We would like to thank all local partners and stakeholders for the support and contributions to the review process and development of this document.

Without the input of Southwark Alliance partners this document would not have become a reality.
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Foreword

Southwark is a borough that has changed considerably and for the better in recent years. It is now one of the most vibrant, exciting and culturally diverse areas of London.

Developments such as the Tate Modern, and the impending new tram link have put Southwark on the national and international stage. Regenerating areas such as Peckham and the planned developments for Elephant and Castle have added to the sense that things are moving forward in the right direction.

Even so there are pockets of deprivation that still exist. Levels of unemployment and a low standard of education and basic skills are challenges that we still face.

Early in the work of the Southwark Alliance, it was identified that there was no borough wide strategy or plan to tackle unemployment. So in 2002, we developed an employment strategy with our partners to address the high levels of unemployment.

To ensure that the strategy has had an effect on employment levels in Southwark, we have undertaken an extensive review, to measure what we’ve achieved so far and to make sure we’re on the right lines for the future. The new strategy sets out a plan of actions to help disadvantaged communities access employment.

The strategy for 2005-2016 sets out some challenging goals for us to achieve. By being focused on partnership working, making it easier for residents to access training to improve their basic skills, we believe we will put Southwark at the heart of ‘world-city’ London.

Nick Stanton
Chair
Southwark Alliance

We are aiming to make Southwark a better place to live, learn, work and have fun - for everyone. As a young, creative and innovative borough, we want to build on the work that has already taken place and the achievements we have made.

This strategy sets out to focus on what we can do to improve employment opportunities. It provides a plan with an emphasis on actions that are focused, sustainable, measurable and inclusive.

Following the consultation process, which captured the views of local residents, employers and stakeholders we have broaden the key principles and objectives. They are:

- Maximising effective use of resources,
- Building an employability and learning culture in Southwark, and
- Partnership working.

However, suggestions from the review have been that we concentrate on tackling the barriers to employment. We’ve identified eight key barriers focusing on: access, or awareness to services and information; access to affordable and flexible childcare; access to ESOL courses; employer participation; basic skills; vocational and soft skills; confidence and motivation; and health. Five additional barriers were identified through the Sustainability Impact Appraisal. These barriers are: caring responsibilities; complex personal issues; unsustainable incomes; transport access to work, and building capacity to deliver sustainability.

In real terms, we have a high level of commitment and are concentrating our resources to deliver innovative education, training and employment programmes and initiatives. We are working in partnership to tackle hard to reach groups and help overcome the barriers they face in accessing employment.

Councillor Jeff Hook
Executive member for Regeneration and Economic Development

Also, a statement by Helen Clements, Chair of the Employment Task Group, will be included.
Introduction

When the Southwark Employment Strategy (SES) was developed in 2002, the ambition of the partners was to address high levels of unemployment and consequent deprivation in Southwark. Its intention was “to help all the key partners meet their own operational targets while continuously improving the way we all operate and work together to improve employment outcomes for Southwark’s residents”.

After an extensive review designed to capture the important changes that have taken place since 2002, the Southwark Employment Strategy 2005 - 2016 replaces the initial strategy. It updates the headlines targets and sets out a plan of actions aiming to improve access to employment for disadvantaged communities in Southwark, by removing barriers to employment.

As the result of the consultation process, there was re-emphasis on the three principles of the strategy: Maximising effective use of resources; Build an employability and learning culture in Southwark, and Partnership Working. In addition, the four key objectives – Access, Sustainability, Progression and Prevention – remain the same. Following the consultation process, however, the focus of this document is on barriers to employment. The eight main barriers to employment identified are:

- limited access to and awareness of services/information;
- limited access to affordable and flexible childcare;
- limited access to ESOL courses;
- limited employer participation;
- limited basic skills;
- limited vocational and soft skills;
- limited confidence and motivation;
- poor health.

In addition, five barriers were identified through the Sustainability Impact Appraisal:

- Caring responsibilities;
- Complex personal issues;
- Unsustainable incomes;
- Transport & access to work;
- Building capacity to deliver sustainability.

This document consists of three parts. Part one focus on Vision, Objectives and Principles of the Strategy and presents an analysis of the barriers to employment. Targets for 2005-2016 have been set taking into consideration the achievements of the last two years’ Southwark Employment Strategy and the current socio-economic context of Southwark, as well as the wider economic circumstances. Part two of this document focuses on the Action Plan. It sets out the specific objectives and actions that have to be implemented within particular timescales in order to meet the targets and objectives of the strategy. Sustainability and Equal Opportunities are promoted through a range of Cross Cutting Actions.

