

Wandsworth Employment & Skills Strategy 2011 to 2014

September 2011

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FOREWORD

On many measures, Wandsworth is one of the most economically successful boroughs in London; we have one of the highest employment rates, the best qualified workforce and a vibrant and growing business base.

Yet behind this success story, our borough faces a number of challenges. Over 6,300 residents are claiming Jobseekers Allowance and we still have some way to go to come down to pre-recession levels. The numbers claiming Incapacity Benefit or Employment Support Allowance remain stubbornly high at some 9,500 and this has been the case for a number of years, regardless of economic conditions. Moreover, over half of all residents on out of work benefits live in six of our twenty wards.

Tackling these challenges is a partnership effort. The Government plays a crucial role through its reforms to the benefits system and through its agencies such as Jobcentre Plus and the Skills Funding Agency. Local providers such as South Thames College deliver national priorities according to local needs. The Department for Work and Pension's new Work Programme has three providers operating in Wandsworth but our borough is a small part of their contract area which covers half of London. And there are a number of other players whose activities impinge in this area ranging from advice services to voluntary and community groups and increasingly partners in the health sector.

Wandsworth Council will play a crucial role in ensuring that these various efforts are mobilised and focused on the borough's distinctive needs. We know our area, its residents and businesses. Many of the borough's workless residents are also users of our services or are our tenants. We want to ensure that they have every opportunity to access good quality employment services, advice and guidance.

A key theme of the Wandsworth Challenge is helping residents to take more responsibility for their own lives. For many, finding and holding down a job is a fundamental to being more in control of their lives and we want to play a key part in supporting residents to develop their skills and look for work. Our proposals to help more working families access social housing is one example.

At a practical level, the Wandsworth Employment and Skills Partnership (WESP) provides the focus for all the key partners to mobilise around a shared agenda for Wandsworth. This is the WESP's Strategy for 2011-14 and it provides the framework within which we will work and the shared targets we will work towards. We have come through turbulent economic times and there is much to do. This Strategy shows us the way forward but the real work will be how partners can successfully work together in new ways reflecting a very different institutional and financial landscape.

As Chairman of the WESP, I look forward to working with all partners to achieve the best outcomes for our residents and businesses.

Cllr James Cousins
Executive Member for Business

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Reducing worklessness in Wandsworth features as a key element of the borough's Sustainable Community Strategy and the Council's Corporate Business Plan. The Wandsworth Employment and Skills Partnership (WESP) was established in January 2008, to provide a strategic overview, reflecting local needs and aspirations, and to establish a local consensus on future needs and provision to address the key worklessness targets of the Wandsworth Local Strategic Partnership (WLSP). A Wandsworth Employment and Skills Strategy (WESS) was agreed at the first formal meeting of the WESP on 30th September 2008 and by the WLSP on 7th October 2008. This document is the updated WESS covering the period 2011-14.

The 2008-11 Strategy fell short of all targets apart from surpassing the reduction in lone parent benefit claimants. The severity of the 2009 recession had a larger impact than envisaged by partners when the strategy was drawn up. The most significant underperformance is seen in the significant rise in JSA claimants during the period and the relative worsening of the benefit claimant rate in the target wards (whereas the strategy sought to improve their relative performance). Looking ahead, partners will need to continue to capture lost ground as a result of the recession but significant improvements will only be achieved with a concerted focus upon those groups and areas which have suffered the most of the last three years.

The updated WESS will need to take into account significant changes to the national context for employment and skills, driven especially by proposed changes to the benefits regime which has an explicit focus upon incentives to work. This is accompanied by significant changes to the operations of Jobcentre Plus and the introduction of the Work Programme, the Government's main support programme for helping workless people back into the jobs market. The National Skills Strategy also sets a new 'demand led' framework for skills funding with a particular emphasis on skills required for the workplace.

There are also substantial changes locally with new opportunities to integrate health, housing and family services with employment and skills, albeit against the context of significant budget constraints. Local regeneration opportunities such as Nine Elms offer the opportunity to support the wider effort to tackle low skills and worklessness.

The updated WESS has set new targets to reflect the challenges for the next four years. The two key benchmarks will be:

- The employment rate for the borough
- The % of benefit claimants in the worst performing neighbourhoods

Meeting these targets will require closer working between different parts of the 'system' and the WESP will facilitate this through three strategic objectives:

- Employer engagement and meeting recruitment/skills needs
- New ways of working in partnership to deliver at the front line
- Information and communication between partners

1. WANDSWORTH'S LABOUR MARKET 2008-2011

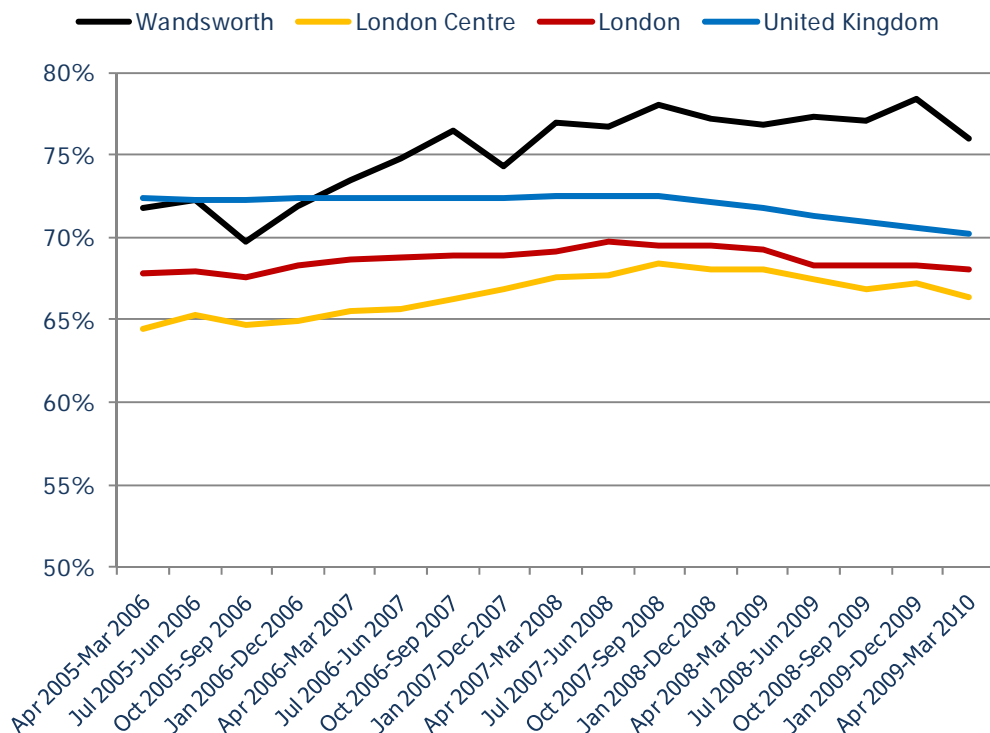
This section reviews Wandsworth's labour market performance over the three years of the previous strategy. It presents available statistics up to the end of 2010, establishes performance against the objectives of the previous strategy and sets out the implications for the 2011-14 strategy. This period coincided with the worst economic recession since the early 1990s which had a clear impact on the delivery of the previous strategy. In order to establish a meaningful basis for the objectives for this strategy, it is important to also gauge how the borough's performance compares with neighbouring areas and the rest of London.

