

Dudley City Status Submission: Profile

“

City status will allow Dudley to *reach its true potential*. We've always known we have plenty to talk about and offer; city status will simply make that clear to the rest of the world. We have excellent plans for regenerating our town, and the whole borough, and are striding ahead with plans to further attract inward investment. Dudley is continually proving itself as a great place to live and do business.

Councillor Les Jones, leader of Dudley Council

“

Dudley is a peaceful and welcoming area. Wherever you're from you're guaranteed a warm welcome.'

Jayden, age 10

“

Dudley is a place of *great historical (and prehistorical) significance* with its priory, castle and fossil sites as well as the Black Country Living Museum. It holds together diverse cultures which have worked together well to resist efforts from outside to disrupt them. It has an identity clearly distinct from neighbours such as Birmingham. My own designation as Bishop of Dudley reflects that for church purposes it is accorded the dignity of city status.

Rt Rev David Walker, Bishop of Dudley

“

Dudley's many attractions make it a mind-blowing place. A special place for all people from all our communities.'

Lucy, age 11

“

The borough of Dudley is vibrant, multi-racial and has a long sense of history. City status would enhance all the historical and cultural richness within the borough, leading to more vibrancy and the *building of stronger and more prosperous communities* in which current and future generations can achieve their full potential.

Kenneth Rodney, chief executive of Dudley's centre for equality & diversity

1. Putting Dudley on the map

Dudley borough describes a unitary local authority situated on the western edge of the West Midlands. It forms part of the Black Country, an area made up of the metropolitan boroughs of Dudley, Sandwell and Walsall and the city of Wolverhampton.

With a growing population that currently stands at 306,000, we are the third largest district in the West Midlands conurbation and the 12th largest metropolitan area. Over 45,000 people live within a 15 minute walk of the centre of Dudley Town itself.

The borough covers approximately 38 square miles or 98 square kilometres. Although predominantly urban in form, Dudley is surprisingly green. Around 30% of the borough is made up of green spaces and 17% of the 98km² is green belt land. It is the nature in which wedges of high quality, accessible green space bisect the traditional urban landscape that generates such an attractive visual appearance.

Being on the fringe of the conurbation, the people of the borough enjoy easy access to both urban areas and the countryside, with the city of Birmingham situated approximately nine miles east of the borough. Rural Staffordshire and Worcestershire lie in close proximity to the west and south.

Dudley has a vibrant and diverse population; a melting pot of language, culture and ethnicity. There are many different languages spoken within the borough, including Arabic, Urdu, African, Chinese, Polish and French. Our diversity is one of our main strengths and no more is this evident than in our younger generation, where the school census records over 70 language variants actively in use today. The 2007 mid-year ethnic group population estimates show that the percentage of White

British people in the borough is now 89.7%. This reflects small increases in the populations of all minority ethnic groups. Groups that have seen the largest growth are Pakistani, Other White and Black African groups. According to estimates the Pakistani and Indian community remain the largest minority ethnic groups in Dudley today at 2.6% and 1.7% respectively.

In order to further the understanding and appreciation of that community diversity, we have developed a unique learning programme in schools known as Routes to Roots. It is a powerful resource with some exciting tools that should help to promote tolerance and respect for different cultures and traditions. Routes to Roots will challenge opinions based on misinformation and prejudice and help build bridges between community groups.

Routes to Roots also reminds us of Dudley's rich multicultural heritage from a Saxon settlement (Duddha's Lea) to the Norman Conquest (French invaders built Dudley Castle), the refuge of 17th century Protestant refugees from Europe (the founders of the Black Country's great glass making industry) to the post war settlers who came from Commonwealth countries to help rebuild the region. Routes to Roots is a mirror on the past and a gateway to the future - 21st century resource for 21st century learners.

Source: 2001 Census / Mid-Year Ethnic Group Population Estimates 2007 (experimental statistics), Office for National Statistics/ Directorate of Children's Services

Our place in the Black Country

Dudley is often referred to as the capital of the Black Country, the naming of which reflects its heavy industrial past. That legacy is also present in the particular linguistic accent of the area - certainly distinct from Birmingham and drawing strongly even today from its roots in Old English. Dudley's former pattern of old townships and villages is reflected in subtle variations of accent and dialect.

Our towns

The borough is made up of four major towns (Brierley Hill, Halesowen, Stourbridge and Dudley) and a number of local centres. Our ambitions for the regeneration of these communities draw on their individual and unique strengths by recognising that each has a vital contribution to make to the overall well being of the borough.

Our proposals for change are based on a sustainability assessment to ensure that both the borough's natural resources and the strongest features of the built environment are safeguarded for future generations.

Brierley Hill has been designated as a strategically significant site within the Black Country sub-region to reflect its retail and office significance. That in itself has been a major transformation for local people. From what was once the massive Round Oak Steelworks we now see a high quality quayside development and premier hotel/conference facilities. The area also offers a hub of cafes and eateries to make it a prominent social meeting place for local residents and visitors. Brierley Hill features a busy High Street, three indoor markets and the famous Merry Hill Centre - one of the biggest shopping centres in the country which

attracts over 23 million visitors annually. One famous feature of the town is the canal side conservation area known locally as the Delph Locks, - a flight of nine locks climbing straight up a hill in one continuous run.

Halesowen stands on the border between the Black Country and Birmingham. The town dates back to Saxon times and the 13th century ruins of Halesowen Abbey can still be seen today. Halesowen has all the conveniences of a town but at the same time retains the feel and character of the village it once was. It is surrounded by some beautiful countryside, notably in the south.

