed a Skills Action Plan and has taken forward actions including delivering business network training for SMEs and a facilitators' pilot education programme for ICT SMEs and facilitators of networks for ICT SME's.</p>
20 High Level Skills and Adult Learning	Partnerships for Progression – "Aim Higher" Six West Midlands Learning and Skills Councils	B n/a	<p>See also action 17 and 22. A framework for action has been developed by the RSP for higher level skills and specific actions have been taken forward; for example, Advantage West Midlands has funded a Graduate placement service and approved proposals to establish a graduate recruitment service. Both are aimed at increasing graduate</p>	

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			employment in the region. The graduate recruitment service is expected to gain full approval in 2008. Foundation Degree Forward and Advantage West Midlands have agreed in principle joint investments aimed at working with employers to develop and deliver work-based graduate development programmes.	
21 Skill needs in Business Clusters	Six West Midlands Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs)	B	See also action 17 and 22. Cluster Skills Plans have been produced for all business clusters and Advantage West Midlands has appointed a Cluster Skills Manager to work with business clusters to overcome the current and future skills shortages.	
22 Innovation Skills in Business Clusters and HEIs	West Midlands Higher Education Association (WMHEA) Rural Skills Leadership Group	B n/a	See also action 17 and 20. A draft framework for action has been developed by the RSP for higher level skills. Cluster Skills Plans have been produced for all business clusters and Advantage West Midlands has appointed a Cluster Skills Manager to work	

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			with business clusters and ensure links are made to HE programmes.	
23 Leadership Skills	Regional Leadership and Management Skills Group Succession Planning Steering Group	B n/a	See also action 17 and 24. An RSP Leadership and Management Group was established in 2005, chaired by an RSP Board member, to lead the delivery of the RSP leadership and management workplan. During 2007 the leadership and management pilot work was embedded within the Business Link services as a specialist brokerage service to middle market companies. A further pilot with SME owner managers is also being undertaken as part of this work.	
24 Management Skills for SMEs	Regional Leadership and Management Skills Group	B	See also actions 17 and 23. The specialist leadership and management brokerage service includes the development of a 'depository'. This aims to improve access to information about employer's current leadership and	

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			<p>management skills needs for providers of training and encourage greater alignment between supply and demand for skills development. The leadership and management brokerage service complements the LSC Train to Gain and Director Development support for skills and together these are providing a range of support to assist employers to improve business performance through improving leadership and management skills and access more tailored training solutions - including environmental training programmes.</p>	
25 Implement Entrepreneurship Strategy	Regional Young Entrepreneurship Group	A	This activity has now been completed and taken onto another level. Following development of the Framework and further research the Enterprise Board took the view that 'enterprise education' should look at developing enterprising skills as opposed to 'just' developing skills which will help young people start	The issues going forward which will be addressed by the Centre of Expertise for Young People will be measuring the true impact investments in this agenda have made or will make, identifying which products and services are value for money and to assist schools in purchasing the right type of activity for their school, age
	Local Education Authorities	n/a		

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			<p>a business. The research also identified that there were a number of public sector partners such as Enterprise Insight, Education Business Partnerships and Connections, encouraging schools to build enterprise into their curriculum and that from the private sector a large number of organisations were offering schools a variety of tools and packages which they could purchase. Some of these focused on 'business start-up skills' delivered by organisations such as Young Enterprise, whilst others focused on ways to 'develop enterprising attitudes'. Again the Regional Young Entrepreneurship Group has not been in operation since 2005 and this agenda has been taken forward by the Enterprise Board who has developed the Centre of Expertise for Young People.</p>	<p>group and pupils. The Agency needs to take a strategic view on this.</p>
26	Regional Assembly Transport	B	Overall progress is very good. The	

