



City of
Stoke-on-Trent

Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Economic Development Strategy
2024-28

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Executive Summary

This strategy outlines Stoke-on-Trent's plan to transition from a post-industrial city to a nationally important generator of economic growth, employment and innovation. It sets out nine priorities for the delivery of a wellbeing-centred economy and describes the city's existing and emerging competitive advantages in relation to key industrial sectors, as well as its aims to leverage the city's unique cultural heritage and assets to drive economic growth and improve living standards. The strategy also defines the main challenges which exist in terms of latency in the city's economy, and important opportunities to catalyse growth, innovation and investment.

Economic Context

Stoke-on-Trent has transitioned from a traditional manufacturing base to a more diversified economy. Key sectors include advanced manufacturing, digital technology, and creative industries. Despite this diversification, the city faces challenges such as health-related unemployment, lower educational attainment, and economic inactivity. Addressing these issues is crucial for unlocking the city's full economic potential.

Economic Outlook

The city is well-positioned to contribute significantly to regional and national economic growth. Emerging sectors like digital technology and green energy, along with a strong advanced manufacturing base, are expected to drive future growth. However, to fully realize this potential, the city must address underlying issues such as skills gaps, health disparities, and infrastructure needs.

Key Economic Sectors

Advanced Manufacturing

Stoke-on-Trent is at the heart of the UK's largest advanced manufacturing cluster, particularly strong in ceramics, materials, and metals. The sector employs around 2,350 people across 115 companies, generating a combined turnover of nearly £400 million. Key industries include rail, automotive, aerospace, and renewables manufacturing.

Digital and Technological Sector

The digital sector in Stoke-on-Trent is growing rapidly, with significant clusters in gaming and cyber security. The city has a strong digital infrastructure, including a city-wide gigabit-enabled full fibre network. The sector employs over 3,700 people in 377 companies, with a combined turnover of around £1.1 billion.

Creative Industries

Stoke-on-Trent aims to become an International Centre of Ceramics, leveraging its rich cultural heritage. The creative industries sector is seen as a key driver for economic growth, with plans to develop the city into a globally significant cultural destination.

Strategic Pillars and Priorities

Pillar 1: People

1. Community Wealth Building.
 - Objectives: Utilize local assets and investment to boost the local economy and distribute economic benefits more fairly.
 - Approach: Focus on local procurement, community ownership, and social enterprises to build wealth within the community.
2. Creating Opportunities for Employment and Skills.
 - Objectives: Improve education and skills to match industry needs, support long-term sick individuals to remain in or return to work, and enhance social mobility.
 - Approach: Develop sector-based work academies, improve public transport connectivity, and channel investment into education and skills programs.
3. Improving Living Standards and Quality of Life.
 - Objectives: Reduce poverty and inequality, improve health and wellbeing, and ensure access to quality housing and services.
 - Approach: Implement a Fuel Poverty Strategy, support employers in achieving quality work accreditations, and develop a more affordable public transport network.

Pillar 2: Business

4. Supporting Businesses to Start Up, Grow, Thrive, and Innovate.
 - Objectives: Foster innovation, streamline access to finance, and create a skilled workforce.
 - Approach: Develop a comprehensive business support model, create a growth-focused business ecosystem, and support SMEs with specialist services.
5. Working with Businesses and Partners to Maximize the Benefits of Responsible Procurement.
 - Objectives: Increase local procurement, promote social value, and create employment and skills opportunities.
 - Approach: Implement a responsible procurement framework and develop a social value-based approach to inward investment.
6. Enabling and Supporting Green Growth.
 - Objectives: Promote sustainable economic practices, support the green economy, and decarbonize local industries.
 - Approach: Expand the District Heat Network, develop a green energy innovation hub, and invest in energy recovery technology.

Pillar 3: Place

7. Making Stoke-on-Trent a More Attractive Destination.

- Objectives: Improve the city's attractiveness for businesses and residents, enhance public transport, and develop new housing.
- Approach: Develop transport infrastructure, create new employment sites, and improve the physical appearance of urban areas.

8. Revitalizing High Streets and Town Centres.

- Objectives: Transform high streets and town centres into vibrant hubs of activity.
- Approach: Develop masterplans for urban centres, improve public realm, and explore community asset transfers.

9. Developing Economic Infrastructure and Social Capital.

- Objectives: Strengthen social capital, improve community facilities, and support local entrepreneurship.
- Approach: Work with community groups, develop funding plans for social infrastructure, and encourage community-led projects.

Foreword

This economic development strategy sets out how the city of Stoke-on-Trent and all of its people can successfully navigate the transition from our prosperous past as the Staffordshire Potteries through the underperforming present of a post-industrial manufacturing city to a future in which our city thrives in the technological revolution currently underway in the transition to a greener economy.

Our city was once the innovative, creative, cultural home of Josiah Wedgwood and Arnold Bennett, of Reginald Mitchell and Hugh Bourne, and we are rightly proud of our past. Following the rapid growth of manufacturing industries in the Staffordshire Potteries, the population of Stoke-on-Trent and its six towns increased almost tenfold over just one hundred years to the end of the 19th Century. The buoyant trade exports at that time underpinned a local prosperity which is still reflected today in a citywide heritage of grand Victorian-era buildings and our landscaped city parks, as well as in the continuing manufacture of ceramics.

Since those times, the population has almost doubled again and we are now a quarter of a million people living and working in an area which remains the central nexus of the North Staffordshire sub-regional economy. Within our dense urban area, you will find advanced steel-making supplying the US military, precision micro and nano-ceramics producing component parts for space rockets, bespoke PC design of the highest specification and digital security services used by the world's leading state intelligence bodies, and of course the number one online gaming company in the world. Our sheer diversity gives us strength, built on a bedrock of small and medium enterprises, two knowledge rich universities and a flexible labour force with transferable skills between the various sub-sectors that thrive within the Potteries. It all adds up to a can-do culture – if something needs making, we will find a way to make it; if something needs doing, we will find the way to get it done.

But this economic resurgence cannot deny the reality of derelict buildings, empty homes, broken windows and boarded up shops: indicators of the enduring impact of the post-industrial manufacturing decline which was also experienced by many other places across the Midlands and in the North of England.

The links between population health, relative poverty and levels of attainment in education and skills are well evidenced. Together, in Stoke-on-Trent today, they act as an unwanted brake on our latent potential for economic growth. It is a dragnet from which we must break free, the greatest weakness that our economic development strategy seeks to address. To navigate the transition from past to future prosperity, from the manufacturing industries of the Staffordshire Potteries to the best prospects of a future economy in the modern world, we will need to change the state of affairs: reinvigorating the people, as well as the places and businesses of Stoke-on-Trent. To do so, we cannot simply rely on top-down interventions, like multi-million pound high-profile investments, to breathe life back into a few of our most special buildings. We will need to be smarter than that.

The good news is that we have not lost our capacity to innovate: our businesses and the people who work in them are at the forefront of the world's most important industries. Our digital economy sector is one of the ten most productive in the UK and, anchored in Stoke-on-Trent, we are well-positioned to benefit from the expected focus on digital technology and AI in the government's Industrial Strategy. We remain a creative city, richly endowed with an arts and cultural sector providing community events, public galleries, accessible museums, popular concert halls and theatres. We are resilient, too, with our recovery GVA growth rates among the greatest in the country following the recent economic shocks which stalled growth across the British national economy. We can help our logistics resources sector move from its strong

existing base into even higher value-added activities. As the largest manufacturing cluster across Staffordshire, with particular strengths in advanced manufacturing, we can place ourselves among the leaders of the transformation to a green economy, drawing on the innovation capabilities of the Universities of Keele and Staffordshire.

We are a younger than average British city so, with these two universities as well as a renowned FE college and the region's concentration of health sector capability, we can be central to improving the availability of skills and talent across the whole region, in support the Government's overall growth and employment strategy, including all of that which follows from an ageing population and increasing demands for health and social care.

These are among the firm foundations that we can build on to realise the full potential of our ambitions for the future of our city, as we seek to exploit opportunities for betterment that arise, whether from devolution to local governance arrangements, or the government's five national missions for economic renewal, or from as yet unforeseen developments in technology.

This is a city that embraces growth and the benefits it will bring for our population. We are a city that will say 'yes' when new opportunities are made available to us. And we are ready to shape our own future, creating wealth for the nation as we did so successfully for over 200 years.

Together, we can chart this course, working with the people in our communities and the businesses across our city, to enhance the place where we all live.

(Cllr Jane Ashworth – Leader, Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Cabinet Member for Strategy, Economic Development, Culture and Sport)

Introduction

Stoke-on-Trent is the primary city economy and driver of employment and economic growth in and around Staffordshire, and the largest city between the West Midlands, Greater Manchester and East Midlands conurbations. A track record as one of the UK's fastest-growing local economies in the past decade has demonstrated that investment in Stoke-on-Trent goes further and unlocks greater economic and social benefits than elsewhere. Today, a combination of factors, including geographical advantages, strong labour supply and the diversification of the city's industrial base, means that Stoke-on-Trent is primed to deliver sustained, rapid growth and become a regionally and nationally important generator of wealth, productivity and employment. To achieve its economic objectives, the city must address the significant latency which has hitherto dissipated the effects of the last decade's sustained expansion, investment and regeneration. This strategy sets out how Stoke-on-Trent will build on its economic and geographical strengths and its cultural history of creativity and innovation to fulfil its potential as the key driver of commercial expansion, opportunity and prosperity for the northern Midlands.

Stoke-on-Trent is the largest city in Staffordshire and the biggest urban area within a 40-mile radius bounded by Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, Sheffield, Derby and Nottingham. As the economic and population centre of the North Staffordshire city region, Stoke-on-Trent's economic influence encompasses neighbouring Newcastle-under-Lyme and Staffordshire Moorlands and extends into Mid- and South Staffordshire and into adjoining parts of Cheshire East, Shropshire and the Derbyshire Dales. Travel to work data clearly illustrates the city's role as the chief driver of employment and commerce within this 'Greater Stoke' functional economic area and highlights the powerful interdependencies between the city and satellite population centres and districts.

The historical predominance of manufacturing industries, and the world-renowned ceramics sector in particular, established Stoke-on-Trent as a post-Industrial Revolution powerhouse and a nationally important nexus of creativity and wealth generation straddling the logistical artery of the Trent & Mersey Canal. The rapid decline of traditional manufacturing industries and coalmining in the 1980s delivered a devastating blow to the city's economic and social fabric. Stoke-on-Trent experienced one of the proportionately largest declines in manufacturing employment of any place in the UK, from more than 60,000 employed in manufacturing or mining in the early 1980s, accounting for half of the total workforce, to 13,000 manufacturing jobs today, representing only 10% of employment in the city. By the time of the 2008 global financial crash, however, the effects of multi-layered interventions and regeneration programmes had begun to reverse this decline, creating the conditions for greater investment and expansion. The city benefited from a sustained economic resurgence over the next decade, against a backdrop of faltering national recovery, catalysing a process of economic renewal which has seen Stoke-on-Trent embrace new industries and sectors and begin to capitalise on the city region's geographical advantages, its exceptional knowledge economy and a younger and more skilled workforce.

While grappling with significant challenges, Stoke-on-Trent is nonetheless well-placed to build on its positive economic trajectory and transform, not only its own economic future, but that of North Staffordshire and wider sub-region. The city's economic profile highlights significant strengths, both current and potential, which can propel it to new realms of commercial activity, expansion, diversification and prosperity, while addressing residual problems. Although diminished compared to its former industrial heyday, manufacturing has not only remained a mainstay of Stoke-on-Trent's economy, but has evolved and diversified to incorporate a strong and growing advanced materials and manufacturing sector which has its creative origins in the ceramics industry. The creativity which characterised Stoke-on-Trent's illustrious past as a

global centre for ceramics production is not only powering the growth of creative and cultural industries and clusters in the city, but is also shaping an emerging digital creative sector which heralds a new era of innovation and opportunity.

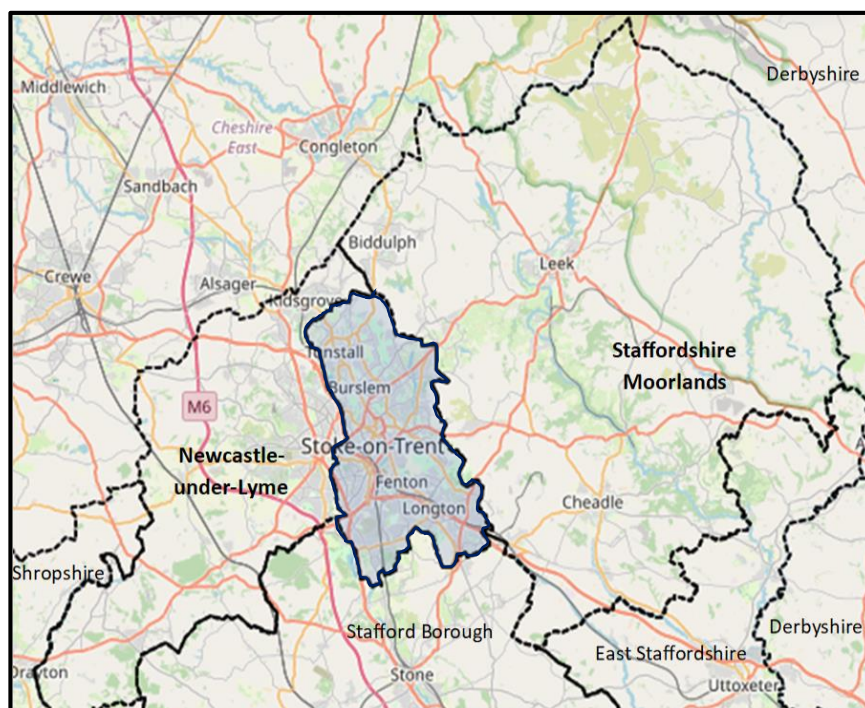
This Economic Development Strategy is intended to provide a highly credible and collaborative blueprint for the continuing transformation and expansion of Stoke-on-Trent's economy. By securing additional investment, nurturing high-growth sectors, enhancing the urban environment and addressing workforce skills and wellbeing, Stoke-on-Trent can overcome its economic latency to deliver increased prosperity for its citizens and unlock transformative benefits for the city region, Staffordshire and the wider economic area. The strategy will also address the evident disconnect between economic performance and the lived experience of citizens which has highlighted the need for a new approach and an economy that works for everyone in our city. Fixing this will necessitate a new approach geared towards strengthening connections between supply-side growth and the economic and social welfare of the city's population.

To achieve these aims, the strategy focuses on three key pillars: People, Business and Place, and sets out a number of supporting priorities and approaches which, together, will aim to create the conditions for sustained economic expansion, enhance productivity and reduce the socio-economic latency which has characterised the city's economy for too long. In doing so, it aims to cultivate a fairer, more inclusive local economy which can deliver more tangible benefits for the city and its people. The priorities set out under each pillar have been selected and shaped through collaborative work and consultations with key partners and stakeholders and represent shared ambitions for a more prosperous future which the city and its regional and national partners can unite behind and ultimately work together to deliver over the next five years and beyond.

The strategy is intended to provide a coherent, credible and deliverable framework to enable the City Council and partners to secure investment to enable delivery against each of the nine economic priorities. Sustained reductions in local government funding nationally since 2010, and in funding for more deprived areas in particular, mean that it is not possible for the City Council to deliver this strategy on its own. Our spending power has been reduced by around 70 per cent over the last 14 years, while demand for local services has increased. Successful delivery of this strategy is therefore contingent on securing additional funding and support from central government, potentially through some form of devolution arrangement, as well as continuing to attract vital private investment to progress key regeneration and development projects throughout Stoke-on-Trent and wider North Staffordshire.

This strategy provides a high-level summary of the key economic priorities, challenges and opportunities in relation to Stoke-on-Trent over the next decade and beyond. More detail in terms of specific actions, timeframes and resources required to implement the strategy and achieve the city's economic objectives will be set out in a forthcoming delivery plan.

Overview of Stoke-on-Trent



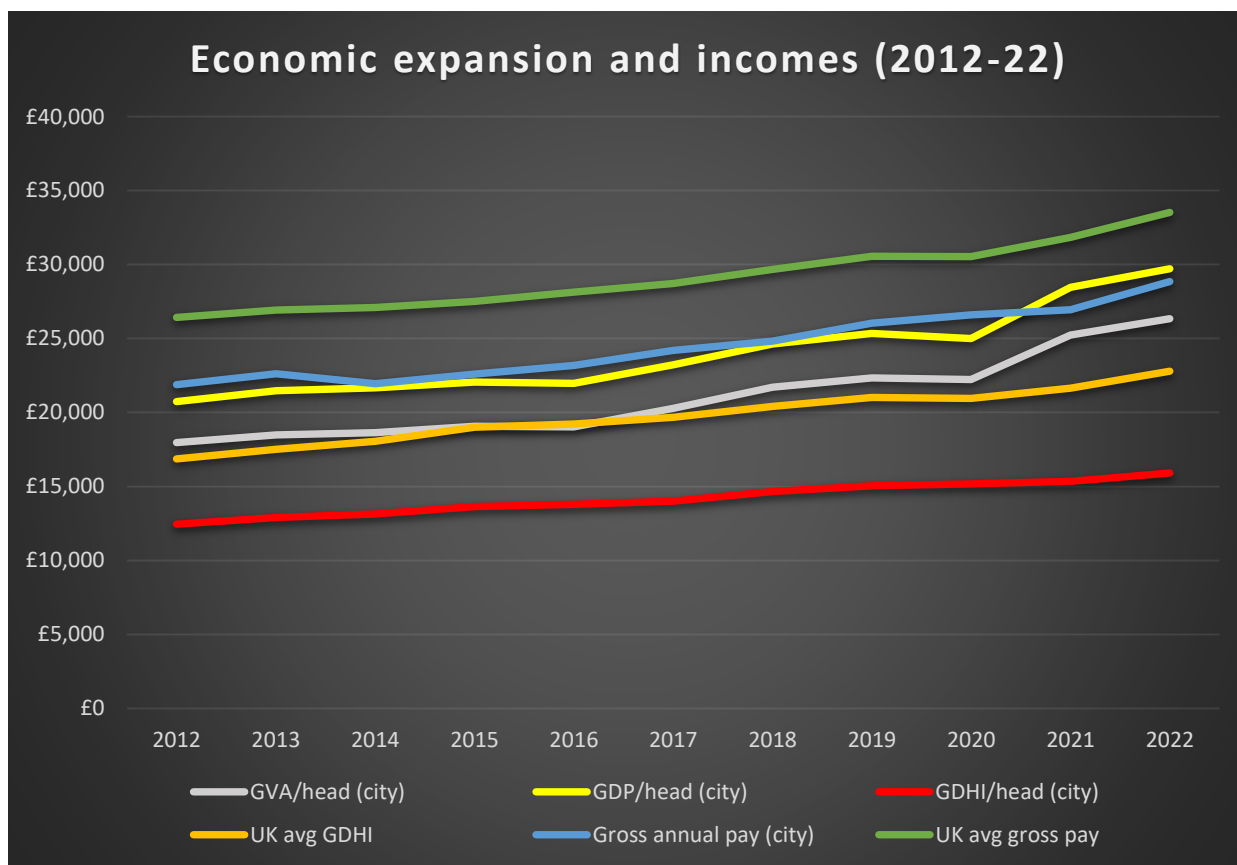
Stoke-on-Trent is a growing city with a relatively young population of more than 258,000 residents. Net population growth has been highest in the five to 14 age range, at 18.8 per cent, followed by the over-65 population, which grew by 14.1 per cent. The working age population of 161,000 has remained stable, but the lack of net change masks a more complex picture of immigration and internal migration which is characterised by adults moving out of the city in their 20s and 30s and being replaced by migrants from abroad and other parts of the UK, particularly from London, where metropolitan boroughs have incentivised relocation outside the capital in recent years. Cheaper housing costs mean that it is possible to live more comfortably on lower income levels, especially for young families. But the data suggests that limited employment opportunities and housing choices may be driving the exodus of younger adults, including graduates.