Wandsworth Borough Council commissioned the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion (who prepared the original strategy) to undertake this update of the labour market performance.

1.1. Employment

As of November 2010 the number of Wandsworth residents in employment stood at 163,700 people, with the employment rate at 76.0%. Despite the recession, Wandsworth's employment rate has remained strong since the previous employment and skills strategy was written. It continues to be above the London employment rate and is considerably better than the rate in central London boroughs.

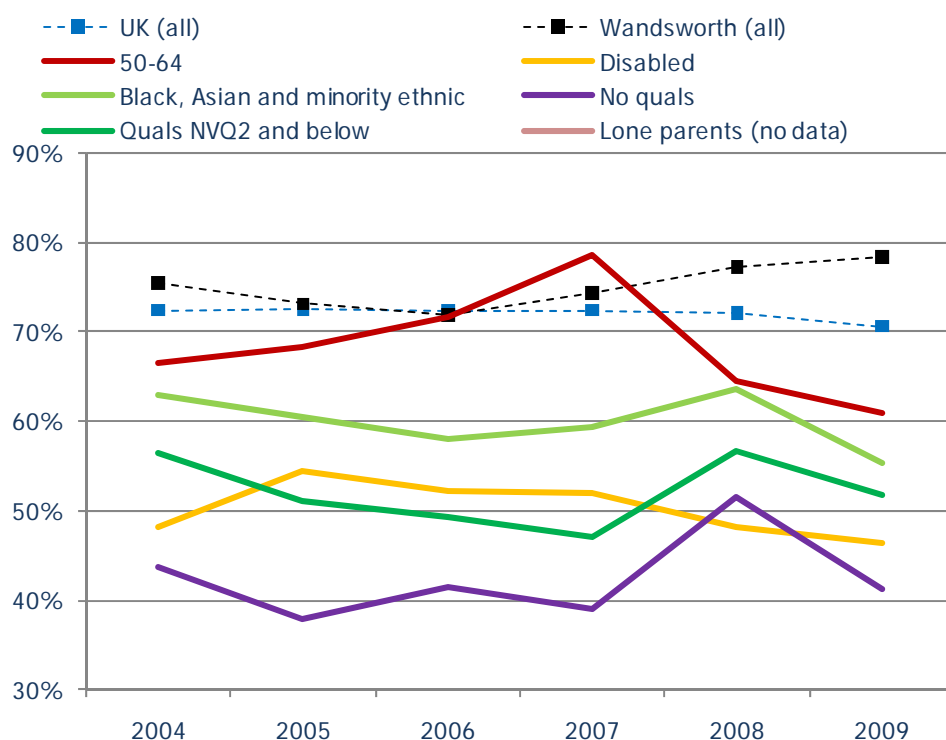
Chart 1: Employment rate in Wandsworth and comparator areas



Source: Annual Population Survey, ONS

Although the overall employment rate in Wandsworth has endured the recession well, employment for those groups nationally recognised as at a disadvantage in the labour market has suffered. The gap between the employment rate for disadvantaged groups and the overall rate in Wandsworth has grown since the previous strategy was drawn up, which should be of particular concern to Wandsworth Council and local partners when considering future strategic priorities.

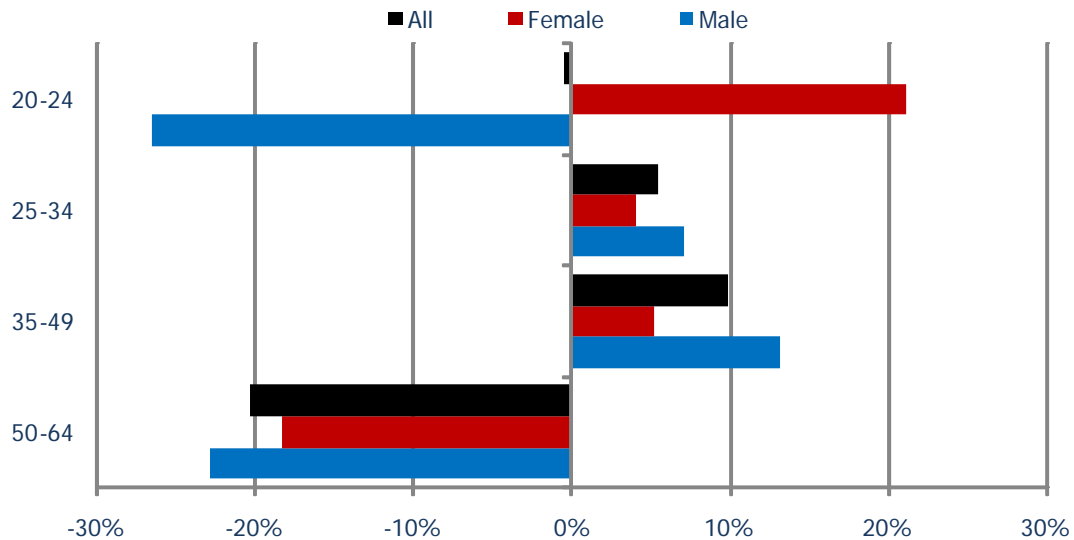
Chart 2: Employment rate of disadvantaged groups in Wandsworth



Source: Annual Population Survey, ONS

Since the previous strategy was written the employment rate has increased for Wandsworth residents aged 25-34 and 35-49, but decreased significantly for those aged 50-64. Among young adults (20-24) in Wandsworth the employment rate has increased sharply for females and decreased sharply for males since the previous strategy was written. Sampling errors at borough level mean that these indicators can vary substantially but it is important to review such trends to understand the broad impact of the recession.

Chart 3: Employment rate by gender and age in Wandsworth: change between January–December 2007 and April 2009–March 2010