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<p>Deliver Regional Transport Strategy and 'Priorities'</p>	<p>Partnership</p>		<p>Regional Funding Allocation process is an excellent example of how the Regional Transport Partnership (RTP) can make difficult decisions, even though its own powers are limited. The 'funding' action is at a very early stage and RTP has yet to take an active role. Timing is always an issue, the various strands need to join-up, but the gestation time does not help e.g. we need to identify transport priorities and revise the Regional Spatial Strategy, but decisions elsewhere (such as the statutory process need for an Examination in Public) do not sequence effectively. As we move forward the uncertain future and role of the RTP must come into play. The Sub National Review (SNR) will affect the Assembly and have knock-on effects for its partnerships. The Local Transport Bill (when enacted) will change transport governance across the region. This could affect the membership</p>	

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<p>27</p> <p>Co-ordinate upgrading of ICT infrastructure</p>	<p>West Midlands Broadband Partnership</p> <p>West Midlands Networking Company</p>	<p>A</p>	<p>We need to continue to audit availability of Broadband in 'hot spot' areas, and to supply citizens and businesses with on-going support with enquiries/queries.</p> <p>On-going support provided to Advantage West Midlands ICT team on rural Broadband issues until completion of succession project, end March 2010.</p> <p>100% Broadband availability (as far as can be measured).</p>	<p>The ICT 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 ICT Steering and Operational Groups.</p>
<p>28</p> <p>Implement strategic land use programme</p>	<p>West Midlands Regional Assembly</p> <p>Advantage West Midlands</p>	<p>B</p> <p>B</p>	<p>Strategic Interventions – key activities including acquisitions and investments in support of RZs, HTC's and Clusters and gap funding programme undertaken.</p> <p>Brownfield Land – the Regional Brownfield Land Working Group continued to promote the re-use of</p>	<p>The Brownfield Land Action Plan process encountered some problems and is to be revised, responding to local needs and national policy developments.</p>

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			<p>previously developed land and input to national and regional strategies. In 08-09 the Group is to develop promotional activity and possible new measures and indicators.</p> <p>Redundant Buildings Grant developed and rolled forward in rural areas.</p> <p>I54/Wobaston road - the 220 acre site at Wolverhampton, land remediation implemented and well progressed, £28 million of infrastructure works (funded by Advantage West Midlands) have been completed and a developer selection competition has been launched.</p> <p>Regional Investment Sites – progress on allocation of RIS in emerging planning policy documents including Longbridge AAP, Draft Aston/Lozells AAP & South Worcestershire Joint Core Strategy.</p>	

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			Centre of Excellence in Land Reclamation (CELR) – the Centre, funded by Advantage West Midlands and hosted by RegenWM, began operating in February 2008. The Centre will develop its programme of activities and facilities during 2008-09.	
29 Implement Regional Planning Guidance	Regional Planning Body Advantage West Midlands	A	The West Midlands Economic Strategy has now been revised and the Regional Spatial Strategy is undergoing a phased partial review. The strategic policy alignment of the documents has been successfully promoted through effective joint working arrangements of the WMES/RSS Working Group in Q4 2006 to Q3 2007. The Group enabled dialogue on the relationship of the economy with spatial themes during the drafting stages of each strategy. The result is a WMES	A new West Midlands Economic Strategy, Connecting to Success was launched 10 December 2007. A new WMES Delivery Framework was launched 24 June 2008. The WMRSS Partial Revision is ongoing. The Draft RSS Phase 2 Revision against which the WMES has been aligned is subject to consultation until 8 December 2008 with an Examination in Public scheduled in April-May 2009. Draft RSS Phase 3 Revision commenced in November 2007 with the launch of the Project Plan.
	A			

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			which includes a wider variety of potential spatial interventions.	
30 Develop and Introduce Design Standards	Advantage West Midlands	B	<p>The Design Framework continues to be taken forward: the Design Review Panel process has now been rolled out across the whole of the region (through UVNS and MADE); the Designed Environment West Midlands network has been strengthened; and the region has led the way in trialing a new process 'Design Enabling'.</p> <p>As well as supporting many of the initiatives across the region Advantage West Midlands has strengthened its direct activity in respect of design of the built environment. During the year the Agency's funding application process was revised and applicants now have to set out how relevant proposals will meet high quality design standards.</p> <p>The CELR has launched well.</p>	<p>Fort Dunlop opened in 2006 and now virtually all the work/office space has been let. Work is progressing well on the other flagship projects – e.g. Eastside (Birmingham), Royal Shakespeare Theatre (Stratford).</p> <p>RegenWM continues to develop its work and expand its role. In early 2008, with support and funding from Advantage West Midlands, it launched the 'Centre of Excellence in Land Reclamation' an innovative approach to raise skills and expertise in respect of brownfield land.</p>
	RegenWM Board	A		
	West Midlands Regional Regeneration Partners	n/a		
	CABE and other Regional Design Partners	A		