Stoke-on-Trent's distinctive cultural heritage is one of its most important assets, both economically and in terms of social cohesion, identity and pride in place. Social and civic pride among indigenous citizens stems from the city's historic status as a world capital of ceramics and a national hub for celebrated pottery manufacturers, designers and artists. It was an internationally renowned city of makers, in which everyone played a part; threads in a rich and colourful cultural and economic tapestry. Nostalgia for this industrial golden age of plentiful and accessible employment, strong communities and (relatively) buoyant living standards has been heightened by the devastating loss of traditional industries during the 1980s and '90s – a crippling economic, social and psychological blow which has reverberated through subsequent decades. The imposing bastions of Stoke-on-Trent's creative industries fell silent and were reduced to crumbling architectural relics as surrounding neighbourhoods became hollowed-out pockets of deprivation and entrenched inequalities which persist to this day.

Relatively buoyant levels of employment in recent years (the city outstripped the West Midlands and wider UK in 2022, achieving 78.5 per cent employment, according to ONS data) mask serious underlying issues. Despite gradual improvements, education and skills levels continue to lag behind the rest of England, from pre-school development rates through to participation levels in higher education. Levels of health-related unemployment have doubled over the past

decade; having closed the gap to the rest of the UK in 2014, they have since risen three times more quickly than the national average level. Poor mental health accounts for more than half of all health-related unemployment in the city, reflecting a broader national picture, but declining physical health is an increasingly concerning factor in a city where the average healthy life expectancy is under 56 years – more than seven years younger than the UK average – and more than a decade before the retirement age.

Similarly, the local economy’s rapid recovery from both the 2008 financial crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic contradicts a multitude of indications that commercial expansion has not directly benefited large numbers of the city’s inhabitants in terms of incomes, living standards or life chances. In purely financial terms, the scale of this latency is highlighted by the direct comparison of GVA and GDP per capita with average wages and gross disposable household income (GDHI) levels in the decade from 2012 to the most recent data release in 2022. In a conventional economic model, rising growth and productivity would also push up wages and average living standards, but that has not happened yet in Stoke-on-Trent. This discrepancy between growth, prosperity and living standards is also reinforced by a number of wellbeing-related measures and other population outcome data.

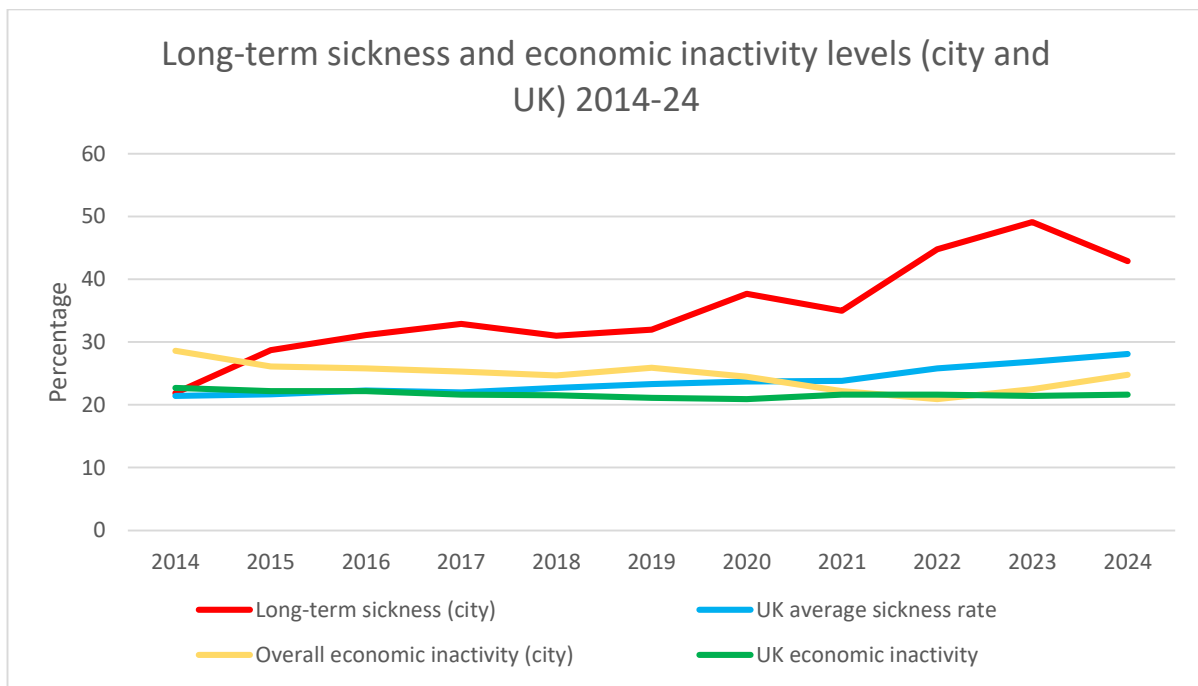


[Fig.1 Stoke-on-Trent’s GVA, GDP, GDHI and wage levels since 2012 – Source: ONS]

The above graph (Fig. 1) shows that the value of the city’s economy (GVA) grew by 47 per cent over the decade (£8,368 per capita), while productivity (GDP) increased by 43 per cent (£8,979) and wage levels rose by 32 per cent (£6,979), rising more rapidly than the UK average (27 per cent). However, disposable household incomes in the city grew least quickly (28 per cent) over this time (£3,444), compared to 35 per cent (£5,919) nationally. The sluggish GDHI growth suggests that living in the city became more expensive, and wages failed to compensate for

this. On average pay, the fact that city wages grew from a lower base meant that the shortfall to the UK average wage actually increased in monetary terms by £113 a year. GDHI data suggest that the average Stoke-on-Trent household was £2,500 poorer by 2022, relative to the UK average, than it was in 2012, despite the city recording stronger economic performance and more rapid wage growth. The factors behind this apparent disconnect between economic growth and prosperity will be explored later in this strategy.

Long-term ill health represents a significant economic challenge for Stoke-on-Trent. The proportion of working age adults who are out of work due to ill health is measured as a percentage of economically inactive adults. The chart below shows that, while Stoke-on-Trent has been maintaining levels of economic inactivity which have been broadly in line with the UK average throughout the last decade, the proportion of economically inactive adults who are long-term sick has doubled in this same time period. The size of the economically inactive cohort of adults has shrunk since 2014. For this reason, although the proportion of long-term sick adults has doubled, the actual number has only increased from 9,900 to 16,800. However, if Stoke-on-Trent had continued to align with the national average trajectory there would be 5,800 fewer adults out of work with long-term health issues in the city. Left unaddressed the levels of long-term sickness may continue to increase, pulling down overall productivity, economic activity and earnings per capita and placing further strain on welfare and local health and support services, including adult social care. Economic activity levels which had consistently languished seven percentage points below the UK average as recently as 2012 closed the gap by 2020 but currently trail a more modest per three cent behind.

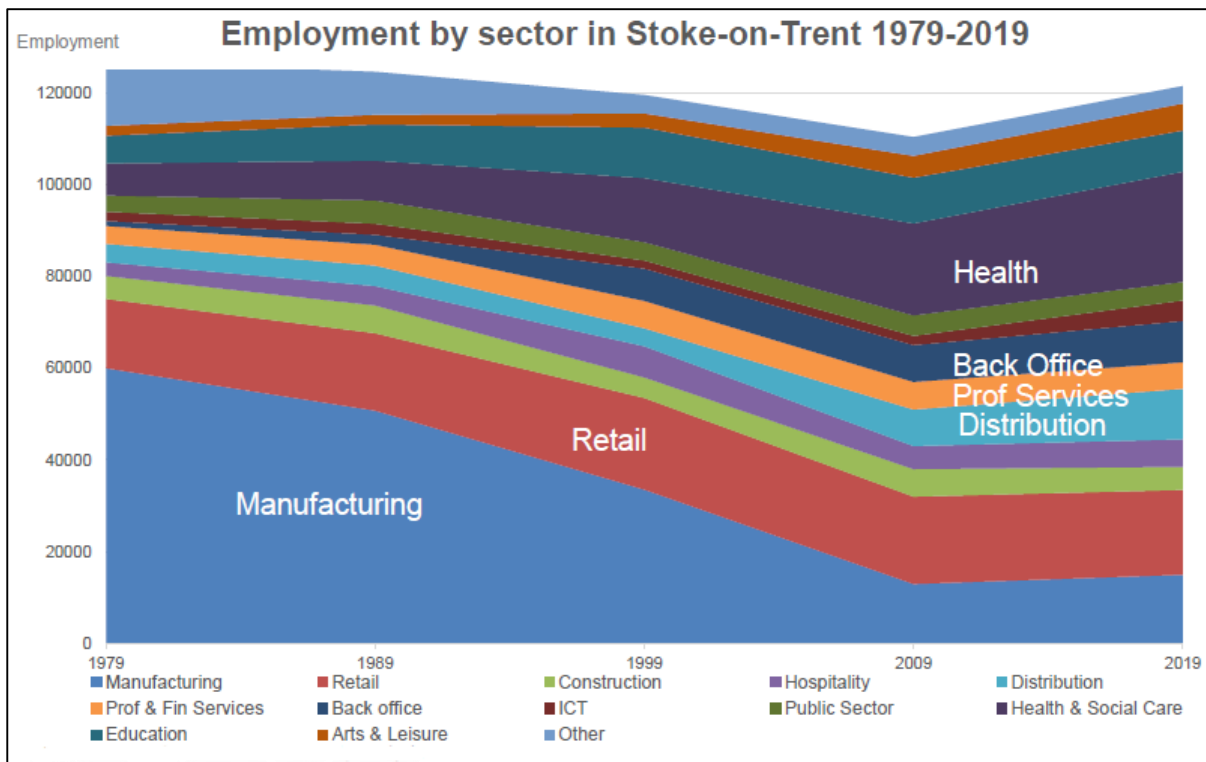


[Fig.2 - Comparing city and UK levels of economic activity and health-related unemployment. Source: ONS]

Economic context

Both locally and nationally, the sectors which were traditionally seen as the key drivers of economic growth have changed over time. Since the 1980s, the UK economy has shifted away from traditional manufacturing towards services (financial services, business services, rent and real estate). This shift exacerbated the economic impact on post-industrial areas and benefited larger cities with established financial and service sectors. The result for Stoke-on-Trent was that the city effectively underwent a transition from making goods to distributing them.

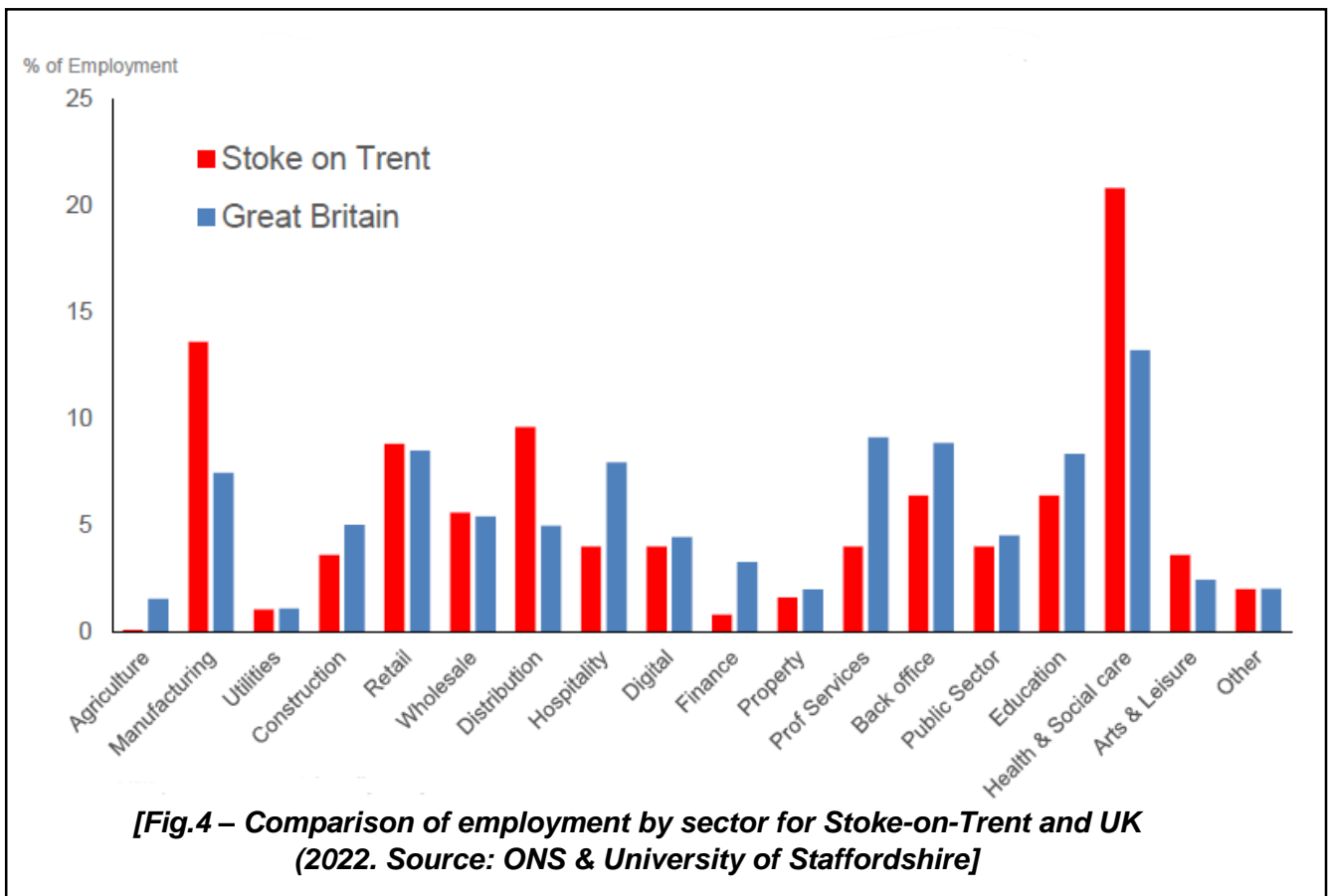
Whereas heavy industry once dominated the labour market, more than a fifth of the city's workers are now employed in the health and care sector, either at the sub-region's main hospital (Royal Stoke University Hospital) or in domiciliary and adult social care – a sector which has seen sustained growth in the last decade due to increasing numbers of infirm older and working age adults. Manufacturing still employs around one in six of the city's workforce, with a similar number working in the retail sector and one in ten occupying jobs in the burgeoning transport and logistics industry.



**[Fig.3 – The emergence of the Stoke-on-Trent's post-industrial labour market
Source: ONS & University of Staffordshire]**

The predominance of manual and elementary level jobs (one in five adults in the city work in low-skilled or unskilled roles) has its origins in historic low levels of educational attainment and training. Currently, 19 per cent of working age adults in the city lack Level 3 or higher qualifications (the UK level is 13.5 per cent), while 8.1 per cent have no formal qualifications at all. The city's average GCSE (Attainment 8) score per pupil was five points below the average score for England. Inward investment and commercial expansion have created more higher-skilled jobs in and around Stoke-on-Trent over the past decade. The dual challenge and opportunity facing Stoke-on-Trent now is to further accelerate levels of business growth and job

creation, particularly in high-value, higher-skilled industrial sectors, while simultaneously transforming education and skills provision to ensure that city residents are able to benefit directly from the plethora of opportunities being created on their doorstep. This 'building the bridge from both ends' approach will necessitate greater investment in a range of areas, including workforce development, infrastructure and connectivity, high streets and communities, housing, green industries, cultural development and community enterprise. By focusing on structural interventions, the City Council and its partners will aim to eradicate latency by improving employment rates, raising incomes, enhancing the business climate and strengthening social mobility.



The above graphs serve to illustrate Stoke-on-Trent’s transition from making to distributing in the wake of the collapse of traditional industries in the city. The local economy has effectively been hollowed out and transformed from maker to distributor in sectors such as food, textiles and printing. Services have grown slower locally than nationally, with banking, accounting and law actually declining while growing nationally. These jobs have been replaced by relatively low-skilled, lower-value-added work in lower-value sectors and industries. Sectoral shifts have resulted in slower growth in high-end opportunities than the UK as a whole and a decline in the skill level of work in the city in the middle of the labour market. Most of the growth in the numbers of associate professional level jobs has been in the health sector and more recently in the digital sector.

