

THE CLIMB PROJECT



OUR CONCERNS

Unemployment and lack of opportunity is a major problem in the South West Birmingham area, as it is in the city as a whole. Birmingham has an unemployment rate double the national average.

For young people the situation is worse. Four years ago – even after the recession had hit – only 20 people aged 16-24 were out of work for over a year. In May 2013, that was 295 young people. **Long term youth unemployment in Northfield is robbing our community of aspiration and prosperity.** The Government has not created the growth or infrastructure to meet our area's specific challenges, leverage the huge opportunities in the area, and secure the quality and long term jobs that the community deserves. **Action is needed now.**

OUR VISION

The area not only has a proud manufacturing heritage, but a truly unique location that bridges Birmingham with the local beauty spots of the Lickey, Wasely and Clent Hills and North Worcestershire. **The Climb Project will create a new identity and economic vision for the Birmingham Hills area in the 21st Century.**

THE THREE CLIMB STEPS

- 1. The Climb Partnership** – the foundation of the project is a multi-sectoral network in the South-West Birmingham area. It will be business-focused, but also include representatives from within the community – including local schools and colleges, charities and politicians. The partnership will be tasked with developing a clear and compelling future vision for the local economy, and providing practical assistance for jobs and growth today.
- 2. The Climb Jobs Fair** – the initial launch of the project will be a major local jobs fair in autumn 2013. This will enable local people to understand what opportunities exist in Northfield, apply for jobs and meet employers. The jobs fair will unite employers and jobseekers from different areas in the region.
- 3. The Climb Pathway:** the Climb Partnership would be able to continue and build on the local economic vision they develop, ensuring local people develop the pathway ahead. This may include:
 - **Marketing and Branding:** developing a compelling economic identity for the area to attract investment.
 - **Signposting:** an important signposting and advice service for investors, businesses and jobseekers.
 - **Action:** proposing practical initiatives to the City Council, regional Local Enterprise Partnership and other bodies – and ensure the benefits of wider projects expand to the Northfield area.

Richard Burden MP and local Labour are committed to supporting an economy that responds to the community. Sectors that could be the basis of a new economic identity for the Birmingham Hills area are outlined below, but the involvement of businesses, educational establishments and organisations from all fields will be vital.

HIGH-TEC DEVELOPMENT

Leveraging the area's manufacturing heritage will be an important focus for building jobs and skills. This ranges from SME's in Small Heath, to traditional companies like Pilkington Automotive & GNV and innovative new firms such as Mechatronic Solutions in Kings Norton, and MG Motor and Shanghai Automotive's R&D centre in Longbridge. Engineering, design and digital, and high tec development, will all be important.

TRANSPORT & CONNECTIVITY

With close proximity to M42 + M5 - and the Cross City Line running through SW Birmingham - the area has huge potential. With New St, HS2 and the Airport transforming Birmingham into a transport hub, investment is needed for connectivity with this area to create jobs and unleash wider growth.

COMMUNITY INNOVATION

This ranges from the retail and high street regeneration led by NTCP, to new forms of volunteering epitomised by local Food and Time Banks, and emerging arts activity driven by the Northfield Arts Forum. Developing the infrastructure of the area's voluntary sector - and linking businesses and community development - will be crucial.