Stourbridge, named after the nearby River Stour, has been home to some of the world's finest glass designers and makers since the 17th century. The town has a compact and easily accessible centre and is home to many smaller specialist shops and a regular farmers market. A prominent feature of the town is its cast iron clock, which was made in 1857 and stands at the meeting point of the lower and upper high street. The Bonded Warehouse and waterfront at Canal Street are a reminder of the town's thriving 18th and 19th century iron industry.

The borough additionally has a number of smaller centres such as Coseley, Sedgley and Netherton, providing access to local shops and amenities. Dudley is also host to a range of supermarkets of all sizes located throughout the borough.

Dudley's geology

How the borough of Dudley came to be what it is today can be explained by the very geology it sits on. That geological heritage, has determined the location of everything from water sources to the location of natural mineral resources, canals and towns. The natural landscape is fundamentally and inextricably linked to our human history and the resulting cultures that now occupy the borough.

Dudley is uniquely rich in mineral seams. Deposits of limestone, together with the thickest coal seam in the UK (the South Staffordshire Thick Coal) and up to 10 other coals in the Coal Measures, which also included rich ironstones, were at the heart of the Industrial Revolution and the development of its key technology. The geological heritage is a treasure of international importance and totally unique. Specifically, the limestone strata in Dudley contains the most diverse and abundant fossil fauna in the world.

The Wren's Nest (site of Special Scientific Interest), including the Seven Sisters limestone mine and features such as the fossil reefs and ripple beds, is considered by geologists and palaeontologists to be an invaluable and unique resource and has contributed to the store of knowledge within earth science research. In recognition of its importance, Wren's Nest



was declared the first geological National Nature Reserve, in 1956. Castle Hill is a scheduled Ancient Monument, reflecting its limestone mining heritage. Our famous fossil is a trilobite, known as the Dudley Bug.

Our industrial heritage

Situated on a ridge of high ground, Dudley was originally an Anglo-Saxon village. The area at that time became known as Duddha's Leah, meaning the woodland estate of a person called Duddha. The first historical reference to Dudley is in the Domesday Book of 1086. Dudley changed from a village to a town in the 13th century, when the then Lord of the Manor started a market in its centre. Dudley's medieval marketplace still stands today and is an integral part of the town's character.

Agriculture was the first industry of the area. By the end of the 17th century Civil War, trade around the Dudley area began to increase dramatically. Dudley's unusual wealth of natural resources such as coal, iron ore, limestone and fireclay accorded Dudley a prominent role in fuelling the Industrial Revolution. The first smelting of iron with coke was achieved by Dud Dudley in 1619. It bequeathed a legacy of knowledge that was to fuel the industrial development of the world through the 18th and 19th centuries via Abraham Darby, born in Wren's Nest in 1678.

The proud and past industries of Dudley that then developed include those involving coal and coke, iron and steel, glassware, nails, chains, ship anchors, locks and keys and the brewing of beer and stout. The product of Dudley's iron was exported over the world into the textile, shipping and transport industries. It was needed for many things, such as for the framework of spinning mules, the boilers and cylinders of steam engines, the railway lines that criss-crossed the country and the metal skeletons of cotton mills.

In the 17th century gentleman glassmakers from Lorraine in France settled in the Stourbridge area of the borough. They were attracted to the abundant resources of fireclay and coal in the area which they could use in

their work. This laid the foundations for the golden age of the Stourbridge glass industry during the Victorian period when firms in the area produced coloured glass and crystal that equalled the best in the world.

Today the remaining factories specialise in cut crystal while the tradition of coloured glass is kept alive by a growing number of small glassmaking studios. World famous crystal manufacturers in the area still exist and include Tudor Crystal, Staffordshire Crystal and Royal Brierley Crystal.

Nails made in Dudley were used in the building of Nonsuch Palace and Hampton Court. Thomas Newcomen's first working steam engine for pumping water out of mines went into operation at a coalmine at Dudley Castle in 1712.

The chain and anchor works owned by Noah Hingley and Sons Ltd, was built in Netherton in 1845 and produced equipment for many famous ships including the ill-fated Titanic. The anchor for the Titanic, which weighed sixteen tons and was the largest in the world, was transported from Dudley by train in 1911. An authentic replica was recently brought back into the borough and will now have pride of place as a piece of industrial public art in Netherton where the original was forged.

The extensive network of canals that connected the region acted as a catalyst to the rapid industrial growth of the Black Country. Roads at the time were poor, making journey times long and dependent upon the weather. Heavy goods were both difficult and expensive to transport. In this climate, canals offered a cheap and reliable method of transporting goods.

The canal network grew rapidly in the 18th century and brought many benefits to the towns and cities it served. The Stourbridge

and Dudley Canals were cut in the late 18th century to link with the Staffordshire & Worcester Canal to the west and the Birmingham Canal system to the east, and through these they became a part of the national network of waterways.

Cheap bulk transport allowed the mineral resources of the area, mainly coal, to be exploited to the full. Once this cheap form of transport was established, the cost of coal fell dramatically and large quantities were mined and transported from Dudley. Heavy industries such as iron and steel began to grow rapidly, using the canal network to bring in raw materials and export finished goods.

The borough of Dudley benefited from its traditional industries for many years and is proud of its industrial heritage. Although traditional industries across England and in Dudley declined during the 20th century, the type of industries the area is involved in has diversified. While metalworking and glass industries continue to exist on a smaller scale, manufacturing has diversified and now employs people in the rubber and plastics, electronics and chemical industries. However, as is the case nationally, service industries such as retail and tourism have grown in importance in Dudley.

Our occupations

Today, Dudley's business profile is still dominated by a large majority of small to medium companies, some of which are active in continuing that manufacturing legacy, although this has declined over recent decades. That decline necessitated a diversification away from the traditional staple heavy metal occupations into a much broader range embracing service sector functions such as call centres and financial services.