Action Number	Lead Partners	Grade as given by Lead Partner	Summary of Comments	Major Change
			<p>Although this is a new area of work for RegenWM, it is also pioneering for the whole county as there has been plenty of space for innovation.</p> <p>The CELR web portal works well and is functioning as it should; there is lots of web traffic with it already being one of the most popular areas of the RegenWM site. It includes a broad range of recourse.</p> <p>The initial even programme, held in 2008 (Feb-April) has proved very popular, with a strong cross-sector representation.</p> <p>A joint conference with the ICE on land quality and reclamation also proved a great success.</p>	
31 Support and develop two Urban	Advantage West Midlands	A	Structures have aligned well across URCS and Zones to increase pace and co-ordination of delivery. Successful integration	Walsall and Sandwell URCS are both operating within a wider framework for regeneration in the Black Country. A City
	Urban Regeneration Companies	A		
	Regeneration Zone Boards	B		
	Pathfinder Boards	n/a		

Action Number	Lead Partners	Grade as given by Lead Partner	Summary of Comments	Major Change
<p>Regeneration Companies</p>			<p>has been established between the Black Country Investment Plan and Zone Implementation Plans.</p> <p>In the last 12 months RZs role with URCs has been to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Align and integrate RES and RSS Phase 1 to delivery; ii) Explore potential of an asset backed delivery vehicle to develop programmes; iii) Establish clear reporting lines with the 3 URCs as an incorporated vehicle for delivery of BC priorities; and iv) Reviewing whether URC plans are robust enough to stand scrutiny by partners. 	<p>Development Company in Wolverhampton was also established in 2007.</p> <p>Going forward, and resulting from the Sub National Review, there will be a need to review delivery mechanisms in the Black Country. This would include role of URC, Black Country Consortium, Local Authorities and Advantage West Midlands, to ensure that they meet the challenges set out in the Black Country Study.</p>
<p>32 Develop West Midlands Canal</p>	<p>Local Authorities British Waterways Inland Waterways Association</p>	<p>n/a n/a n/a</p>	<p>NO UPDATE DUE</p>	<p>All the next steps listed against this action have now been completed.</p>

Action Number	Lead Partners	Grade as given by Lead Partner	Summary of Comments	Major Change
Network				
33 Develop and implement Regional Housing Strategy	Regional Housing Board Regional Housing Executive Regional Housing Partnership Pathfinder Boards and other regional partners	B n/a n/a	<p>The implementation of the Regional Housing Strategy (RHS) is via the Sub-Regional Housing Market Area Partnerships, identified in the 2005 RHS. Please note that since September 2006 the West Midlands Regional Assembly took on the Regional Housing Board function from the Government Office for the West Midlands and revised its housing structures to reflect this new role and responsibility.</p> <p>Whilst the Regional Housing Executive (RHE) is not directly responsible for the Housing Market Renewal Area Pathfinders in the Region, the RHE does support their development in a number of ways; enhanced understanding of the local/sub-regional housing market, particularly through the commissioning of sub-regional Strategic Housing Market</p>	<p>The Regional Housing Board function is undertaken by the Regional Housing Executive which consists of elected members, business sector and other stakeholders' representation. The Executive is supported by a wider Regional Housing Partnership and the Regional Housing Advisory Forum, which is an officer and stakeholder based forum. Cllr John Lines, Birmingham City Council is the Chairman of the Regional Housing Executive (WMRA).</p>

