

STOKE-ON-TRENT

SHAPING OUR CITY | GROWTH FOR ALL

FUTURE 100



FOREWORD

Stoke-on-Trent is a nationally important engine of creativity, innovation and growth.

For over 250 years, the city has driven the unique development of the North-West Midlands, achieving global brand recognition as 'The Potteries' - a region synonymous with the quality and beauty of our craft. Today, the city represents the industrious heart of North Staffordshire - a cohesive city region with immense economic potential which is primed for rapid, sustainable growth.

The collapse of traditional manufacturing industries during the 1980s and '90s, followed by the more recent decade of austerity, has hit our city immensely hard. But while we may have buckled, we never fell. Our proud cultural identity of creativity and innovation has not only survived but has evolved and flourished. It can be seen today in the transformation of advanced materials, in high-tech innovation and inspiring examples of digital creativity.

The people of this city are fighting back. We have torn up the grim prevailing narratives of post-industrial decline and reforged our identity, ambitions and civic pride around our illustrious history of creativity and a determination to augment our city's place and influence in the world. Despite being continuously looked over by central Government, Stoke-on-Trent has emerged as one of the UK's fastest-growing local economies and the primary driver of employment and economic growth in the region, consistently outperforming the UK average trajectory on GVA growth, job creation and wage growth. So, imagine what we could achieve with sustained Government support.

But there is a paradox. Stoke-on-Trent faces significant challenges which it lacks the resources to address effectively. Too many areas of the city remain deprived and underutilised. Persistent inequalities in health, education, skills and life chances, as well as a legacy of historic underinvestment in vital economic and social infrastructure, are stifling growth, prosperity and opportunity. In addition, latency in the local economy risks stalling the city's economic recovery.

In the run-up to the city's Centenary year, we communally reflected on where we have come from and the type of city we want Stoke-on-Trent to become over the next 100 years. We have grappled with the changes and decisions we can make now to shape a more prosperous future.

We are seizing a momentous opportunity to instigate changes that we hope our descendants will thank us for and could restore our World Craft City to global prominence. Once again, our creativity can be the city's power source and its indelible lifeblood, flowing through the centuries and connecting all facets of our economy to each community and citizen. By harnessing public service reform to our core growth mission, we will create new opportunities for people to benefit directly from increased prosperity, as well as reducing demand pressures on local services over time. Crucially, we will shape public services which can facilitate local growth through focused investment, improved use of local supply chains and creating accessible pathways to higher skills and employment.

With targeted support and investment, we can transform our city's economy and the wellbeing of our residents, delivering lasting improvements for generations to come. Addressing critical infrastructure gaps, boosting skills development, and fostering innovation will enable the city to fire on all cylinders, delivering economic benefits not just locally, but across the wider region and beyond, propelling the city's economy to new heights of

innovation and expansion. By investing in sustainable public transport, energy infrastructure, and biodiversity initiatives, we can position Stoke-on-Trent as a green energy smart city, supporting decarbonisation while creating jobs and improving quality of life. By delivering high-quality new housing, restoring our heritage and accelerating brownfield regeneration, we can revitalise high streets, enhance cultural assets, and transform deprived neighbourhoods into vibrant, attractive hubs of activity.

Stoke-on-Trent already has a dynamic, diverse and highly-integrated economy; a rich cultural heritage; and an indomitable sense of community spirit. The city is a strategic hub, connecting labour, goods and services across the region and the UK. With Government support and investment, we can overcome current challenges to create a city that is prosperous, inclusive and sustainable, delivering economic and social benefits locally and nationally for decades to come. We invite the Government to partner with us to unlock this city region's full potential, transform our citizens' lives and unleash a new era of creativity and innovation.



J Ashworth

Councillor Jane Ashworth

Leader, Stoke-on-Trent City Council

Allison Gardner

Allison Gardner

MP for Stoke-on-Trent South

Gareth Snell

Gareth Snell

MP for Stoke-on-Trent Central

David Williams

David Williams

MP for Stoke-on-Trent North

WHERE WE ARE NOW

THE 'STOKE PARADOX'

LOCAL PROSPERITY HAS NOT MATCHED ECONOMIC GROWTH

GROWTH RATES (2016-22)	STOKE-ON-TRENT	UK
TOTAL GVA	40.4%	26.9%
WAGES	24.4%	19.2%
DISPOSABLE INCOMES	15.3%	18.5%
CHILD POVERTY	23.6%	6.4%

INDUSTRIAL CLASSIFICATION

(SHARE OF GVA)

Manufacturing accounts for **10.7%** of Stoke-on-Trent's economic output, compared to the **9.1%** for the UK



