

STOKE-ON-TRENT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



City of
Stoke-on-Trent

Developing a Wellbeing Economy: Sustainable, Inclusive Growth for Everyone

10-year vision: 'Stoke-on-Trent will build on its natural strengths and spirit of innovation to become a city where businesses and communities flourish and residents can enjoy the benefits of better work, higher wages and improved quality of life.'



Alignment with the Corporate Strategy

Key challenge: reducing persistent inequalities

The Corporate Strategy aims to do this by:

- Harnessing the ambition and innovation of local businesses and organisations.
- Finding the right balance between traditional productivity-based economic models and more wellbeing-centred approaches to economic development.
- Ensuring that more of the wealth we create within our city stays in our city.
- Helping residents who experience hardship and poverty to secure better jobs and higher wages.
- Supporting residents with long-term health problems to be economically active.

The Economic Strategy will do this by:

- Supporting businesses to invest, innovate and grow, creating more good jobs.
- Using our influence to maximise economic and social benefits of procurement and investment.
- Involving businesses and communities in developing and implementing the strategy.
- Championing better quality employment and enabling residents to secure better work.
- Community wealth building.



Developing a Wellbeing Economy: Sustainable, Inclusive Growth for Everyone

Supporting businesses to start up, grow, thrive and innovate.

Making Stoke-on-Trent a more attractive destination for businesses, people and investors.

Creating opportunities to boost employment, improve education and skills and ensure that people are ready for work.

Improving living standards and the quality of life, relative to national and regional averages.

Revitalising our high streets and town centres.

Developing economic infrastructure and social capital in our communities.

Community wealth building.

Working with businesses and partners to maximise the benefits from responsible procurement.

Enabling and supporting green growth.



Factors affecting our economy

Challenging factors

- Too many employees have to use welfare to supplement low incomes or insecure work.
- The city is a net importer of labour, especially for higher-paid roles.
- Manufacturing has declined, with job creation shifting to health and social care (low-paid).
- Too many people are out of work due to long-term health conditions.
- We still lag behind the region and UK in skills, particularly digital skills.
- We need to develop new ways of engaging with business (replacing functions of LEPs).
- We need to act to secure a formal devolution deal or alternative proposition for the city.
- Need to create a more sustainable local economy.

Positive factors

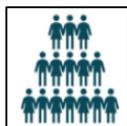
- We have a highly advanced digital network that will support business and Smart City innovation.
- We are delivering major regeneration and housing developments across the city.
- We have strong partnerships with local, regional and national stakeholders to help drive improvements in key areas such as education and skills.
- We are working closely with our universities to strengthen innovation, skills and supporting policy-making.
- The city is a renewable energy trailblazer and has exciting plans around low-carbon heat and energy efficiency and generation, including high-value cluster development.



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Key economic indicators



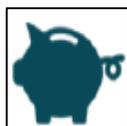
Economic inactivity: 38,200 people (24.3% of workforce) not in employment or seeking work. 17,100 are long-term sick (double the UK average).



Industrial and occupational structure: only 43.8% of residents are employed in managerial and professional occupations, compared to 52.2% for UK.



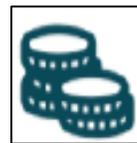
Skills & qualifications: 19,500 working age people (12.4%) have no qualifications (UK average is 6.2%). Only 28.3% have Level 4+ qualifications (42.9% for UK).



Income: gross disposable household income per capita is £15,799. Gap to UK average GDHI has grown from £4,800 to £6,200 since 2010.



Debt & insolvency: over 35% of households in city estimated to be 'overindebted'. UK average level is just 15% of households.



Benefits: the total level of unclaimed benefits for the city is estimated at between £80-100m per annum, including £38.9m of unclaimed Universal Credit.



Child poverty: 1 in 3 children (21,652) are classed as being in poverty (before housing costs) compared to 22 per cent nationally.