Action Number	Lead Partners	Grade as given by Lead Partner	Summary of Comments	Major Change
			<p>Assessments; strategic fit and support in terms of understanding the wider regional economic, housing, social and spatial policies; ensuring alignment and delivery of the Regional Housing Strategy to create mixed and balanced communities by tackling specific housing challenges within the Pathfinderers.</p> <p>In terms of rural affordable housing targets, the RHE recommended that the 1,100 regional target for rural affordable housing should be delivered to market towns and rural communities, i.e. within communities under the 10,000 population threshold, rather than under the 3,000 population threshold. The progress on developing distinct approaches to rural affordable housing is rated as 'C' currently, this is due to the challenges related to delivering affordable housing in rural areas, particularly given the efficiency</p>	

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			savings required under the National Affordable Housing Programme.	
34 Implement the Water Resources Strategy	Environment Agency	B	<p>Managing water resources is ongoing and good progress has been achieved since the Environment Agency strategy was produced in 2001. Water companies have made some progress in reducing leakage and increasing household metering rates to drive down consumption of water. The Environment Agency has worked with the Regional Assembly to include policies in the West Midlands RSS to incorporate improved water efficiency in new developments. Regionally, the Environment Agency has been involved with a number of initiatives to promote water efficiency, particularly in agriculture. A number of events have been organised and we have recently produced a booklet on winter storage reservoirs for</p>	<p>The water companies are currently updating their water resources management plans which plan 25 years ahead and include further improvements to water efficiency and forecast further expansion of household metering. The Environment Agency is updating the Water Resources Strategy to be finalised by December 2008. Regional delivery of water resources management by the Environment Agency will become incorporated into the Water Framework Directive River Bas in Management Plan for the Severn and Humber, also due to be produced in 2008. These will include a variety of measures to further improve water efficiency work in the region.</p>

Action Number	Lead Partners	Grade as given by Lead Partner	Summary of Comments	Major Change
			irrigation.	
35 Promote environmentally beneficial farming	Regional Rural Affairs Forum	B	Effective engagement with agricultural sector. Issues discussed with the Regional Rural Affairs as necessary.	Progress on track.
	Regional Biodiversity Partnership	B		
36 Deliver Regeneration Zones Initiative	Six Regeneration Zone Boards	B	The realignment of zone governance structures in Birmingham, the Black Country and North Staffordshire have helped to accelerate the pace of delivery. For example, in the Black Country joint investment planning with the Urban Regeneration Companies has been integrated into the Black Country Investment Plan. In addition, the Black Country URC Chairs are joining the Zone sub-Board.	The Regeneration Zones represent a distinctive way of delivering economic development activity and an ambitious venture for Advantage West Midlands. There remains a high level of support in the West Midlands for the concept, and in particular for the theme of connecting need and opportunity. The Zones have developed significant strengths in relation to:
	Advantage west Midlands	B		
			Investment by the Agency into zones is now more reflective of a greater emphasis upon co-ordinated strategic planning and investment.	Sub-regional thinking: They have strengthened the thinking behind other sub-regional efforts to the extent that they have encouraged partners to broaden their horizons beyond traditional boundaries.

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			<p>There has been alignment with the (ERDF) Sustainable Urban Development Package Plans</p> <p>The foundations for partnership working are now firmly in place.</p> <p>Preparation of the Zone business investment plan 2008-09 was a relatively smooth process. The process and discipline of producing the ZIP is very useful in taking stock of progress made in the past year, changes that need incorporating into the new plan, reviewing funding requirements and engaging with partners.</p> <p>The East Birmingham North Solihull (EBNS) Zone Partnership has strengthened in 2004 when company status was achieved. The inclusion of the private sector on the Board has had a very positive impact. The (EBNS) Zone has developed a series of strategic Investment Plans (as at 2007) which provide a focus for</p>	<p>Leadership and influence: After a slow start, the Zones as structures have provided strategic leadership and co-ordination. They have helped to reduce a significant number of potential projects to a smaller, more manageable number of priority ones. The contribution to leadership from the private sector has been good.</p> <p>The Zone Implementation Plans, and the process through which they have been put together, have provided good opportunities for joint working and sub-regional strategic focus.</p> <p>Partnership: The Zones have succeeded in getting partners to work together in a way that seems not to have happened previously. The scale of networking has been enhanced and links have been made that otherwise would have been difficult.</p> <p>They have provided a neutral forum</p>

