1. Introduction

1.1 This document aims to provide a clear vision and strategic leadership to drive sustainable and balanced growth creating an environment which benefits the Royal Borough of Greenwich as a whole. It is part of the coordinated process by which the council will manage and influence investment plans, direct public sector investment and promote opportunities for Greenwich to address the underlying economic challenges.

1.2 This strategy brings together the vision for regeneration, planning, property, tourism and transport and is structured as follows:

- historical context and rationale for developing a growth strategy
- outline of the Council’s vision for growth
- an outline of the priority themes which will ensure growth is achieved in Greenwich including:
  - transport infrastructure
  - growth areas
  - new homes
  - jobs and skills
  - creating the right conditions for investment and growth
  - developing and promoting our cultural and tourism offer

1.3 There is an urgent need for the Council to adopt a robust growth strategy in order to seize opportunities and secure the continued regeneration of the Borough as well as to mitigate the effects of the economic crisis. In addition the Government’s proposals to change the funding regime for Local Government, to one reliant on business rate growth, make it vital that the Council promotes a vibrant and sustainable local economy.

2. Vision
2.1 To support growth in the economy of the borough in order to maximise the opportunities for local people in employment, education and skills and access to housing which they can afford and to promote strategic transport links to promote inward investment, business competitiveness and growth and access to key areas of employment opportunity.

3. Historical context and rationale

3.1 Greenwich is one of the largest of the 33 London Boroughs with an area of 5,044 hectares, has 13 kilometres of Thames frontage and is one of 12 boroughs that make up the London Thames Gateway, the UK’s largest regeneration area. The borough has a rich heritage set in its maritime and military past, largely associated with the river and more recently as an industrial centre at the Royal Arsenal. Woolwich served as a royal dock for 350 years, and was one of the world’s largest centres for arms manufacture. The dockyard and arms manufacture provided major employment for the local population. The borough’s employment base dramatically declined following the second world war and the subsequent collapse of manufacturing, culminating in record levels of unemployment during the 1980s and early 1990s.

3.2 The borough has seen the beginnings of recovery with major physical, social and economic restructuring underway; significant inward investment for physical regeneration; new strategic transport links reconnecting the borough with the City (Jubilee line / DLR); and the reclamation for development of large areas of previously disused and contaminated land (Greenwich Peninsula / Royal Arsenal, Woolwich). Yet inequalities persist between areas of the borough in health, wealth, achievement and quality of life in general.

3.3 There is significant capacity for new housing supply – the Council has granted planning permission for over 15,000 new homes in the past five years, with around 35% being affordable homes. Having delivered over 12,000 new homes since 2001, planning permissions are already in place for a further 18,000 new homes to be built in the next decade and
capacity exists for further new housing proposals to come forward at strategic development locations such as Charlton Riverside.

3.4 Further recovery is stymied by the current circumstances which are challenging and the council needs to make the most of the major opportunities ahead. Property values are falling, public expenditure is constrained, sites are not being developed or in some cases have stalled and the council’s ability to bring forward jobs and infrastructure has significantly reduced. Yet Greenwich continues to have significant growth potential and by 2027 the population of the borough will have grown by an additional 53,000 people since 2010. Employment in the Borough has been increased and is forecast to increase by 40,000 jobs by 2020. A ten year housing target of almost 26,000 new homes and the continued availability of brown field land at relatively low values can result in a more financially competitive opportunity for high quality mixed use housing and commercial developments alongside new transport and public infrastructure.

3.5 Given the Government’s strategies there is now a clear imperative for Greenwich to develop its own Growth Strategy to ensure a coordinated approach and reaffirm our commitment to:

- maintain and where possible accelerate the momentum and sustainability of regeneration and economic development opportunities
- provide opportunities for people to develop or enhance their skills, create job opportunities and support peoples aspirations
- make the most of and utilise the unique offer and opportunities that Greenwich has – hosting of the Olympics, being recognised as a destination of choice, a borough with Royal status, Cross Rail, and a developing digital business economy, all of which offer continued potential during the downturn.

3.6 The Council must create the conditions for growth and remove unnecessary barriers that may constrain the momentum of regeneration. The Council will need to be flexible, and use a range of measures, including the provision of leadership and coordination, as well as
facilitating growth through the use of our assets, influencing investment decisions and supporting partners.

3.7 A number of areas of the Borough have significant opportunities for economic growth:

- **Woolwich** is a famous historic town and has tremendous potential to once again become a thriving centre. It has an exceptional setting on the Thames with a stunning historic legacy of high quality buildings and is benefiting from major new transport infrastructure.

- **Charlton Riverside** is an Opportunity Area identified for intensification for mixed use development and with significant capacity for jobs and new homes. Charlton Riverside has potential to accommodate an exemplary new urban district, demonstrating the highest standards of design quality and sustainability and opening up a new section of the river bank as an attractive public space.