Fuel poverty: 25,100 households (21.8%) are classed as being 'fuel poor'. The UK average level is 13.4%

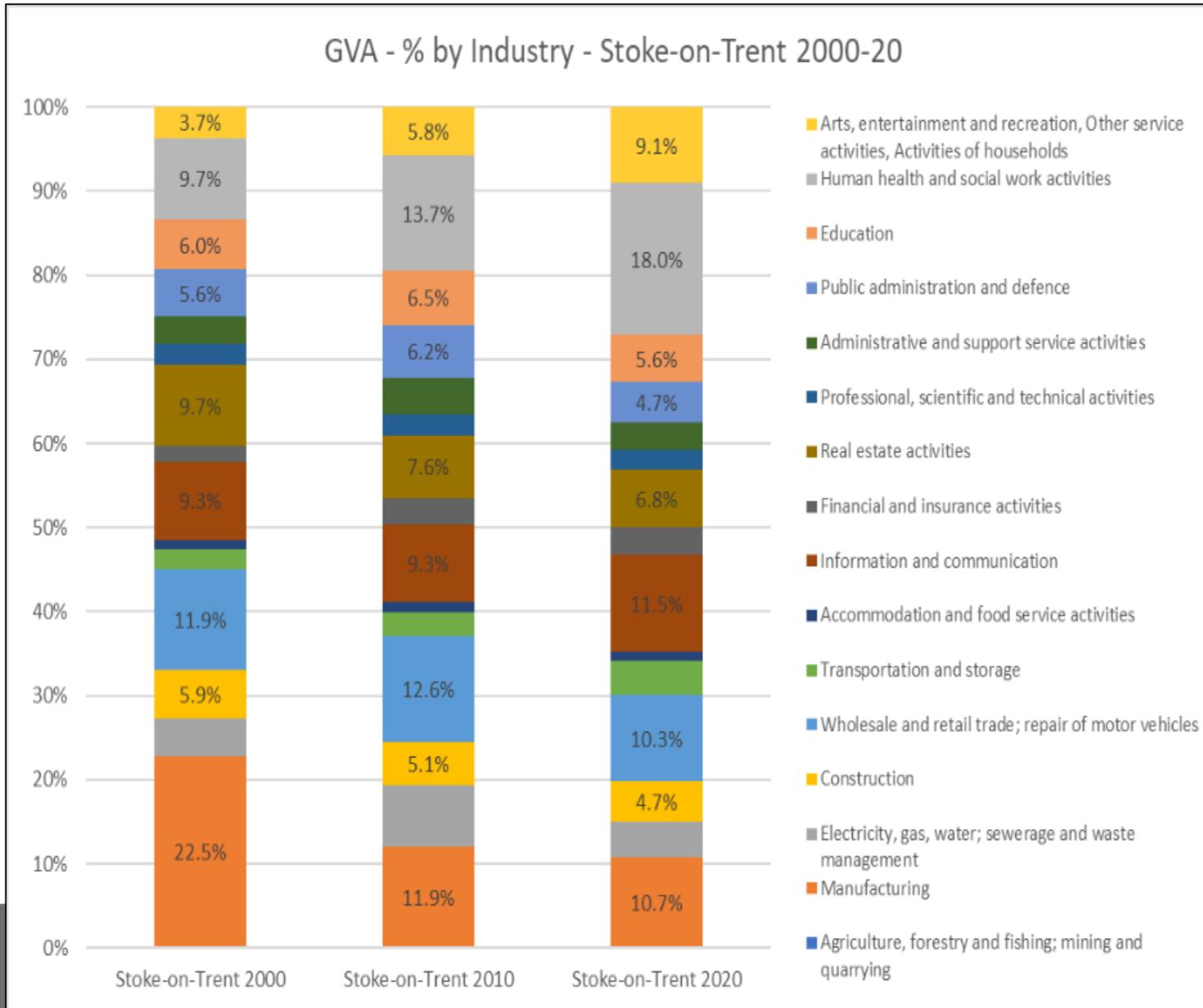


Commerce: the number of businesses operating in the city is just two-thirds of the national per capita average (a gap which equates to 4,400 enterprises).



Average pay: full time wages for people living in the city are £90.20 a week less than the UK average and £61.30 less than the West Midlands average.