Action Number	Lead Partners	Grade as given by Lead Partner	Summary of Comments	Major Change
			<p>investment with the content of Zone Implementation Plan. Although partner commitments remain strong, aligning funds and timing is always a challenge. Proposals in relation to employment land and property indicators continue to progress well through the administrative process of the EBNS Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) in relation to employment land and Digbeth have both seen a number of redevelopment projects progress through.</p> <p>Bridges to sectors or connecting to opportunities projects remain a challenge. These tend to be revenue funded activities whereas the Agency provides mainly capital funding to support Zone activity. In more recent times there has been greater clarity around opportunities to intensify regional support programmes (e.g. around skills, enterprise and worklessness) by 'buying in' extra</p>	<p>where various interests can come together.</p> <p>In most instances, the 'original' Zone Boards and secretariats have been subsumed into wider sub-regional partnership structures. The changes are most pronounced in Birmingham & the Black Country and North Staffordshire.</p> <p>In Birmingham & the Black Country Zone governance has been simplified. The Black Country Consortium is no longer responsible for the Zone area falling within West Birmingham. This now forms part of the Zone managed through the East Birmingham North Solihull Zone partnership.</p> <p>The North Staffordshire Regeneration Zone has been subsumed into the broader North Staffordshire Regeneration Partnership, the new partnership body responsible for co-ordinating</p>

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			<p>provision to Zone areas (rather than duplicating regional programmes).</p> <p>The value of the Zone programme has continued to grow year on year. In 2007-08 Advantage West Midlands invested £78.6 million. This represents a significant 20 per cent growth on the previous year's spend of £66 million.</p> <p>During the last financial year, in line with BERR's requirements, the Agency commissioned a comprehensive, independent evaluation of the Zone programme. This identified that the Zone concept was bold, innovative and had pre-empted much of the Government's thinking around the sub national Review of delivery. It also highlighted that since 2002 the Agency had invested c. £253 million in the programme. The study concludes that this has generated at least £633 million of</p>	<p>economic development and regeneration in the sub-region.</p> <p>In common with the High Technology Corridors, a major achievement in the past two years has been the move to focus in on and agree the genuine investment priorities that have potential to transform the economic well-being of the Zones and the wider region.</p> <p>Zone Investment Plans 2008-09 are undoubtedly the most realistic and focused ever prepared by partners.</p>

Action Number	Lead Partners	Grade as given by Lead Partner	Summary of Comments	Major Change
			GVA for the region's economy.	
37 Implement Market Towns Initiatives	West Midlands Market Towns Forum, Sub-County Networks and Market Town Partnerships	B	The Market Towns Forum is fully operational and is being led and delivered enthusiastically jointly by ECOTEC and AMTi. Attendance is respectable but local authority officer participation has declined as the existing programme winds down. We have a strong market towns programme now with a level of activity appropriate to the needs, opportunities and capacity of each town. We have physical market towns activity underway in about 30 market towns.	
38 Economic Intervention in Towns Study issues	Sub-regional economic partnerships Local Strategic Partnerships Advantage West Midlands	B n/a B	The Economic Intervention in Towns study highlighted the fact that there were a number of other towns within the West Midlands that did not fall within the scope of the Market Towns initiative, and were experiencing economic difficulties. It was decided that this issue would be addressed by	The Agency has worked closely with partners to establish the Transforming Telford Company, the genesis of which lies in the Economic Development Strategy for Telford & Wrekin that was produced some 4 years ago. Considerable investment has been made in partnership management