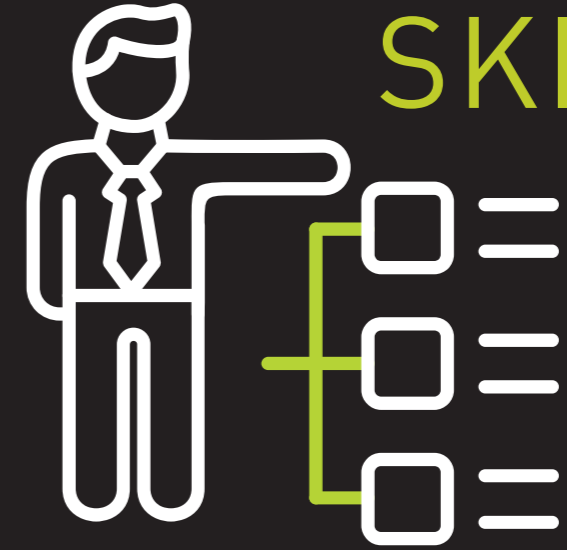
HEALTH-RELATED UNEMPLOYMENT (2014-24)

The proportion of **inactive adults** who are long-term sick is **1.5 times the UK average**

Stoke-on-Trent data: 41.4%
(2024 data)
UK average: 28.2 %



SKILL LEVELS



ONLY 36.6% OF CITY'S WORKING-AGE ADULTS HAVE **Level 4 qualifications.** THE UK AVERAGE IS 47.3%

Child Development Scores



Stoke-on-Trent data: 62.5 % of children were at the **expected level of development** (2024 data) **UK average: 66.2 %**

HEALTHY LIFE EXPECTANCY

STOKE-ON-TRENT DATA:
MALE 56.1 YEARS
FEMALE 55.0 YEARS

2023 DATA - HLE AT BIRTH

ENGLAND DATA:
MALE = 61.5 YEARS
FEMALE = 61.9 YEARS



AN INTEGRATED PLAN TO DELIVER SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH

As the diagram to the right illustrates, we are putting forward a coherent, shared plan designed to enable and accelerate the sustainable growth of Stoke-on-Trent's economy. The plan addresses the wide-ranging, linked factors which will determine the city's economic future. To be effective, this plan must achieve its objectives across all five missions, as all of the approaches are mutually dependent enablers of sustainable growth. The prospectus therefore makes the case that successful delivery will be largely dependent upon securing targeted investment in all of the programmes and interventions included in the diagram. However, we are confident that the resulting economic boost would be fiscally positive over the medium term and will stem the chronic leakage of locally-generated wealth and public finances which has characterised previous attempts to address the city's economic challenges.

Develop a comprehensive work and health offer to give people who are unemployed due to ill-health access to suitable and sustainable employment

Reduce homelessness through a combination of prevention and better support services to ensure vulnerable individuals get timely and effective help

Create a skills and employment 'climbing frame' that ensures local residents can gain and combine skills that local employers will need in the future

Co-ordinate a substantial expansion in youth provision, including developing skills and leadership in working with young people

Reduce antisocial behaviour and environmental crime through the adoption of a 'broken windows' philosophy

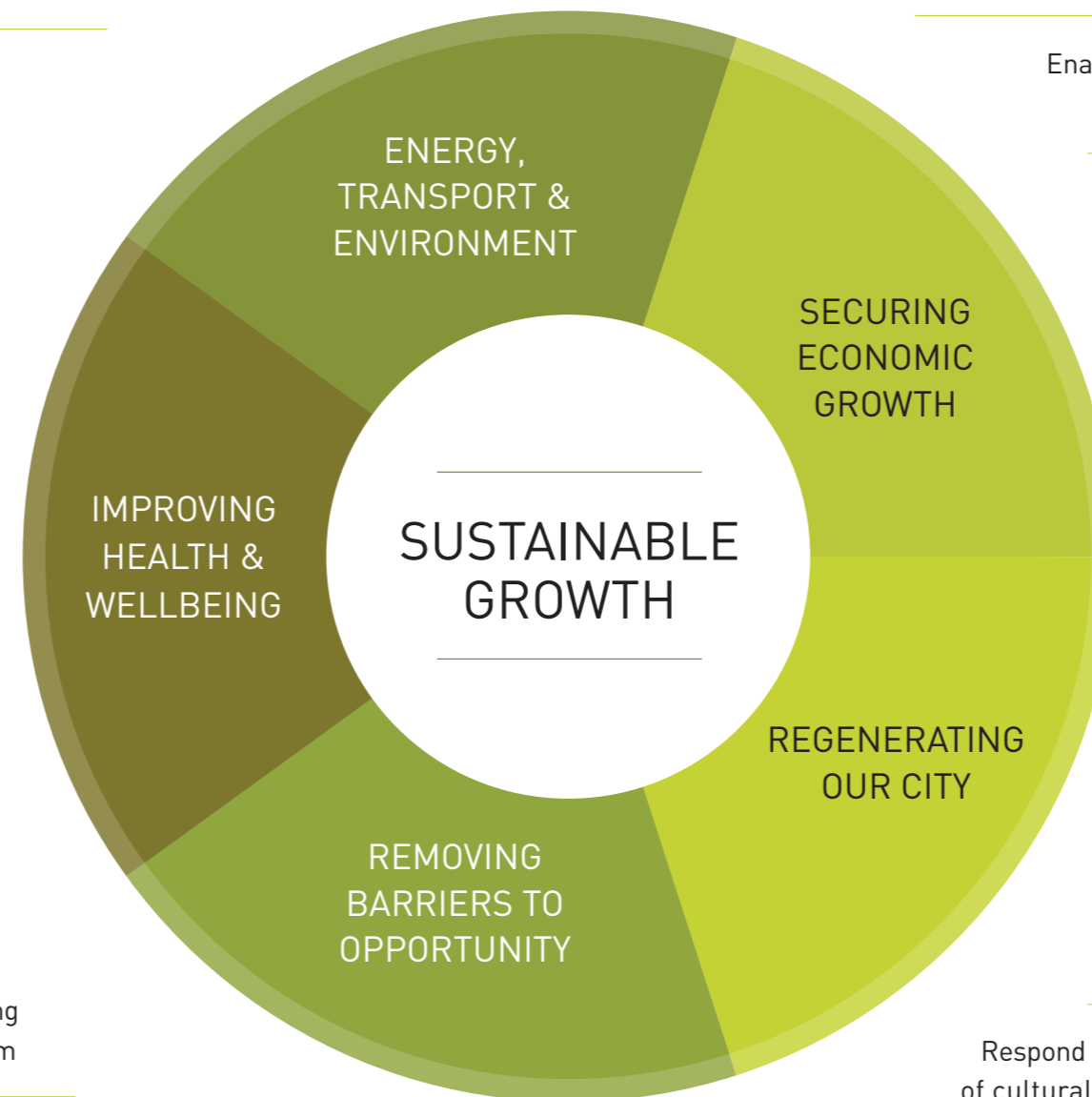
Ensure that investment in transport infrastructure and service improvements enables and supports increased active travel