Economic context – GVA by industry



Key sectors

In decline:

- Manufacturing (*down 11.8 %pts*)
 - Ceramics
 - Other Manufacturing

On the rise:

- Health & Social Care (*up 8.3 %pts*)
- Culture (arts & ents – *up 5.4 %pts*)
- Digital (*up 2.2 %pts*)
 - Gaming
 - Createch
 - Consulting

Unchanged:

- Distribution (transport & wholesale)
- SMEs

Additional Future Priorities:

- Fostering entrepreneurship
- Community / Social Enterprise
- Green & Low Carbon Economy



Employment levels by industry / sector (2015-22)

Industry	No. of jobs 2015	% of workforce 2015	No. of jobs 2020	% of workforce 2020	No. of jobs 2022	% of workforce 2022	% change 2015-2022	Change in overall no. of jobs 2015-22
Mining & Quarrying	100	0.1	75	0.1	30	<0.1	-70.0	-70
Manufacturing	15,000	13.3	14,000	11.9	17,000	13.7	+13.3	+2,000
Electricity & Gas Supply	300	0.3	300	0.3	300	0.2	0.0	0
Water Supply, Sewerage & Waste	500	0.4	450	0.4	1,000	0.8	+100.0	+500
Construction	6,000	5.3	4,500	3.8	4,500	3.6	-25.0	-1,500
Wholesale & Retail Trade	21,000	18.6	19,000	16.1	18,000	14.5	-14.3	-3,000
Transportation & Storage	7,000	6.2	11,000	9.3	12,000	9.7	+71.4	+5,000
Accommodation & Food	4,000	3.5	5,000	4.2	5,000	4.0	+25.0	+1,000
Information & Communication	3,000	2.7	4,500	3.8	5,000	4.0	+66.7	+2,000
Financial & Insurance	3,000	2.7	1,750	1.5	1,000	0.8	-66.7	-2,000
Real Estate	1,000	0.9	1,000	0.8	1,750	1.4	+75.0	+750
Professional, Scientific & Technical	3,500	3.1	4,500	3.8	4,500	3.6	+28.6	+1,000
Admin. & Support Services	7,000	6.2	8,000	6.8	8,000	6.5	+14.3	+1,000
Public Administration	4,500	4	4,000	3.4	5,000	4.0	+11.1	+500
Education	9,000	8	9,000	7.6	8,000	6.5	-11.1	-1,000
Health & Social Work	22,000	19.5	4,000	20.3	26,000	21.0	+18.2	+4,000
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	4,000	3.5	4,000	3.4	4,500	3.6	+12.5	+500
Other Services	2,000	1.8	2,000	1.7	2,250	1.8	+12.5	+250

Employment levels by occupation & skill level

Occupation level	Stoke-on-Trent workforce	UK average workforce	City's gap to the UK average
Managerial & professional	43.8 %	52.2 %	10,125 fewer
Administrative & skilled	18.7 %	18.5%	250 more
Caring, leisure, sales and customer service	15.1 %	14.2 %	1,085 more
Elementary occupations (low skilled/unskilled jobs)	22.4 %	9.5 %	8,800 more

Analysis of the city's labour market shows significant gaps to the national average in relation to the proportions of workers employed in:

- Senior managerial, professional or associate professional roles.
- Low- or unskilled elementary occupations.

These gaps contribute to the city's comparatively low pay and productivity levels, and are linked to causal factors such as education, skills, work readiness and life chances.



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Policy landscape

National

- Levelling Up agenda (or successor policies)
- Build Back Better
- UK Growth Plan
- UK Inward Investment Strategy
- Plan for Jobs
- Devolution
- Skills for Jobs
- Climate change (net zero)
- Energy Security
- Funding
- Planning reform/housing
- National Infrastructure Strategy
- UK Innovation Strategy
- UKSPF / Community Renewal Fund
- Political change (2024 election)
- DWP-funded Universal Support

Regional

- Midlands Engine
- Midlands Connect
- Network North (HS2 funding)
- Regional devolution landscape
- DWP-funded training contracts

Local

- Pan-Staffordshire Economic Strategy
- Potential devolution options
- Homes England strategic partnership
- Local Plan
- Local Skills Framework
- LSIP & 14-25 Skills Strategy
- Post-LEP governance arrangements
- Local DfE initiatives
- Health & care integration (ICS)