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			<p>economic intervention in these towns, initially starting with Hereford, Telford and Burton-on-Trent.</p> <p>Two priorities were identified for Hereford – Rutherwas Futures, a 90 hectares industrial estate and new access road. And Edgar Street Grid which at this moment is in delivery stage of its development – Advantage West Midlands has committed £20m to this project with an overall value of £250m – redeveloping 40 hectares of Herefordshire City Centre.</p> <p>In Telford, an “Urban Regeneration Company +” (Transforming Telford Ltd.) has been set up with the Agency, English partnerships and the local Council as founding partners. The Company has developed a business plan and agreed a 10-year investment programme containing a portfolio of key</p>	<p>and in assisting the Company’s executive team to develop project proposals that address not only local needs, problems and issues but also accord with the aims and objectives of the West Midlands Economic Strategy. The Transforming Telford Business Plan is a well defined route map of investment and the Company must ensure that it does not become diverted from the path by other, lower priority imperatives; all partners have a role and responsibility in helping the Company to achieve this goal.</p>

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			<p>regeneration schemes. To date, the development and delivery of complex, individual projects has taken longer than initially anticipated but the rate of progress can be expected to increase significantly as the Company asserts its position and credentials as the lead organisation for regeneration, economic development, inward investment and business support in the Telford & Wrekin sub-region</p> <p>For Burton-on-Trent, investment continued through the old SRB programme which ended in 2007. However, we have always supported longer term development of land south of the village of Branston, 2 miles south of Burton on Trent in Staffordshire.</p>	
<p>39 Improve support for formation of social enterprise</p>	<p>Regional Social Enterprise Network</p>	<p>B</p>	<p>While during the last four years there have been some challenges, in the last year there has been progress and the network is getting into a position to respond</p>	<p>The Enterprise agenda is increasing in the Region with greater support to local social enterprises and wider engagement. Strong links with regional partners</p>

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40 Role of the NHS and other large public sector bodies	Government Office for the West Midlands	B	to social enterprises both geographically and in relation to capacity and skills. 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. An audit has been undertaken of all the work across the Trusts within the Region. Local Procurement has been difficult to progress 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. Initial work has started on mapping local food procurement to NHS hospitals in Birmingham,	including GOWM and the Strategic Health Authority. The Network is working with social enterprises to maximise opportunities in the Region. The Regional Health partnership is working well. The Regional health and well being strategy was published in January 2008. There is a section on the economy and health. Advantage West Midlands personnel attend the majority of the meetings and have played an active part in the development of the strategy and in the action planning in taking this forward. Since publication of the action plan the three strategic health Authorities have become one and they published their Investing for Health strategy at the end of 2007. A joint meeting has been held between the Strategic Health Authority and Advantage West Midlands and areas of agreed work
	Three Strategic Health Authorities	B		
	Local Authorities	n/a		

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			<p>but this has hit problems around quality standards</p> <p>In the local procurement of services the market needs to be grown to provide an alternative to NHS facilities and the SHA held an event in September 2007 with potential providers to help with the delivery of the Investing for Health strategy.</p>	<p>are being progressed.</p>
<p>41 Engagement of Voluntary and Community Sector in Regeneration</p>	<p>Regional Action West Midlands (RAWM)</p> <p>EMBRACE West Midlands</p> <p>Business in Communities</p> <p>Government Office for the West Midlands</p> <p>Advantage West Midlands</p>	<p>n/a</p> <p>n/a</p> <p>A</p> <p>C</p> <p>B</p>	<p>Embrace ceased operations 2 years ago.</p> <p>Business in the Community has achieved all targets.</p> <p>GOWM 'C' is down to one action - Race Equality Action Board, GOWM now doesn't fund this.</p> <p>Business In the Community no longer has any contractual relationship with any of the regeneration zones. BIC did have a three year contract with the</p>	<p>Overall there has been considerable progress against the overall action. This includes the successful BiTC programme within Regeneration Zones; the West Midlands Race Equality Action Board developing its work programme; agreement on a new regional Economic Inclusion Panel to bring together partners from the public, private and Third sector; continued support from public partners for the role of Regional Action West Midlands; and the creation of Social enterprise West</p>