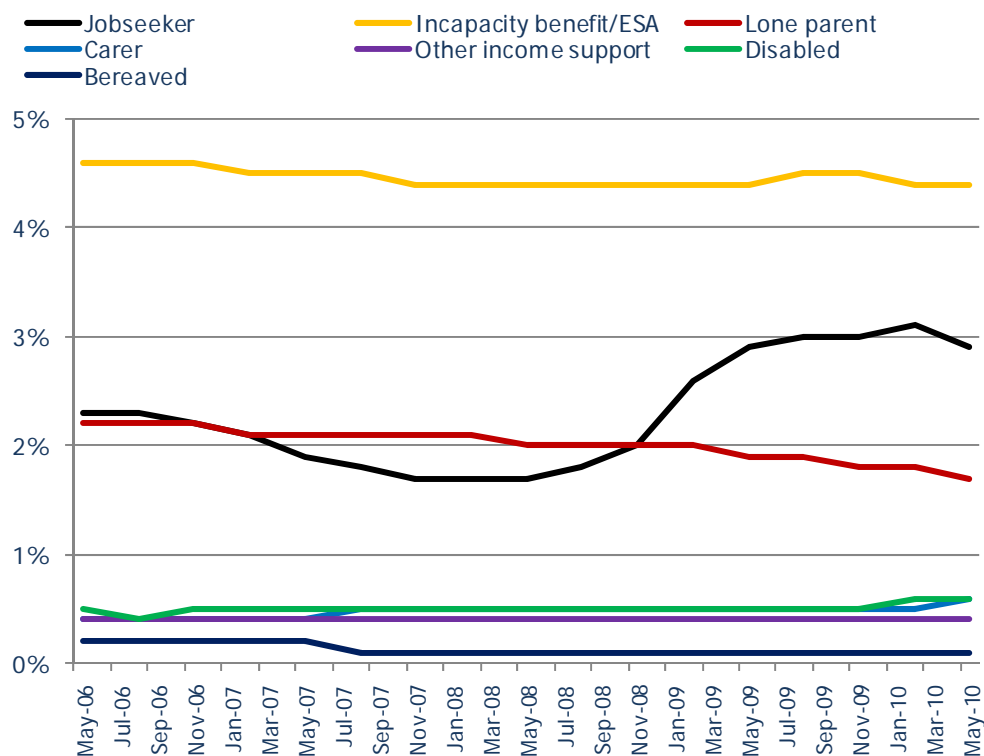
Source: Annual Population Survey, ONS

1.2. Benefit claimants

Wandsworth’s workless benefit claimant rate had been steadily declining prior to the recession but has risen over the past two years. Nonetheless it remains over 3 percentage points below both London’s rate and the rate for central London boroughs, a gap that has remained stable since the previous strategy was drawn up. There are 20,676 claimants in Wandsworth, with significant concentrations in certain parts of the borough. The wards with the highest numbers of claimants have remained the same over the past few years.

Of all workless benefits the JSA claimant rate has shown the sharpest increase since the beginning of the recession, with Lone Parent Income Support claimants in decline (mostly due to the restrictions in eligibility for this benefit that have been phased in over the past few years). There are now more JSA claimants than claimants of Lone Parent benefits. Since the previous strategy was written IB/ESA claimants have remained the largest group, with numbers staying relatively stable.

Chart 4: Claimant rate for workless benefits in Wandsworth



Source: Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study, DWP/ONS

1.3. Demand for labour

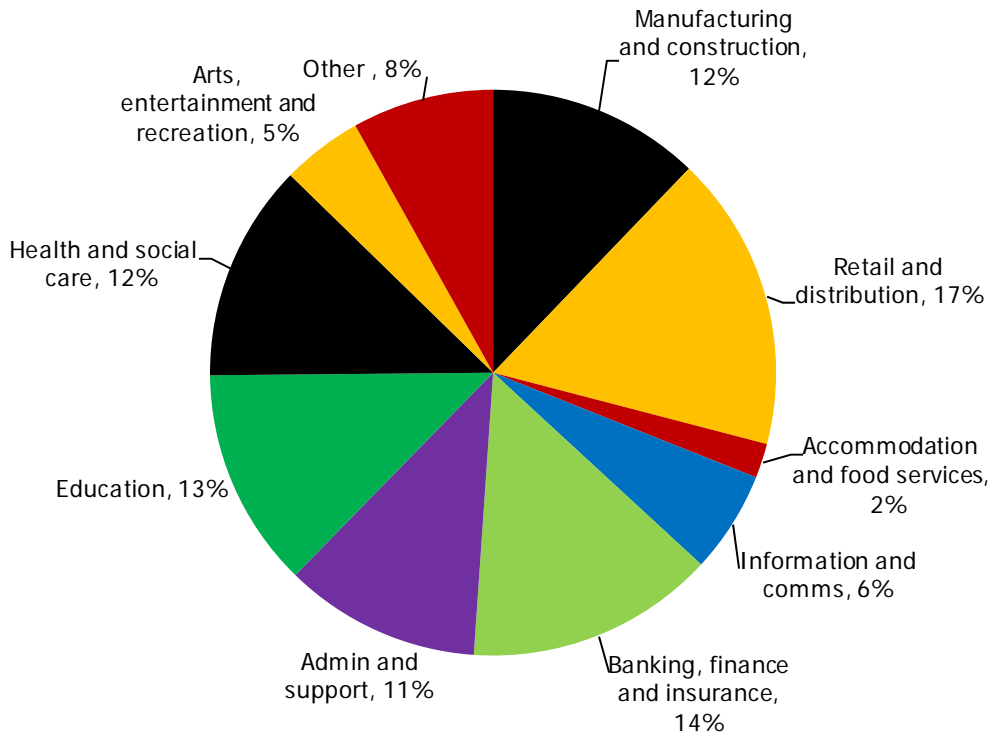
Wandsworth is fully integrated into the London labour market, with more than 70% of residents employed outside the borough and more than 60% of workers in Wandsworth living outside of the borough.¹

Jobs in Wandsworth come from a diverse mix of sectors. The sectors with the largest number of employees in Wandsworth are the 'Retail and distribution', 'Banking, finance and insurance' and 'Education' sectors. In 2009, these sectors accounted for 44% of employees in Wandsworth. No significant individual sectoral shifts have been noted since the previous strategy was formed, although the overall picture shows a more even distribution among sectors.²

¹ Census of Population, 2001

² Sectoral classifications have changed since the previous strategy was written, making it harder to quantify the precise sectoral shifts that have taken place over the past few years.

Chart 5: Sectoral break-down of jobs in Wandsworth, January–December 2009



Source: Annual Population Survey

2. 2008-11 PERFORMANCE AGAINST TARGETS

There were two sets of targets included in the previous Wandsworth Employment & Skills Strategy: those that were part of the Wandsworth Regeneration and Community Safety Corporate Business Plan (including relevant LAA indicators), and those additional targets set by the Council and local partners when the strategy was formed. This chapter focuses on performance to date against these additional strategic targets, referring to performance against LAA indicators where appropriate.³

2.1. Targets for reducing the claimant rate

i. Jobseekers Allowance (JSA)

When targets were set it was predicted that JSA claims would increase in coming years, due to the state of the wider economy and also changes to eligibility for Income Support for Lone Parents meaning that many would join JSA. It was felt that the best scenario for 2011 would be that JSA claims returned to the 2008 level. The target was therefore stated as a **0.0% increase in the JSA claimant rate**.

Table 1: Performance against JSA target

	Baseline: November 2007	Target: May 2011	Current Performance: April 2011
Number of JSA claimants	3,980	4,095	6,372
JSA claimant rate	1.89%	1.89%	2.99%
Change in number compared to baseline		+115	+2,392
Change in rate compared to baseline		0.00%	+1.10%

Wandsworth is currently falling considerably short of this target and will not achieve it by May 2011. This is likely to be due to the depth of the recession, and reduced eligibility for Lone Parent benefit having a more severe effect than was predicted.

³ Baseline figures and targeted reductions in this chapter sometimes differ from those presented in the original strategy. This is because figures and targets have been updated in line with statistical changes by the Office for National Statistics and updated population estimates/projections.