Geospatial economic factors (1)

Element	What we will do ourselves	What we will do with others	Who we will work with
Supporting business growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to Voice of Business and Business Board Deliver business incubators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create innovation partnerships Identify relevant funding Develop procurement charter (local contracts and jobs for local companies and residents) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Universities Innovate UK Dept. of Business & Trade Innovation Alliance WM Public sector partners and anchor institutions
Inward investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to Voice of Business and Business Board Business champions Identify High Value Propositions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A500/A50 corridor Site / Strategic Land Assembly Strategic Cluster Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staffordshire County Council Midlands Engine Dept. of Business & Trade Public and private landholders Property agents
Tourism and place marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to Local Visitor Economy Partnership Board Establish Growth Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver Cultural Strategy Place / destination marketing Local Visitor Economy Partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visit England Visit Staffordshire Arts Council England



Geospatial economic factors (2)

Element	What we will do ourselves	What we will do with others	Who we will work with
Providing business accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish Growth Partnership Repurpose council assets for business start-up / incubation activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capitalise on A500/A50 corridor developments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staffordshire County Council Midlands Engine Private Landlords (e.g. Regus) Property Agents Universities
Transport improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional rail stations Bus service improvements Key highways enhancements Develop plans for Network North funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A500/A50 corridor Leek-Stoke line reopening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Midlands Connect Dept. for Transport National Highways Network Rail Staffordshire County Council
Zero carbon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Energy innovation (DHN etc.) Low-carbon buses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Install EV infrastructure Improve housing stock Retrofit / repurpose council owned assets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Energy providers Housing providers Government (funding) Universities
Digital infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver Silicon Stoke Expand full fibre network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Become a Smart City 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Energy networks Public sector partners



Geospatial economic factors (3)

Element	What we will do ourselves	What we will do with others	Who we will work with
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify potential development sites Develop plans for new high-quality homes Deliver marketing to stimulate investment Invest in improvements to the city's housing stock Using disposals of council-owned land to facilitate housing developments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring suitable sites forward for development Secure funding to address barriers to development and investment Reduce fuel poverty levels in the city 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homes England Historic England Sport England
Education & Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance access to quality training and employment opportunities Ensure equality of opportunity for children from vulnerable families Support children and young people with learning difficulties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work to improve education outcomes for all ages Capitalise on job creation opportunities outside the city Secure skills and employment benefits through progressive procurement practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools, colleges, universities and Early Years providers Department for Education Training providers Employers Investors and developers Local government partners



The Economic Strategy will provide the strategic link between the Corporate Strategy and key delivery elements:

- The Cost of Living Plan will address aspects of poverty and financial hardship in the city.
- Community Wealth Building will encourage alternative business models and strive to keep the 'Stoke-on-Trent £1' in the city.
- A partnership approach to oversee all aspects of economic growth, including business support, inward investment, employment, apprenticeships and skills, culture & tourism etc.
- A number of other strategies will also contribute to key economic objectives.



Priorities

Supporting businesses to start up, grow, thrive and innovate.

Creating the conditions required for enterprises of all sizes to flourish and ensuring that the city and its residents are able to benefit from enhanced productivity and prosperity.

- Access to finance for expansion, research, development and innovation.
- Reliable, accessible and cost-effective local infrastructure (transport, energy, digital).
- A skilled and educated workforce, with training programmes that align to industry needs (co-created with industry – pre-employment through to ‘in work’ reskilling).

Key deliverables:

- Establishment of an appropriate governance mechanism to oversee local growth, investment and skills.
- A new and comprehensive Business Support model catering for enterprises of all sizes and sectors.
- An inward investment approach targeting UK and foreign-owned businesses, as well as attracting external funding to support programmes (e.g. Housing, high streets, culture).
- Development of key account management programme of strategic companies to gather intelligence and identify job creating investment / expansion plans.
- Development of high-value proposition and strategic clusters in priority growth and nascent sectors (e.g. culture and digital) creating a growth-focused business eco-system.
- Specialist support for SMEs, including use of Enterprise Centres and Spode site.
- Support to help businesses to improve sustainability and reduce carbon emissions.
- A transport system that enables employment, commerce and economic expansion.