A detailed assessment of the current Southwark context, along with a summary of the review and monitoring process can be found in Part three. A glossary of technical terms and acronyms is also included.
PART I

1 Overview

1.1 Background

The initial Southwark Employment Strategy (2002) was driven by a variety of partners involved in employment interventions who saw the need to document both the tasks and overall objectives of their organisations. As high unemployment and deprivation persisted in the Borough, the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) believed such a document would assist the delivery of mainstream and specialist programmes designed to help residents locked in the cycle of benefit dependency and low skills.

After an extensive review to capture the important changes that have taken place since 2002, the Southwark Employment Strategy 2005-2016 replaces the initial strategy. Following partners’ suggestions the focus of this document is on the management of barriers to employment.

1.2 Vision, Objectives and Principles

This strategy has a strong commitment to Equalities and Diversity, as well as Sustainability values.

The overall vision of the Southwark Employment Strategy is: "to maximise opportunities for accessing and sustaining high quality employment for all Southwark’s residents."

The Southwark Employment Strategy’s role is to provide a framework to improve access to good jobs and the benefits of wealth creation.

To achieve this vision, the Strategy has four key objectives:

**Objective 1 - Access:**
To improve access to employment for disadvantaged communities in Southwark by removing barriers;

**Objective 2 – Sustainability:**
To support new entrants to the labour market in order to sustain employment;

**Objective 3 – Progression:**
To ensure progression in employment by building the skills of Southwark’s workforce; and

**Objective 4 – Prevention:**
To prevent Southwark residents from becoming long-term unemployed.

Three principles underpin the vision and the four objectives:

**Principle 1 - Maximise Effective Use of Resources**
Ensure mainstream and specialist support is used by as many hard to reach clients as possible and that the Borough continues to attract the maximum amount of funding possible to achieve this.

**Principle 2 - Build an Employability and Learning Culture in Southwark**
Put preventative measures in place to stop young people and adults from becoming unemployed; improve basic skills, and promote lifelong learning initiatives as widely as possible.

**Principle 3 - Partnership**
Continue to support inter-agency agreements, co-working, joint marketing and other partnership projects which will in turn identify good practice and maximise resources; ensure the Employment Strategy is one that can be delivered by the Partnership of Southwark Alliance.

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All pictures in the document taken by Jody Kingzett. Source: [http://www.southwark.gov.uk/MediaCentre/Photolibrary.html](http://www.southwark.gov.uk/MediaCentre/Photolibrary.html)
1.3 Employment & Unemployment in Southwark

Employment rate

Despite a significant increase in the employment rate in Southwark between 1996 and 2001, and steady increases in VAT business registrations, Southwark still has one of the country’s lowest employment rates. Southwark has a far lower employment rate than GB, London. In general, employment rates are falling in Southwark, as in London and in inner London boroughs like Lambeth or Lewisham, whereas, the GB average employment rate is increasing slightly.

Employment rates are particularly low for ethnic minorities and people without qualifications.

Figure 1: Employment rate – working age (%) Feb 2000 – Feb 2004.

Unemployment rate

After a strong decline in the unemployment rate in the late 1990s, the working-age unemployment rate reached a five-year high in 2003/2004 at 13.9%. This was far higher than national, London or Lambeth and Lewisham averages. Within Southwark, unemployment rates range between 4.5% (Village ward) and 16.2% in Peckham ward or Faraday ward with 16.3%.

Figure 2: Unemployment rate – working age (%) Feb 2000 – February 2004.

Unemployment affects all sections of the community and particularly young people. The unemployment rate of 16-19 year olds is particular high, primarily among females (50%). The unemployment rate of males aged 20-24 and 50 and over is higher than the average rate in Southwark. The unemployment rate of non-white groups is 17.2%, while the unemployment rate of white ethnic groups is 7.8%.

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2 The number of people in employment aged 16 – 59/64 expressed as a percentage of all working age people. In Employment: people over 16 who did some paid work in the reference week (whether as an employee or self employed); those who had a job that they were temporarily away from (on holiday, for example); those on government supported training and employment programmes; and those doing unpaid family work.