In addition, drawing from the Regeneration and Community Safety Business Plan the Wandsworth Employment and Skills Partnership wanted to ensure that Wandsworth did no worse than neighbouring boroughs in the same labour market. It therefore adopted the LAA indicator target that **Wandsworth's JSA claimant rate should have the same annual percentage change as the average of the neighbouring boroughs.**

Table 2: Performance against JSA LAA indicator: Wandsworth compared to neighbouring boroughs

Indicator: % change in JSA claimant rate in Wandsworth minus % change in JSA claimant rate in 7 neighbouring boroughs		Baseline and Targets	Current Performance
	2005-2006	Actual: +0.6%	
	2006-2007	Actual: -0.8%	
	2007-2008	Actual: -1.2%	
	2008-2009	Target: 0.0%	Actual: +3.5%
	2009-2010	Target: 0.0%	Actual: +0.8%
	2010-2011	Target: 0.0%	

In 2008-2009 Wandsworth fell considerably short of its target, recording a percentage increase in the JSA claimant rate above that in neighbouring boroughs. The target was not met in 2009-2010 either, although the difference between Wandsworth and its neighbours was much smaller.

ii. Incapacity Benefit/Employment Support Allowance (IB/ESA)

When targets were set partners hoped that the recent decline in IB numbers could be accelerated due to the introduction of Pathways to Work and a likely decline in take-up of ESA (which replaced IB in 2008). The target was therefore set at a **0.86% reduction in the IB/ESA claimant rate by May 2011.**

Table 3: Performance against IB/ESA target

	Baseline: November 2007	Target: May 2011	Current Performance: Nov 2010
Number of IB/ESA claimants	9,508	7,916	9,440
IB/ESA claimant rate	4.51%	3.65%	4.42%
Change in number compared to baseline		-1,592	- 68
Change in rate compared to baseline		-0.86%	-0.09%

Wandsworth is currently falling far short of its target and does not look set to achieve the desired reduction in IB/ESA claimants by May 2011.

iii. Income Support for Lone Parents

Due to the forthcoming changes to eligibility for Lone Parent benefits and planned improvements in support for this group, partners set a target of a **0.30% reduction in the Lone Parent benefit claimant rate by May 2011**, a much stronger downward trend than was being seen at the time.

Table 4: Performance against target for Lone Parents on Income Support

	Baseline: November 2007	Target: May 2011	Current Performance: Nov 2010
Number of Lone Parent benefit claimants	4,483	3,961	3,470
Lone Parent benefit claimant rate	2.12%	1.82%	1.63%
Change in number compared to baseline		-521	-1013
Change in rate compared to baseline		-0.30%	-0.49%

Wandsworth has surpassed its targeted reduction in the Lone Parent benefit claimant rate before the May 2011 target date. This is likely to be partly due to changes in eligibility having a greater effect than was predicted.

iv. Other Income Support

Partners set a target of a **0.07% reduction in the rate of claims for other kinds of Income Support by may 2011**.

Table 5: Performance against target for other Income Support claimants

	Baseline: November 2007	Target: May 2011	Current Performance: Nov 2010
Number of claimants of other Income Support	853	725	870
Other Income Support claimant rate	0.40%	0.33%	0.41%
Change in number compared to baseline		-127	+17
Change in rate compared to baseline		-0.07%	+0.01%

Wandsworth's rate of claims for other Income Support has increased since November 2007, rather than there being any reduction towards the target. Therefore it looks unlikely that the target will be achieved.

v. Summary of claimant reduction targets

The overall impact of the above targets is a total targeted **reduction of 2,240 claimants, bringing the claimant rate to 7.69% in May 2011 – a reduction of 1.23%**

over the period. The targets placed emphasis on support to people on Incapacity Benefit (74% of the claimant reduction was targets to come from IB claimants), and to lone parents (who made up 30% of the targeted reduction).

Table 6: Summary of performance against claimant reduction targets

	Baseline: November 2007		Target: May 2011			Current Performance: Nov 2010			Performance against 'change in rate' target (negative % indicates shortfall)
	Number	Rate	Number	Change	Change in rate	Number	Change	Change in rate	
JSA	3,980	1.89%	4,095	+115	0.00%	6,372	+2,392	+1.10%	-1.10%
IB/ESA	9,508	4.51%	7,916	-1,592	-0.86%	9,440	-68	-0.09%	-0.77%
Lone Parent on	4,483	2.12%	3,961	-521	-0.30%	3,470	-1013	-0.49%	0.19%
Other IS	853	0.40%	725	-127	-0.07%	870	+17	+0.01%	-0.08%
Total Workless	18,823	8.92%	16,697	-2,240	-1.23%	19,670	+847	+0.20%	-1.43%
<i>Working Age Pop</i>	<i>211,000</i>		<i>217,119</i>			<i>215,697</i>			

The above table shows that the only target that looks likely to be met by May 2011 is that for Lone Parents on Income Support. Wandsworth is likely to fall short of the target 2,240 reduction in workless benefit claimants, having achieved 28% of this reduction thus far, however changes in JSA numbers over the next six months could quickly alter this.

2.2. Target wards

Partners agreed that the overall reduction of 2,240 workless benefit claimants should be concentrated in those wards with the most workless benefit claimants, in order to close the gap between the wards with the highest and lowest claimant rates. The gap between the rate in the seven wards with the highest proportions of claimants and that in the remaining wards was 6.6 percentage points in November 2007. These seven wards accounted for 49% of all claimants in the borough. The partners set the target that **70% of the overall reduction in workless benefit claimants should come from the seven worst-performing wards**. The targets and performance to date are set out in the table below.

Table 7: Performance against targets in target wards

	Baseline: November 2007		Target: May 2011			Current Performance: May 2010	
	Number	% of total claimants	Reduction	% of total reduction	% change	Reduction /increase	% change
Furzedown	1,123	6.0%	-182	8.1%	-16.2%	+218	19.4%
Graveney	1,090	5.8%	-186	8.3%	-17.1%	+151	13.9%
Latchmere	1,791	9.5%	-293	13.1%	-16.4%	+120	6.7%
Queenstown	1,375	7.3%	-225	10.0%	-16.4%	+84	6.1%
Roehampton	1,631	8.7%	-292	13.0%	-17.9%	+111	6.8%
Tooting	1,095	5.8%	-180	8.0%	-16.4%	+200	18.3%
West Hill	1,170	6.2%	-209	9.3%	-17.9%	+41	3.5%
Total target wards	9,275	49.3%	-1,567	70.0%	-16.9%	+925	10.0%
Non-target wards	9,548	50.7%	-673	30.0%	-7.0%	-1,548	-16.2%
Total	18,823	100.0%	-2,240	100.0%	-11.9%	-623	-3.3%

Wandsworth has made no progress towards the targeted reductions in those wards that were performing worst in November 2007. In contrast to the target that 70% of the overall reduction in workless benefits claimants should come from seven target wards, all of the current reduction has been achieved outside of these wards, with the number of claimants in target wards actually increasing by 10%. Furthermore, the gap between the workless benefit claimant rate in these seven wards and the rest of Wandsworth has increased from 6.6 percentage points to 7.4 percentage points. The wards of Furzedown, Graveney, Latchmere, Queenstown, Roehampton, Tooting and West Hill remain the seven worst performing wards in terms of out-of-work benefit claimant numbers.

2.3. Summary and implications for the new Strategy

The 2008-11 Strategy fell short of all targets apart from surpassing the reduction in lone parent benefit claimants. The most significant underperformance is seen in the significant rise in JSA claimants during the period and the relative worsening of the benefit claimant rate in the target wards (whereas the strategy sought to improve their relative performance).