The Annual Population Survey for the period October 2009 – September 2010 revealed that the most common occupation for people living in Dudley was manager and senior official (18%). The following table shows the percentage of people living in Dudley employed in each occupation group compared with the West Midlands and England:

| | Dudley | West Midlands | England |
|--|--------|---------------|---------|
| Managers and senior officials | 20.3 | 15.2 | 16.1 |
| Professional occupations | 10.3 | 12.4 | 14.0 |
| Associate prof & tech occupations | 11.0 | 12.7 | 14.7 |
| Administrative and secretarial occupations | 13.0 | 11.0 | 11.0 |
| Skilled trades occupations | 9.3 | 11.1 | 10.1 |
| Personal service occupations | 9.2 | 9.8 | 8.7 |
| Sales and customer service occupations | 8.7 | 7.6 | 7.4 |
| Process, plant and machine operatives | 7.7 | 7.9 | 6.6 |
| Elementary occupations | 9.2 | 11.8 | 11.0 |

Source: Annual Population Survey Oct 2009 – Sept 2010, Office for National Statistics

Whilst the majority of residents live and work within the borough, Dudley also attracts a significant commuter workforce; for example, a total of 37,559 people lived outside the borough and commuted to work here in 2001 (Source: 2001 Census).

Historically Dudley has experienced lower than average earnings and qualifications. In 2010 the median gross annual pay of full time employees living in Dudley borough was £22,276. We have the lowest average full time wage in the West Midlands metropolitan area. The borough wide data suggests that Dudley appears relatively affluent compared to the rest of the West Midlands region. However, it is recognised that there are some small but severe pockets of deprivation within the area. These are closely associated with our traditional manufacturing base, which suffered from economic decline in the latter half of the 20th century. Two of these areas are within the 10% most deprived areas in England and are in close proximity to

Dudley town centre. City status would provide a welcome boost to the local economy and assist the plans already underway to revitalise the borough.

However, with a focus on education and skills, we are determined to raise this bar. As part of the wider Black Country subregion, we aim to expand our share of knowledge sector industries, matching that aspiration with a need to develop and retain our own educated and skilled young people.

Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) 2009, Office for National Statistics

Our parks and green space

Approximately 30% of the borough is made up of green spaces. Half of these green spaces are parks, open spaces, recreation grounds, football pitches and amenity land. The

remainder comprises local nature reserves and areas of importance for nature conservation.

Three of the borough's main parks were donated in the 1920s and early 1930s by Ernest Stevens, a successful local industrialist. He presented the then Stourbridge Council with parks in Stourbridge, Wollescote and Quarry Bank for the benefit of the local communities.

Mary Stevens Park in Stourbridge features Grade II listed ornate wrought iron gates which were modelled on gates from Buckingham Palace. Stevens Park in Wollescote houses two national plant collections, with one of the largest collections of *Ceanothus* and *Rudbeckia* in the country.

Himley Hall and Park

Himley Hall is a commanding 18th century Palladian style building set amongst 180 acres of landscaped parkland designed by Lancelot 'Capability' Brown. Once the family home to the Earls of Dudley and visited by royalty and high society, Himley Hall was bought outright by Dudley Council in 1988.

Current visitor numbers to Himley Hall and park reach over 200,000 per year and there are regular exhibitions, art and craft showings and other events during the year. The hall itself offers prestigious conference facilities as well as being a magnificent setting for wedding ceremonies, receptions and other special occasions.

The park hosts a variety of outdoor events such as classic vehicle and horticultural fairs, an annual fun filled under 5's day and a breathtaking fireworks display every November. Visitors can sail and fish on the great lake, play golf or just enjoy a peaceful stroll around the park.

The Leasowes

The Leasowes is a historic landscape located near Halesowen town and is Grade I listed on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England. Designed by the poet William Shenstone between 1743 and 1763, the Leasowes contains the remains of one of the most influential landscapes of the 18th century. Indeed the Leasowes is considered to be one of the first natural landscape gardens in England.

Shenstone designed the wooded valleys, open grasslands, cascades, pools, lakes and streams to highlight views in the surrounding countryside. It is these features that also make the Leasowes such an important site for wildlife, providing a wealth of different habitats for birds, mammals, invertebrates and plant species rare to the local area.

A recent Dudley Council restoration project at the park received £1.3 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The project has seen the 18th century Beechwater Dam, as well as pools and cascades at Virgil's Grove, brought back to life. Other work to the site includes restored walkways and new paths improving access to the historic landscape.

Nature reserves

There is a wide diversity of natural green space in the borough. Some sites have received national and even international recognition for their importance, while others have been recognised for the local contribution they make to biodiversity and people's enjoyment of the natural environment.

Wren's Nest was designated the UK's first ever urban National Nature Reserve in 1956, while Fens Pool is a Special Area of Conservation.

The borough also has seven local nature reserves; Barrow Hill, Buckpool and Fens Pools, Bumble Hole, Cotwall End Valley, The Leasowes, Saltwells and Wren's Nest.

As we highlighted above, Wren's Nest National Nature Reserve is a geological site of exceptional importance. It is internationally famous for its range of beautifully preserved limestone fossils which number over 600 species. A third of the fossil species known to the area, were found in Dudley first and then in other parts of the world.

Buckpool and Fens Pool local nature reserve has been designated a Special Area of Conservation, primarily in regards to the population of great crested newt which reside there, one of the largest groupings in the UK. Saltwells local nature reserve is famous in the area for its stunning display of bluebells which bloom in early May. Saltwells also contains two geological Sites of Special Scientific Interest: Doulton's Claypit and Brewin's Cutting.

Dudley canal tunnel and limestone mines

Dudley borough has three main canals with a number of smaller arms and extensions leading from them. No longer used for commercial carrying, today the canals are enjoyed by walkers, boaters, and cyclists. Visitors can take a boat trip and enjoy stunning countryside and industrial views as they pass places like Fens Pool, Windmill End and the Delph Locks on their way through the borough's limestone caverns.