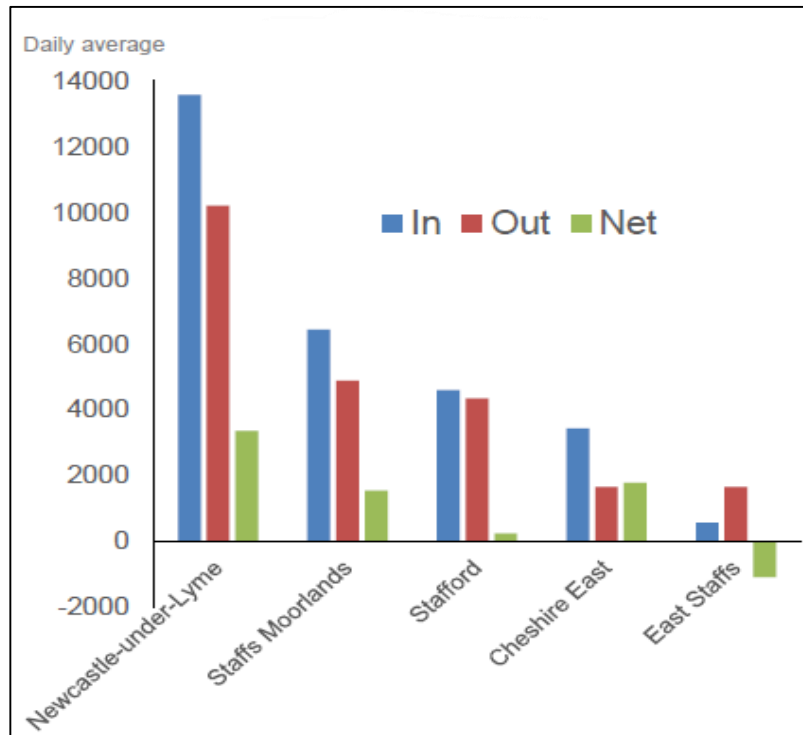
Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire - key data

Comparison of key demographic and economic data for North Staffordshire. (Sources: ONS, GOV.UK & Midlands Engine)

Measure	Stoke-on-Trent	Newcastle-under-Lyme	Staffordshire Moorlands	UK average
Population size	258,100	123,000	96,000	-
Median population age	38 years	43 years	49 years	40 years
No. of working age adults (% of population)	161,300 (62.5 %)	76,100 (61.9 %)	55,700 (58.0 %)	(62.9 %)
Economically active adults (% of working age adults)	125,300 (76.9 %)	68,600 (80.6 %)	50,400 (81.8 %)	(78.4 %)
Jobs density (jobs per head)	0.84	0.68	0.76	0.87
Business count	6,625	3,630	4,065	-
Medium & large businesses	175 (2.6 %)	75 (2.1 %)	45 (1.1 %)	(1.9 %)
Micro & SME businesses	6,450 (97.2 %)	3,555 (97.8 %)	4,020 (98.9 %)	(98.0 %)
GVA per capita	£24,175	£18,256	£16,251	£31,138
Total GVA growth rate	+9.5 %	+8.0 %	+6.3 %	+7.3 %
Level 3+ qualifications	63.0 %	66.2 %	49.2 %	67.8 %
No qualifications (adults)	8.4 %	(no data)	(no data)	6.5 %
Adults in low-skilled jobs	22.5 %	22.3 %	(no data)	14.3 %
Adults in senior managerial/professional roles	36.1 %	46.0 %	63.7 %	52.9 %
Average GCSE points/pupil	40.5	44.5 (Staffordshire)		46.4

Comparison of demographic and economic data for the three local authorities in North Staffordshire underscores both Stoke-on-Trent's strategic role as the primary generator of jobs, growth and economic activity for the sub-region, but also some of the main challenges facing the city in terms of barriers to economic growth. The comparison table above shows that the city has by far the largest and youngest population as well as the largest numbers of working age and economically active adults in the sub-region. The city has the highest business count and a greater proportion of larger firms, which are contributing to Stoke-on-Trent's higher jobs density, GVA per capita and annual rate of total GVA growth. However, the table also highlights specific challenges in Stoke-on-Trent in terms of the education and skills gap to neighbouring areas and the UK as a whole, and the consequent disparities regarding the structural composition of the labour market in relation to skill levels.

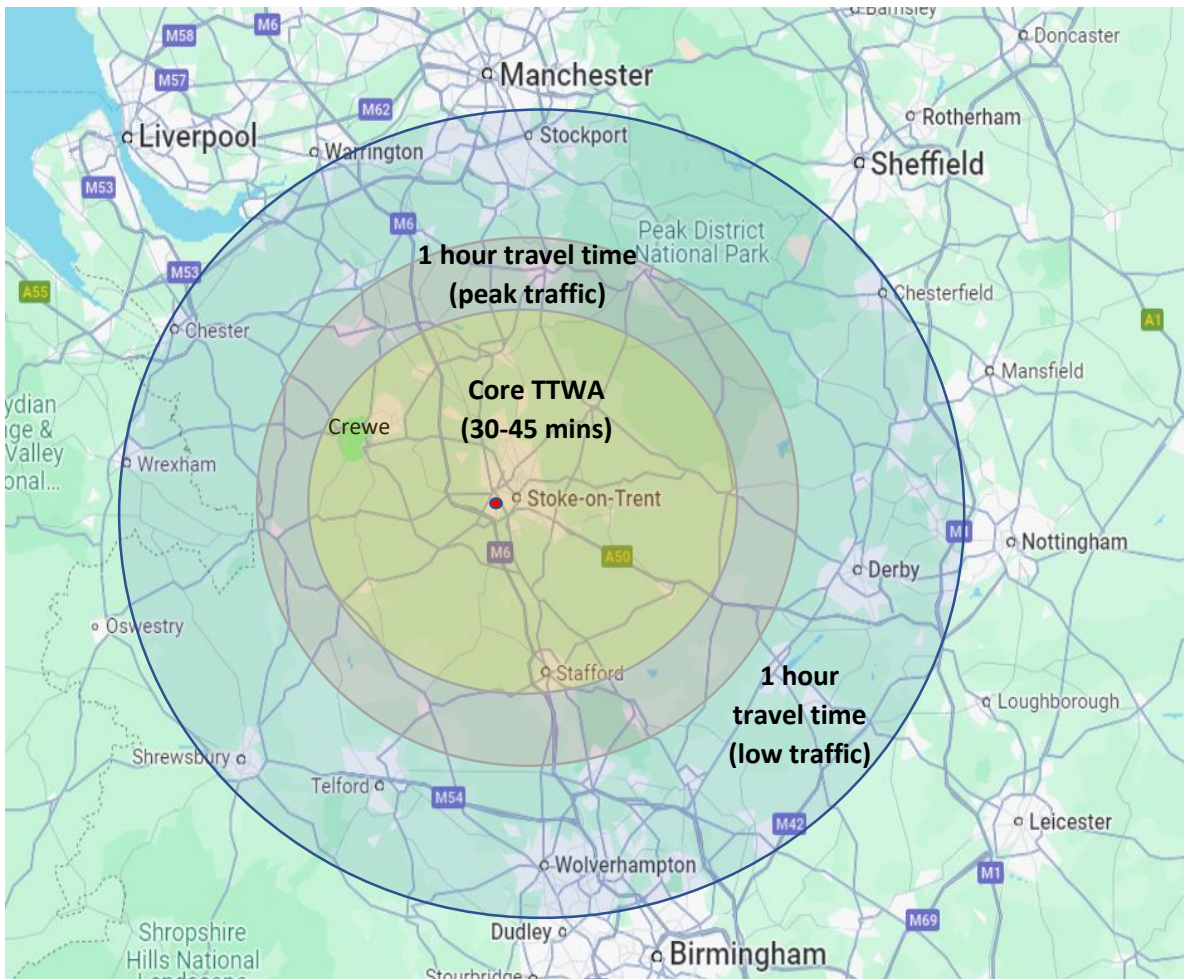
Travel to work areas and patterns



[Fig.5 – Travel to work patterns between Stoke-on-Trent and surrounding areas. Sources: ONS & University of Staffordshire]

Analysis of travel to work data for Stoke-on-Trent and surrounding areas also supports the finding that Stoke-on-Trent is the primary economic powerhouse for the sub-region and wider county. The data shows that 32,425 workers commute into the City for employment compared with 28,430 residents who commute out of Stoke-on-Trent – a net inflow of 3,995 workers. As well as showing that Stoke-on-Trent is a net importer of employment, these figures also demonstrate that the city is a nexus of economic activity for North Staffordshire. The growth of Stoke-on-Trent's economy is highly beneficial to neighbouring areas who rely on it for employment; however there is also mutual benefit to job creation in these surrounding areas, provided that Stoke-on-Trent residents can access the resulting opportunities. In this sense, the sub-region benefits from the agglomeration of businesses and jobs in Stoke-on-Trent.

The map below (*Fig.6*) shows that Stoke-on-Trent's geographical location and surrounding road transport infrastructure puts the city within or close to one hour's travel time from most surrounding cities, and parts of the Greater Manchester, West Midlands and East Midlands conurbations in particular. Stoke-on-Trent's core travel to work area (TTWA) radius covers a travel time of between approximately 30 and 45 minutes. Enabling more workers from the city to secure employment at sites within the TTWA would unlock economic benefits for Stoke-on-Trent as well as for neighbouring areas.



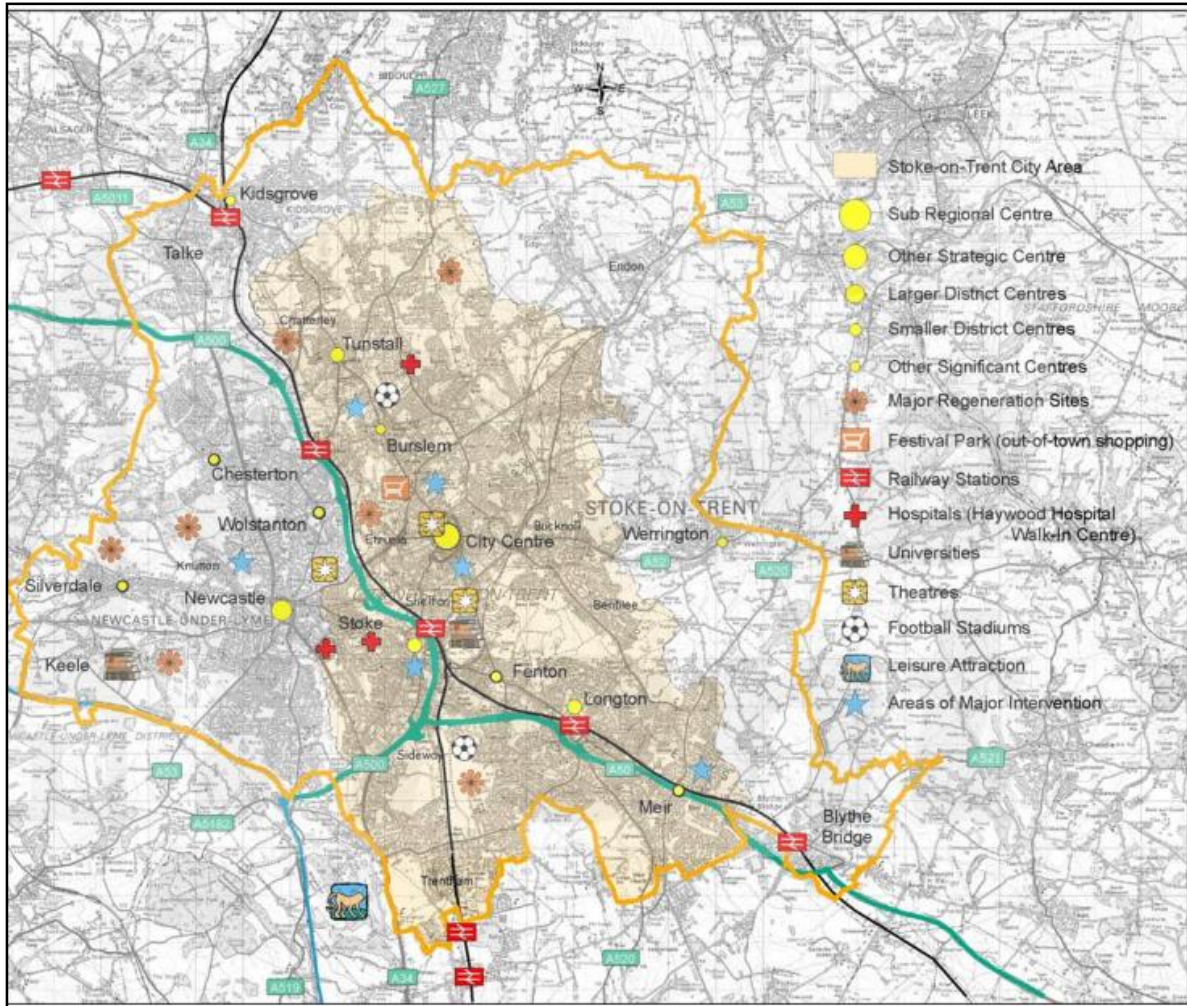
[Fig.6 – Travel to work area (TTWA) travel times from Stoke-on-Trent]

Supporting entrepreneurship

As well as enabling more residents to be able to access the jobs being created on the periphery of Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire, there is a clear need to do more to support and encourage greater entrepreneurship within the city's population. The number of commercial start-ups recorded for the city fell by 23 per cent between 2021 and 2023, from 1,130 business 'births' annually to 870. The national average start-up rate has fallen by 13 per cent over this period. The one-year survival rate for new businesses in the city was 87.5 per cent in 2022, compared to 93.1 per cent for Staffordshire. 91.4 per cent for the West Midlands and 92.3 per cent for the UK as a whole. Stoke-on-Trent is a city which, historically, has been renowned for its entrepreneurship and commercial ingenuity. There is much more work to be done around growing entrepreneurship in the city, from education and training to tailored financial support, mentoring and the provision of high-quality business incubator facilities, including the City Council's own estate of enterprise centres.

Transport

North Staffordshire's location holds the key to unlocking its economic ambitions. Already connected to the North West, West & East Midlands, local partners are now focused on making this infrastructure work across both its hierarchy and mode. This evolution requires specifically targeted investments that will lead to the transformation of the North Staffordshire economy to unlock the area's unrealised economic potential.



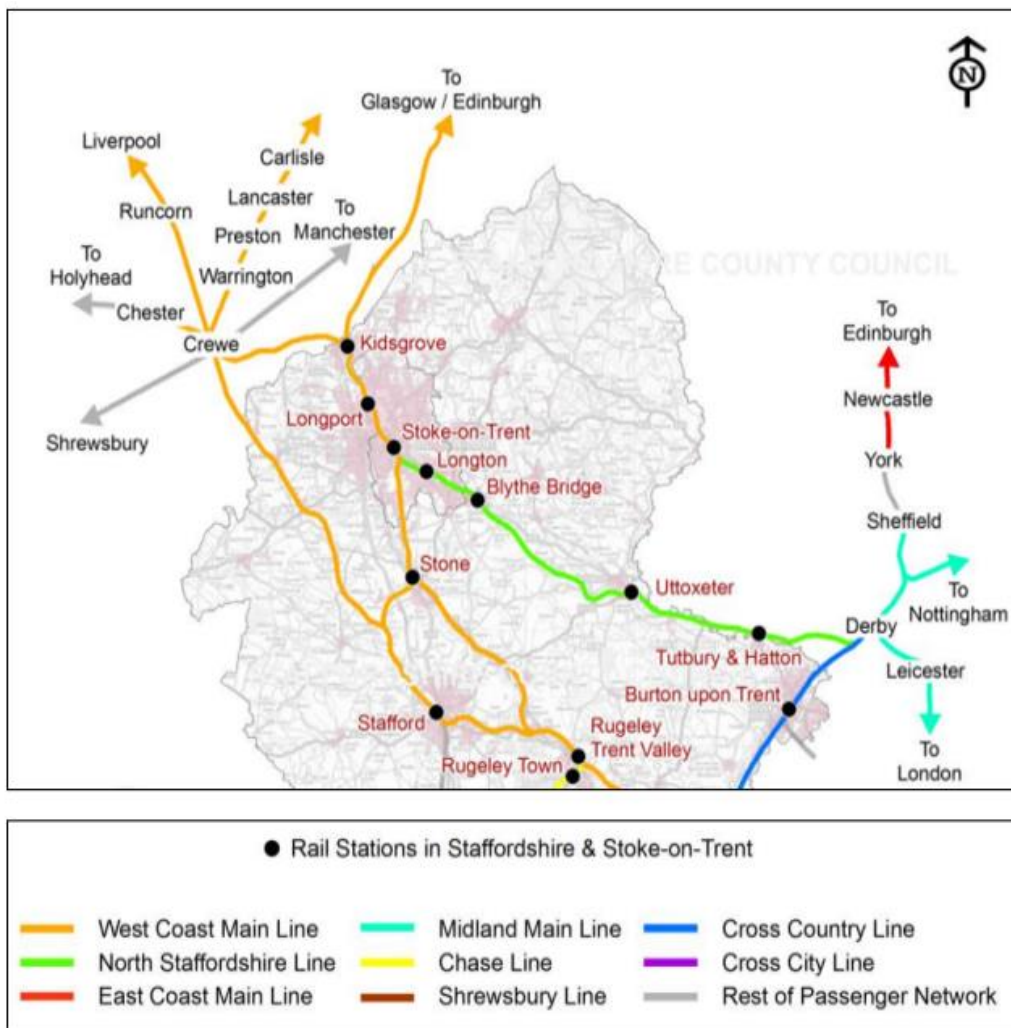
[Fig.7 – North Staffordshire's transport networks]

Rail connectivity

Stoke-on-Trent is the hub station of North Staffordshire's passenger train service, providing frequent services to London and Manchester via a branch of the West Coast Main Line, as well as Crewe, Derby and Nottingham via the East Midlands Railway. The station is used by approximately 2.5 million passengers each year. This is down from 3.26 million passenger journeys prior to the pandemic, although numbers have been increasing in successive years since travel restrictions were removed. Stoke-on-Trent provides North Staffordshire's only direct rail connections to Manchester and London. The East Midlands Railway manages a number of other stations in North Staffordshire and provides the only rail route which links all three of the North Staffordshire local authorities. The West Coast Main Line is the busiest mixed-traffic rail corridor in Europe, carrying a mix of passenger and freight traffic. The line carries 43 per cent of all freight on the national rail network.

Direct rail connections to Stoke-on-Trent:

Network	Line	Key stations	Local stations	Frequency	Travel times
North-South	West Coast Main Line	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manchester Stafford Wolverhampton Birmingham (New St & Int'l), Milton Keynes London 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stoke-on-Trent 	Twice hourly to London & Birmingham. Up to three services an hour to Manchester.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manchester (<40 mins) Birmingham New St. (<50 mins) London (1hr 35m)
East-West	East Midlands Railway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crewe Derby Nottingham 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kidsgrove, Longport, Stoke-on-Trent Longton Blythe Bridge 	Up to three times an hour to Crewe. Hourly to Derby & Nottingham.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crewe (<25 mins) Derby (<50 mins) Nottingham (1hr 15m)
Capacity has recently been increased with the replacement of some single-carriage services with newer, double-carriage trains on this line.					



[Fig.8 – North Staffordshire’s passenger rail network]

Key economic advantages:

Although the economic challenges facing Stoke-on-Trent are complex and highly damaging, the city also has a number of important advantages which will be of vital importance in helping to overcome obstacles and deliver stronger, more inclusive economic growth over the next decade and beyond. Previous investment in infrastructure has strengthened the city's ability to capitalise on its advantageous geographical location at the national crossroads between north and south, east and west.

Stoke-on-Trent has a highly advanced digital network that will support business and Smart City innovation. The gigabit-enabled, full-fibre high-speed network currently covers more than 70 per cent of Stoke-on-Trent and is growing all the time. The presence of high-quality digital infrastructure will help to meet the digital connectivity needs of existing homes and businesses, as well as attracting new employers in the digital and technology sector and laying the foundations for planned advances in digitally-enabled low-carbon energy infrastructure.

We are delivering major regeneration and housing developments across the city. The City Council is working with its strategic partner, Homes England, and private developers to secure the necessary investment to deliver plans for tens of thousands of quality new homes across Stoke-on-Trent over the next decade. Many of these will be built on 'brownfield' former industrial sites which had previously lain derelict due to unresolved land reclamation issues and other longstanding barriers to regeneration. The City Council is also reviewing plans for the City Centre to evaluate opportunities to create new housing developments which will generate the sustainable footfall needed to reinvigorate the commercial heart of the city. Furthermore, the proven importance of housing standards in raising population wellbeing levels means that delivering progress in this area is doubly vital to our economic ambitions.

The strong partnerships which exist in the city are driving interest in, and appetite for, new approaches to the generation of increased prosperity and opportunities across all parts of the city, and particularly in more deprived areas. By forging closer ties with our anchor institution partners, we will take a shared approach to procurement, contract management, public assets and investment with the aim of encouraging the creation of more social and community-owned enterprises which can strengthen local supply chains and generate sustainable wealth as well as good quality employment opportunities.

