

Strategy for Knowsley

‘The Borough of Choice’



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1. Foreword

In 2008 the Knowsley Partnership set out its vision to make Knowsley the ‘Borough of Choice’ in our *Sustainable Community Strategy*¹. Since then the national economic and political landscape has changed dramatically. A global economic recession, a change of Government, wide ranging policy reforms and austerity measures until at least 2017-18 mean that all organisations are refocusing their policies and approaches.

The statistics show that Knowsley is one of the areas hardest hit by the cuts and one with an over-reliance on public sector jobs. The 2011 Census confirmed the Borough’s population fell by over 4,500 between 2001-2011 and despite improvements in recent years, levels of child poverty, dependency and worklessness remain serious challenges to Knowsley’s future sustainability. In addition, the cost of household essentials – food, petrol, utility bills – is continuing to rise and many families, including those in work, are ‘just coping’. Life will be tough for the next few years, both for those who depend on good public services and those who provide them.

The ‘Strategy for Knowsley’ replaces the 2008 Sustainable Community Strategy and remains the overarching plan to make Knowsley the ‘Borough of Choice’. Whilst retaining the long term ambitions and vision, this plan focuses on actions to deliver short term priorities up to 2015, recognising that new ways of working will be required to address these challenges. Our goals are to:

- Improve Knowsley the place
- Narrow the inequality gap
- Create a thriving, diverse economy

The Knowsley Partnership is clear that the way that we prioritise, plan and work collaboratively is now more important than ever before if we are to achieve these goals.

The Strategy has been written following consultation with all members of the Knowsley Partnership, including Thematic Partnerships and Area Partnership Boards. The following organisations have contributed directly to its development:

Knowsley Council; Merseyside Police; NHS Knowsley; First Ark; Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service; Knowsley Chamber of Commerce, Knowsley Community College, Knowsley Clinical Commissioning Group.

¹ http://inquiry.knowsley.gov.uk/Docs/scs_strategy.pdf

2. The Borough of Knowsley

Knowsley has a population of 145,900, two thirds of which are of working age (16-64 years) and is home to around 3,000 businesses. The Borough covers an area of 8,620 ha, of which 54% is designated as Green Belt. Located between Liverpool and Manchester, Knowsley is connected to these cities by the M57 and M62 motorways, and the A580 East Lancashire trunk road. Its superior connectivity means the Borough is well placed for both business and commuting, within the City Region and further afield.

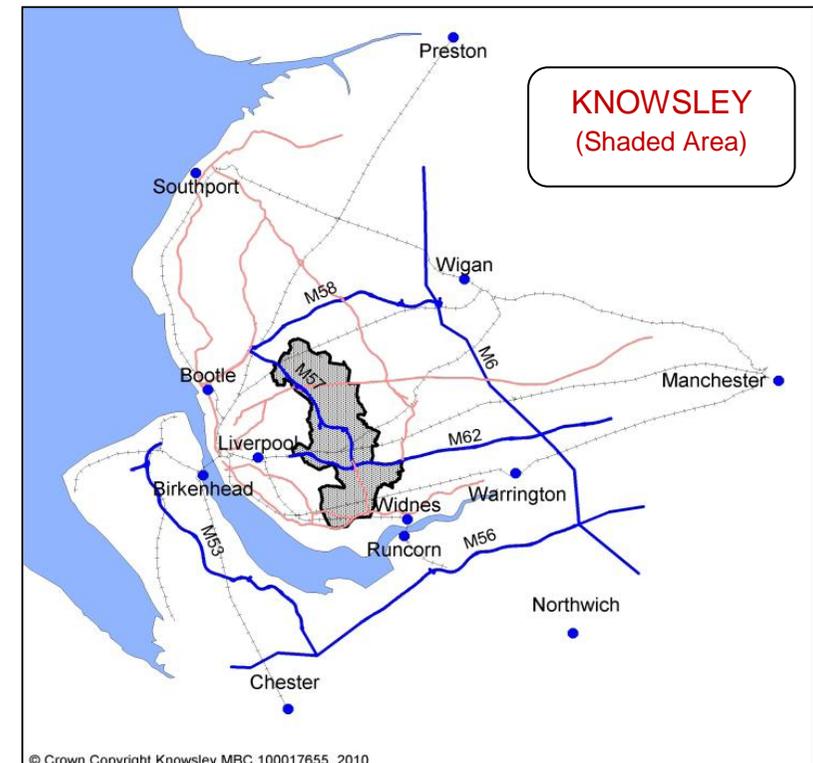
The Borough is made up of four main townships: Huyton, Kirkby, Halewood and Prescot / Whiston; and the smaller villages of Cronton and Knowsley Village. Each area has its own characteristics and history which makes them unique. Knowsley is a Borough of contrasts: it has areas where deprivation levels are amongst the highest in the country (particularly Kirkby, Huyton and Stockbridge Village) and other areas that are seen as relatively affluent.