It is clear that the severity of the 2009 recession had a larger impact than envisaged by partners when the strategy was drawn up. This was felt across London and neighbouring boroughs. Wandsworth's overall labour market performance remains good compared to the rest of London and, whilst unemployment worsened compared to neighbouring boroughs during the recession, indications are that the borough's recovery is relatively stronger and earlier.

However, it is clear that the position of the most disadvantaged groups and neighbourhoods has deteriorated compared to the rest of the borough. Looking ahead, partners will need to continue to capture lost ground as a result of the recession but that significant improvements will only be achieved with a concerted focus upon those groups and areas which have suffered the most of the last three years.

Before looking at how partners will work to do this, it is important to understand the forthcoming changes to the policy and delivery landscape which will have a significant bearing on how this will be achieved.

3. CHANGES IN THE POLICY AND DELIVERY LANDSCAPE

3.1. Benefits

The new government formed in 2010 agreed to make significant changes to the benefits system with a particular focus upon making work more attractive and placing more individuals onto 'active' benefits linked to finding work.

Changes already underway at the launch of this strategy include:

- Re-assessment of all IB claimants underway, which means increasing numbers of people will transfer to JSA and ESA, significantly changing the local composition of claimants.
- From January 2012 (to be confirmed) lone parents will be transferred to JSA when their youngest child is aged five or over and those with children over one will be required to attend interviews.
- Reductions in the value of Housing Benefit are introduced 1st April 2011, especially for tenants in the private sector where:
 - The maximum amount that any household can qualify for under the new rules will be the four bedroom rate.
 - A nationwide maximum for weekly rates will be introduced (bed £250, 2 bed £290, 3 bed £340 & 4 bed £400).
 - Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates will be reduced so that only three out of ten properties (presently five out of ten) for rent in any area are likely to be affordable to people on housing benefit.
 - From April 2012, all tenants under 35 (rather than 25) will see a cut to their LHA payment, and may have to share a property.
- Non-dependent deductions will be increased for both Housing & Council Tax Benefit.

3.2. The Universal Credit

A key policy aim of government is the introduction of a new Universal Credit that will absorb many of the current benefits into a single payment strongly linked to helping claimant find and stay in work.

Housing Benefit (HB), for example will be absorbed into the administration of the Universal Credit. For new claims this will commence from 2013-14 when no further claims will be accepted for HB (and all other existing benefits). The existing caseload will be transitioned over to Universal Credit by 2017.

3.3. Council Tax Benefit

Council Tax Benefit spending will be reduced by 10% from 2013-14, and localised to local authorities. Local authorities will be given flexibility to tailor the scheme to meet local priorities and to manage spending within lower limits, while protecting the most vulnerable. The precise flexibilities to be given to local authorities are yet to be determined.

3.4. Government programmes for claimants

A number of programmes such as Flexible New Deal and Pathways to Work established during the previous programme period ended in 2011 to be replaced by the government's new Work Programme. This has been commissioned from the new DWP 'Commissioning Framework' of prime contractors able to deliver services over a large contract packager area. Local government was encouraged to submit their priorities to Jobcentre Plus; Wandsworth Council's priorities are attached as Annex 1.

Wandsworth lies within the West London 'contract package area', and three contractors have been selected from the Framework following a competitive tender process:

- Ingeus/Deloitte
- Maximus/Careers Development Group
- Reed in Partnership

The Work Programme will run during and beyond the Strategy period and will provide the main back to work support for those most disadvantaged in the labour market. Given the need for this Strategy to focus on disadvantaged groups and areas, the involvement of the Work Programme contractors and their supply chains in its delivery is essential.

There will be a limited number of more specialist programmes to accompany the Work Programme, including Workchoice for severely disabled people, which is delivered in Wandsworth by Ingeus.

Jobcentre Plus has also undergone a restructure and Wandsworth is now in the new West London District. Districts have been given more flexibilities to respond to local conditions and will play the key role in providing support to customers out of work for less than a year and making referrals to the Work Programme where more in depth support is needed.

Jobcentre Plus will also play a key role in delivering a suite of new products under the banner of Get Britain Working. These include:

- Work Clubs
- Work Together – to use volunteering as a way of helping people back into work
- Work Experience – to get unemployed people workplace experience
- Service Academies – sector based pre-employment training

The West London District's Employer Engagement offer incorporates the Battersea Jobshop which will continue to operate in the north of the borough.

In addition:

- The Future Jobs Fund ceased recruiting in April 2011 with the last employees leaving in September 2011.
- The Skills White Paper, 'Skills for Sustainable Growth,' will embed a new 'demand led' approach to skills with Apprenticeships at its heart; it also encourages local authorities (amongst others) to provide informal adult and community learning for disadvantaged communities as part of the Big Society approach.
- The London Development Agency ceases to exist on 31st March 2012, with residual functions absorbed into the Greater London Authority. The budget for employment and skills has been substantially cut. A new London Enterprise Partnership consisting of the Mayor, Boroughs and London business representative has been formed.

4. LOCAL INITIATIVES

Whilst the policy changes at national level account for the great majority of resources going to support skills development and tackle worklessness, there remain a number of important local services that will play a major role in this area. These local initiatives are crucial in developing services which are responsive to the needs of Wandsworth residents and businesses. It is important that national and local services are able to complement and support each other in order to make best use of resources and ensure that residents and businesses can access excellent provision.

4.1. Regeneration of key areas of the borough

Wandsworth contains a significant number of regeneration opportunities, particularly in the north of the borough at Nine Elms but also in its five town centres and Roehampton. Regeneration is a long term process but investor interest was strong in 2011 and a number of schemes and store openings/ expansions are programmed to start during the Strategy period. The Council plays a key role through its planning and economic development functions and is committed to using this investment to create employment and training opportunities for borough residents. Such opportunities have historically been delivered through employment agreements in Section 106 clauses. The S106 regime is changing over the Strategy period and partners will need to review how employment agreements will need to change to reflect this.

4.2. Apprenticeships and Work Based Learning

Apprenticeships are supported through national funding but there is an important local dimension. Wandsworth based providers include the Council's Lifelong Learning service, South Thames College and Target Training. Other providers operate within the borough but local providers provide a direct link with residents and school students who may be interested in taking up apprenticeship opportunities. Residents may also require pre-apprenticeship support and guidance in order to be able to access these opportunities.

Local partners can also play an important role working with employers to increase the number of apprenticeship places in Wandsworth. The Council is developing its own programme and has negotiated places through its schools rebuilding contracts. Wandsworth Council has a good relationship with local businesses and work with local providers and the National Apprenticeships Service to promote the benefits of taking on apprentices.

Work based learning is changing with the cessation of programmes such as Train to Gain and the shift of focus to apprenticeships. There will be increased focus on shorter employment focused outcomes and encouraging employers to invest in

training and workforce development. It is important that the requirements of local employers are clearly articulated in new arrangements.

Wandsworth Business and Education Succeeding Together (BEST) provides the link between schools and employers in the borough, offering work experience, learning and mentoring opportunities.