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Priorities

Making Stoke-on-Trent a more attractive destination for businesses, people and investors.

Creating an environment that fosters economic growth, attracts employment, supports diverse industries to grow, encourages innovation and enhances people's quality of life.

- Identifying new employment sites to support job creation.
- Capitalising on job creation and investment hotspots outside the city's boundaries.
- Boosting intra-city connectivity, as well as commuter infrastructure.
- Delivering new, high-quality housing for ownership or private rental.
- Investing in improvements to the quality of existing housing provision

Key deliverables:

- Transport plans and infrastructure to reflect economic needs, boost connectivity and enhance passenger experience.
- Establishment of a new joint approach to investment, business support, job creation, skills, digital connectivity, planning, culture and tourism.
- New structures to amplify and harness the voice of business to help shape economic planning and decision-making across our city.
- Growth-focused planning policy.
- Bringing forward brownfield sites for regeneration and housing development.
- Using Council land and assets to facilitate delivery of key elements of the strategy.



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Priorities

Creating opportunities to boost employment, improve education and skills and ensure that people are ready for work.

Reducing economic inactivity levels to boost productivity and contribute to higher disposable incomes and quality of life for residents.

- Delivering targeted employment and health support services.
- Raising skill levels and improving work readiness.
- Working with employers to develop upskilling / reskilling programmes to enhance social mobility and career progression.

Key deliverables:

- NHS Individual Placement Support programme (via ICS).
- WorkWell programme to help long-term sick or disabled adults into employment.
- JET programme.
- A skills academy and apprenticeship hub for the housing sector.
- Work readiness programmes.
- Sector-based work academies (Future Skills Academy).
- UKSPF-funded interventions at community level.
- Deliver Government's Plan for Jobs programme locally.
- Bus, rail and active travel upgrades to improve access to employment throughout the city.



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Priorities

Improving living standards and the quality of life, relative to national and regional averages.

People have opportunities to secure work which not only provides them with high levels of satisfaction, but also enables them to attain at least a satisfactory standard of living and gives them greater control over their lives.

- Maximise household incomes and reduce unclaimed benefits.
- Support people in hardship.
- Create viable pathways to better paid work opportunities.
- Make homes warmer and safer to improve health outcomes.

Key deliverables:

- A sector-led skills plan to support access to higher paid, better quality work.
- A remote working strategy to attract jobs without the need for physical investment.
- Development of a plan to ensure our residents are able to secure jobs in 'strategic corridors'.
- Work with key partners to promote in-work skills development and Real Living Wage commitment.
- Delivery of the City Council's Fuel Poverty Strategy and investment in housing quality improvements.
- More public and private sector employers achieving accreditations (e.g. 'living wage' employer, 'investors in diversity' and 'disability confident').
- Provision of a more affordable and accessible citywide public transport network.



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Priorities

Revitalising our high streets and town centres.

Reimagining and reshaping our high streets and town centres in order to create places that people value, that attract visitors and trade, and instil pride in communities.

- Improving the public realm and investing in transport infrastructure.
- Effective use of heritage and other public assets.
- Imaginative planning for post-retail uses for local centres.
- Involvement of communities in designing sustainable future uses for places.
- Commercially-informed future high streets / town centres.
- Delivering the right mix of housing and business premises in town centres.

Key deliverables:

- High Street Accelerators programme to develop innovative solutions for urban centres.
- Revised town centre masterplans for the post-retail era (shift to experiential model / offer).
- Heritage Action Zones.
- Townscape regeneration programmes;
- Exploring and identifying viable opportunities for community asset transfer.
- Repurpose / reuse of buildings and heritage assets to decrease property vacancy rates.
- Attraction of cultural 'pop-ups' and touring shows.
- Creation of 'local hubs' combining housing with experiential attractions and retail offers.



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Priorities

Developing economic infrastructure and social capital in our communities

Involving different groups and communities in economic strategy and decision-making around investment and planning for the future of our city.