Our local universities represent the key to strengthening innovation, skills and policy-making. Evidence from other parts of the UK has shown that places with vibrant knowledge economies, supported by highly-engaged universities and further education colleges, are better able to help drive innovation across industries and sectors which can supercharge economic expansions and boost productivity, wage levels and employment opportunities.

Stoke-on-Trent is already a renewable energy trailblazer and has exciting plans around low-carbon heat and energy efficiency and generation, including high-value cluster development. The delivery of the game-changing District Heat Network continues to gather pace, with input from industry giants such as SSE and international expertise from Scandinavia and elsewhere. Future plans around energy decarbonisation and digitally-enabled smart grid technology will consolidate Stoke-on-Trent's place at the vanguard of place-based energy innovation and generate valuable opportunities in terms of advanced skills and high-value jobs.

Significant economic developments are taking shape all around our city. Stoke-on-Trent is not an island, but part of a well-established functional economic area spanning the whole of North Staffordshire and extending beyond into parts of East Cheshire and mid-Staffordshire. By taking a more opportunistic, consensual and collaborative approach to economic activity which is happening on our borders, we can enable workers from Stoke-on-Trent to secure a greater share of the opportunities being created in terms of quality, skilled jobs. This will require a more

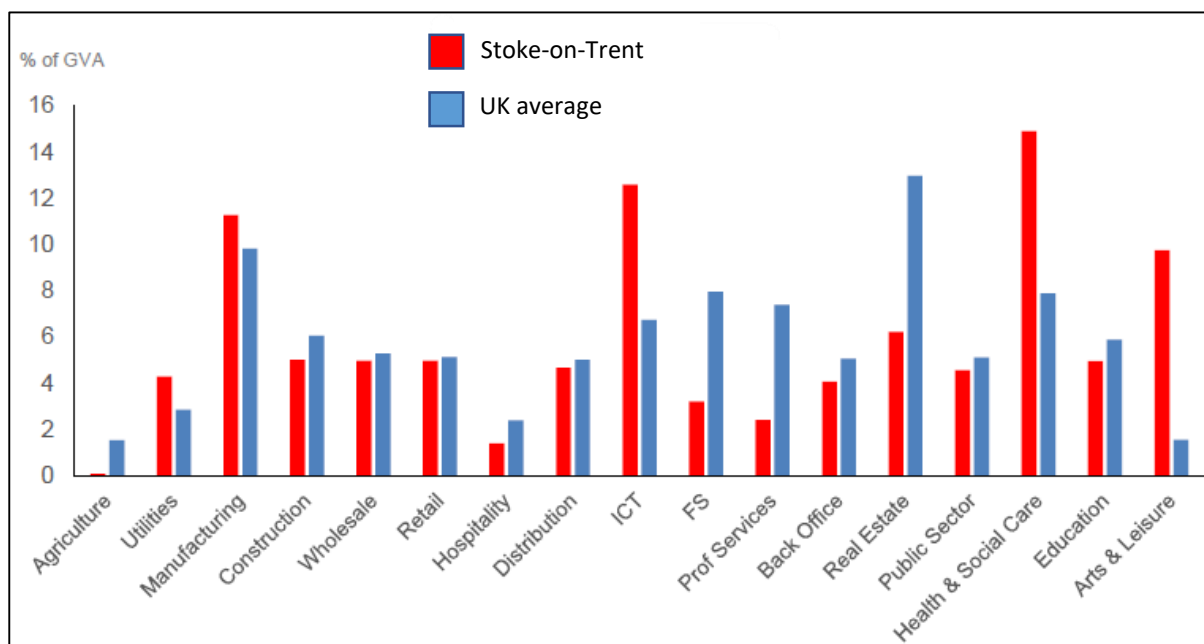
strategic approach to transport and skills to ensure that local people are able to easily access employment sites outside the city and have the qualities and abilities which employers need and value.

There is a significant public sector presence in the city which, through effective partnerships with the voluntary, community and faith sector, has demonstrated that it can influence important aspects of the city's foundational economy and thereby help to not only create the conditions for economic growth, but also contribute to improvements in living standards and key population outcomes.

We remain a creative city, richly endowed with an arts and cultural sector providing community events, public galleries, accessible museums, popular concert halls and theatres. This matters because culture, creativity and heritage are not only potential drivers of growth, as set out in the Government's Industrial Strategy, but they are also vital enablers for place-making and the enrichment of the urban environment and people's quality of life.

Economic outlook

Stoke-on-Trent is well positioned to make a significant contribution to economic growth, both regionally and nationally. The presence of emerging digital and ‘crea-tech’ sectors, as well as sophisticated green energy companies and a high-value advanced manufacturing sector have the potential to deliver rapid economic growth and create larger numbers of high-value, well-paid, fulfilling employment opportunities in the city. Analysis of the city’s economy indicates that there are a number of sectors which are currently growing strongly, although not all are in the ‘high-value’ bracket which are more likely to create better-paid jobs and power future commercial expansion.



[Fig.9 – Share of output (GVA) by sector in Stoke-on-Trent and comparison with (2022). Sources: ONS & University of Staffordshire]

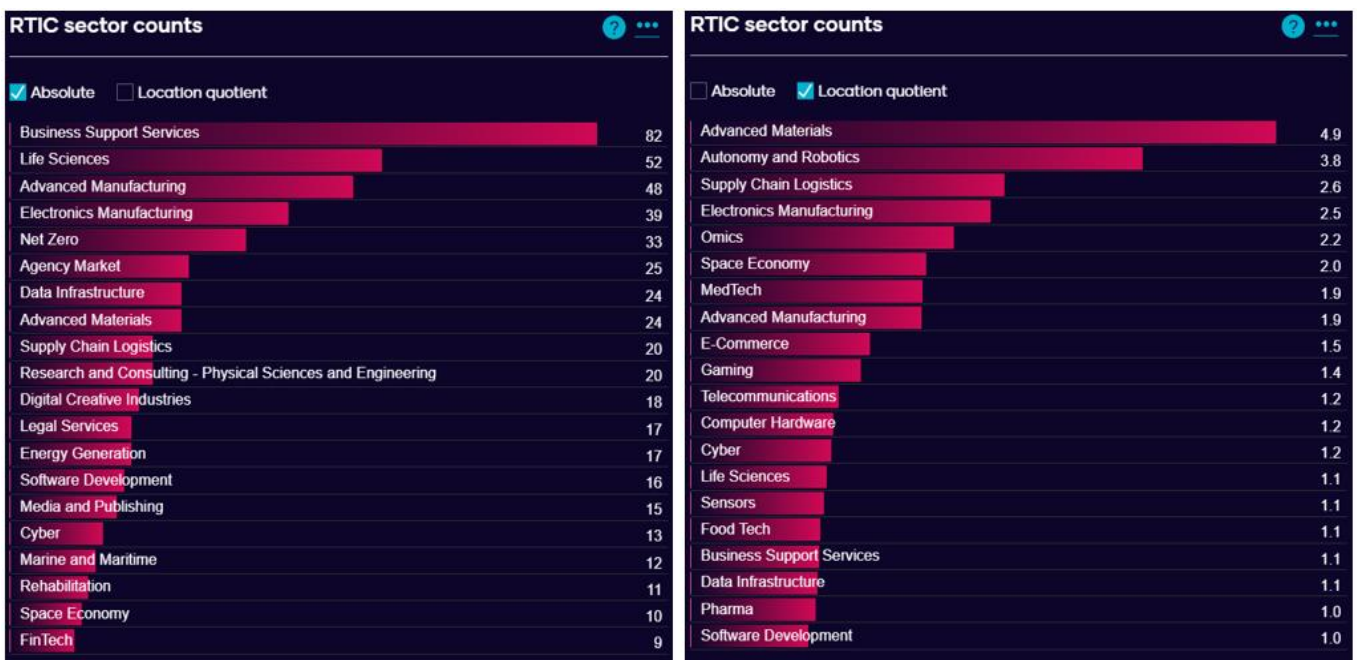
Key economic sectors in Stoke-on-Trent

The UK government has listed eight sectors which it regards as having the greatest potential to deliver rapid economic growth (see ‘Industrial Strategy’ in National Policy Context), of which three are established sectors or strongly emerging clusters within Stoke-on-Trent’s economy. This section examines these sectors in more detail, focusing on their potential strengths and the enablers required to ensure that they can achieve significant expansion. The development of sectoral clusters will be of particular importance to growing the city’s economy over the next decade and beyond. Clusters of economic complexity lead to increased sector productivity and to a greater potential for future economic growth due to the added propensity for innovation which clusters can bring. These innovations are the basis for increased productivity, which is acknowledged as the key to greater growth nationally.

For Stoke-on-Trent the prioritisation of specific high-growth sectors presents both opportunities and challenges. Supporting and enabling the growth of existing and emerging clusters is likely to benefit other industries through the development and strengthening of local supply chains to service the cluster businesses. There are also likely to be increased higher-skilled employment opportunities which will pay higher wages; and there will be a knock-on impact on the city’s

skills ecosystem as employers seek a more highly-skilled and educated workforce. However, in Stoke-on-Trent’s case, this will necessitate the dismantling of structural barriers which currently make it more difficult for many city workers to secure high-skilled jobs. In addition, any prioritisation of high-growth sectors may come at the expense of other, more established sectors and industries which already employ large segments of the workforce and which make significant contributions to the local economy.

For this reason, we would ask the Government to be careful in the way that it backs identified sectors and places. In a diversified economy such as Stoke-on-Trent there is a latent potential for development in multiple sectors and sub-sectors. For example, defence is identified as a key growth sector nationally, but at present the geographical pattern of Government defence expenditure is highly skewed with the West Midlands as a whole only benefiting from 1.5% of that expenditure, against over 25% in the North West. And yet Stoke-on-Trent industries have many of the competences, capacity and skills to contribute to defence industrial activity. And they operate collaboratively and in sophisticated supply chains, even though they don’t necessarily belong in the same industrial sector. Cluster behaviours come in different shapes and sizes. The challenge to the Government is therefore not only to build on what already exists, which may just perpetuate inequality, but use the power of UK State investment to boost the industrial prowess of places like Stoke-on-Trent.



**[Fig.10 – Analysis of Stoke-on-Trent’s industrial clusters by sector.
Source: Midlands Engine (2023)]**

Stoke-on-Trent is a city which is primed for rapid growth. Its locational advantages and close economic and demographic links to the wider sub-region and beyond are among the core factors which will drive economic expansion over the next decade. Furthermore, the existence of a diversified industrial base and plentiful supply of increasingly skilled labour mean that Stoke-on-Trent is well placed to be the single biggest driver of economic growth in Staffordshire and the wider north-west Midlands. Identifying and nurturing the right industrial sectors will be of pivotal importance to ensure that the city can realise its potential and unlock holistic benefits which can improve wellbeing outcomes for the local population. For this reason, we describe

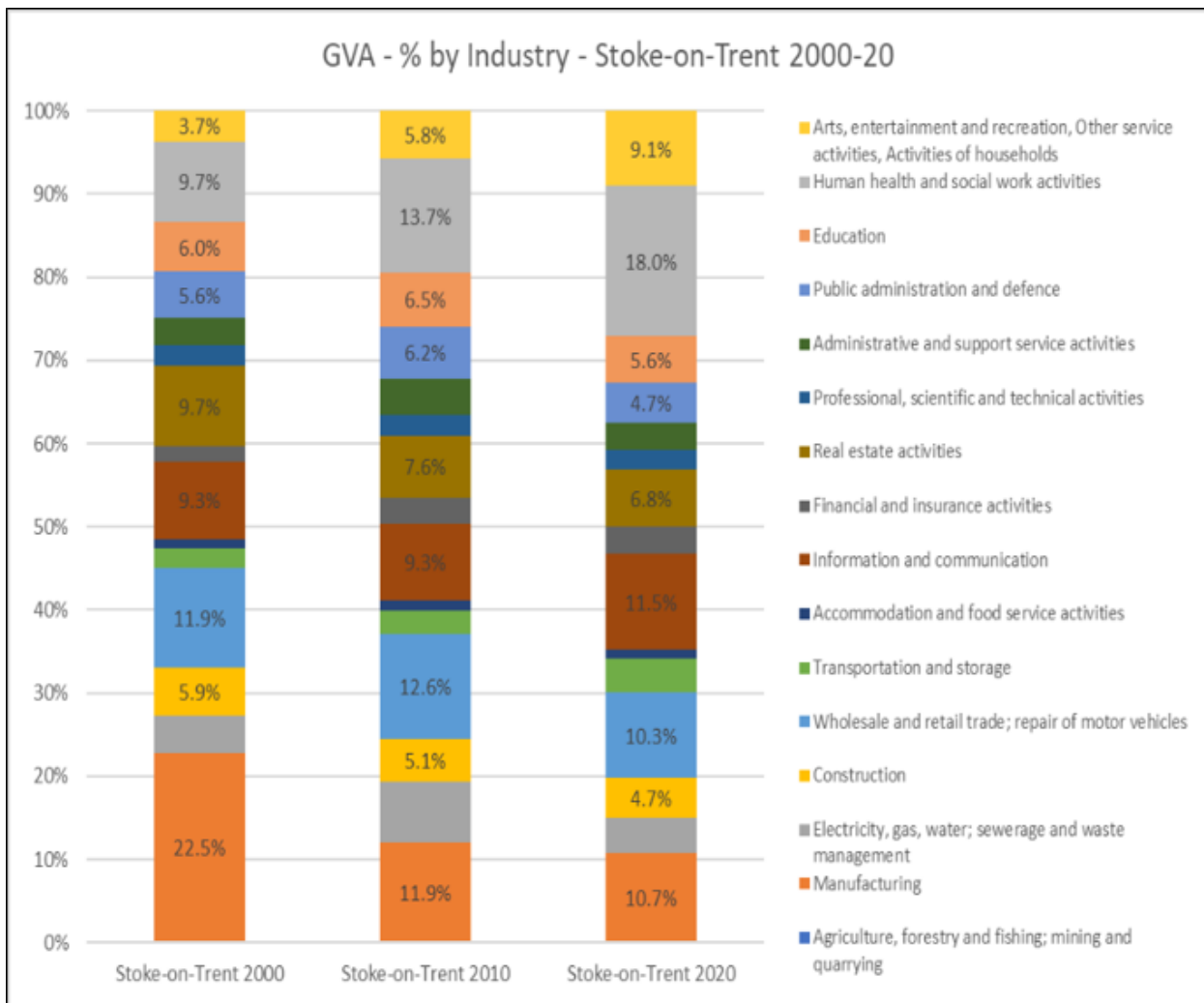
our approach to the crucial task of sectoral development as ‘building a bridge from both ends’, because we will only deliver shared economic prosperity if local communities can reap the rewards of growth in terms of better opportunities, more attractive neighbourhoods and improved living standards.

Sectoral labour market changes in Stoke-on-Trent, 2015-22. (Source: ONS).

Industry / sector	No. of jobs (2015)	Workforce % (2015)	No. of jobs (2022)	Workforce % (2022)	% change 2015-2022	Net change (job nos.)
Mining & Quarrying	100	0.1	30	<0.1	-70.0	-70
Manufacturing	15,000	13.3	17,000	13.7	+13.3	+2,000
Electricity & Gas Supply	300	0.3	300	0.2	0.0	0
Water Supply, Sewerage & Waste	500	0.4	1,000	0.8	+100.0	+500
Construction	6,000	5.3	4,500	3.6	-25.0	-1,500
Wholesale & Retail Trade	21,000	18.6	18,000	14.5	-14.3	-3,000
Transportation & Storage	7,000	6.2	12,000	9.7	+71.4	+5,000
Accommodation & Food	4,000	3.5	5,000	4.0	+25.0	+1,000
Information & Communication	3,000	2.7	5,000	4.0	+66.7	+2,000
Financial & Insurance	3,000	2.7	1,000	0.8	-66.7	-2,000
Real Estate	1,000	0.9	1,750	1.4	+75.0	+750
Professional, Scientific & Technical	3,500	3.1	4,500	3.6	+28.6	+1,000
Admin. & Support Services	7,000	6.2	8,000	6.5	+14.3	+1,000
Public Administration	4,500	4	5,000	4.0	+11.1	+500
Education	9,000	8	8,000	6.5	-11.1	-1,000
Health & Social Work	22,000	19.5	26,000	21.0	+18.2	+4,000
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	4,000	3.5	4,500	3.6	+12.5	+500
Other Services	2,000	1.8	2,250	1.8	+12.5	+250

The above table shows the proportional and numerical changes which have occurred in Stoke-on-Trent’s labour market between 2015 and 2022. The figures record modest levels of growth across most industries and sectors in this time, as well as more dramatic growth in employment levels for the transportation and storage (logistics) sector, the health and social work sector, the manufacturing sector, which includes advanced manufacturing, and the information and communication (digital and technological) sector. Sectors which saw the largest declines in employment levels included the wholesale and retail sector, which has been affected by online retail and the rapid contraction of the physical retail estate in towns and cities in recent years. The financial and insurance sector also saw a significant reduction, along with the construction sector and education.

Share of output (GVA) by sector in Stoke-on-Trent. (Source: ONS & University of Staffordshire).