In 2009 the Dudley Canal Trust gained a Silver Award in the Large Visitor attraction section at the Black Country Hotel and Tourism Awards. And most recently the importance of the Dudley canal tunnel has been recognised with the award of a Red Wheel plaque by the Transport Trust.

Tourism in Dudley

Tourism in Dudley is both big business and diverse, with attractions ranging from the celebration of heritage to destination shopping. In 2008, there were some 4.3 million visitors to the borough. In 2010 Dudley won a joint silver award in the Heart of England Excellence in Tourism Awards for Christmas at the Black Country Museum. In 2009 the same body recognised the Black Country Museum for its "outstanding contribution" while the museum also won a silver award under Business Tourism of the Year, also in 2009.

The main types of visitors to Dudley are day visitors. The following figures are for the year 2010:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| • Merry Hill Centre | 23.9m |
| • Dudley Zoo and Castle | 195,345 |
| • Black Country Living Museum | 307,268 |
| • Canal Tunnel and Singing Cavern | 82,885 |
| • Dudley Museum and Art Gallery | 26,763 |
| • Himley Hall, Dudley | 21,452 |
| • Himley Park | 193,662 |
| • Himley events | 60,067 |
| • Broadfield House Glass Museum | 14,789 |
| • Red House Glass Cone | 33,570 |

The Waterfront is also home to the annual water and light festival which attracts as many as 14,000 visitors in celebration of our canal heritage.

The borough hosts a number of high quality hotels, including the Village in close proximity to Dudley town centre and the Copthorne hotel in Brierley Hill. There is accommodation for 500 visitors within the proposed city centre boundary with a further 636 rooms available totalling 1,350 bed spaces across the borough.

Our glass heritage

There has been a tradition of glass-making in the Stourbridge area for the past 400 years, adding a unique feature of Dudley's heritage. Our present day collection of glass resides in the glass quarter of Stourbridge and enjoys a reputation as one of the major glass museums in the world. Broadfield House Glass Museum has one of the best collections of British glassware in the country, from 18th century tableware through to Victorian cameo and modern studio glass. The museum has a glassmaking studio on site, where visitors can learn about the skills of glassblowing.

The glass museum also hosts many popular events and exhibitions throughout the year, including an annual Beads Day which features demonstrations of glass bead making by artists such as Pauline Holt of Jazzy Lily Hot Glass, who make their own unique hand made beads. Other events to take place later on in August this year include the International Festival of Glass which takes place every two years at venues throughout and beyond Stourbridge glass quarter.

The importance of raising the profile of Stourbridge's glass community was a driver in the formation of the International Festival of Glass in 2004. Taking place every two years it attracts thousands of people, including a strong global contingent. The festival invites world renowned artists to run classes and share their skills, culminating in free demonstrations to the public. The festival is a celebration of Stourbridge as a centre of excellence for glass making.

Red House Glass Cone



The Red House Glass Cone stands in Wordsley near Stourbridge, right at the heart of the Glass Quarter in the West Midlands. Built at the end of the 18th century, it was used for the manufacture of glass until 1936.

Reaching 100 feet into the sky, it is now one of only four complete cones remaining in the United Kingdom. The cone is open to visitors who can explore 200 years of glassmaking history through audio guides, exhibits and live glassmaking demonstrations.

Arts, public art and entertainment

Dudley is recognised nationally for its promotion and provision of high quality public art. A number of accolades have been received including the National Art Collections Fund Award "for an outstanding contribution to the visual arts" (1994), the Royal Society of Arts "Art and Architecture" Award (1993); and in 2005 the council's resident public artist was elected as an associate member of the RBSA, the historic Midlands equivalent of the Royal Academy.

Notable public art works include Andrew Logan's "Pegasus" with glass inlaid wings at Scotts Green Island, celebrating the glass industry and also intended as an optimistic image of the future of Dudley; as well as a "walkabout" trail of smaller sculptures celebrating the fossils and early history of Dudley by artists hailing from the region, such as John Vaughan, Michael Lyons and Michael Konu. Another important aspect of the work of the public art project and borough artist has been to organise artworks to commemorate local heroes. In recent years for example

this has led to a major two part commission celebrating the life of footballer Duncan Edwards for Dudley Market Place (1998 and 2005), a film strip sculpture commemorating actor Sir Cedric Hardwicke in Lye (2005), a relief to the Schindler-like figure of Frank Foley in Stourbridge (2004), and a refurbishment of the monument to Joe Darby, the Victorian jumping champion, in Netherton (2006).

The borough has five public halls: Stourbridge Town Hall, Dudley Town Hall, the Cornbow Hall, Halesowen, Netherton Arts Centre and Brierley Hill Civic Hall. Most of these buildings date back to Victorian times and all are in prime town centre locations. They each host a very wide range of events, ranging from small private family hires, to large professional musical concerts.

Royal connections with Dudley borough

Dudley is proud to have received visits from two reigning queens: Queen Elizabeth I who stayed at Dudley Castle in 1575 and Queen Elizabeth II who visited the town in 1957 as part of her tour of Staffordshire & Worcestershire in 1977 as part of the celebrations to mark her Silver Jubilee and in 1994 to open the new visitor centre at Dudley Zoo.

Dudley also welcomed other members of the royal family during the 20th century; in particular Edward, Prince of Wales who visited Netherton Iron Works and Dudley Guest Hospital in June 1923 and then returned in 1927 to open the Birmingham New Road. The Duke and Duchess of York also paid Dudley an official visit in 1925 visiting Dudley Guest Hospital, returning in 1942 as King George VI and Queen Elizabeth when they inspected Dudley's civil defence unit as part of their West Midlands tour.