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			<p>North Black Country Zone that concluded in June 2007 where BIC over achieved on all outputs in generating private sector support for the zone and the programmes targeted. And in the first of those three years BIC completed some work on behalf of the South Black Country Zone.</p> <p>BIC is continually directing members resources to support communities, community organisations, schools and specific programmes e.g. Trellis, Fair cities, and homelessness.</p> <p>GOWM has participated in Advantage West Midlands recent review of the Third Sector infrastructure in the region. This should lead to the development of an inclusive regional Third Sector forum which will develop and drive relationships with the Sector in the future and respond to the Office of the Third Sector policy. This development should also</p>	<p>Midlands (SEWM) to act as a network and champion for the role of social enterprise in eh economy and regeneration. The full engagement of BME voluntary and community sector at a regional level has not been achieved, and requires further consideration.</p> <p>The creation of the Economic Inclusion Panel provides the opportunity to put worklessness and economic inclusion at the heart of regeneration, and to ensure gaps in activity are identified; best practice is shared; and activity is better linked. The proposed creation of a Third Sector strategy group, led by Advantage West Midlands will allow the public and third sector to have a consistent dialogue on the way we can work together and address any gaps or failings.</p>

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			<p>secure longer term funding for RAWM, which is now operating with more stable resources. The regular KITs with Advantage West Midlands have become more ad hoc and programme/project based and there will not be any agreement on joint objectives with RAWM as we move to a commissioning framework for the final year of funding.</p>	
<p>42 Implement marketing and image programme</p>	<p>Advantage West Midlands West Midlands Regional Assembly</p>	<p>B B</p>	<p>2007/8 saw the development of a stronger 'signature' (branding device) for the West Midlands Region, designed to create a single voice across all regional communications. 'The Heart of England, West Midlands Region' signature builds upon both our geographic location and our position at the heart of it all and is currently being rolled out across all regional communications (Nov 2008 – May 2009). Marketing activity targeting the</p>	<p>Regional Marketing Board is being convened. The first full meeting is scheduled for Sept 2008 following the appointment of RMB Chair July 2008. A shadow board has met to develop the work programme and constitution of the main board; a progress group is in place and operational supporting the development and implementation of a revised Regional Marketing Strategy. Shadow RMB, supported by progress group, is continuing to</p>

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			<p>European business audience continued throughout 2007/8, the regional 'flight experience' trade show activity was awarded the accolades of Best Interbuild Stand Award 2007 (Birmingham Nov 2007) and the Bronze Perfect Stand Award at CEE Property & Investment Fair 2007 (Poland May 2007).</p> <p>The latest West Midlands Regional Champions campaign 'Have you Ever' launched (October 2007) at a number of events across the breadth of the region. The campaign, created to encourage pride in our regions culture and heritage, has to date secured the support of over 300 new West Midlands Regional Champions.</p>	<p>identify priorities for inclusion in the revised strategy.</p>
<p>43 Sharing of information and intelligence</p>	<p>West Midlands Regional Observatory</p>	<p>A</p>	<p>State of the Region report highly regarded but with not as much impact as desirable, so process is changing / improving for 2008, to engage more with policy drivers.</p>	<p>Focus on the proposed single integrated regional strategy and the 'robust' evidence base needed to support this – need better links with RSS to deliver this.</p>

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			<p>Benchmarking is our aim, but inconsistency / unavailability of data remain an issue.</p> <p>Annual conference October 2007 focussed on this aspect in particular. Our work on economic impact of migrant labour and annual skills assessment are further examples of policy implications / demographic change.</p>	
44 Working with other Regions	<p>Advantage West Midlands Government Office for the West Midlands West Midlands Regional Assembly</p>	<p>B n/a B</p>	<p>Smart Growth Midlands Way Action Plan still key to business and looking to ensure alignment with East Staffordshire, South Derbyshire areas.</p>	<p>Raising profile of Smart Growth Midlands Way.</p>
45 Implement European Strategic Framework and Strategy	<p>Regional Assembly's European and International Affairs Partnership</p>	B	<p>The European and International Partnership is being restructured in to a European Strategy Board, this includes reviewing the delivery arrangements for the strategy. This reflects the findings of the strategic review and the requirement of a more streamlined</p>	<p>European Strategy has been reviewed and has a focus on four specific priority areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Cohesion • Research and Innovation • Environment and Climate Change • The single market.

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			approach.	