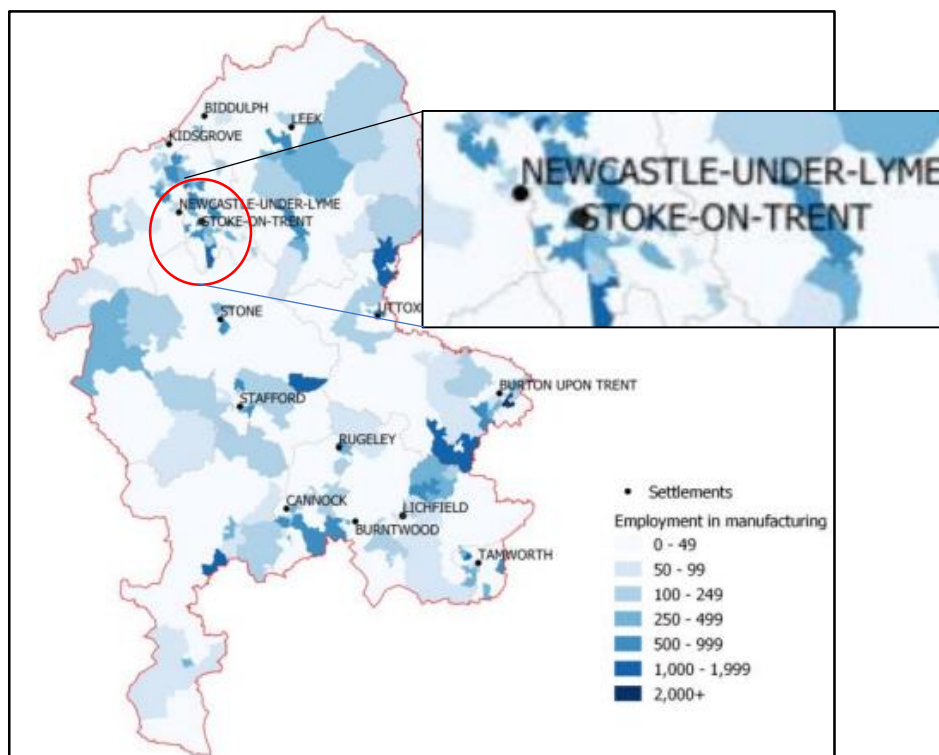


Advanced manufacturing sector

Stoke-on-Trent is at the heart of the UK's largest advanced manufacturing cluster. The sector employs an estimated 2,350 people in 115 distinct companies with a combined turnover of almost £400 million across Staffordshire, most of which are in or close to the city. The sector encompasses a wide variety of applications, fields and products, with required skills ranging from engineering design and specialist fields of engineering, to production management, surveying, software development, programming, product design, sales, scientific research, buying and welding. The main industries are associated with rail, automotive, aerospace and renewables manufacturing, as well as metal and food products. Across Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire, advanced manufacturing creates more than 1,000 engineering technician vacancies annually, and more than 800 welding vacancies, although these roles are increasingly being superseded by automation. Recruitment within the sector is affected by a higher than average rate of hard-to-fill vacancies (12 per cent) and skills shortage vacancies (44 per cent of all vacancies), which are double the average rate for all businesses. Prominent advanced manufacturing businesses in or near to Stoke-on-Trent currently include Steelite,

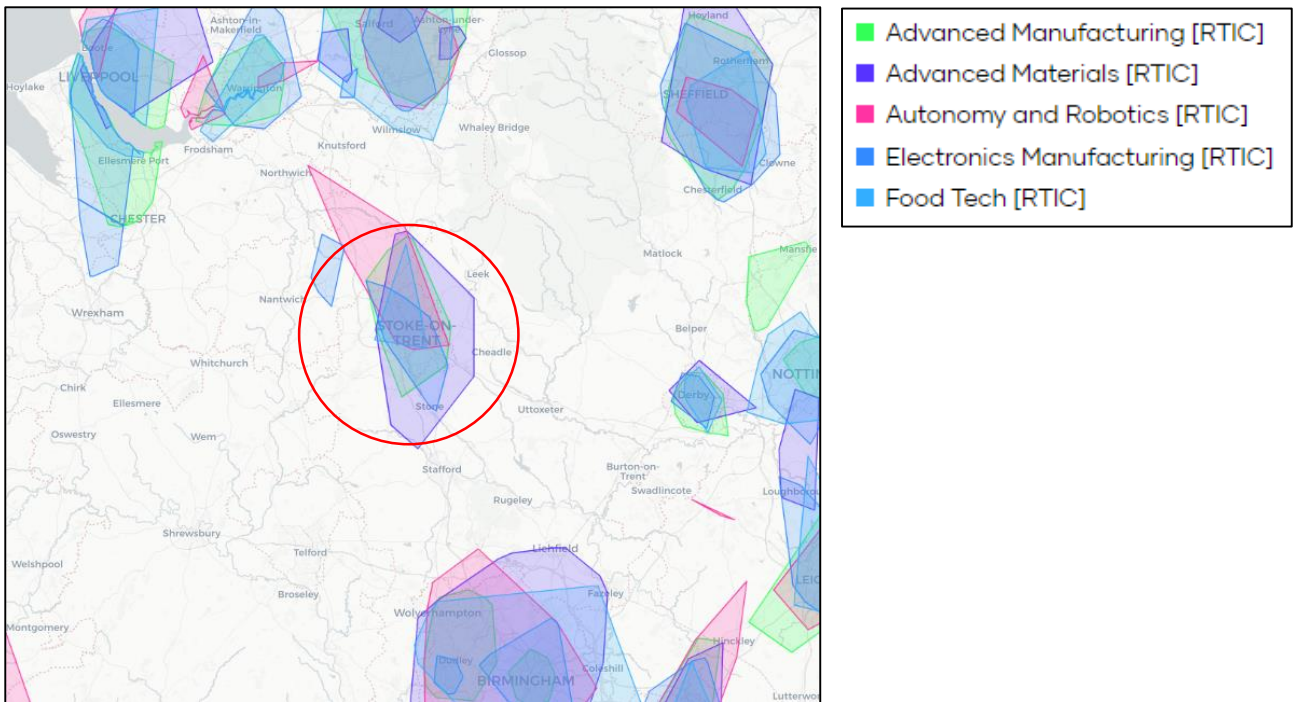
JCB, Michelin, Goodwin Steel Casting Ltd, Lucideon Advanced Ceramics and the Science Park at Keele University. There is also a strong supply chain of SME businesses in the city. Midlands Engine’s sectoral analysis¹ of Stoke-on-Trent’s economy has identified ceramics, materials and metals as the strongest advanced manufacturing cluster in the city, relative to other areas. The cluster comprised 24 businesses in 2023, employing 666 people and generating a total annual turnover of £87.2 million.

Skills have been identified as one of the most important enablers for the expansion of the advanced manufacturing sector locally. The Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP took decisive steps to address this issue through the establishment of the Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering Hub at Stoke-on-Trent College’s Burslem Campus. The Hub provided a range of training programmes and apprenticeships which cover welding, construction, highway maintenance and advanced engineering and manufacturing. The college is also home to The Heat Academy, which delivers advanced engineering and manufacturing training to support the installation and maintenance of Stoke-on-Trent’s District Heat Network. There is also a strong crossover with digital skills, given the increasing need for software design, CAD, programming and automation skills within the sector. Enabling the future expansion of the advanced manufacturing sector will require further actions to address skills shortages and align training provision with existing and emerging sectoral skills requirements. There is a need to design skills provision in a way that will future-proof the local manufacturing workforce, and provide specialist support to strengthen local competitiveness, increase productivity and drive greater export levels.



[Fig.11 - Spatial distribution of manufacturing jobs in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire. Source: SSLEP]

¹ Midlands Engine (2023), Exploratory Analysis of Midlands Cluster Data and the Data City.



[Fig.12 – Heat map showing existing manufacturing clusters in the North West and West Midlands. Source: Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT)]

The above maps (Figs. 11 & 12) and the table below highlight the relative strength of Stoke-on-Trent’s advanced manufacturing and overall manufacturing sectors, as well as the scale and economic contribution of component clusters.

Composition of advanced manufacturing clusters in Stoke-on-Trent. (Source: Midlands Engine).

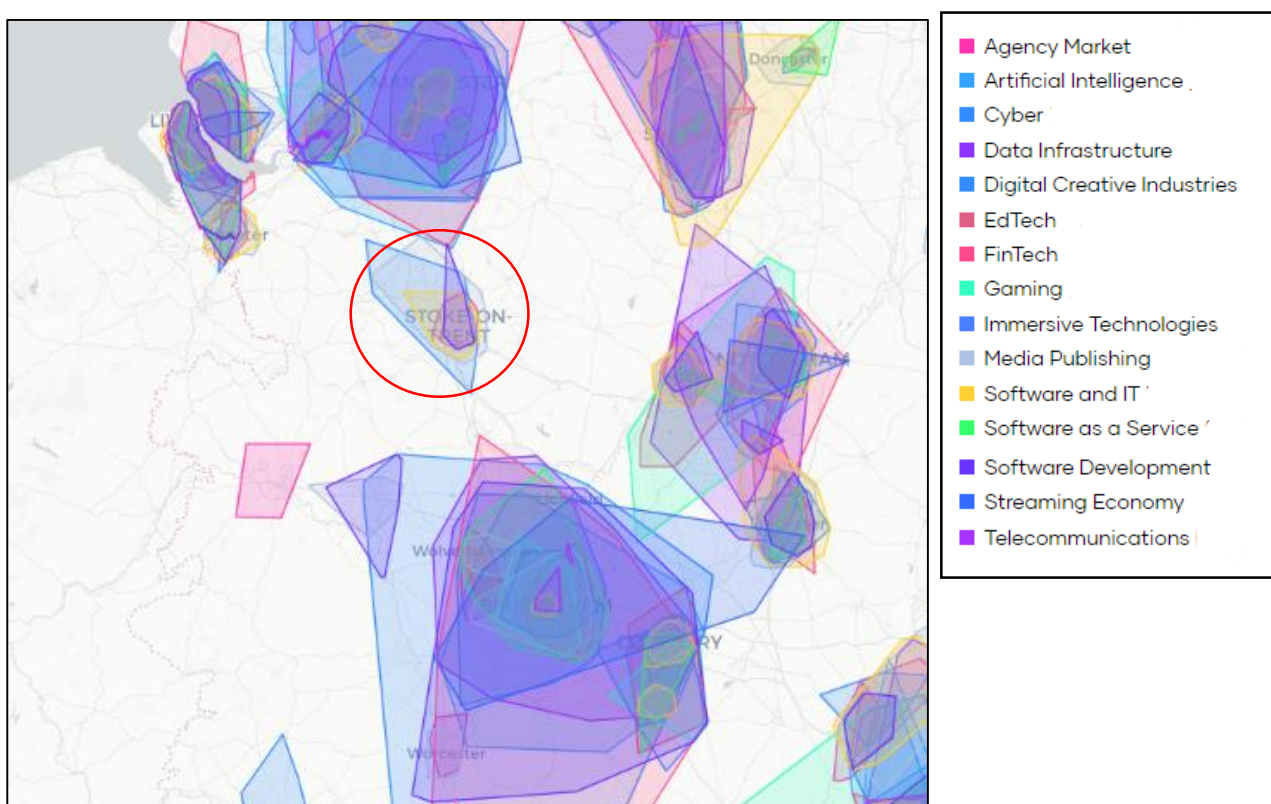
Advanced manufacturing cluster	Business count	Total employees	Total annual turnover
Aerospace	40	773	£88.34m
Automotive	17	507	£60.17
Ceramics, materials & metals	24	666	£87.26m
Food & drink	12	750	£50.58m
Rail	21	(N/A)	£0.48m

Digital and technological sector

The sector currently employs more than 3,700 people in 377 distinct companies in the IT, software and cyber segments, however there is also a sectoral crossover with creative industries, as the city is home to a growing cluster of creative digital, or ‘crea-tech’ businesses. The sector has a combined turnover of around £1.1 billion across the whole of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, but the majority of businesses are located within, or in close proximity to,

Stoke-on-Trent. The city's adjusted competitive cluster scoring is LQ 1.1. However, within this overall cluster, gaming represents an exceptionally strong and growing sub-cluster with a headline LQ score of 1.4, a turnover rating of LQ 6.9 and an employment score of LQ 10.7.

Stoke-on-Trent was the first city in the country to complete a city-wide gigabit-enabled full fibre network, and has one of the highest rates among UK cities for households and businesses with access to high-speed broadband. The city is also home to the University of Staffordshire, which has garnered a reputation as one of the leading universities in the country for digital education and innovation, with specialisms in games development, e-gaming and crea-tech. The emergence in recent years of a growing digital sector in Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire evidenced in the table below and in the growth in employment in this sector, which has created 2,000 additional jobs in Stoke-on-Trent between 2015 and 2022. The sector's share of Stoke-on-Trent's GVA has also increased by 50 per cent in the last decade, indicating rapid and accelerating growth.



[Fig.13 – Digital clusters in the North West and West Midlands. Source: DSIT]

The digital clusters heatmap above (Fig.13) and table below illustrate the importance of Stoke-on-Trent as a digital innovation hub situated between the surrounding cities of the North West and East and West Midlands. The sectoral cluster map shows that Stoke-on-Trent and the surrounding sub-region of North Staffordshire is home to the biggest cluster of digital industries and businesses in the northern West Midlands and the only cluster based predominantly in Staffordshire. The city's main digital clusters are worth more than £200 million in combined annual turnover and employ around 1,550 people across more than 110 businesses.

Composition of digital clusters in Stoke-on-Trent. (Source: Midlands Engine).

Digital cluster	Business count	Total employees	Total annual turnover
Connected device technology (IOT)	5	31	£1.2m
Cyber	23	69	£12.85m
Data-driven healthcare & technologies	9	446	£41.41m
Digital creative & video games	32	242	£21.92m
Disruptive technologies for professional / financial services	43	741	£122.48m
Education technology	2	21	£0.51m

The table below also shows that, while Stoke-on-Trent has the highest concentration of digital businesses and local units of the three local authority areas which comprise North Staffordshire, all three areas share elements of the clusters and therefore benefit directly from the continuing growth of this key economic sector.

ICT businesses and units in North Staffordshire, 2023. (Sources: ONS & University of Staffordshire).

Business measure	Stoke-on-Trent	Newcastle-under-Lyme	Staffordshire Moorlands	Total for North Staffordshire
Enterprises	235	190	120	545
Local Units	265	195	125	585

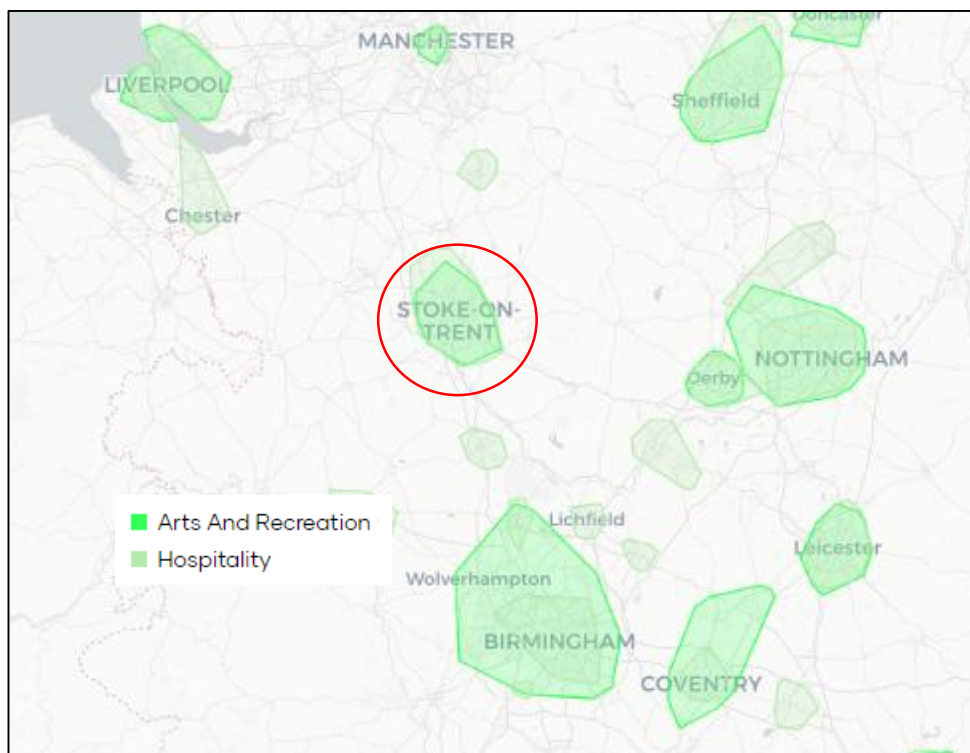
Independent academic research² has concluded that the digital and technological sector is already a major component of Stoke-on-Trent's economy, and has the potential for significant growth with targeted support and investment. The city's existing digital cluster includes creative media businesses based at the former Spode Pottery site, as well as the success of Burslem-based cyber security business Synectics Solutions, and the continuing growth of the university's own e-gaming capabilities. The city's digital sector is also the seventh most productive in the UK, with average GVA per job of £155,000, compared to £91,000 for the UK.

² Pugh, G., Li, Y. & Gregory, M. (2024), 'Digital Stoke': a new opportunity for a second-order post-industrial city, Centre for Business, Innovation and the Regions (Staffordshire University Business School) & The Productivity Institute (Manchester University).

Creative industries

The growth of the creative industries in the city presents numerous opportunities for economic growth, improved holistic wellbeing, and the revitalisation of the historic built environment. We have plans to develop Stoke-on-Trent into an International Centre of Ceramics. This vision is based upon repurposing the historic built environment and transforming the city into a globally significant cultural destination that will celebrate North Staffordshire's past, present, and future contributions to ceramics and creative industry.

Working alongside strategic partners, we believe that establishing Stoke-on-Trent as an International Centre of Ceramics has the potential to make a significant game-changing contribution to the shared ambition for the regeneration of Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire, whilst simultaneously creating a cultural and technological destination of international appeal within the heart of the Midlands region. The success of such a centre will require a combination of heritage, artistic creative endeavour and technological innovation to reach a critical mass of domestic and international appeal. This vision draws together all of these elements for the first time and celebrates their mutual dependencies.



[Fig.14 – Arts, recreation and hospitality clusters in the North West and West Midlands. Source: DSIT]

The map above (Fig. 14) shows that Stoke-on-Trent has the strongest cluster of creative industries in the region, and represents the only cluster of this kind in the northern West Midlands. All of the significant surrounding clusters are located in major cities. In order to promote our creative industries and encourage further growth we are developing a strategy for enhancing and protecting the historic built environment. By finding sustainable economic uses for built heritage assets, we will be able to animate the city with creative activity, promote cultural place making, and ultimately stimulate the visitor economy. There are numerous elements to this which includes making use of our cultural assets such as the Potteries Museum

& Art Gallery. Recent investment by Arts Council England has enabled us to begin to improve visitor facilities whilst we are concurrently working on the reinterpretation of the permanent galleries to better represent our proud creative heritage. It is the combination all these factors that makes Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire a prime candidate to become a nationally important Creative Industries cluster within the context of the Government's Industrial Strategy, and an economic environment in which current activity can grow and flourish. Indeed, we are calling for the city to be nationally designated as an International Centre for Ceramics to give us equality of status on the global stage with similarly recognised centres in China, South Korea, France and Scandinavia, amongst others.

Crea-tech

Stoke-on-Trent's crea-tech sector is diverse and expanding, encompassing video games, advertising, animation, digital learning and arts. The sector is characterized by small, innovative enterprises supported by strong educational institutions and community-focused initiatives. The video games sector includes around 18 small companies, with an average of 3.6 employees each. The University of Staffordshire's games programmes provide a steady stream of graduates, although many move to larger cities, limiting local employment impact. Despite its small size, the university's reputation enhances the sector's credibility and potential for future talent retention. The city's advertising and digital marketing sector features a number of prominent agencies which offer comprehensive services in brand development, digital marketing, and web design, as well as purpose-driven marketing. The sector has recently begun to focus on AI-enabled creative content, collaborating with local universities around R&D support.