3 Average Employment rate Jun 95 - May96 56.8 %; Jun 03 - May 04 64.4 % Source: ONS/NOMIS LFS – quarterly; employment rate 1994-2004.

4 ONS/NOMIS: Midyear population estimates 2003.
1.4 Barriers to Work

The unemployment rates are affected by barriers to employment and training/education. These include:

1. Limited access to and awareness of services / information
2. Limited access to affordable and flexible childcare
3. Limited access to ESOL courses
4. Limited employer participation
5. Limited basic skills
6. Limited vocational and soft skills
7. Limited confidence and motivation
8. Poor health
9. Caring responsibilities
10. Complex personal issues
11. Unsustainable incomes
12. Transport & access to work
13. Building capacity to deliver sustainability

Limited access to, or awareness of services and information
This strategy provides for services and information to be more accessible in order to reach all parts of the community. Southwark Council works in partnership with the LSP to make services open, transparent, sustainable and available to all groups.

Limited access to affordable and flexible childcare
Limited affordable and flexible childcare is a major barrier to families and particularly single parents. Single parents’ childcare needs are further compounded by high cost of living. Future childcare provision should match the needs and expectations of a growing, relatively young population and diverse workforce.

Limited access to ESOL courses
ESOL courses are crucial to support qualified people lacking necessary English skills, to enter the labour market. ESOL is also significantly important for other groups of the community in order to access employment. The strategy provides for community and voluntary sector involvement, especially with organisations from ethnic minority communities, asylum seekers and refugees.

Limited employer participation
Employer engagement is crucial in workforce development and training in order to increase opportunities for those groups who are traditionally excluded from labour market. The strategy promotes work with all partners, and business networks to bring employers on board and open up job opportunities.

Limited basic skills
Lack of basic skills has adverse effects on the earning and employment prospects of individuals. For example, people with good literacy and numeracy tend to have higher wages and better chances of being in work. The LSP is working to raise attainment levels.

Limited vocational and soft skills
Vocational skills and qualifications are linked to labour market participation, as well as to individuals’ levels of self-esteem, personal and social benefits. In addition, there are considerable employment opportunities, due to high demand of vocational qualifications in particular industrial sectors.

Limited confidence and motivation
People who have been out of work for long periods experience difficulties in changing their lifestyle and may become benefit-dependent. Confidence and motivational courses increase self-esteem; broaden horizons and ambitions. These social skills can be useful in searching, finding and sustaining meaningful employment.

Poor health
There is a well-documented link between health and employment and poor health is often associated with poverty and low income amongst the unemployed. Work can play an important role in people’s mental health and the way they participate in society. There is also the effect that people with poorer health are more likely to be unemployed - this is particularly true for people with long term disabilities. Promoting higher levels of employment the strategy aims also to benefit the health of individuals and the local community.

Caring responsibilities
Working-age adults face barriers to employment due to caring responsibilities for other adults, such as disabled or elderly relatives. They require support in order to access the labour market. The strategy aims to work with partners in Social Services, Health Services, PCT and others to tackle the problem.

10 Other than childcare.
**Complex personal issues**
The Strategy addresses barriers to employment that arise from complex personal problems like housing instability or relationship breakdown.

**Unsustainable incomes**
A London specific minimum wage is acknowledged as an important device to sustainable income and employee retention in the capital.

**Transport & access to work**
Transport to work can be a problem for people in the first month of employment (due to the cost) or due to unsociable working hours. Beside these issues, the Strategy promotes the use of sustainable means of transport.

**Building capacity to deliver sustainability**
The Strategy aims to build the capacity of Council and Southwark Alliance to deliver sustainable outcomes of their work.

**Conclusion**
People do not fit neatly into one category and may have a range of these barriers to face before being job ready. Some of these groups are linked to specific geographic and demographic factors, e.g. concentration of social housing, others linked to experiences of particular ethnic groups.

These barriers to work require well-tailored policies and support services. It is essential that all partners are pulling together under the banner of Southwark Alliance. Genuine partnership working is integral to reducing barriers, therefore objectives and targets from the Southwark Plan, the Community Plan, Neighbourhood Renewal, Employment Strategy, Enterprise strategy and other regional (e.g. the LDA’s Economic Development Strategy) or national plans are included and involved in this strategy.

This strategy will cut across several areas of work, predominantly Jobcentre Plus and its mainstream partners’ initiatives to address movement into work and to sustain employment. However, there is a target group of approximately 50,000 working age jobless people, some of who are not engaged with the labour market in any way.