4.3. Adult and Community Learning (ACL)

Wandsworth Council delivers a comprehensive and high quality ACL programme working with a range of other providers including South Thames College. In 2008-9 over 11,000 learners benefitted from these programmes. The Council's Lifelong Learning Service provides a range of course with the over-arching aim of raising participation in and achievement in learning. Whilst not solely focused upon employment and career development, the ACL programme offers an important stepping stone into the labour market for many borough residents.

ACL is supported through national funding from the Skills Funding Agency. The government has indicated its intention to review the national framework for ACL during the Strategy period.

4.4. Further and Higher Education

South Thames College is the biggest local provider of vocational skills and is developing its offer to local residents and businesses reflecting the national Skills Strategy. As well as expanding its range of courses and qualifications, the College remains a key provider to local residents and its newly refurbished Wandsworth Town campus gives the borough excellent state of the art learning facilities.

Roehampton University is the Borough's principal provider of higher education and is able to offer high quality skills development and enterprise support to local residents, businesses and their workforces.

4.5. Volunteering

Wandsworth Council recognises the value of volunteering both to individuals and to the wider sense of community found in Wandsworth. Levels of volunteering are viewed as an important indicator of active citizenship with direct benefits for both the local community and the personal development of the volunteer themselves. The Council invests directly in the Borough's Volunteering Service. The service, called Volunteering Wandsworth, focuses on all aspects of volunteering in the Borough:

- Helping individuals to register and become volunteers
- Assisting charities, organisations, private and voluntary sector to successfully involve volunteers

- Providing specialist support for those individuals and groups who have extra needs
- Brokering good volunteering placements

Volunteering is increasingly recognised as an important way for individuals to enter or re-enter the workforce, providing valuable experience, motivation and confidence building. Jobcentre Plus has put in place a volunteering option within its portfolio and the Work Programme providers are also considering how this might link to their programmes of support.

4.6. Family Recovery Programme (FRP)

The FRP is the name for Wandsworth's 'Community Budgets' initiative to support families with complex needs. The principle behind this approach is to pool the resources of the different agencies that already work with this client group in order to develop a 'team around the family' approach. The Wandsworth FRP team will include staff from different Council departments, NHS Wandsworth, the police and probation services. It will also include an embedded JCP advisor to assist individuals into employment. This is seen as crucial element of achieving sustainable outcomes for the FRP.

The FRP fits in to wider support for families as set out in the Council's Child Poverty Strategy.

4.7. Adult Social Services employment support to people with disabilities

Wandsworth Council's Adult Social Services Department contracts with external organisations to provide employment services to people with disabilities. A new specification is being tendered for a job brokerage employment service for people with learning disabilities and physical and sensory disabilities and an outcome based contract for an Individual Placement and Support (IPS) service for people with mental ill health. This will run for two years from 1 July 2011 with scope for possible extension subject to performance and budget availability.

Adult care services are undergoing a significant transformation with the move to personalisation and personal budgets. This places the service user at the heart of decision making about service needs, moving from a 'service menu' approach to an 'a la carte' approach. Employment services will need to adapt to this new approach.

4.8. Local health services

Another key development locally is the planned transfer of public health services from the Primary Care Trust to the Council and the move towards GP commissioning of services. Wandsworth is keen to make progress in these arrangements and has

already established a Health and Well Being Board that brings key agencies and patient representative together. The opportunity exists for much greater integration between local health and social care services. Given the important links between health and employability – which will become more important due to changes in the benefits regime – such service integration will become a more central feature in the delivery of this Strategy.

4.9. Housing

The Council's Housing Department is working with relevant internal and external agencies in drawing up initiatives and strategies designed to reduce the level of worklessness found within the social and temporary housing sectors, improving income maximisation and assist in tackling Child Poverty. A Housing Into Work Strategy and Plan is to be published in 2011/12 and a review of the Council's Allocation Plan will explore options to create a link between housing offers and training and employment status. Other Registered Providers are also active in this area and are key players within the local employment and skills landscape.

5. TARGETS AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES TO 2014

Taking the previous chapters into account, the new Strategy for 2011-14 has been devised to continue with the high level goals of its predecessor but reflecting the severe challenges of the past three years, the new policy and delivery landscape and the imperative to work within increasingly constrained budgets. It also takes into account the views of partners, including the effectiveness of the previous strategy and how this can be improved.

5.1. Establishing targets and objectives

The previous Strategy adopted two sets of targets:

- Those that were included in the Council's corporate business plan, which in 2008. were also related to the then Local Area Agreement
- Additional targets considered by partners to be necessary to achieve the overall aims of the Strategy

This Strategy will adopt a similar approach but against a new policy context and on the basis of labour market and strategy performance over the previous three years.

Regarding corporate targets, the current Government has largely done away with the previous regime, allowing local authorities to set their own targets. The Council proposes to use the targets and benchmarks in Table 8 to measure labour market performance in its area

These targets have been selected on the basis of their applicability over future years, especially taking into account changes to the benefits regime, the ease of collecting data and their effectiveness in allowing the Council and its partners to understand the overall performance of the borough's labour market.

These targets are all relevant to tackling the key issues identified in the borough's labour market. The key indicators are, however, the targets for the borough employment rate and the benefit claimant rate in the worst performing neighbourhoods. Data on skills levels is collected through surveys and is subject to sampling errors at the borough level; for this reason, the WESP will use this as an indicator of progress rather than an explicit target. Comparison to other inner London boroughs is used for benchmarking purposes. The JSA claimant rate provides the most regular and timely data but will be increasingly affected by changes to the benefits system as well as prevailing labour market conditions.

The worst performing neighbourhoods have been defined as those wards where the proportion of the working age population on out of work benefits is significantly above the average rate for the borough (9.4% at the time of writing). Six wards fall into this

category - Latchmere, Roehampton, Queenstown, Tooting, Furzedown and Graveney. West Hill ward was included in this definition in the previous Strategy but its rate is now equal to the borough average.

Table 8: Wandsworth Borough Council indicators for incorporation in Wandsworth Employment and Skills Strategy 2011-14

INDICATOR	ACTUAL 2008/09	ACTUAL 2009/10	2010/11 or latest available data as at 31st March 2011	TARGET 2011/12	TARGET 2012/13	TARGET 2013/14
% working age population qualified at Level 2 or above (derived from ONS Annual Population Survey data) - Calendar year	78.5%	70.7%	78.3%	80%		
	<i>Indicative number people upgrading their skills</i>			<i>Approx 2,000 each year (NB excludes 16-18 yrs)</i>		
% change in unemployment in Wandsworth compared to the inner London average (for benchmarking purposes)	+ 7.2%	+ 1.5%	- 6%	0%	0%	0%
	<i>Indicative numbers</i>			<i>N/A benchmarking purposes</i>		
JSA claimant rate -annual 12 monthly-averaged figure to the end of period (count in brackets)	2.1%	3.1%	2.9%	2.9%	2.8%	2.6%
	<i>Indicative net reduction in JSA claimants per year</i>			<i>70</i>	<i>250</i>	<i>400</i>
% overall employment rate (working age) based on the ONS annual population survey	76.9%	75.9%	73.7%	75%	77%	79%
	<i>Indicative net increase in number of residents into employment</i>			<i>500</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>4000</i>
% working age people claiming key out of work benefits (yr to date annualised figure)	9.13%	9.97%	9.2%	9.0%	8.8%	8.6%
	<i>Indicative number of residents moving off benefits</i>			<i>Approx 800 per year avege</i>		
% working age people claiming out of work benefits in the worst performing neighbourhoods	14.7%	15.4%	14.6%	13.7%	13.0%	11.5%
	<i>Indicative number of residents in worst performing neighbourhoods moving off benefits</i>			<i>Approx 500 per year avege</i>		

Progress is generally monitored on a quarterly basis and it is proposed that these indicators are reported to the WESP meetings at a similar interval (see below). The above table provides indicative numerical targets linked to the target rates. Percentage rates provide a better basis for target setting but partners have indicated that 'real

numbers' help to provide a better grasp of the challenge at hand. These indicative targets therefore provide useful benchmarks for partners in service planning and in monitoring overall progress in 'real time'.