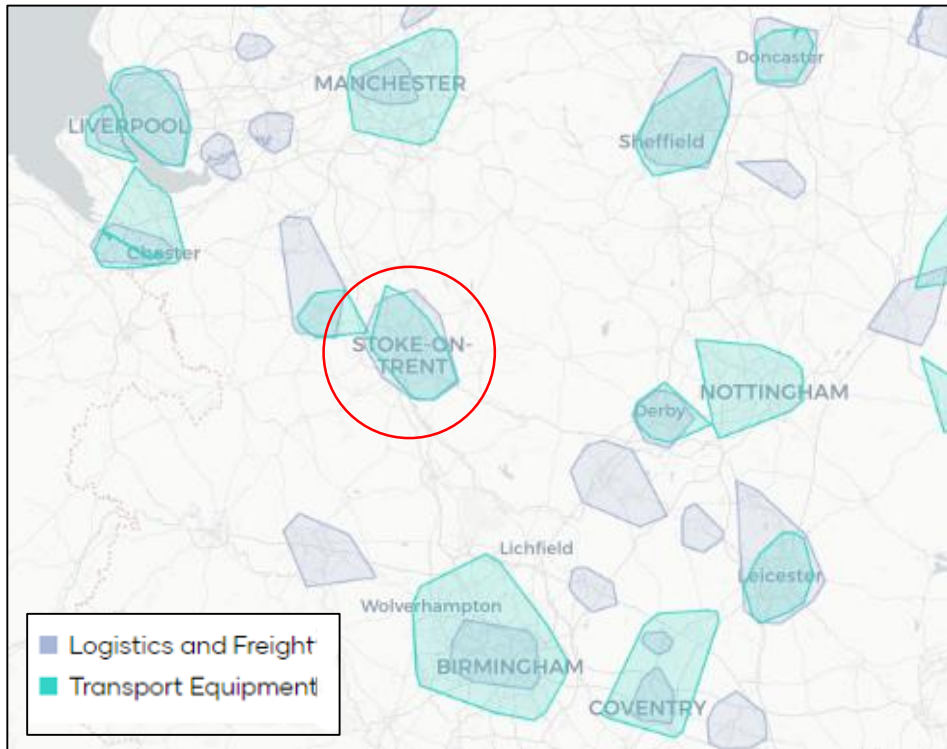
Stoke-on-Trent is also home to a growing number of animation and content production studios which specialize in 3D animation and visual effects. This is a small but growing sector which is already contributing significantly to the local economy. The studios benefit from being able to access educational support through the University of Staffordshire's arts programmes. A number of thriving digital learning and content agencies offer customized e-learning solutions, digital marketing services, instructional design and digital training and video production and community involvement services. This evolving sector has been particularly successful in adapting to digital transformation to enhance learning and development. Arts, culture, and creative platforms also make a significant contribution to the crea-tech sector in the city, whether showcasing local artists and the city's artistic heritage, producing innovative ceramics or supporting participatory arts projects with communities to enrich the cultural landscape.

Other key industries and sectors in Stoke-on-Trent

Based on analysis of their competitive strengths as evidenced by location quotients (derived from BERS business survey data), there are other industrial sectors with a significant competitive clustering advantage in Stoke-on-Trent, but which are not prioritised as high-growth sectors in the Government's Industrial Strategy. These sectors include:

Transport and Storage (LQ 1.94). This sector has seen the largest growth in terms of job creation over the past decade, resulting in a net 5,000 additional employees since 2015. It has also grown its share of the city's GVA, which has roughly doubled over the same period to account for around four per cent of economic activity. Growth in this sector has been enhanced

by the strategic advantage of Stoke-on-Trent's location at the crossroads of the M6 (north-south) motorway and A50 (east-west) trunk road, as well as the development of the Ceramic Valley Enterprise Zone and adjoining industrial sites. Logistics businesses in the city benefit from lower overheads and a location within approximately one hour's drive of six large cities, three airports and the docks at Liverpool and Birkenhead.



[Fig.15 – Transport and logistics clusters in the North West and West Midlands. Source: DSIT]

Stoke-on-Trent's transport and logistics cluster (including e-commerce in Fig. ?? below) represents one of the most important elements of the city's economy, rivalling those found in larger cities and generating more than £400m each year.

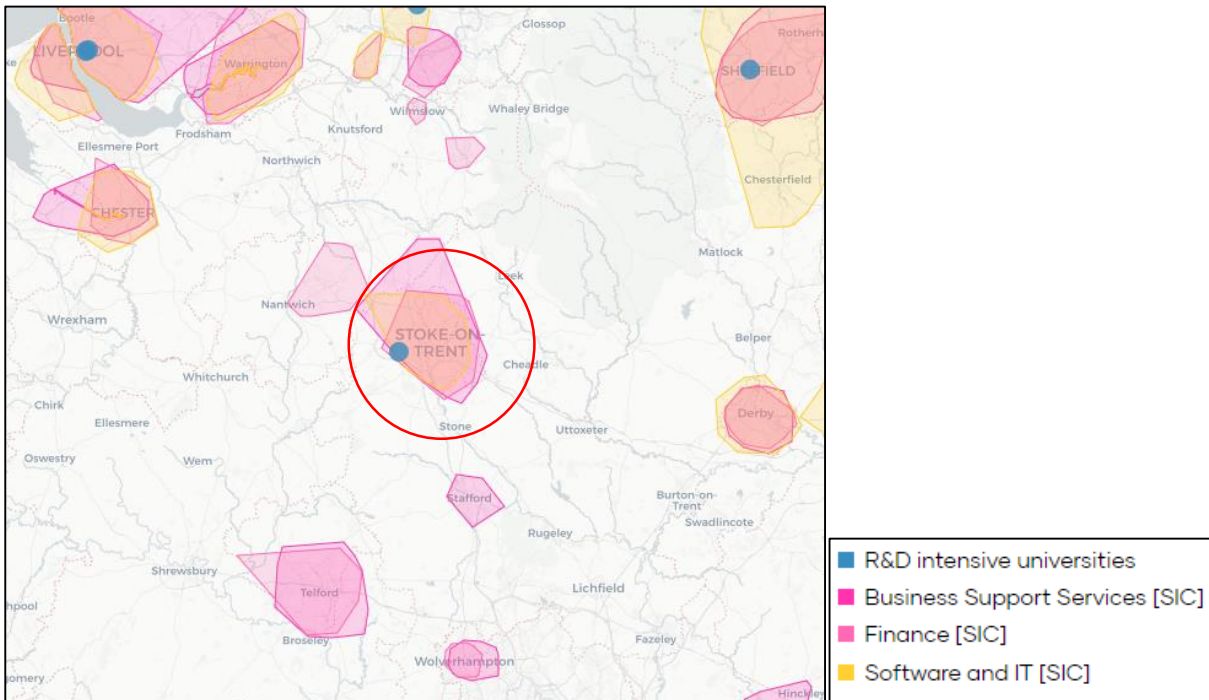
Composition of the logistics cluster in Stoke-on-Trent. (Source: Midlands Engine).

Cluster	Business count	Total employees	Total annual turnover
Logistics and E-commerce	50	1,398	£405.76m

Human Health and Social Work (LQ 1.51). This rapidly expanding sector is responsible for 21 per cent of jobs in Stoke-on-Trent and 18 per cent of the city's GVA. It is the city's biggest employer and has seen the largest growth, as a share of the city's GVA, in recent years.

Water and Waste Management (LQ 1.43). This sector accounts for around four per cent of the city's total GVA – a share which has remained broadly static for the past decade. However, it has seen employment levels double during this period, albeit from a low base of just 500 jobs.

Business support, finance, IT & R&D (LQ 1.1). This is one of the strongest industrial sectors in Stoke-on-Trent's economy in terms of the number of businesses operating, although staff headcount and turnover indicate that many are smaller enterprises. Nonetheless, the heatmap below (Fig. 16) demonstrates that this sector is sufficiently expansive to rival those of much larger cities, including Liverpool and Derby. Stoke-on-Trent's business support services cluster comprises 82 businesses (the highest number of any local cluster), employs more than 800 workers and generates an annual turnover of £44.5 million.



[Fig.16 – Business support, finance, IT & R&D clusters in the North West and West Midlands. Source: DSIT]

Green energy. Delivery of the City Council-owned District Heat Network across the city is driving innovation regarding energy recovery technology. The council is working to secure investment for a £30 million facility to recover electricity and heat energy from an upgraded energy from waste (EFW) plant in the city at Hanford. The city has also identified an opportunity to recover waste heat energy from an AI data centre. A £7 million pilot is being developed in conjunction with energy companies SSE and Octopus which will use recovered energy to heat the Spode business enterprise centre in Stoke town, as well as contributing excess heat energy to the District Heat Network. Scaled up, the pilot is forecast to become one of the largest GDP accelerator in the city, generating an estimated £150 million of annual economic activity and supporting the commercial viability and future expansion of the Stoke-on-Trent's emerging AI and crea-tech sectors and the heat network.

A new approach

All of the available evidence indicates that the underlying capability of Stoke-on-Trent's economy has the potential to transform economic growth, not only within in the city, but across the North Staffordshire sub-region and the wider county, of which the city is the vibrant economic heart. Stoke-on-Trent is the primary centre for investment, employment and commercial activity within Staffordshire and its economic influence enables surrounding districts to generate greater economic activity and contributes to the creation of commercial networks throughout the local, regional and national economies. However, in order to unlock this latent capability, there is an increasingly urgent need to address the factors which are creating and contributing to significant barriers to growth and prosperity. Evidence also demonstrates that simply facilitating commercial activity and expansion has not succeeded in addressing the latency in the city's economy, and may even have exacerbated some contributory factors. Dealing with the barriers to growth effectively will require the City Council to work with central government and local and regional partners to address a number of issues:

- Improving educational attainment levels across all ages to ensure more adults have the skills and qualifications they need to secure and progress in work.
- Transforming skills provision to meet the current and future needs of employers, particularly in high-growth sectors and supply chains.
- Reducing long-term sickness levels and enabling people to become and remain fit enough to work.
- Addressing NEETs (young people not in education, employment or training) to improve participation and economic activity levels.
- Reducing entrenched inequalities and promoting greater social mobility.
- Building greater economic resilience in deprived neighbourhoods with weak social capital.
- Increasing inward investment levels, including FDI and domestic pension fund investment, and enabling innovation and investment to drive productivity and local wage growth.
- Improving public transport to enhance local connectivity and facilitate access to employment.
- Creating the conditions to increase economic participation in deprived areas from the ground up.
- Identifying a pipeline of suitable sites to support future economic expansion.
- Creating the conditions needed to support business growth.
- Securing the right mix of investment and new development to revitalise town centres and high streets.
- Strengthening the foundational economy by reducing crime and antisocial behaviour, improving the environment, conserving heritage assets and enhancing the city's housing offer.

The first area of focus relates to so-called 'left-behind' neighbourhoods. These are communities that are doubly deprived, scoring poorly on the main socio-economic indicators, but also affected by weak levels of social capital.

The second priority is building community wealth across the city. We are establishing a dedicated, expert hub that will ensure more of the 'Stoke pound' stays in Stoke-on-Trent, that our anchor institutions are using their economic power to support local residents and

communities, that communities have access to community assets and spaces, and that they are supported to develop community enterprises and co-operatives in many forms.

This Economic Development Strategy has been developed in close consultation with the City Council's partners and key stakeholders to devise a new approach to the stewardship of Stoke-on-Trent's economy – one which can sustain and enhance the positive economic trajectory of recent years while also helping to address some of the pressing social issues which are damaging our citizens' quality of life and undermining their ability to benefit from the opportunities being created in the city.

Our 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.'

Our pillars and priorities

People	Business	Place
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delivering community wealth building.• Creating opportunities to boost employment, improve education and skills and ensure that people are ready for work.• Improving living standards and quality of life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supporting businesses to start up, grow, thrive and innovate.• Working with businesses and partners to maximise the benefits of responsible procurement.• Enabling and supporting green growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Making Stoke-on-Trent a more attractive destination for businesses, people and investment.• Revitalising our high streets and town centres.• Developing economic infrastructure and social capital in our communities.

Alignment with the Our City, Our Wellbeing Corporate Strategy

Stoke-on-Trent City Council adopted a new corporate strategy for the city in May 2024. 'Our City, Our Wellbeing' sets out our vision for improving the wellbeing of all residents in the city by tackling inequality, sharing wealth more fairly with communities and raising living standards. The Economic Development Strategy has been developed to underpin much of this work and to make Stoke-on-Trent a healthier, fairer and more prosperous city.



Our City, Our Wellbeing represents the council's blueprint for allocating its resources, structuring its workforce and delivering local services over the next four years. The priorities set out in the corporate strategy will be the cornerstones of every decision and action that will be taken during this time. The Strategy will be used to inform the scope and overarching aims of the council's core policies, as well as relevant delivery plans and strategies for specific service areas and initiatives. Its delivery will be underpinned by a performance framework consisting of measures and indicators which align closely with the corporate priorities and objectives.

The core aim of the corporate strategy is to reduce persistent social and economic inequalities and improve levels of wellbeing in the local population. The most serious inequalities relate to gaps between Stoke-on-Trent and the rest of the UK in outcomes for life expectancy, educational attainment, the development rates for young children, income levels and numbers of children in local authority care. These persistent inequalities contribute to the hardship and deprivation that continues to blight lives and communities throughout our city. And many of the factors which contribute to, and exacerbate these inequalities are linked to economic issues. The corporate strategy aims to explore and address these discrepancies and ensure that most people in Stoke-on-Trent can benefit from the same opportunities and outcomes as those living elsewhere in the UK.

Alignment with the core priorities

Our City, Our Wellbeing is structured around seven priorities which contribute to improved community wellbeing. The table below shows how these priorities and ambitions are picked up and reflected in the Economic Development Strategy.

Our City, Our Wellbeing priorities	Economic Development Strategy priorities
Healthier: creating a healthier standard of living for all our citizens	<i>Improving living standards and the quality of life, relative to national and regional averages</i>
Wealthier: reducing hardship and enabling greater shared prosperity	<i>Making Stoke-on-Trent a more attractive destination for businesses, people and investment.</i>
	<i>Supporting businesses to start up, grow, thrive and innovate</i>
	<i>Developing economic infrastructure and social capital in our communities</i>
Fairer: tackling inequality and improving life chances for everyone	<i>Community wealth building</i>
	<i>Working with businesses and partners to maximise the benefits of responsible procurement.</i>
	<i>Creating opportunities to boost employment, improve education and skills and ensure that people are ready for work</i>
Skilled: providing opportunities for people to improve their skills and education	
Greener: conserving our environment and living more sustainably	<i>Enabling and supporting green growth</i>

Alignment with the Critical Issues

Alongside the corporate priorities, Our City, Our Wellbeing sets out five cross-cutting Critical Issues which have been identified as areas of specific focus for citywide partnership activities aimed at addressing complex problems which have a negative impact on population wellbeing levels and outcomes.

Our City, Our Wellbeing Critical Issues	Economic Development Strategy priorities
Reclaiming our streets: enabling residents to take back ownership of our streets and public spaces	Making Stoke-on-Trent a more attractive destination for businesses, people and investors
	Revitalising our high streets and town centres.
Addressing hardship and poverty: helping to maximise income and improve residents' quality of life	Developing economic infrastructure and social capital in our communities.
Ensuring decent homes for all: using our influence to help eradicate problems such as fuel poverty, damp and mould	Improving living standards and the quality of life, relative to national and regional averages
Supporting family life: ensuring families are helping to give their children the best start in life	

National policy context

Central government's priorities

The UK Government is pursuing five core 'missions', through which it aims to deliver a decade of national renewal. The missions which apply to this strategy are:

Mission 1 – Kickstart economic growth.

The Government aims to ensure that the UK economy is able to deliver the highest sustained level of growth in the G7 group of industrialised nations. It also aims to deliver good jobs and productivity growth across all areas. Key deliverables involved in achieving this priority include:

- Creating improved national economic stability through the imposition of new government spending rules aimed at reducing public debt as a proportion of GDP.
- The establishment of a new partnership with business to identify, develop and implement shared plans which can boost economic growth across different sectors and regions.
- The creation of a £7.3 billion National Wealth Fund to invest in jobs. The Government will align the UK Infrastructure Bank and the British Business Bank to spur investment in industries which are likely to shape the jobs and skills of the future.
- Implementing reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) that will require local areas to build 1.5 million new homes nationally by 2029. These are likely to include permitted use of 'grey belt' land for housing development and increasing the capacity of local planning authorities to process applications more quickly.
- Increased devolution of powers and funding from central government to local areas across England to ensure that no area is excluded from the benefits of a devolution deal.
- Implementation of a 'New Deal for Working People', which will include an Employment Rights Bill to upgrade workers' rights in relation to issues such as zero-hours contracts, flexible working arrangements and the use of 'fire-and-rehire' employment tactics.

Mission 2 - Make Britain a clean energy superpower.

The Government has committed to reducing domestic and commercial energy bills, creating additional employment opportunities in the green energy sector and strengthening national energy security through a transition to zero carbon electricity and achieving net zero emissions. Key deliverables include:

- The establishment of Great British Energy, a new publicly-owned clean energy company which will partner with industry and other stakeholders to invest in and help deliver clean energy generation projects across the UK.
- The creation of 650,000 new high-quality jobs within the clean energy sector.
- Delivery of a programme of energy efficiency improvements to make it cheaper to heat homes and help reduce levels of fuel poverty.

Mission 4 - Break down barriers to opportunity.

This priority involves raising people ambitions and aspirations by improving education provision and making childcare more affordable and accessible. Key deliverables include:

- Recruiting 6,500 new teachers who will have expertise in subjects closely aligned with high-growth employment sectors.

- Developing and implementing a more modern educational curriculum which teaches students skills which are aligned to real and future employment opportunities, and preparing them for the workplace.
- Delivering more high-quality apprenticeships linked to the current future needs of industry and key employment sectors.
- Creating more specialist technical colleges to improve education and training provision in relation to the sectors which will be the biggest drivers of economic growth in the UK.

Mission 5 - Build an NHS fit for the future.

This aims to improve access to high-quality healthcare in order to improve population health outcomes and raise levels of wellbeing. Deliverables which relate to economic growth include:

- Plans to provide an extra 40,000 NHS appointments every week in order to cut waiting times. This is likely to help provide timely support for people who are off long-term sick or at risk of leaving employment due to chronic ill health.
- The recruitment of 8,500 additional mental health staff nationwide, which will also help to reduce levels of economic activity due to long-term ill health. Around half of those affected suffer from a mental health condition.

Industrial Strategy

The *Invest 2035: The UK Modern Industrial Strategy* Green Paper provides the ‘central pillar’ for delivering the Government’s Growth Mission. The primary aims are to deliver long term, sustainable economic growth through focused interventions targeting established commercial clusters located in the underperforming city regions outside London and the South East, along with eight UK industrial sectors identified as offering the highest potential for driving growth.

These comprise:

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Clean Energy Industries
- Creative Industries
- Defence
- Digital Technologies
- Financial Services
- Life Sciences
- Professional and Business Services

The Industrial Strategy sets out the policy parameters within which this Economic Development Strategy, and potentially its successor, will be delivered. It presents a number of opportunities which the city may be able to exploit in relation to high-growth sectors which have been singled out and prioritised to benefit from targeted government funding and support over the next decade. This approach is likely to benefit not only the constituent businesses in the city, but also local supply chains and businesses outside the city which are accessible to Stoke-on-Trent workers. In addition, there are likely to be additional benefits for less prominent clusters of city businesses within the Clean Energy, Life Sciences and Defence sectors.

The Industrial Strategy also highlights the importance of the ‘foundational economy’ in enabling and facilitating economic growth. Local government and other agencies will need to deliver or leverage any necessary improvements across the various elements of the foundational economy, which include:

- Housing stock quality;
- Population health;
- Transport infrastructure;
- Educational attainment;
- Skills training.

These enablers of growth are all areas which the City Council and partners are focused on addressing and improving over the next decade, both through this strategy and via other programmes of work.