The Earl of Dudley played host to many members of the royal family during the first part

of the 20th century, most notably to the Duke of Kent and his bride Princess Marina who spent part of their honeymoon at Himley Hall in 1934. The Duke of Kent returned to the borough a few months later to open the new Council House. In 1937 he was back again with the Duke & Duchess of Gloucester to visit the Zoo and during the war he made two morale boosting visits to inspect the Dudley Home Guard, the Citizens Advice Bureau and the Women's Mutual Service.

Other royal visitors include Princess Margaret who opened the extensions to the Dudley Teacher Training College and the Duchess of Kent who opened the glass centre at Brierley Hill and extension to the College of Education and a home for the visually impaired in Sedgley. From the 1980s onwards, visits have also been made by Prince Charles and Diana, Princess of Wales, the Princess Royal, Prince Michael, the Duke of Kent and the Duke of Gloucester.

The strength and importance of community

Success in revitalising our communities largely depends on the people of the borough. The vision of building and maintaining strong communities runs throughout our plans, as people come together to shape the decisions that affect their lives. One of our most valuable assets is volunteering - building on the strengths of the 40,000 volunteers who regularly give their time, energy and skills their local community. Their contribution is acknowledged each year through the annual Volunteer of the Year Awards.

There is a thriving network of voluntary and community organisations involving individuals of all ages and backgrounds to support this, including one of the most effective community empowerment networks in the country. Working with local communities we have an established

Compact with the voluntary sector to help set a framework for positive relationships. Our partnerships and our plans are built on the basis of this engagement. There are also strong links between communities, that help provide a bridge across different backgrounds and outlooks. For example there is the Dudley inter-faith Network, which has brought together people from the range of faith groups, to build up relationships, to work with the council and partners on common priorities and to work together to promote community interaction and understanding. We also have a flourishing Dudley Youth Parliament, enabling the voice and creativity of young people in the area to be expressed and acted upon.

Partnership working

The cornerstone of efforts to unite communities is the Dudley Community Partnership, established in 2000, that brings together local public bodies, private sector and voluntary community and faith organisations. The partnership has led the development of our 2020 community strategy, and been a key factor in assisting organisations to achieve major improvements in public life over the last ten years. Dudley Council, as one key partner, has been consistently recognised as being a top performing but low cost authority. Here are some examples of how the council, its partners and the community have worked to improve life in the borough.

A healthy place

Dudley exhibits a mixed pattern of relative deprivation including pockets of real severity. In common with elsewhere, components of deprivation correlate strongly with incidences of poor health and present a challenge. However, tackling that challenge is meeting with some success. Dudley's health economy

has contributed to the improving health of the borough over the last 10 years where the rates of early death from cancer and from heart disease and stroke have declined by 21% and 53% respectively, which is higher than the target reductions set by the Department of Health in "Saving Lives, Our Healthier Nation" (1999).

One key indicator is life expectancy, which for females has increased from 80.3 years to 81.9 years between 2002/02 and 2006/08. Similarly, life expectancy for men went from 75.6 years 77.2 years. We have striven to invest in preventative measures that contribute to healthier lives in the long term. These include successful smoking cessation, alcohol and drug treatment programmes. Through developments such as the healthy hubs in parks, healthy choices are being made accessible to all people throughout the borough.

Healthy hubs



The Healthy Towns programme is a £4.5 million partnership project between Dudley NHS Primary Care Trust and Dudley Council. The aim is to encourage greater physical activity amongst young people and families by making the most of the borough's outdoor spaces.

Hubs connect to people's homes via safe active travel corridors and are complemented by a programme of activities and events. The nationally funded initiative, which encourages families to exercise outdoors

together, is one of only nine in the country that are piloting long-term solutions to reducing levels of childhood obesity. Issues such as community safety, public toilets, park lighting and partnership working are also part of the project.

Netherton Park was the first park to see physical work begin. This was followed by works at Silver Jubilee Park in Coseley, The Dell and Fens Pool in Pensnett, Mary Stevens Park in Stourbridge and Huntingtree Park in Halesowen.

Source: 2001 Census / Life Expectancy at birth by Local Authority in England and Wales 2006-2008, Office for National Statistics

Dudley embracing the 2012 Olympics

As a borough we are looking forward to making the most of the London 2012 Games, joining in with the excitement and opportunities it brings. The NHS Healthy Community Challenge Fund and the Healthy Towns programme has created the infrastructure and delivery mechanism to deliver a sustainable local legacy directly linked to 2012.

The nationwide Sportivate campaign forms part of the Places, People, Play Olympic legacy programme contributing directly to increasing mass participation. Sportivate targets 14-25 year olds and is intended to guide them into regular participation in sport. A successful Sportivate pilot was run at Lions Boxing Club in Brierley Hill and a range of local programmes are planned providing a direct link to the legacy from London 2012.

St Thomas's Community Games in Dudley have taken place for a number of years and are a clear example of how Community Games can engage local communities. The regional Community Games programme, funded by

Legacy Trust UK, is a West Midlands for 2012 programme inspired by the original Wenlock Olympian Games. Community games are organised and delivered by communities for communities, there is no prescribed template and the St Thomas's project has epitomised the ethos of the West Midlands programme.

Local athletes are in training for potential participation in London in 2012. Gymnast, Kristian Thomas (22 years old) from Earls Gymnastics Club is part of the Visa Team 2012 and won a team silver medal in the European Artistic Gymnastics Championships in 2010. Cyclist, Jessica Varnish (21) from Halesowen Cycling Club, who has been part of the British Cycling Olympic Development programme since 2005, competed in the 2011 Track Cycling World Championships Team Sprint event alongside Victoria Pendleton.