- Exploring possible economic uses for community and heritage assets.
- Examining how the council and partners could enable and support the development of community-owned enterprises.
- Working with engaged/influential community groups to nurture entrepreneurship at local level.
- Supporting communities to develop ways of contributing to key priorities in the Our City, Our Wellbeing Corporate Strategy.

Key deliverables:

- A funding and financing plan aligned with the priorities highlighted in the strategy.
- Partnership with the Local Trust to develop approaches to building social capital.
- Delivery of UKSPF grants to encourage and sustain community-level entrepreneurship.
- VCSE Accord on partnership working between the council and the voluntary, community and faith sector locally.



Priorities

Community wealth building.

Creating an economic environment where wealth creation is distributed across various segments of the community, and where the money generated remains in the local economy for longer.

- Exploring potential opportunities for community-based wealth generation.
- Assessing requirements for the development of community-owned and social enterprises.
- Working with developers to ensure major regeneration projects are delivered in line with community wealth building principles.
- Targeting business development funding at local communities to foster entrepreneurship.

Key deliverables:

- Community wealth building and alternative ownership models (e.g. community and social enterprises).
- A procurement model aimed at maximising economic and social value benefits to improve key outcomes.
- Invite public and private sector organisations to sign up to Stoke-on-Trent procurement charter to retain local spend and create opportunities for local people.
- Use of UKSPF-funded funding streams to encourage and sustain community-based entrepreneurship.
- A cohesive plan to grow community-owned and social enterprises.
- VCSE Accord.



Priorities

Working with businesses and partners to maximise the benefits from responsible procurement.

Using the combined influence and spending power of the City Council and engaged partners to extract greater social and economic value from procurement and inward investment.

- Implementing the new procurement model and monitoring delivery of social value benefits.
- Collaborating with anchor institutions to share knowledge, maximise benefits and work towards shared objectives.
- Exploring the potential use of community assets to support economic renewal.
- Using procurement and inward investment to maximise social value outcomes from council contracts and spending.

Key deliverables:

- A procurement model aimed at maximising economic and social value benefits to improve key outcomes.
- Devising and implementing the 'Stoke-on-Trent Pound' model to maximise collective spending power across the city
- Development of a social value-based approach to inward investment that requires developers and other stakeholders to incorporate additional social and economic benefits within new contracts.
- Development of new procurement charter and framework for key anchor institutions.
- Promotion of a mutually beneficial procurement approach for local businesses.



Priorities

Enabling and supporting green growth.

Capitalising on our emerging status as a beacon for renewable and low-carbon energy innovation to help create the conditions for environmentally sustainable economic growth.

- Develop a compelling commercial low-carbon energy offer to businesses.
- Address and mitigate local implications of climate change.
- Decarbonise housing, transport and industry to adhere to the UN COP framework and targets.
- Create the conditions for the expansion of renewable energy innovation and businesses.

Key deliverables:

- Installation, expansion and operation of the District Heat Network.
- Bringing forward Historic England's plans for a green energy hub on the Chatterley Whitfield Colliery site.
- Capitalising on the opportunities provided by the availability of a local geothermal heat source.
- Delivering plans for the Energy Recovery Facility at Sideway.
- Establishing a commercial energy company.
- Installing electric vehicle charging infrastructure at strategic locations across the city.
- Delivering solar energy generation facilities at suitable locations across Stoke-on-Trent.
- Working with universities to capitalise on renewable energy innovation projects.
- Ensuring that residents benefit from the skills opportunities generated by renewable energy.



Measuring progress

Delivery of the Inclusive Economic Strategy will be monitored and reported using appropriate indicators from the revised Strategic and Operational Measures which will underpin the performance monitoring of the Our City, Our Wellbeing Corporate Strategy.

The development of this strategy alongside the Corporate Strategy provides an opportunity to influence and inform the selection of the new Strategic Measures.

Proposed measures will be evaluated and selected based on:

- Availability of reliable and meaningful data (preferably at both city and ward level).
- Frequency of reporting (preferably quarterly).
- Any delay in the reporting of data which might reduce their utility.
- The ease of data collection and processing.