Devolution and economic growth

The Government is firmly committed to extending devolution of powers and funding from Whitehall to all local areas before the end of the current parliament. An English Devolution Bill, which aims to give local government greater powers over local growth through a standardised devolution framework set out in law, was included in the King's Speech in July 2024. The aim is to use devolution to enable economic growth and to level the current uneven playing field, in which some places have formed established mayoral combined authorities with extensive devolved powers and geographies, while others have rejected mayoral governance in favour of more modest devolution deals based on county footprints, and others, including Stoke-on-Trent, have yet to fully embark on their devolution journeys. The detail behind the Government's ambitions will be set out in a devolution White Paper which is expected to be published by early 2025. However, it has already made clear that it intends to ensure that no place in England will be excluded from devolution by 2029.

Stoke-on-Trent has begun to work with other councils across Staffordshire to secure a meaningful devolution deal which can unlock useful powers and funding pots to boost economic growth. This venture will focus on securing wide-ranging new powers in relation to economic development and skills, housing and regeneration, transport, and energy and the environment. The leaders of all councils in Staffordshire, including the City Council, have submitted a joint proposal to the Secretary of State to partner with the Government to deliver shared growth and remove barriers to opportunity. The aim is to use devolved powers and funding to unlock Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent's extraordinary economic and place potential to deliver tangible and sustained economic growth that improves living standards in the places where the area's 1.1 million residents live. The joint devolution proposal stipulated a number of conditions to ensure fairness, enshrine the notion of subsidiarity and guarantee that the potential benefits of a devolution more than outweigh any additional costs or administrative or governance burdens that it may entail.

Delivering the Economic Development Strategy

Pillar 1: People

Inclusive growth is about creating opportunities for all people to participate in and benefit from the local economy in order to reduce economic disparities between places, social groups and communities. It is about equipping people with the necessary tools, and creating the economic conditions, to ensure everyone has the chance to succeed. In Stoke-on-Trent, this is about understanding and addressing the complex factors which continue to prevent large sections of the city's population from benefiting from the city's economic expansion. One of the central aims of the Our City, Our Wellbeing Corporate Strategy is to reduce persistent inequalities which harm many people's quality of life and their opportunities to help themselves. This is not just about the inequality gaps in outcomes between Stoke-on-Trent and other parts of the UK, but also about the significant disparities in income, education, health and wellbeing that exist between nearby parts of the city itself.

Priority 1: Community wealth building

Utilising the power of locally-rooted institutions, community wealth building focuses on using local assets and investment to boost the local economy and distribute the returns from economic activity more fairly. Anchor institutions, such as local councils, health boards, universities, colleges and housing associations, and potentially the private sector, play a significant role in focusing investment into local businesses and assets to build wealth. The Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector also plays a crucial role, using its local intelligence and influence to drive engagement and target resources where they are most needed; supporting communities to build skills and expertise, as well as being an important contributor to the local economy in its own right.

The five principles of community wealth building are:

- Plural ownership of the economy.
- Making financial power work for local places.
- Fair employment and just labour markets.
- Progressive procurement of goods and services.
- Socially productive use of land and property.

Our Objectives	Our Approach
Explore how partners and residents can work together to keep more resources in Stoke-on-Trent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing collaborative mechanisms of procurement with the VCS sector.
Establish an economic development model which prioritises community wellbeing and promotes community wealth building.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering an effective partnership approach to Community Wealth Building. • Implementing a responsible procurement framework and encouraging anchor institutions and partners to follow suit.
Enable and encourage alternative business models, including community ownership and social enterprise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing community businesses and social enterprise sectors. • Unlocking the economic potential of grassroots cultural enterprises.
Empower communities to become effective stewards for their areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accelerating the transfer of land and buildings to communities. • Supporting community ownership / management of local assets. • Supporting communities in their stewardship of assets.
Encourage, support and facilitate community ownership of local assets.	
Demonstrate a positive impact on our key economic strategic measures such as children in poverty; fuel poverty; gross weekly pay and percentage of residents who are living in the most deprived 10 % of areas in England.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using community power to achieve wider objectives (e.g. bringing empty units back into use). • Working with anchor institutions on socially responsible procurement to extract better outcomes from public sector contracts (including local jobs and training).

Priority 2: Creating opportunities to boost employment, improve education and skills and ensure that people are ready for work

Inclusive economic growth is dependent upon ensuring that everyone, regardless of background, has access to job opportunities. This can mean tackling systemic barriers to employment faced by disadvantaged and marginalised groups, including those from low-income backgrounds. A key area of focus involves the creation of viable pathways into sustainable, skilled employment in more deprived areas of the city, which have traditionally experienced higher levels of unemployment and inter-generational worklessness. An additional challenge will involve supporting working age people who are long-term sick to remain in, or return to, sustainable employment.

Education and skills are closely linked to aspiration levels, employment opportunities, household incomes and overall quality of life and wellbeing. Delivering inclusive economic growth will require investment in the development approaches to education and skills development which will be accessible to all residents. Ensuring that people are equipped with the skills needed for future jobs, such as digital literacy, green technology, and innovation-

based roles, will help to not only improve their chances of securing future work, but will also contribute to the provision of a skilled workforce capable of attracting higher-value employers to Stoke-on-Trent and enabling existing firms to grow and innovate.

Our Objectives	Our Approach
<p>Delivering targeted employment and health support services to help more people to return to, or remain in, employment with long-term or chronic health conditions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will work with our NHS partners, via the Integrated Care System, on the development and expansion of programmes which support adults who are long-term sick into employment, including the Connector programme that incorporates the Individual Placement Support programme, as well as our own JET (Jobs, Enterprise, Training) programme.
<p>Raising skill levels and improving work readiness to ensure that workers who live in the city are equipped with the skills employers need and able to secure good quality work and progress in the workplace if they wish to.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will support the creation of sector-based work academies, including a Future Skills Academy and the development of a skills academy and apprenticeship hub focusing on skills needed to work in the housing sector locally. We will channel investment and funding streams such as an element of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) into programmes and activities which can improve education, skills and employment outcomes in our communities, including more deprived areas of the city.
<p>Working with employers to develop an ambitious workforce plan for the city's future, as well as delivering upskilling and reskilling programmes to enhance social mobility and make career progression a realistic option for more working people in Stoke-on-Trent, regardless of their background or which industry or sector they work in.</p>	
<p>Involving businesses in the development of more effective approaches to careers guidance and work experience to raise aspiration levels and boost the take-up of quality apprenticeships as well as numbers of young people going on to university.</p>	
<p>Improving graduate retention by creating more graduate level jobs to encourage them to remain in the city or relocate here after completing higher education.</p>	
<p>Development of a plan for future investment in public transport provision which will remove current barriers to accessing employment by connecting more people with employment sites across the city and making journeys quicker and more affordable.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will develop a whole-city plan for future bus, rail and active travel upgrades to improve access to employment throughout the city.

Priority 3: Improving living standards and the quality of life

Inclusive economic growth plays a crucial role in enhancing living standards by ensuring that the benefits of economic development are shared by all, leading to more equitable, sustainable, and prosperous communities. Inclusive growth ensures that economic policies are not just about increasing GDP, but also about improving the quality of life for everyone, particularly those in deprived areas. This involves creating jobs that provide a decent living wage and good working conditions which benefit employees' wellbeing. Reducing income inequality is one of the most important ways of helping people to improve their living standards and lifting people from disadvantaged communities out of poverty. Other important factors include:

- Having a long-term home that is warm, secure and free from damp, mould and other hazards.
- Being able to access high-quality healthcare that is responsive to patient needs.
- Access to good-quality education, training and employment opportunities.
- Being part of community where people feel safe and have access to decent amenities and green spaces.
- Being able to participate in society and build and maintain beneficial connections to others.
- Living in a society that treats everyone equally and fairly.

Our Objectives	Our Approach
Reducing poverty and inequality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are determined to deliver the City Council's Fuel Poverty Strategy and channel further investment into housing quality improvements which are vital to better health and wellbeing. • We are engaging in more holistic planning in relation to housing, skills, transport and other factors to enable more residents to secure employment in strategic corridors which are situated outside the city. • We will be supporting and enabling more public and private sector employers to achieve accreditations in relation to the quality of work and support being provided to their employees to ensure that more jobs are good, sustainable jobs which contribute to positive wellbeing (e.g. 'living wage' employer, 'investors in diversity' and 'disability confident' accreditations).
Improving levels of health and wellbeing.	
Transforming education and training provision.	
Empowering communities to have a greater say in decision-making.	
Maximising household incomes and promoting take-up of eligible benefits.	
Improving access to good-quality employment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will work with local and national partners on the development of a sector-led skills plan to support access to higher-paid, better quality work.
Ensuring that essential services are high-quality and accessible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are working with partners to develop a more affordable and accessible citywide public transport network that can help to alleviate isolation and improve access to vital services and employment and leisure opportunities.

Key deliverables – People

Priority	Key deliverables
1 - Delivering community wealth building	We will look to develop a Community Wealth Building hub to provide expert support and resources to neighbourhoods across the city
	Improve access to finance and support for social and micro enterprises and other business ownership models
2 - Creating opportunities to boost employment, improve education and skills and ensure that people are ready for work	Develop a skills and employment framework for the city that enables improved skills progression and identifies key gaps for new or expanded provision
	Work with education providers to Influence the Government's plans for educational improvement in the context of the city's needs
	Work with education and health partners to improve educational inclusion based on locality partnerships, securing Department for Education investment to enable increased mainstream provision
	Develop a refreshed Adult Skills Delivery Plan, building on the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)
	Focus on development of lower level skills, including through informal social education at the community level
	Make a compelling proposition to Government, as part of a potential devolution deal, for greater collective control over adult skills resources
	Lobby the Government to secure a work and health programme for the city to be delivered in partnership with local health trusts and primary care services
3 - Improving living standards and quality of life	Address hardship by enabling households to maximise their income and access affordable food and other essential goods and services
	Expand the hardship programme as resources permit, using the strength of the local partnership to attract external investment and the contribution of all sectors
	Address inequalities and promote social mobility by working intensively with the voluntary, community and faith sector to invest and build resilience in deprived neighbourhoods with weak social capital levels
	Develop a detailed affordable warmth plan and maximise opportunity of government- and utility-led programmes to improve the energy efficiency of existing housing stock to reduce fuel poverty levels

Measuring progress - People

Measure	Data source(s)
Key Stage 4 & 5 educational attainment scores	City Council performance data (Population Outcome / Corporate Measures)
Adults with at Level 3 qualifications or higher	
Adults with no formal qualifications	
Percentage of young people who are EET	
Claimant Count for out-of-work benefits	
Working age people unable to work for health reasons (long-term sick)	
Average gross disposable household income (per head)	
Percentage of working age population in employment	
Numbers of adult learners against target	
Performance of employment support programmes against target	
Numbers of rough sleepers	
Households experiencing fuel poverty	
Percentage of council housing stock that meets decent home standards.	
Number of reports of damp and mould issues	
Personal wellbeing ratings (life satisfaction / happiness / anxiety)	Resident / user survey data
Percentage of people who find it difficult to manage financially	

Pillar 2: Business

Our priorities

Priority 4: Supporting businesses to start up, grow, thrive and innovate

Achieving inclusive economic growth is the fundamental aim of this strategy, and businesses are very much at the heart of this ambition. We aim to understand and address the unique needs of businesses of all sizes across different sectors and industries, while ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to participate in the economy. By focusing on access to finance, skills development, entrepreneurship, innovation, inclusivity, and sustainability, the strategy can empower businesses to flourish and create more equitable economic opportunities across Stoke-on-Trent and its constituent towns and communities.

During the development of both this strategy and the Our City, Our Wellbeing Corporate Strategy, we listened to the views and concerns of businesses in Stoke-on-Trent. In particular, we took note of the strength of opinion across the business community on the need to raise skill levels in the local workforce and align them to industry needs, as well as helping to foster increased innovation and business investment to ensure Stoke-on-Trent's enterprises are able to compete with national and international counterparts and access new markets.

Our Objectives	Our Approach
<p>To work with government and other stakeholders to streamline and secure finance and investment which can be tailored to the specific needs of local employers in terms of business start-up, expansion, research and innovation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will help to develop a key account management programme of strategic companies which will be able to gather intelligence and identify future job creation, investment and expansion opportunities in specific industries and sectors. • We will work with key partners to create a growth-focused business eco-system in the city which will be able to address the needs of high-value, high-growth and emerging sectors and strategic clusters to nurture and sustain business expansion and economic growth. • We will seek to develop and deliver a package of specialist support for SMEs, including commercial access to our Enterprise Centres and the high-quality business incubator facilities which are being created at the Spode site.
<p>To ensure that the voice of businesses in our city is able to influence post-LEP approaches to business growth and support across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will work with partners to establish new structures to ensure that the voice of business is able to help shape economic planning and decision-making.
<p>To provide reliable, accessible and cost-effective local infrastructure that can support and sustain business and employment growth, including access to better, cheaper transport, energy and digital connectivity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will work with businesses to develop a new and comprehensive Business Support model catering for enterprises of all sizes and sectors.

Our Objectives	Our Approach
<p>Creation of a suitably skilled and educated workforce, as well as the development of co-created training programmes which align more closely to industry needs, from pre-employment through to in-work reskilling.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will support the creation of sector-based work academies, including an ambition to develop a Future Skills Academy.
<p>To work with key sectors on fostering innovation and the adoption of new technological solutions which can transform productivity, efficiency and commercial competitiveness while creating higher-skilled employment opportunities our citizens.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through our innovative work around green energy and sustainability we will help businesses to reduce energy costs and carbon emissions, improve sustainability and benefit from increased opportunities relating to the expansion of the green economy.
<p>The creation of a thriving and commercially important cultural and creative industrial sector in the city which not only contributes to the local economy but also helps to make Stoke-on-Trent a more attractive destination for visitors and investors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will build on Stoke-on-Trent's World Craft City status by exploring ways to unlock the economic potential of the city's cultural, creative and heritage sector by supporting more creative start-ups and the development of skills pathways into the sector.

Priority 5: Working with businesses and partners to maximise the benefits of responsible procurement

Responsible procurement which is designed to increase the social value from the purchase of goods and services can significantly contribute to inclusive economic growth by promoting local wealth distribution, fostering innovation, supporting marginalized communities, and driving sustainability. Responsible procurement involves sourcing goods and services from local suppliers, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). By channelling a greater share of procurement spend into local businesses, the City Council and other public sector partners can help to retain money within the local economy, contributing to job creation and supporting local livelihoods. If implemented at the right scale, responsible procurement can also help to establish and strengthen localised supply chains of smaller firms who are able to bid for and secure a pipeline of contracts from larger organisations and businesses in the city. This approach can also support our work in relation to community wealth building.

Our Objectives	Our Approach
<p>Reducing procurement barriers for SMEs, who have traditionally faced difficulties competing for large public contracts. Our responsible procurement approach will include breaking larger contracts into smaller, more manageable packages that local businesses and smaller suppliers can bid for, creating more inclusive opportunities for different types and sizes of local enterprise.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will work with local businesses, anchor institution partners and the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector to deliver, and drive wider engagement with, our own responsible procurement framework to highlight the mutual benefits that it offers businesses and communities. • We will make responsible procurement a central element of our wider work on developing and implementing a Stoke-on-Trent-focused approach to community wealth building. • We will work with partners to devise a social value-based approach to inward investment that requires developers and stakeholders to incorporate additional social and economic benefits within new contracts and features robust monitoring arrangements.
<p>Promoting social value to ensure that more of the economic activity that occurs in our city delivers social benefits which in turn help to improve lives and strengthen local communities to make our entire city more prosperous and attractive, and helping to create an environment in which all businesses are able to flourish more easily.</p>	
<p>Creating employment and skills opportunities by requiring organisations bidding for council and public sector contracts to deliver tangible benefits in terms of their contribution to raising skill levels and creating good quality employment opportunities which can improve living standards, raise aspirations and lead to the development of a more skilled workforce in the city.</p>	

Priority 6: Enabling and supporting green growth

By capitalising on Stoke-on-Trent’s emerging status as a beacon for renewable and low-carbon energy innovation, we aim to help create the conditions for environmentally sustainable economic growth across our city. Green growth has a crucial role in creating a more inclusive local economy through fostering sustainability, creating more highly-skilled, better-paid job opportunities and ensuring that the benefits of economic development are shared across communities.

Green growth promotes the development of industries like renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and energy-efficient construction. These sectors offer a range of job opportunities that can be accessible to diverse segments of the population, including lower-skilled workers, but also create higher-skilled opportunities which can help to raise employment aspiration and income levels, boost skills provision and improve more people’s standard of living. Harnessing the benefits of green growth is about ensuring that local businesses and organisations are well positioned and equipped to compete in this expanding marketplace and developing a compelling green economic offer that can attract businesses to the city, including the creation of sustainable supply chains and sectoral clusters.

Our Objectives	Our Approach
Developing a compelling commercial low-carbon energy offer to businesses of all sizes and sectors in our city.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will complete the ongoing work regarding the installation, expansion and operation of the city’s innovative District Heat Network in order to bring cost-effective, low-carbon heat energy to businesses and homes throughout the city.
Creating the economic conditions for the expansion of renewable energy innovation and businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will work closely with a wide range of national, regional and local partners to explore plans for the creation of a nationally-important green energy innovation hub on the site of the former Chatterley Whitfield Colliery. • We will lead the way in investing in, and demonstrating the value of, energy recovery technology locally, including the possible redevelopment of the Hanford energy-from-waste plant.
Decarbonising our local housing, transport and industrial sectors to ensure that the city can comply with the UN COP framework and targets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will explore the implications of the Government’s proposed new planning policies around renewable energy infrastructure with a view to securing potential benefits for businesses and communities in the city. • We will work closely with our universities and leading businesses to strengthen Stoke-on-Trent’s emerging status as a national centre renewable and low-carbon energy innovation.
Working with national and local partners to identify, address and mitigate the local implications of climate change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will ensure that the expansion of the green economy locally yields significant and tangible improvements for our residents and communities in terms of employment, skills, pay, living standards and environmental sustainability.

Key deliverables – Business

Priority	Key deliverables
4 - Supporting businesses to start up, grow, thrive and innovate	Create a commercial site pipeline, including a revamp of the city's enterprise centre offer
	Work with universities and colleges to increase the local business start-up rate with improved incubator support
	Develop an improved business growth support offer with Staffordshire County Council and the Chambers of Commerce
	Implement specific sectoral support and growth plans, with focus on 'crea-tech', advanced ceramics and advanced manufacturing
	Secure a pipeline of business finance, with particular focus on venture capital, business growth, restructuring and decarbonisation
5 - Working with businesses and partners to maximise the benefits of responsible procurement	Ensure that all anchor institutions in the city are supporting development of local supply chains and employment opportunities
6 - Enabling and supporting green growth	Work with regional partners to explore potential for an advanced green manufacturing corridor along the A50 / A500
	Lobby the Government for investment in improvements to key sections of the M6, A50 and A500
	Open talks with the Government around support for continued development of a decentralised energy system in the city
	Develop a detailed plan and business case for creation of an eco-business park at Chatterley Whitfield

Measuring Progress - Business

Measure	Data source(s)
Total number of micro, small and medium businesses in the city	City Council performance data (Population Outcome / Corporate Measures)
Business survival rates (Calendar Year) -	
Percentage of council contract/spend in Stoke-on-Trent.	
Office completions by total floorspace area	
Retail completions by total floorspace area	
Gross value added GVA per capita (economic productivity)	National statistical release (e.g. ONS)
GVA contribution of businesses by industry and sector	
Employment contribution of businesses by industry and sector	

Pillar 3: Place

Our priorities

Priority 7: Making Stoke-on-Trent a more attractive destination for businesses, people and investment

One of the aims of this strategy is to create an environment that fosters economic growth, attracts employment, supports diverse industries to grow, encourages innovation and enhances people's quality of life. This is about taking a holistic approach to addressing the factors which influence people's and businesses' perceptions of our city and creating the conditions to enable enterprises, families and communities to thrive in Stoke-on-Trent.