- **Greenwich Peninsula** remains largely undeveloped with a significant derelict area to the West of the Peninsula which has been held back by two century-old factors: the remnants of its industrial history and the southern approach to Blackwall tunnel. The huge potential of the site lies in its Riverside location with spectacular views to the west over Canary Wharf and Greenwich, with its World Heritage site.

- **Eltham** needs to realise its potential to offer a thriving town centre location known for its retail and leisure offer combined with the rich history of Eltham Palace and its surrounds.

3.8 Capitalising on the opportunities arising from these growth areas combined with the boroughs existing strengths in tourism, creative and cultural and digital industries sectors will provide the opportunity for Greenwich to thrive.

4. **Key themes**

4.1 **Transport Infrastructure**
Greenwich faces significant challenges to secure better links between the Royal Borough and the rest of London which is vital for securing economic growth and prosperity. There have been some positive
transport improvements connecting the Royal Borough of Greenwich to the rest of London with the arrival of the DLR and the Jubilee Line and which will be further enhanced with the arrival of Crossrail. In addition we need to improve north/south connectivity to transport hubs and tackle areas of congestion.

These should include commitments to:

- secure the funding for the station fit out of the Crossrail station at Woolwich together with further lobbying for additional river crossings at Silvertown and Gallions Reach.
- improve the connectivity within the borough, by promoting north/south links by an extension of the DLR and by delivering the Greenwich Waterfront Transit to link Greenwich Peninsula to Woolwich Town Centre, Thamesmead and Abbey Wood whilst providing east/west connectivity through Charlton Riverside.
4.2 Growth Areas - creating sustainable places
Greenwich has established a series of key Growth Areas: Greenwich town centre, the Peninsula, Woolwich, Eltham, Kidbrooke, Abbeywood & Thamesmead and Charlton. These are areas where Greenwich is already actively working to deliver regeneration and where the benefits will be maximised for all. Each of these Growth Areas has sites of significant opportunity which offer the opportunity to become vibrant places and ideal locations for sport, leisure, retail, business and housing growth.

In recognition of the need to work collaboratively to realise the potential for Greenwich, these key areas are overseen by a Partnership Board of stakeholders from both the public and private sectors. This partnership approach will increase our chances of success, help to develop mutually supportive priorities, address any coordination difficulties and will establish confidence for the private sector to invest in Royal Greenwich.

Greenwich needs to establish mechanisms to support the agreed growth objectives. Integral to this is an understanding of the new financial regime for local government, and the need to use the new planning system to address any barriers to growth as well as provide a clear framework for local development.

Small, focused area based teams have been established with the aim of removing any blockages and pursuing more flexible approaches to planning and regulation ensuring success. The development of master plans for the key growth areas of the borough will outline the potential to deliver economic growth and opportunities in a sustainable way for residents and prospective investors.

We will:
- develop master plans for key areas of the borough which have the potential to deliver economic growth and opportunities in a sustainable way
- explore the opportunities for various funding models to support growth

4.3 New homes
There continues to be a significant gap between housing supply and rising housing demand. We are committed to maximising the opportunities to develop the right size, type and supply of homes to ensure we create places of choice that attract and retain residents and businesses alike. We will work in partnership with Registered Providers and developers to ensure that the mix of homes includes family-sized units and provides homes which are affordable.

To create and sustain new economic opportunities, we know Greenwich needs to be able to attract and retain skilled workers, provide the right transport links and have the right service infrastructure in place. New development within the borough needs to be supported by appropriate physical, social, community and green infrastructure. In order to support growth in the borough the Council needs to establish a comprehensive understanding of infrastructure requirements and how and when these will be provided. Delivering infrastructure of the right type and at the right time will ensure the needs of both current and emerging populations are met and will ensure the confidence of people seeking to move into the area as well as investors seeking to develop. In a climate where we are encouraging growth, we remain committed to growth that is environmentally sustainable.

In the current economic conditions it is vital that we continue to target our own investment to maximise the benefits for residents and the impact to the economy. Maintaining our public sector investment programme including our capital schools programme, and using the Council’s own land and assets to support investment will have critical impact on growth. This can include the use of Council investment and the lever of private funding to develop asset backed vehicles or to consolidate land ownership to create the environment for development

We will:

- continue to maximise high quality housing development in areas of opportunity, including the Woolwich estates programme and the Kidbrooke regeneration programme
- ensure that development include accessible and affordable family housing as well as a variety of tenure offer to support social mobility
- to use the Council’s own land and assets to support investment that will have a lasting impact whether to develop new Council housing, to kick start a development or to attract additional investment to the borough
- progress the Heart of East Greenwich Centre to provide support services and facilities for residents
- develop our property and services strategy to ensure the right balance of services and community facilities across the borough
- invest in our schools

4.4 **Inward investment / creating the right conditions for business growth**

Inward investment can offer significant opportunities for delivering growth. Greenwich is working to ensure that we have the best conditions for growth by establishing the right environment for our existing businesses to thrive and to attract new and enterprise to locate in the borough. Foreign investment presents us with an opportunity to expand our economic base and we are working with government and the business community to showcase Greenwich as a good value high quality and well connected location. Our position at the heart of London’s future growth is key to the Borough’s future prosperity.