Knowsley is an important location for employment in the Liverpool City Region, which has a combined population of £1.5 million people and a £20bn economy, and is a major source of workers for the wider area. The Borough has a large industrial base concentrated mainly at Knowsley Industrial Park and business parks at Kirkby, Huyton and Prescot as well as being home to internationally renowned businesses such as Jaguar Landover and QVC. Almost one third (31%) of all employees work in the public sector, compared to 28% nationally.

In recent years there has been considerable investment in the Borough's infrastructure, including new schools, health centres, state of the art leisure facilities, a velodrome and an international BMX facility. The town centres of Huyton and Halewood have both seen major retail investment, and Stockbridge Village has a new village centre and community facilities. Kirkby and Prescot town centres will soon see similar investment.

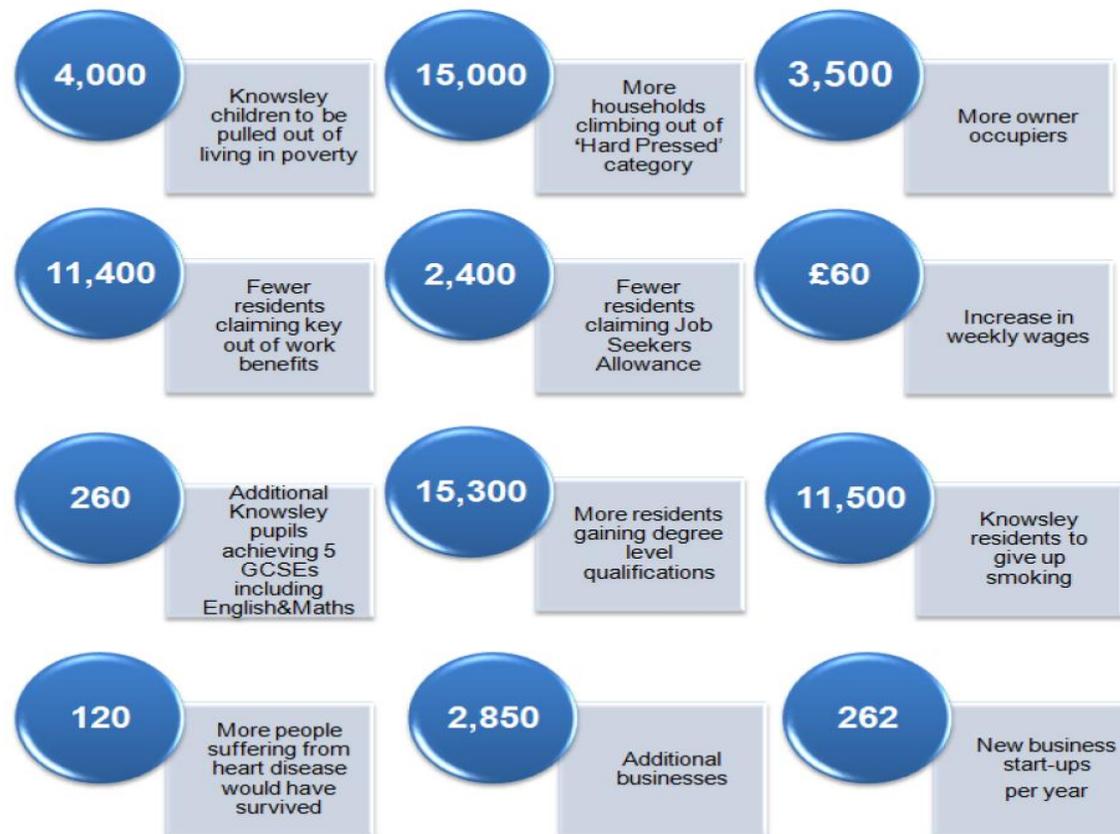
The Borough has a number of key assets for the Partnership to build on:

- Superior connectivity
- Internationally recognised businesses
- Abundant good quality and accessible green space
- Regionally significant industrial and business parks
- Major capital investments in schools, leisure and health
- Affordable, suburban housing
- Resilient people and communities



In addition, Knowsley's good location within the City Region close to a number of important projects such as Liverpool and Wirral Waters and the Mersey Gateway is critical to our ambitions for the Borough, our businesses and our residents. The collective opportunities created by these planned developments, combined with the City Region's economic strengths of the SuperPort, Advanced Manufacturing, Low Carbon, Knowledge and Visitor economies will be key to 're-balancing' the economy.