Delivery against this priority will be about far more than cosmetic environmental improvements; it must extend to the provision of high-quality, accessible public services, enhanced and affordable public transport connectivity, decent housing across a range of types and tenures, improved education attainment and workforce skill levels, innovative and thriving commercial sectors and the creation of a fairer, more equitable and prosperous society with improved living standards and reduced social and economic inequalities.

Our Objectives	Our Approach
Identifying new employment sites that will support the creation of more high-value jobs in the city, and attracting the employers who can deliver them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pursuing growth-focused planning policy, including bringing forward a refreshed Local Plan for the city which will identify and prepare the way for delivering development. • Using council land and assets to facilitate approaches to place-making. • Supporting and building on the successful delivery of Creative Activation Zones, which are being led by cultural organisations and aim to change how people use high streets.
Delivering new, high-quality housing for ownership or private rental and investing in and driving much-needed improvements to the quality of existing housing provision throughout the city.	
Improving the physical appearance of our city and town centres and local neighbourhoods. Conserving and repurposing our built heritage to create distinct identifies and unique cultural offers for our localities.	
Boosting intra-city connectivity, as well as commuter infrastructure, through major improvements to the quality, coverage and affordability of public transport and active travel networks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing plans for transport services and infrastructure which reflect economic needs, support local daytime and night-time economies, boost connectivity and enhance passenger experience.
Listening to the voice of businesses and communities about the qualities that they want to see reflected in their city and the issues we need to address, and working with them to co-produce effective approaches.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating new structures to amplify and harness the voice of business to help shape economic planning and decision-making across our city.

Our Objectives	Our Approach
<p>Creating an image of the city as a place where people can live a lifestyle that is positive and attractive and aligns with their interests and values.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of a new joint, county-wide approach to investment, business support, job creation, skills, digital connectivity, planning, culture and tourism. • Improving community safety so that people feel safer in all areas of the city, but especially in the places where they live, work, shop and spend their leisure time.

Key opportunities for Place

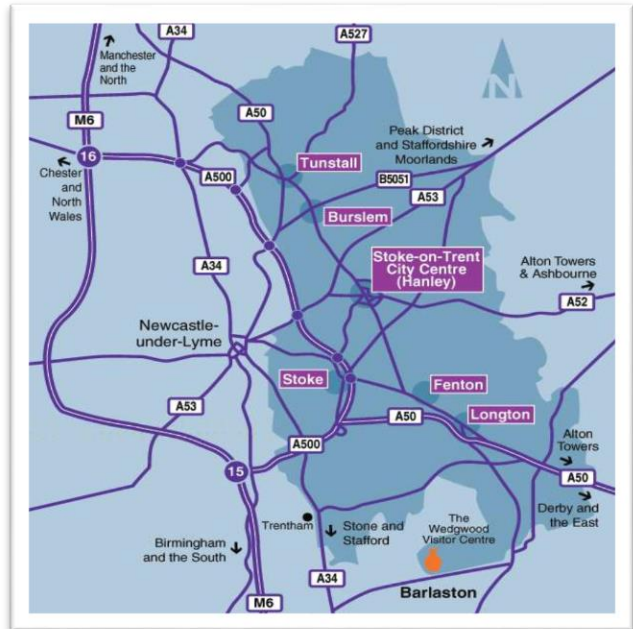
1 – The A50/A500 Corridor

Midlands Connect and Midlands Engine have identified the A50/A500 corridor linking Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire to Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire as a nationally important economic project which is capable of creating more than 17,500 new jobs and up to 30,000 new homes by 2030. The longer-term impacts include a forecast GVA uplift of £12 billion over the next 60 years across the Midlands Connect area. The corridor would also aim to improve connectivity between the M6 and M1 motorways by addressing identified pinch-points along the heavily congested existing route, which is travelled by up to 90,000 vehicles each day.

The 90km corridor already represents a hugely important supply chain and distribution artery for businesses along the east-west axis linking the North West to the East and West Midlands. In North Staffordshire, this includes industry-leading employers such as Bet365, JCB, Michelin Tyres and Steelite. The ambition is to transform it into one of the UK's most important locations for sustainable growth and investment through investment in low-carbon transport innovation along with improved rail connectivity.

2 – Road and rail infrastructure

While Stoke-on-Trent’s geographical location and regional and national connectivity are among its strongest economic advantages, there are emerging signs that parts of the surrounding road network are at, or near to, capacity. The City Council and local government and regeneration partners have identified a number of strategically important locations where investment is required to upgrade the existing highways infrastructure to relieve congestion at peak times and improve traffic flow around the city and wider sub-region. A summary of these projects is presents in the table below.



[Fig.17 – North Staffordshire’s motorway, trunk and A-road network]

Rail infrastructure also requires additional investment. Plans have been submitted to the Government for the potential reopening of the mothballed Stoke-on-Trent to Leek line, which could reduce the number of commuter car journeys along this route. In addition, there are plans to reopen previously closed stations along the East Midlands Railway at Etruria and Meir to meet passenger demand and ease road congestion.

Focus	Examples of Key Transport Investment Proposals
Newcastle-under-Lyme & Stoke-on-Trent	M6 Smart Motorways & Junction 15 Improvement & new Junction 15A (Nr. Keele)
Stoke-on-Trent	A50/500 Corridor Future Proofing- delivering recommendations of the Midlands Connect study
Stoke-on-Trent	City East Link Road – Scheme currently shortlisted with DfT
All	Rail Connectivity Improvements, including Stoke/Leek Rail link and new/reopened stations in Stoke-on-Trent
Newcastle-under-Lyme	Knotty Metro – Extension the Newcastle/Keele, Link to University Growth Corridor
All	Bus Network Improvements, Urban and Rural
All	Local Rail Network enhancements

Key transport infrastructure improvement projects across North Staffordshire. (Source: Midlands Connect and SOTCC).

3 – Grid capacity

Existing capacity limitations in relation to Stoke-on-Trent's power network are creating constraints on economic expansion in parts of the city. This is due to limited capacity for new connections and difficulties in managing load balancing and the upload of new generation. Left unaddressed, these issues are likely to impede future development in the centre and south of the city. Local grid capacity in the north of the city is able to accommodate further development and manage additional upload from power generation. However, it is affected by capacity constraints in relation to its connection to the National Grid infrastructure. These grid capacity issues need to be addressed to enable the roll-out of planned electric vehicle charging infrastructure improvements across the city, as well as to accommodate future development sites and incorporate additional renewable energy generation systems.

National Grid's current business plan for the North Staffordshire area is based on predictions of limited growth and potential for falling demand on the local grid based on their analysis of developments and local growth potential in the area. This is at odds with the city's current trajectory of economic expansion and citywide development, and makes no allowance for the significant impacts of transport electrification or renewable energy generation in the city. An opportunity now exists whereby National Grid can be mandated to invest in grid capacity improvements if it can be demonstrated that its business plan forecasts of local energy and grid capacity demand are inaccurate. The City Council is therefore working to develop a Local Area Energy Plan which will set out the energy infrastructure requirements needed to support Stoke-on-Trent's economic, transport and energy generation ambitions over the medium and longer term. The plan will be based on the current position, as well as a range of local growth and development scenarios. This strategic approach will enable the city to engage directly with National Grid in ensuring that local grid infrastructure is fit for purpose and designed to accommodate local growth as anticipated in both the Local Plan and sector-specific commercial development plans.

4 – Ceramic Valley Enterprise Zone

Ceramic Valley has become one of the most successful and rapidly growing enterprise zones anywhere in the UK. The cluster of development sites spans the Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme local authority boundaries, and has been developed and marketed jointly by both councils and Staffordshire County Council. The ongoing expansion of the Ceramic Valley Enterprise Zone since its inception in 2016 has been one of the key forces driving the development of affordable and accessible commercial and employment space in Stoke-on-Trent. In January 2023, the City Council marked the achievement of the 50 per cent development milestone across all six enterprise zone sites, as well as the completion of the Stoke-on-Trent sites, with all the available development spaces either occupied, being developed or in the planning process. Attention has now moved onto the delivery phase for these sites, and assessing how further development land can be unlocked across the enterprise zone to meet high levels of demand from businesses for quality, purpose-built premises in well-connected locations close to a significant labour market. Ceramic Valley contributed £48 million in GVA uplift between 2016 and 2023, and is set to have created at least 5,000 new jobs by 2025.



[Fig.18 – Map of the Ceramic Valley Enterprise Zone development sites]

5 – Chatterley Whitfield

The City Council is working with local partners and energy industry experts to develop a masterplan to transform the former Chatterley Whitfield colliery site, to the north of the city, into a renewable energy demonstrator hub. The disused colliery site, on the outskirts of Chell and Ball Green in Stoke-on-Trent, is owned and managed by the council and comprises 10.5 hectares of former mining buildings and structures set within a 50-hectare country park. Industry studies have confirmed that the site is suitable for the generation of heat energy and electrical power, and already has supporting infrastructure in place. Recent proposals include using the site for the development of a mine water energy demonstrator, as well as potential for solar PV installations and battery storage facilities. The City Council plans to bring these proposals together within a single masterplan for the development of an Eco Hub incorporating energy demonstrator facilities, capitalising on the opportunity to use the heat and power generated at the colliery site as a low to zero carbon energy supply into the local community for commercial, residential and public realm use. The plans would simultaneously safeguard Chatterley Whitfield's outstanding heritage assets and deliver a unique sustainable energy facility which would exploit the economic, social and energy potential of the site.

The Chatterley Whitfield masterplan seeks to build on a recent vision document produced by Historic England regarding the future use of the heritage colliery site, which concluded that it should be repurposed as a focal point for a green energy cluster and surrounding commercial development opportunities. The City Council is working with a number of green energy providers who have developed proposals to repurpose the surrounding site as an eco/green technology cluster in line with the Historic England vision. The masterplan will be developed alongside a detailed techno-economic feasibility study to assess the technical viability, capital and operational costs associated with the delivery of the master plan and as well as potential outputs. The collective outcomes will be summarised and presented through a development prospectus for the site development and energy opportunities. The redevelopment of the site is forecast to create at least 500 new jobs for the city within the green energy industry.



[Fig.19 – The Chatterley Whitfield development site. Source: Midlands Engine]

Priority 8: Revitalising our high streets and town centres

Post-pandemic changes in the retail and leisure sectors have coincided with a digital revolution which has fundamentally and irreversibly changed people’s shopping and spending habits. Footfall has not recovered and the once-vibrant demand for high street retail and hospitality has fallen away so rapidly that businesses and places have struggled to adjust to these seismic changes. In too many cases, the result has been lengthening rows of empty shops, closed department stores and declining shopping centres. This decline has further exacerbated the problems facing more deprived communities, where disposable incomes are lower and transport between communities and town centres is less affordable and accessible. Inclusive economic growth can play an important role in transforming high streets and town centres by promoting local entrepreneurship, creating jobs, improving infrastructure, and fostering community engagement. In an inclusive economy, economic benefits are shared more widely, creating a vibrant, diverse, and sustainable urban environment that attracts businesses, residents, and visitors alike. Through a focus on equity, accessibility, and local investment, this strategy aims to breathe new life into localities which have been affected by the departure of traditional retail, to ensure that they can become resilient hubs of activity and opportunity for all.

Our Objectives	Our Approach
Reimagining and reshaping our high streets and town centres to create places that people value, that attract visitors, trade and investment, and which can instil greater pride in communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will pursue the High Street Accelerators programme to develop innovative and sustainable solutions for urban centres in collaboration with local residents and traders. • We will develop new City Centre and town centre masterplans for the post-retail era, which will focus on improving the experiential offer of places and the use of housing in the creation of local hubs which can combine visitor, retail and hospitality attractions with new communities which will bring additional and sustainable footfall. • The development of creative and sustainable solutions for high streets and town centres will be an important part of the ongoing work to refresh the city’s Local Plan to ensure that future planning policy aligns with our ambitions in this area.
Improving the public realm and investing in transport infrastructure to enhance the attractiveness and accessibility of high streets.	
Delivering the right mix of housing and business premises in town centres to improve their attractiveness and economic sustainability.	
Developing and shaping more commercially informed future high streets and town centres across the city.	
Using inclusive design principles to ensure that public spaces are accessible to all, and that town centres are more welcoming and can attract a broader range of visitors.	
Involving communities in co-designing sustainable future uses for their local centres.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will explore and identify viable opportunities for community asset transfer in order to repurpose and reuse empty council buildings and heritage assets to reduce high street vacancy rates and stimulate economic activity.
Making effective use of heritage and other public assets and exploring the potential use of community asset transfers to enable disused buildings to contribute to the local economy.	

Priority 9: Developing economic infrastructure and social capital in our communities

This strategy aims to support and enable the creation of more resilient and prosperous communities throughout Stoke-on-Trent by empowering them to participate more fully in the economy and share in the benefits of economic growth. This can be achieved more effectively by involving different groups and communities in economic strategy and decision-making around investment and planning for the future of our city. Inclusive economic growth strengthens both the economic infrastructure and social capital in deprived communities by ensuring that investments in physical and digital infrastructure benefit everyone, and by promoting social cohesion, skill development, and local ownership.

Key elements of this approach include the provision of affordable, quality housing and commercial spaces in more deprived areas, fostering entrepreneurship to encourage business growth, closing the 'digital divide' between more and less affluent areas and investing in community-led projects to reduce inequalities, boost cohesion and capitalise on cultural activities and assets.

Our Objectives	Our Approach
We will work with community groups and the wider VCSE, public and commercial sectors to understand and address the factors which undermine social capital and infrastructure in deprived communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with local and national partners on a strategy to build social capital and empower communities in the most deprived areas of Stoke-on-Trent.
We will deliver elements of community wealth building in collaboration with our partners to boost economic participation levels in more deprived parts of the city and create sustainable approaches to wealth generation.	
We will explore possible economic uses for community and heritage assets and work with communities to develop viable plans, including the use of community asset transfers or community stewardship arrangements where appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploring and identifying viable opportunities for community asset transfer in order to repurpose and reuse empty council buildings and heritage assets to reduce high street vacancy rates and stimulate economic activity.
We will work with engaged and influential community groups and commercial and VCSE sector partners to nurture increased entrepreneurship at local level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing a new accord with the VCSE sector in the city to shape future partnership working approaches and ensure closer alignment with the City Council's corporate and economic priorities. Working with partners and channelling UKSPF grant funding to encourage and sustain community-level entrepreneurship.
We will work with local cultural organisations to develop new approaches to cultural development and community engagement which can raise community aspirations and pride in place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with National Lottery Heritage Fund and Arts Council England to deliver national cultural development and heritage conservation programmes in the city.

Key deliverables – Place

Priority	Key deliverables
<p>7 - Making Stoke-on-Trent a more attractive destination for businesses, people and investment.</p>	Ensure the continuation of regular direct train services from Stoke-on-Trent to London, Birmingham and Manchester, and pursue improvements to the Crewe-Derby line.
	Create an ambitious pipeline of housing development opportunities through the Local Plan and partnership with Homes England
	Establish a revolving land fund, backed by the use of compulsory purchase powers, to ensure a decent pipeline of developable brownfield land
	Create a prioritised heritage restoration plan, combining acquisition, investment and enforcement
	Undertake feasibility study on medium-term plan for Stoke-on-Trent to become a UNESCO World Heritage Site, recognising tangible and intangible heritage, and in shorter term
	Refresh the existing plan for the city to become a designated International Centre for Ceramics
	Strengthen neighbourhood policing, working in close partnership with local communities to address local issues
	Adopt a local Conference of the Parties (COP) framework to address issues relating to climate change
	Develop a city carbon reduction and mitigation plan on doughnut economic principles that takes into account social impact.
	Complete development of the refreshed Local Plan and complementary Local Transport Plan
	Lobby Government for long-term transport investment (in the context of wider devolution discussions) focused on the development of a quality bus network and road infrastructure improvements
Develop a city-specific energy plan, building on the City Council's energy plan, covering buildings, transport and infrastructure, and focusing on energy generation, storage and efficiency	
<p>8 - Revitalising our high streets and town centres</p>	Produce refreshed plans for the City Centre and town centres, supported by appropriate delivery vehicles that will promote investor confidence
	Develop a funding model to bring empty properties back into beneficial use, with particular focus on additional supported housing to enable implementation of a Housing First model for tackling homelessness in the city
	Develop a robust partnership plan for reducing crime and antisocial behaviour in town centres and public spaces
<p>9 - Developing economic infrastructure and social capital in our communities</p>	Deliver the Strengthening Communities programme, initially focused on three areas of the city, attracting government and National Lottery investment, tracking outcomes and sharing learning
	Adopt a 'Total Place' approach to expenditure review and reallocation in relation to the Strengthening Communities neighbourhoods

Measuring progress - Place

Measure	Data source(s)
Number of visitors who book overnight stays in the city	Council performance data (Population Outcome / Corporate Measures)
Percentage of residential development on brownfield land	
Number of heritage buildings categorised as being at risk	
Number of heritage buildings in the city which have been safeguarded or improved	
Antisocial behaviour reports received by the City Council (per 1,000 population)	
Net housing completions	
Number of empty homes brought back into use	
Vacant commercial properties	
Number of new homes delivered, broken down by tenure	
Percentage of highways in good condition	
Air quality measures	
Number of bus passenger journeys (per passenger)	Service provider data
Levels of volunteering in the city in the previous 12 months	Resident / user survey data
Percentage of residents who are satisfied with their local area	
Percentage of residents whose fear of crime affects their day-to-day lives	
Percentage of people who feel that their neighbourhood is relatively clean and tidy	
Percentage of residents who feel they can get around without always relying on a car or taxi	
Percentage of residents in the city who are satisfied with the opportunities and activities that are available for local young people	

Governance

Although this strategy is primarily concerned with the city of Stoke-on-Trent and the wider city region encompassing North Staffordshire, the delivery of the strategy will increasingly be shaped by governance structures and procedures which are designed to operate across the combined geography of Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire. The strategic oversight and support previously provided by the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership is now being delivered by new cross-sector partnerships in the form of the Staffordshire Growth Hub for business support services, and the Make it Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire inward investment service. Stoke-on-Trent is also a key contributor to a joint economic strategy covering all 10 local authority areas which make up the county footprint of Staffordshire. This is also the administrative geography for public health service planning and delivery, following the creation of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care System (ICS), as well as police and fire services. This collaborative approach to economic development has also facilitated the development of the member councils' joint proposals to the Government regarding a potential devolution deal to spur investment and economic expansion. County-wide decision making is made possible by the Staffordshire Leaders' Board, a panel of local government leaders and chief officers representing all of the constituent authorities.