Cyclist Helen Scott from Halesowen Cycling Club is another member of the Visa Team 2012. She is a member of the Great Britain Under 23 Sprint Academy and is a tandem pilot for the visually impaired on the Paralympic team. She aims to compete in the 2012 Paralympics.

Wheelchair tennis player Jordanne Whiley (19) from Halesowen who plays at the David Lloyd Club in Brierley Hill was a Beijing Paralympian in 2008. She entered the world top 10 wheelchair tennis players in 2010 and made her Grand Slam debut at the Australian Open in 2011. Another Beijing Paralympian, Simon Hill (26) is a blind footballer from Stourbridge. The Great Britain blind football team finished 5th in Beijing and are hoping to improve on this result in London in 2012.

The Olympic year will undoubtedly be memorable one. We are determined to make the most of it, cheering on our athletes and making this a joyful time for everyone.

A learning borough

The total number of school age children (from nursery age to Year 14) currently stands at 47,272. As of February 2011 there are 109 schools maintained by Dudley borough. These are made up of:

- 78 primary schools
- 20 secondary schools
- 7 special schools
- 3 short stay centres
- 1 family centre

The educational attainments of our young people have been improving. In 2010 56.4% of Dudley pupils achieved five or more A*-C GCSE grades including English and Maths which was the highest in the Black Country. This was higher than the England state funded schools figure of 55.2%. In four of the borough's secondary schools over 70% of pupils achieved five or more GCSE A*-C grades including English and Maths.

The borough offers four further education institutions outlined below (2010/11 enrolment figures included):

- Dudley College (14,000 students)
- Halesowen College (4,000 students)
- Stourbridge College (2,000 students)
- King Edwards VI College, Stourbridge (1,600 students)

Although there is not a higher education institution in the borough, the universities of Wolverhampton, Birmingham, Aston, and Birmingham City are all within easy commuting distance.

Source: Department for Children, Schools and Families: <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/performance/tables/>

A prosperous borough

Dudley offers distinctive geographical and economic advantages to existing and potential businesses, namely:

- 70% of the current workforce work and live in the borough representing a long-standing stable population and loyal workforce.
- 70% of businesses are content with the area as a place to operate a business.
- A strong sign of business confidence is evident in the fact that a third of existing businesses are looking to expand.
- Four million people live within a 40 minute drive and five million within an hour's drive.
- Global business success is recognised in local companies securing prestigious accolades such as the Queen's Award for International Trade and being recognised in the Sunday Times Top 100 of companies showing fastest growth in international sales.
- Ease of access to the cities of Birmingham, Manchester and London by rail and road with good accessibility to the M5 and M6 motorways and Birmingham International Airport.
- Home to the nationally recognised Merry Hill Centre - the 4th largest shopping mall in the UK with over 300 stores attracting 23.5 million visitors per annum.
- A tourism economy worth £223m with 4.3 million visitors per annum.

There are 10,500 businesses operating within the borough, of which 96% employ less than 50 employees. According to the Dudley Business Survey 7% of Dudley businesses cover European and worldwide markets. Sixteen percent of businesses in Dudley are considering exporting their goods and services

in the future. Of these businesses, those in the manufacturing sector are most likely to be exporters (50% compared to 16% overall). The majority of exports are destined for Western Europe.

While five year survival rates in the Black Country are generally below the national average, businesses in Dudley have a higher five year survival rate than national and regional averages at 47.1%.

However, Dudley was significantly affected by the 2008 recession, with above average increases in unemployment and high impact on manufacturing and engineering. We have responded strongly to this set back - we have a clear vision, strong partnership and a very practical action plan to get the best outcomes for our residents and workforce. An example of this response was the 'Dudley Means Business' campaign which has successfully put on one stop road shows for local people, highlighted new business opportunities for local employers and directly helped people affected by the economy. Our approach has brought agencies and people together to support local people - banks, colleges, public sector, voluntary & community sector and is just one example that demonstrates Dudley's wider community strength.

A sustainable borough

The Black Country Core Strategy that sets out the master plan for future development in the borough is based on the key principle of achieving a sustainable future environment. There are a wealth of initiatives taking place, many with community drive, to making Dudley a clear and sustainable borough, including:-

The Beacon Centre for the Blind has a state of the art new energy efficient building recognised as an example of good

environmental practice in the Dudley Energy Heroes Awards 2010. It was **officially opened by Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal in June 2010**

Roberts Primary - Solar panels, wind turbine and natural construction materials together with the Environment Zone, a unique and inspiring education centre visited by over 10,000 local children and adults each year. The wind turbine project won **Gold at the Green Apple national awards in 2007** as one of the best environmental projects in the Country.

Low carbon communities - This project focuses on testing methods to successfully engage communities in activities to reduce their energy use and impact on climate change. The project is focused on in two distinct areas training volunteers to deliver energy efficiency guidance to householders

Increasing recycling - The percentage of household waste reused, recycled or composted has been consistently increasing ahead of our target, whilst the percentage of municipal waste sent to landfill was only 11.7%, firmly beating the target of 15%.

A safe and peaceful borough

The borough has an extremely effective and well supported Community Safety Partnership. At the year ending 31 March 2011 Dudley had the lowest crime per 1,000 residents across the West Midlands, helping to make this one of the safest communities in the region. Crime in Dudley has fallen year on year. Over the last five years overall crime has decreased by 32%. In real terms that means over 4,800 fewer victims of crime.

There have been notable reductions in serious acquisitive crime (includes burglary dwelling, robbery and vehicle crime offences) to a rate

of 14.4 crimes per 1,000 population by the end of 2010/11. Likewise Dudley also had an objective to reduce assault with injury. Over the last three years the rate per 1,000 population has dropped year on year - exceeding the target of 7.68 per 1,000 down to 5.16 by March 2011. Consequently fear of crime and the concern over anti-social behaviour has fallen among local residents. These reductions have been achieved through joint working across agencies, sharing resources, agreeing priorities and combining with local people to support vulnerable communities.