**1.5 First Two Years Achievements of the Southwark Employment Strategy**

Many successful projects have contributed to the improvement of existing barriers to employment. These include:

- Improved use of community facilities for health promotion;
- Increasing learner numbers across the LSCLC area by 14% between 2000/2003.
- Increase of BME learners from 10% in 2001/2002 to 35% in 2002;
- Continuous growth in completion of apprenticeship frameworks and NVQ’s in Central London areas over past 3 years. Some 30% rise in the total WBL success rates between 2002 and 2004;
- Successful childcare programme and Centre at Aylesbury Plus assisting lone parents back to work and training;
- An expanded Workplace Co-ordinator programme supporting over 400 people into work in 2004/5; and
- Increased take up of youth service provision from 96,726 to 151,000 during the last two years.

**1.6 Current Context and Strategic Linkages**

The 2004 Strategic map of Southwark is significantly different from that of 2002. Over the last 2 years Southwark Alliance has become a strategic umbrella under which all other major strategies affect the Borough operate. It aims to assist local providers manage the changes affecting their client base, many of whom still suffer acute levels of poverty and deprivation.

Since 2002 Jobcentre Plus, working from newly refurbished offices in Newington Causeway, Peckham and Camberwell Green, has increasingly focussed on lone parents, New Deal for Partners and sick and disabled people. They have benefited since April 2004 from the introduction of multiple provider contracts for the Southwark Employment Zone, which were awarded to Reed in Partnership and Work Directions are expected to run until 2009. Moreover Building on New Deal (BoND) initiative will allow for further flexibility in how personal advisers work with their client base. Jobcentre Plus has also a specialist Homeless Unit at Southwark Bridge Road (Wedge House).
The Central London Learning and Skills Council has recently completed a major Strategic Area Review (StAR) which will have consequences for post 16 Education, employer engagement and adult learning over the coming decade. One of the key Learning and Skills Council objectives is to combat continuing poor levels of basic skills. The Skills for Life strategy will try to ensure every adult reaches level 2 by 2010. This objective will be assisted by other strategies such as Working Together and Family Learning, which aim to target the widest audience possible using community-based delivery.

This community-based delivery has been strengthened by the presence of eight Community Councils and local community networks. Their remit of safer, greener, healthier communities will improve the quality of residents’ working and home lives which are now crucial indicators in assessing the success of the Employment Strategy, Neighbourhood Renewal and Local Area Agreements, the latter being launched by the Office of Deputy Prime Minister during 2005/2006. Over the last two years, Neighbourhood Renewal, assisted by the legacy of outgoing SRB programmes such as Peckham and Aylesbury Plus, has developed community projects at the Peckham Store, Camberwell and the Aylesbury Centre which ensure the Borough will meet future targets.

Local providers involved in community-based delivery, will experience a shift from non-qualification based learning. They must comply with a new National Qualification Framework which aims to ensure progression via a credit based system recognised and developed by employers. The Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) services will also be affected by changes in standards and a centralised contract awarded by LSCLC.

The drive for improved work based learning opportunities at all levels and ages for residents has created further strategic development impacting on Southwark’s learning and employer networks. The Regional Skills Partnership oversees the work of Sector Skills brokers, London Central Workforce Development Unit and the Work Based Learning Alliance which are all central to improving employment and learning at work opportunities. Since 2002 the network of Centres of Vocational Excellence has been strengthened and key personnel such as Business Development Managers have been employed specifically to match employers needs to the emerging workforce.

1.7 Maximising Employment Opportunities in Southwark

Taking into consideration the Neighbourhood Renewal Floor Targets, current socio-economic context, the achievements of the previous employment strategy and consultations with partners the following Headline Targets have been set:

Over 5 years to 2009 increase the employment rates of people with disabilities, incapacity benefits/income support claimants, lone parents, black and ethnic minorities, young people and people aged 50 and over.

Over 5 years to 2009 increase employment rates in Southwark and reduce the gap between Southwark and the inner London, Greater London and national rate.

The Action Plan, in Part two, sets out how these headline targets will be achieved.

Southwark is already taking steps to meet these targets. The LSP and partners have mainstream services supporting unemployed people, alongside projects that fill strategic gaps. These projects are funded by LBS, NRF, ESF, LDA, among others.