Despite these major opportunities significant challenges remain for the Borough, both from the national agenda and as a consequence of long-term deprivation. More must be done to raise performance levels and to lift Knowsley beyond the national average for many indicators. Although not specific targets, the illustration below gives an indication of the size of the challenge we face. There remains a big gap to close in terms of educational attainment, future life chances and ill health caused by the high levels of poverty and worklessness experienced by many of our residents.



3. The Vision – where we want to be by 2023

The Knowsley Partnership remains committed to achieving the vision for Knowsley the ‘Borough of Choice’. By 2023 we want Knowsley to have:

- Attractive, sustainable neighbourhoods with a wide choice of housing and excellent community facilities
- Vibrant and welcoming town centres
- Residents and local communities who are able to make positive lifestyle choices
- High quality employment areas which help to drive economic growth in the Liverpool City Region
- Narrowed the gap in deprivation levels both between different parts of the Borough and between Knowsley and elsewhere

The recent Census figures confirmed that the Borough’s population fell by 3% between 2001 and 2011, in contrast to a national upward trend, and showed that the people leaving the Borough tend to be younger, of working age. Achieving the vision for Knowsley is central to addressing this population decline.

The Partnership has identified three goals which reflect the most important issues facing the Borough, and ten shared strategic outcomes that it wants to ensure are delivered in the short, medium and longer term. These will form the basis for delivery planning across the Partnership.

Vision for 2023 – Knowsley: the Borough of Choice					
Our goals	Improve Knowsley the Place		Narrow the Inequality Gap		Create a Thriving, Diverse Economy
What do we want to achieve? (outcomes)	<i>Empowered, resilient, cohesive communities</i>	<i>People are protected from risks that can affect their health & wellbeing</i>	<i>Children get the best possible start in life</i>	<i>Everybody has the opportunity to have the best health & well being</i>	<i>Knowsley has the conditions to support sustainable business growth</i>
	<i>Safe attractive sustainable neighbourhoods</i>	<i>Quality infrastructure and environment</i>	<i>Improved outcomes for our most vulnerable young people</i>	<i>More people look after themselves and support others to do the same</i>	<i>Residents are empowered to reach their economic potential</i>

4. Priorities to 2015

In 2011 the Partnership Board agreed three short term priorities: housing, employment and personal debt that if not addressed on a sufficient scale, risked undermining the longer-term vision. These continue to be relevant issues for the Borough, along with other measures that will contribute to achieving our strategic outcomes, including retaining and attracting residents in sufficient numbers to rebalance the population. By 2015 our aim is that:

- The Knowsley Centres for Learning will achieve national averages or better for 5 GCSE A* - C, including Maths and English.
- We will put 10,000 Knowsley residents into long term jobs.
- We will take a key leadership role for jobs, skills and tackling poverty in the Liverpool City Region, and ensure Knowsley benefits from the new investment and plans to create over 100,000 new jobs over the next decade.
- We will invest in the development of 426 new affordable homes and make land available for up to 2,250 additional homes.
- Every resident will have access to free debt and money advice and affordable credit.
- We will provide the conditions and support to develop a range of businesses in our local economy, including the development of 5 new community owned businesses.

To do this the Partnership will prioritise and co-ordinate the following activities:

	Activity	Lead Partner / Thematic Partnership
1	Work with our Centres for Learning to raise GCSE attainment (including English and Maths) to be at least in line with the national average. This will be done by providing more targeted pupil level support, additional English and Maths tuition and improvements in the overall quality of teaching.	Children and Families Partnership
2	Continue to challenge our education and training providers to improve 'work readiness' – a part of which will be through stronger ties between businesses and schools.	14-19 Partnership / Knowsley Chamber
3	Respond to the Government's 'Troubled Families' initiative through implementation of our Stronger Families Programme.	Knowsley Partnership Executive
4	Adopt and deliver a single, co-ordinated plan to tackle worklessness.	Knowsley Partnership Executive