(Source: Home office research & Analysis Unit/IQuanta)

Dudley - a new city centre

As we have outlined above, the borough is proud and privileged to have a number of historic and notable towns within its borders. However, Dudley town provides a focus for our city bid, and offers a natural city centre environment with a unique heritage and world class attractions.

In terms of local landmarks, the focal point in Dudley town is the 11th century castle overlooking the town from its hilltop location. The medieval marketplace, with its regular market days, adds to the town's distinct character. In close proximity to the town centre are visitor attractions such as Dudley Castle and Zoological Gardens and the Black Country Living Museum.

Gateways to the city centre

Bold, striking public art decorating traffic islands draws the eye as one approaches the centre from the Birmingham New Road or the Southern By-Pass - such as the giant iron girders striding the island at Cinder Bank. The High Street itself is bounded by two churches, St. Thomas's at the top and St. Edmund's at the

bottom, near the foot of Castle Hill, and plays host to a thriving market open six days a week. Here, and on streets leading off, is where most of the town's banks, shops, cafes and pubs can be found. Indeed, the street pattern still reflects the original mediaeval plan with its original shops and burgage plots stretching behind them. There are also 22 places of worship within the proposed city boundary: 15 Christian, three Sikh, two Hindu and two Muslim.

Approaching from the west brings the visitor into streets lined with impressive Georgian and Victorian buildings and then into Stone Square - a key focus for people to gather, and the site of an excavation that revealed a medieval stone pavement, now recorded for posterity. The castle of course dominates the northern skyline and all that lies below it, just as it has done for almost a thousand years.

Dudley Castle

The iconic image of the castle was selected by the BBC to represent the Black Country, and is our most famous landmark. The castle was built by the Norman Lord Ansculf of Picquigny just after 1071. Dudley's administrative role began in the 11th century when the castle was built. The Earls of Dudley ruled over most of the towns and villages in today's borough.

The defensive parts of the castle were demolished by order of the government at the time of the 17th century Civil War in England, during which time Parliamentary forces had twice tried and failed to get into the castle. They only gained access when the Royalists occupying the castle surrendered. Further parts of the castle were badly damaged in a fire in 1750. Today, more than 250 years later, the castle ruins continue to attract tourists and historians from across the world. They learn about its history and, in the dark of the evening, its ghostly tales.

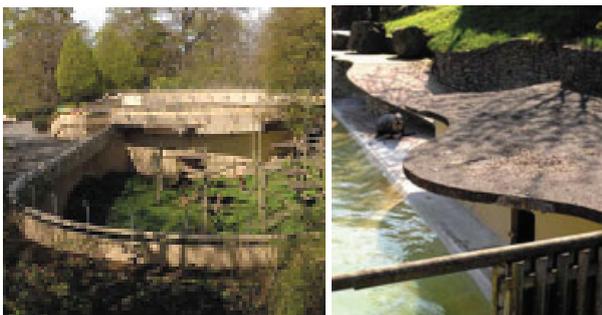
The civic and cultural quarters

The art deco-inspired architecture of Council House sets the tone for this part of the town centre. The building has Grade II listed status and looks out toward the castle across the formal Coronation Gardens, which commemorated the coronation of George VI in 1937. Situated behind the Council House are the library, museum and town hall. The latter provides a strong civic function for the local community whilst also supporting a thriving local arts and entertainment scene for the night time economy. It is the largest venue in the borough and is renowned for its superb acoustic qualities.

Dudley Castle and Zoological Gardens

Set in the splendour of the castle ruins, Dudley Zoo has more than 1,000 animals representing over 200 different species from around the world. Here there are examples of Tecton animal enclosures, which enjoy listed building status.

The architects chosen to design Dudley Zoo were renowned Modernists, calling themselves The Tecton Group, led by Russian-born Berthold Lubetkin. They viewed the zoo as a microcosm of society and aimed to protect the welfare of the animals while meeting visitors' demands for a clear view from a safe position. Using reinforced concrete Lubetkin's team created a revolutionary new design of building: Tectons.



Structures include:

tropical birdhouse, bird ravine, polar bear complex, kiosks 1 and 2, sealion pool, moat cafe, safari cafe, reptiliary, elephant house, zoo entrance and Queen Mary restaurant.

The design for Dudley Zoo was structurally daring and made use of a new material, pre-stressed concrete. Reinforced with steel rods inserted under tensions, the concrete could be bent into curves and forms impossible to achieve with other materials.

Eye-catching curving lines and projecting floors could be constructed which did not resemble any previous architectural style. Lines were kept simple and standardised free-curved forms were used in various combinations to give the buildings both uniformity and contrast.

The Black Country Living Museum

This 26 acre urban heritage park in the shadow of Dudley Castle is a leading visitor attraction in the West Midlands. The award winning Black Country Living Museum employs over 200 local people and attracts over 300,000 visitors per year, with its canal-side village featuring costumed demonstrators and working craftspeople that bring the buildings to life with their local knowledge, practical skills and unique Black Country humour.

Historic buildings from all around the Black Country have been relocated and authentically rebuilt at the museum. Visitors can experience the underground coalmine, take a lesson in the old fashioned school, travel on a tramcar, watch the demonstration of glass cutting and metal working and sample traditional fish and chips at the 1930's fried fish shop.

St. James Priory ruins, Priory Park

In recognition of its historical significance, Priory Park is listed on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England.

Founded in the 12th century and encompassing 7.7 hectares, the park hosts an extensive array of recreational facilities, including a games area, tennis courts and bowling green.