**Digital Peninsula**

Greenwich has established a new business district which at its heart aims to stimulate innovation and business growth, with a particular focus on the digital sector. State of the art offices, including Digital Enterprise Greenwich and the Cisco National Virtual Incubator, flexible work space, and the world class facilities and teaching at Ravensbourne will help ensure our success. The Peninsula has huge potential with a further 6 million square feet of commercial space (with 3 ½ million for office space) identified and the opportunity to enhance our offer with a super fast broadband and 4G WiFi connectivity.

We will:
• build partnerships to further develop and strengthen the offer of the Digital Peninsula to attract new businesses and support the growth of existing businesses
• promote the development of affordable business space for graduates and businesses leaving the Ravensbourne Eco-Incubator.
• Building linkages with businesses across the Borough and across London to ensure the potential of the Digital Peninsula benefits the whole Borough

Our Town Centres
We will continue to support our town centres and counter the trend of decline. Greenwich is ahead of the curve, having already established an area based focus involving key stakeholders to give the visionary management and enable the development of town centre solutions. We are working hard with businesses to build confidence and actively promote our town centres.

We will provide the environment for them to thrive and flourish and raise the profile of our town centres using community areas which will result in additional footfall and extended dwell time. We are already seeking to consolidate land ownership to ensure our town centres can diversify their use into multi functional centres integrating them with the housing and commercial development opportunities which are so important to attracting and retaining residents, visitors and workers.

We will:
• Consolidate land ownership in town centres to help create the opportunity for development.
• continue to work with our partners to ensure that people feel safe with no fear of crime in town centres.
• use our regulatory and enforcement powers alongside our street cleansing and waste services to help promote a positive image of the Royal Borough of Greenwich.

4.5 New Jobs
We are committed to support local people and to ensure they have the appropriate skills to access job opportunities. Investing in our schools and a University Technical College (UTC) will help ensure they have the right facilities to support our children to exceed their potential. The presence of the University of Greenwich, Ravensbourne College and Greenwich Community College, together with the establishment of our skills centres means we are well placed to continue increasing our skills base so that more of our residents have intermediate and higher level skills.

The economic downturn is resulting in an increasing number of people out of work. The position in Greenwich is stable with the gap between Greenwich and London reducing marginally and well below the levels experienced in the 1990’s. Our employment programmes continue to go from strength to strength and we will continue to connect people to jobs through our business support and local labour schemes.

We will:
- establish a University Technical College and new skills centres in partnership with employers and leading agencies best placed to deliver the training
- review our employment support offer to maintain the best fit with employer needs and changes in Government policy.
- Support the development of green skills training and green jobs through initiatives such as the Green Deal

4.6 Developing and promoting our offer
The Royal Borough receives around 16 million visitors per year to its World Heritage site and to the O2 arena and Entertainment District. The visitor economy in Greenwich is worth £774m per annum and provides 11,700 jobs.

Leisure and business tourism
Greenwich is an international tourist destination and we will use the opportunities of hosting the Olympic Games to promote our brand. We have already developed the Destination Greenwich brand and tourism offer, which has placed us on the international map and has resulted in
the leading travel guide company Frommers identifying Greenwich as a top destination for 2012.

We need to further broaden our offer and unlock the potential of our world class visitor destinations by increasing the numbers of high quality hotel bed spaces, securing the opportunities arising from the cruise liner terminal at Enderby Wharf, developing our business tourism offer and the capacity for conferences, exhibitions and corporate hospitality. Further opportunities will also arise as a result of the improved connections via the Emirates Airline cable car from the Peninsula to the Excel centre as well as developing river based attractions to enhance our offer.

Cultural Offer
Greenwich is home to a number of important cultural institutions and an established cultural events programmes. The Council has developed its festival offer over a number of years and 2012 will see the expansion of our festival programme with additional events during the Games, a festival on the Peninsula and the presence of Tall Ships. We need to continue to promote our cultural programme, the performing and visual arts as part of our post Olympic legacy. We need to improve our performance spaces and assist our cultural institutions to become more sustainable.

Using the river
The river Thames is a major resource for Greenwich, with its existing use as a transport corridor for tourism, commuter and commercial uses. It has further potential with the development of the cruise liner terminal and the scope to develop moorings and marinas. The river is also a source of natural beauty and attraction which offers opportunities for recreation and represent a perhaps under utilised source of economic growth for Greenwich.

We will:
• ensure delivery of a range of quality hotel spaces
• develop the business tourism offer
- establish a tourism company with other stakeholders to develop and promote the offer
- work with partners to maximise our use of the river for business and leisure
- further develop our cultural and creative industries offer ensuring a legacy post Olympics including the provision of quality performance space