Experience from the previous Strategy shows how external events in the economy and policy environment can affect the ability of local partners to meet the Strategy targets. In monitoring progress, the WESP will give consideration to why targets may not be being met and the degree to which this is due to under-performance or external factors. Benchmarking against inner London will provide one measure and contextual information from national and London wide data will also be used.

WESP will also monitor Job Centre Plus notified vacancies on a rolling and annual basis as an indicator of the local demand for labour. Whilst these vacancies only represent about a third of the overall opportunities – and whilst Wandsworth jobseekers will be able to access opportunities beyond the borough – they nonetheless provide a good indicator of the economic context for WESP activity.

The additional targets identified in the previous strategy have also been reconsidered on the basis of:

- The labour market challenge summarised in chapters 1 and 2
- The new policy and delivery context outline above; and
- The degree to which these achieved traction during the last strategy period

In developing this new strategy, partners have agreed to:

1. Reduce the number of additional actions and focus them around the following three strategic objectives:
 - Employer engagement and meeting recruitment/skills needs
 - New ways of working in partnership to deliver at the front line
 - Information and communication between partners
2. Establish clear milestones and delivery against which progress can be monitored.

The need for focus is important given the reduced resources available to many partners. Equally, partners have agreed that furthering these themes will be essential to helping them deliver most cost effectively. The previous Strategy identified the importance of a linked delivery plan but formal monitoring of the additional actions was not undertaken systematically and delivery was mixed.

This Strategy will therefore identify three strategic objectives against which concrete progress will be reported. Given uncertainty regarding resources and changes to delivery, only high level and indicative critical success factors are identified in this Strategy. Partners will take forward further work to identify the activities and decisions required to deliver these high level indicators, preparing implementation and delivery plans identifying milestones and key roles and responsibilities. This will allow flexibility to ensure that partners agree outcomes that are deliverable, affordable and add value.

5.2. SO1 - Employer engagement and meeting recruitment/skills needs

Partners have identified the need to align their services ever more closely with the needs of employers. This has been a long-standing driver of policy and public funding is moving towards a 'demand led' approach based upon acquiring work place skills and sustained employment. It is even more important given the post recession job market and the imperatives for private sector led business growth and recovery. The main challenges are:

- Ensuring that public funded skills and employment services are recognised and valued by employers and are clearly aligned to their needs
- Ensuring co-ordination of different services is achieved so that employers are not confused and are able to exercise choice
- Ensuring that public funded services are geared to real opportunities in the labour market

Potential milestones include:

- A high performing service for matching employers with jobseekers and relevant skills provision
- Establishing a mechanism for providers and other partners to co-ordinate employer facing provision
- Establishing engagement and feedback mechanisms with employers to ensure that services are constantly adapted to meet their needs

High level indicators might include:

- Employer satisfaction and recognition
- Numbers of employers registering or establishing a business relationship with Wandsworth providers
- Take up of work based learning programmes such as apprenticeships

5.3. SO2 - New ways of working in partnership to deliver at the front line

This continues partners' efforts under the previous strategy to ensure more co-ordinated outreach and joint working with a view to providing more accessible services to workless residents that are more closely adapted to personal circumstances. The need for such an approach is becoming ever more important as the benefits regime moves towards a focus on finding work and the resources available to individual partners become more constrained. The main challenges are:

- High demand on employment advice services as finding work becomes more central in benefits eligibility
- Involving a wider range of partners, including health, housing and advice services
- Establishing the practical mechanisms to deliver joint delivery/commissioning to generate both service improvements and budget savings

Potential milestones include:

- Agreed programme of jointly delivered initiatives such as advice sessions, events and joint projects
- At least one jointly delivered facility in one of the target neighbourhoods, following the one-stop shop approach
- At least one example of partner co-operation to deliver a more personalised service to individuals and/or families

High level indicators might include:

- Good levels of awareness amongst residents of how to access advice relating to employment and career development
- Demonstrable impact from partners working together
- New outreach and delivery relationships with health and/or housing sectors

5.4. SO3 - Information and communication between partners

A persistent demand from all partners is having information about who does what so that clients can be directed to the right provision for them. This is especially true as the benefits regime changes and new providers and their supply chains become established in the borough. Creating effective partnerships requires organisations to be aware of each other and what they do. Good communication around shared objectives is essential to the delivery of the Strategy. The main challenges are:

- Changing and complex delivery landscape means difficult to keep information comprehensive and up to date
- Presenting information to employers, individuals and partners in a simple and useful way
- No agreed 'clearing house' or information sharing protocols in place

Potential milestones include:

- An agreed approach amongst partners for providing, sharing and publishing information on a regular basis
- A suite of relevant and practical tools for sharing and presenting information – directories, web-sites, joint marketing collateral, events schedules, etc.
- Identification of key channels and brands which provide the key access points to information, advice and referral to services

High level indicators might include:

- High levels of awareness amongst employers and residents about where to find information on employment and skills
- Common set of information tools (websites, directories, marketing) used consistently by partners
- High levels of referrals between partners and satisfaction levels of front line staff

These three objectives have been agreed amongst the partners. They will be taken forward through agreed partnership working mechanisms, for example task and finish groups, to develop more detailed phased action plans with progress reporting to the WESP Board (see below).

The three new strategic objectives represent an evolution of the actions defined under the previous Strategy but updated to reflect policy and delivery changes and re-focused to assist implementation across the partnership. The key activities set out in the previous Strategy remain relevant:

- Co-ordinated and effective outreach
- Mainstream provision (such as that now provided by JCP and the Work Programme) geared to meet local needs
- Responsive in-work support to achieve sustained employment, continuing skills development and career progression
- Building links with Adult and Community Learning to provide additional flexible entry points to skills and employment provision
- Putting services in the right places, particularly to ensure that residents in the target wards have adequate access to provision

6. THE ROLE OF THE WESP

The *Wandsworth Employment & Skills Partnership* (WESP) was established in tandem with the development of the original strategy. It has proven to be a useful and recognised vehicle for bringing the key partners working in the borough together. It has helped to improve collaboration across those agencies and organisations responsible for planning and delivering employment and skills, as well as those delivering complementary services. It is nonetheless important to review the membership and working of the WESP in order to deliver this updated Strategy.