The monks who settled at Dudley Priory originally came from Cluny in Burgundy, France which is where the name Cluniac originates. Founded by Lord of Dudley, Gervase Paganell in the 12th century, St. James Cluniac Priory was closed by Henry VIII in the 1530s. The ruined remains of the Priory include examples of archways, staircases and walls. The grounds themselves are open to the public, in their setting on Priory Park.

Dudley Museum and Art Gallery

Dudley Museum and Art Gallery houses a permanent collection of art, geology and fossils along with contemporary and local interest exhibitions and hands-on exhibits related to the school curriculum.

The Fantastic Fossils exhibition displays the Silurian and Carboniferous fossils native to the region, demonstrating the sheer number of different types of creatures found as fossils in the locality. The museum's fine arts collection contains nearly two thousand works including 250 oil paintings, 750 drawings and watercolours, 450 old engravings and 350 modern original prints.

The city of ambition

The economic strategy for Dudley borough provides a long-term focus for economic regeneration, in particular the regeneration of the borough's town centres. There is a bold ambition that drives us and highlighted below are some recently completed and upcoming developments in town centres and other parts of the borough.

New developments

Funding is in place and the site has been acquired for a new £6m Borough Archive Work on this landmark building will commence on site later this year and will complete and open in 2013. This is a vastly improved facility which will complement other adjacent town centre visitor destinations such as the Black Country Museum, Dudley Castle, and Canal Trust.

Within the centre of Dudley a buoyant and innovative residential renaissance of modern urban living space with 360 new dwellings is planned for development over the next 10 years.

In Dudley, an arms length company called New Heritage Regeneration Limited is working in conjunction with the council to help deliver a £300 million regeneration programme for the area. The project is now gaining momentum with refurbishment works to a key historic building in Wolverhampton Street, the Crown Hotel, completed in March 2010. Work to this site included external and internal repairs, reinstatement of historic features and refurbishment of the interior. The second listed building in the 'Townscape Heritage Initiative' is currently on site at Baylies Hall, which is a former Bluecoat school. Offers of funding have been made and accepted for two other buildings which will start on site shortly, with five further buildings programmed for starting in 2012.

Dudley College has announced its plans for future expansion, which include the creation of three new learning centres, a sixth form college, a higher education facility and a vocational centre, most of which are to be completed in 2012. The first phase of the scheme is the vocational centre which commenced on site earlier this year. At 85,000 sq.ft it will be the largest building to be constructed in the town centre in a generation. It will be an attractive building that will add significantly to the educational, economic and cultural vibrancy of the centre.

The expansion will see the creation of a university style campus at the heart of Dudley town centre. The proposed higher education facility will offer students the chance to study towards foundation degrees, higher national certificates and diplomas in a range of subjects including engineering, construction and business management.

Designs have also been completed for the historic market place, which dates back to the medieval period, in association with the castle and churches. Outline funding approval (£3m) has been secured from the European Regional Development Fund, with the initial start on site programmed for 2012.

The remit of New Heritage Regeneration Limited has been extended to include the Castle Hill area which comprises the Castle and Zoological Gardens, the Black Country Living Museum and Dudley Canal Trust. This extensive area, which forms a key component of the town centre, currently attracts approximately 600,000 visits a year. These numbers will increase considerably as a result of planned investment in a new arrival infrastructure, new attractions and joint promotion. Importantly, the three main attractions will be physically linked together for the first time. 2012 will see a new main access

to the site completed, the new archive facility completed, new offices for the zoo completed and restoration to the first of the listed Tecton buildings underway.

Transport context

Transport has and will always play a key role in supporting the growth and prosperity of the area and particularly in and surrounding Dudley town centre. It has been the trading and administrative hub of the borough since medieval times and continues to be today. Historically transport infrastructure in the area has evolved with the exploitation of its mineral wealth and associated expertise in heavy industry. Transporting goods was made easier with the development of the canal network in the 1700s and later with the rail and road networks.

Transport networks

Dudley is a primary destination with key strategic routes providing links to the motorway network (see Figure 1 - overleaf).

The A4123 provides direct connections to national and international gateways such as Birmingham International Airport via M5 Junction 2 and M6 Junction 10. The primary routes A4036 and A461 provide important through routes and access to the town's hinterland. The A461 corridor has been subject to considerable investment in recent years, culminating with the major scheme A4123/A461 Burnt Tree improvement, concluding later this year.



Figure 1:

Bus

Dudley town centre benefits from having one of the largest operational bus hubs in the West Midlands conurbation. Approximately 300,000 people are within a 30 minute walk or bus journey to the town centre, demonstrating the geographical significance of the town centre within the Black Country sub region.

Dudley Council is working in partnership with the Integrated Transport Authority and its executive Centro to develop bus infrastructure and improve services with a view to reversing the recent national decline in bus patronage. This reflects the importance placed on bus travel in accessing the town centre and encouraging sustainable modes of travel.

Rail

The closest rail station to Dudley town centre is located at Dudley Port, just two miles away, with another station nearby at Coseley. They both provide access to Wolverhampton and Birmingham via the Westcoast Mainline between Manchester and London.

Network Rail in its latest Route Utilisation Plan, post 2015, is proposing to reintroduce freight services between Round Oak and Walsall, passing through Dudley. Although heavy rail passenger services would not be economically viable on the same line, it would provide the impetus to progress the proposed extension to the West Midlands light rail transit system, Metro, for which powers were granted to build and operate from Wednesbury to Brierley Hill in

2005. Centro, being the promoting authority for Metro continue to seek funding opportunities and the proposal remains in their long term programme.

Active travel

Dudley Council is committed to promoting sustainable active travel and raising the profile of the health agenda to encourage healthy lifestyles. Dudley town centre benefits from having the National Cycle Route passing through the heart of the borough, making extensive use of Dudley's canal and green space infrastructure.