	Activity	Lead Partner / Thematic Partnership
5	Encourage all public sector partners within Knowsley to use their spending power to create jobs and employment opportunities.	Knowsley Partnership Executive
6	Build partnerships with developers, businesses and public sector partners to ensure Knowsley offers a competitive business location with effective internal transport links, digital connectivity and high quality sites and premises.	KMBC / LEP
7	Focus investment and development activities towards sectors where Knowsley has identified strengths and potential for long-term growth: Transport, Communications and Distribution; Manufacturing; Finance and Business Services	KMBC / LEP/ Knowsley Chamber
8	Through the Sustainable Knowsley Programme oversee and coordinate the Borough's strong portfolio of green energy projects.	KMBC/ Knowsley Partnership Executive
9	Enhance the local housing offer through the Knowsley Local Plan, Partnership Tenancy Strategy and delivery of the Homes and Communities Agency housing investment programme.	Housing Partnership / KMBC / First Ark
10	Develop a Partnership Marketing Strategy for the Borough, promoting our key assets, tourism opportunities and location at the heart of the Liverpool City Region.	Knowsley Chamber / KMBC
11	Increase the strength of the social sector to enable the public, private and social sectors to work together to deliver social value as set out in our Community Empowerment Framework.	APBs / KCVS / KMBC / Social Enterprise Unit
12	Encourage greater joint investment with partners in early intervention, prevention and behaviour change to avoid the longer-term need for reactive, specialist services.	Knowsley Partnership Executive / Health and Wellbeing Board
13	Lead on Go On Knowsley Digital Inclusion work to ensure that our residents can access opportunities and services in a different way.	First Ark
14	Develop a Partnership approach to implement Resident Behaviour Change initiatives.	Knowsley Partnership Executive/ Health and Wellbeing Board
15	Support residents to deal with the increasingly difficult financial circumstances they face through the delivery of the Partnership's Financial Inclusion Strategy.	Knowsley Partnership Executive/ Advice forum

5. Implementing the Strategy

The Knowsley Partnership Executive will lead and oversee delivery of this Strategy. Progress will be reported annually to the Knowsley Partnership Board. The Executive will also play an important role in making policy decisions, driving progress on integrated partnership working, and aligning the strategies and priorities of the Thematic Partnerships and Area Partnership Boards.

Having the right information available to make decisions is key to achieving change. Our Partnership Needs Assessment, Resilience Monitor and data sharing agreements will continue to provide the information the Partnership requires to do this.

Delivering change

Working within the tightest budget framework for years, making the best use of the resources available across the partnership, closer collaboration and co-ordination of activities between agencies, together with new ways of working will be essential to delivering change.

The strategic commissioning of services to meet the shared outcomes identified in this Strategy will become more commonplace and there will be more instances where partners chose to test out new approaches to service delivery. Our approach to delivering the Stronger Families Programme will be one of the first examples of collaboration on a large scale. Partners involved in this programme are clear that the ultimate aim is to develop a sophisticated model that results in more efficient, lower cost services that produce better outcomes for families in Knowsley.

The Partnership has long been committed to effective engagement with the communities of Knowsley. Work is already taking place across a number of partners to enable residents to build individual and community resilience to cope with the collective impact of national policy reforms, economic pressures and other challenges ahead. This Strategy will also set the foundations for the future with a focus on building community capacity across the Borough and developing the social sector to encourage more sustainable and empowered communities and therefore reduce demand on public services.

There will be opportunities to take a fresh look at how, why and when we provide services, recognising that a 'one size fits all' approach may no longer meet the needs of our communities. For example, through more third sector collaborations and exploring how mutual and co-operative models could deliver some services in the future and retain jobs and investment in the Borough.

The Partnership will continue to bring together the key public, private, community and voluntary sectors in the Borough, ensuring jointly agreed priorities are reflected in the way we work and spend our money. This includes working with our newly aligned Public

Health team and the Clinical Commissioning Group within Knowsley to help deliver the outcomes of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Joint Strategic Asset Assessment, ensuring the health of the Borough's residents underpins the Partnership's actions.

How we will measure success

A more detailed Partnership delivery plan accompanies this Strategy and makes clear what actions Partners have committed to do to support its delivery over the period to 2015. From a practical perspective, the priority outcomes and indicators that we must reach by 2015 have been brought together to form a 'Knowsley Partnership Agreement' giving a clear focus on those things that matter most to deliver our vision. This will be monitored with the delivery plan by the Knowsley Partnership Executive and the Board. All partners have committed to achieving these outcomes and indicators and to ensure what we are trying to achieve is reflected in their individual business plans, strategies and delivery mechanisms.

Residents will also have a critical role to play in shaping the future of the Borough. The Partnership is seeking to promote changes to the behaviours of individuals where this can have a positive impact: this is a cross cutting theme. Through the Community Empowerment Framework and behaviour change principles, there are some good practice examples where this approach is achieving results, such as healthy life style choices and environmental enforcement which the Partnership will seek to build on.

A clear measure of success will be how this Strategy contributes towards improving outcomes for residents, businesses and the Borough as a whole, achieving efficiencies and value for money. Evidence of service integration and collaboration at the local level will be critical. This includes improving processes and systems to drive out duplication across services and co-ordinating our work with families as a whole. In addition, evaluating new ways of working and providing evidence of behaviour change in our communities will be important to capture.