WESP's mission remains relevant:

“To aim to build a prosperous community by reducing worklessness in Wandsworth by helping all claimants find and sustain employment. Improve the effectiveness of employment and skills provision in Wandsworth by working together to provide better opportunities that will lead to reduced numbers of claimants, increased skills, and fewer children living in poverty.”

WESP's core membership is drawn from those organisations that plan and provide employment and skills, and other related services, to people out of work. These will change to reflect the new provider base and other institutional changes. It is also proposed to add formal representation from the business community the housing and advice sectors. Membership will be open to all relevant organisations but key partners will form the WESP Partnership Board.

The WESP Partnership Board will be composed of the following agencies:

- Wandsworth Council
- Jobcentre Plus
- National Apprenticeship Service and/or Skills Funding Agency
- Health and Well Being Board
- Work Programme providers
- Social Housing sector
- South Thames College
- Voluntary & Community Sector representative
- Advice sector
- Business and employer representation

The Partnership Board will meet quarterly and its scrutiny role will be to monitor:

- progress towards WESP targets
- delivery against the three strategic objectives set out above
- changes in labour market conditions
- performance of relevant provision.

The Partnership Board will also take steps to improve the planning and delivery of provision by:

- Committing to share labour market and management information, especially on performance of services
- Identifying barriers to improved performance and proposing action to remove barriers
- Identify gaps and duplication in provision and take steps to rectify, including requirements placed on providers

The wider membership of WESP will be involved through activities to promote networking and dialogue between providers, specifically an:

- information network, particularly linked to Strategic Objective 3; and an
- annual provider conference.

6.1. Wandsworth Local Strategic Partnership (WLSP)

WESP is a thematic partnership of WLSP, which is responsible for the Wandsworth Sustainable Community Strategy. WESP directly contributes to current WLSP aims of:

- building a prosperous and vibrant community; and
- improving education for all.

This Strategy will directly contribute to Wandsworth's Sustainable Community Strategy, which is the overarching plan for the Borough. WESP will report on a regular basis to the Wandsworth Local Strategic Partnership, specifically on:

- Progress towards targets and indicators
- Actions to improve partnership through the three objectives.

The proposed Wandsworth Business Partnership is likely to take over the main responsibility for overseeing the top level issues in relation to the Wandsworth economy.

6.2. Wider Partnership

The WESP will have an important relationship with other local partnerships, including:

- The proposed Wandsworth Business Partnership
- Town Centre Partnerships
- Wandsworth Family Recovery Programme Steering Group

- Wandsworth Child Poverty Partnership
- Nine Elms Vauxhall Strategy Board
- The Roehampton Partnership/Roehampton Trust
- Wandsworth Lifelong Learning
- Wandsworth Health and Well-being Board

These links can be embedded through common WESP membership and officer representation.

WESP will also both involve and contribute views to:

- London partners represented on the new London Enterprise Partnership
- The Mayor of London and the London Employment and Skills Board
- UK Commission on Employment & Skills
- Other local employment and skills partnerships in London
- Other bodies that the Partnership consider relevant.

6.3. Servicing of WESP

Wandsworth Council will be responsible for the co-ordination and servicing of WESP meetings and email information network. Jobcentre Plus and the Skills Funding Agency (via the NAS representation) undertake to provide regular information on progress towards targets as well as national and local developments.

Annex 1 Wandsworth Council - Priority areas for consideration by Work Programme (WP) providers

Focus on deprived areas...

Over half the borough's claimants are concentrated in 7 wards, reflecting the challenge of deprived neighbourhoods in a largely health labour market. We wish to put in place a high performing and visible back to work offer that responds to local needs and conditions. We will seek WP co-investment to support this. The benefit to the WP will be participation in a multi-agency approach that recognises community needs and which help offset some of the initial engagement costs.

Co-location with other services...

The Council is reviewing all its service delivery in the context of challenging budget reductions; this includes use of its property estate. The Council provides a range of services to future WP clients – they are likely to be our tenants, recipients of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit, Adult Social Services clients, receiving careers guidance through Connexions or taking up training opportunities through our Adult and Community Learning service. We need to identify smart ways of bringing services together that reduce costs but which can help to present a more client focused approach. We will seek WP co-operation and possible co-investment to help establish co-location and more viable delivery infrastructure. The benefit to the WP will be reduced outreach and premises costs and the ability to build in delivery efficiencies through partnership working.

Developing a personalised offer....

We need to shape our services around the needs of the client and not vice versa. We are already seeing radical changes to the delivery of social care through personal budgets and we think there is scope to apply some of this thinking to employment support. Getting back to work is about self confidence and initiative. Being able to make informed choices on the support an individual needs should be part of this. We will seek co-operation with WP providers to test new delivery models working in co-operation with other Council services. The benefit to the WP will be more motivated clients who are more likely to find and stay in work.

Supporting the Community Budgets Initiative...

Wandsworth is in a Community Budgets Pilot area which seek to put in place focused support and action for families with 'complex needs'. This will be a major priority for the Council and helping the individuals concerned to find work will be a key factor in achieving sustainable outcomes. We wish to seek WP co-operation and investment in this programme working with the new team being established to deliver this. The benefit to the WP will be reduced engagement costs for this client group and the ability to work in a delivery partnership with key agencies.

Linking with local regeneration....

The Council is a key player in local regeneration, particularly Nine Elms, but also in other locations, for example through the Schools rebuilding initiative. In this respect, it is able to secure agreements with developers and others relating to job opportunities for local people. We will seek co-operation with WP providers to co-invest in regeneration initiatives (for example the Battersea Jobshop) with a particular focus on providing job ready candidates to fill job and work experience opportunities. The benefits to the WP will be reduced vacancy search and employer engagement costs.

Employer engagement and sourcing vacancies....

Wandsworth Council has extremely good relationships with its local business base, many of whom are employers. We are keen to work with them to assist their recruitment needs and to ensure that growing businesses can offer opportunities for local people. We will seek co-operation with WP providers in providing a compelling and easy to understand offer to local businesses that encourages them to take on local unemployed people. We also want to see an integrated and co-ordinated approach to local businesses. The benefit to the WP will be reduced employer engagement costs.

Volunteering as a step into work....

Wandsworth Council is keen to support volunteering as a means of delivering community cohesion and self confidence. We see important links with employment services and wish to encourage these. We will seek co-operation with the WP to incorporate volunteering within its offer to local people and support to agencies providing volunteering services in the borough. The benefit to the WP will be reduced cost in support services to their clients.

Preparing people for the local job market....

Wandsworth has a high value economy which risks excluding those who do not have the basic, employability and vocational skills it requires. We see skills development as a key part of employment support in the borough and want to see provision that is clearly linked to job availability and employer need. We will seek co-operation with WP providers to purchase or align their offer with skills provision that clearly meets the needs of employers and the local economy. The benefit to the WP will be increased sustained employment outcomes.

Engaging in the Wandsworth Employment and Skills Partnership....

The WESP is the key forum for strategic focus and partnership working. Chaired by a senior councillor, it allows the Council and a range of stakeholders to review progress in meeting the borough's priorities, brokering partnership arrangements to improve delivery and identifying challenges that require renewed focus by partners. We will seek WP providers to engage with the WESP and to identify a named contact to attend meetings. The benefit to the WP will be reduced partner search effort and the ability to adapt delivery to changing demands more easily.