Become an exemplar age-friendly city where older people benefit from high-quality homes, local amenities and care and support

Provide a family support offer that is among the best in the country, enabling all families to access the help they need to thrive as close to home as possible

Co-produce distinctive plans to improve our city centre and town centre offers by securing the right mix of new development, heritage restoration and high-quality public realm

Make higher education more accessible to students from disadvantaged backgrounds and encourage and support more students to remain in North Staffordshire after graduation



Support local businesses to achieve decarbonisation and maximise the city's green competitive advantage

Enable more low-income households to benefit from affordable warmth by ensuring more housing attains 'decent homes' standards

Achieve a lasting step-change in local bus services in North Staffordshire

Develop a culture of lifelong learning and skill up our young people so they are ready to thrive in the industries of the future

Develop a de-centralised energy system that improves our local resilience and reduces our carbon impact

Make measurable progress in nature recovery, improved biodiversity and access to high-quality green spaces

Facilitate business growth and inward investment

Increase participation levels in the city's labour market through a combined focus on health and skills

Grow community wealth by enabling enterprise, asset building, access to finance, business investment, philanthropy and social value

Respond to the heritage emergency by adopting a prioritised programme for the restoration of culturally important and locally valued buildings, structures and spaces for new uses

Meet our national target for new housing, delivering a diverse range of affordable and attractive homes



MISSION 1

SECURING ECONOMIC GROWTH

Why this matters

Stoke-on-Trent has been among the fastest-growing local economies in the UK over the past decade. As the primary city economy and driver of employment and economic growth in Staffordshire and the wider northern West Midlands, Stoke-on-Trent is primed to deliver sustained, rapid growth due to its geographical advantages, strong labour supply and a diverse industrial base. This encompasses strong sectors including both conventional and advanced manufacturing, digital and crea-tech, creative industries, transport and logistics and healthcare and life sciences. To fully realise its remarkable potential, and to ensure it benefits all residents, the city must urgently address significant latency which will otherwise continue to prevent its dramatic economic resurgence from firing on all cylinders.



Challenges:

- Unemployment levels remain above both the Staffordshire and UK averages.
- A quarter of adults in the city who are in work earn the minimum wage.
- Too many residents cannot access newly-created job opportunities due to poor health, low skills and lack of transport, particularly bus services.
- Business start-up rates remain too low for a city of Stoke-on-Trent's size and economic capabilities.
- Specific barriers to the commercial expansion of the creative sector, including low retention rates for graduates, access to sustainable funding for creative start-ups, lack of suitable performance and production facilities and access to distribution networks.
- Sectors such as retail and commercial property require active intervention to support rationalisation and re-positioning in changed market circumstances.
- Business growth potential is being stifled by a lack of access to sufficient skilled labour, which can cause relocations or opening of other bases outside North Staffordshire (e.g. Greater Manchester).
- A lack of quality commercial sites highlights the need for a refreshed pipeline, underpinned by a strong, growth-orientated Local Plan.
- Need to ensure traditional industries and particularly ceramics are also able to sustain and thrive.

Opportunities/Advantages:

- The city benefits from locational advantages, exceptionally strong economic links to the rest of North Staffordshire and surrounding areas, and a highly diversified, yet closely integrated economy with an unusually strong manufacturing sector.
- North Staffordshire is uniquely positioned for growth in the creative sector, with a burgeoning cluster of creative industries particularly in crea-tech, games design and more traditional design-led manufacturing at all scales.
- Stoke-on-Trent is a World Craft City where business agility and our passion for excellence in designing, making and doing mutually support each other.
- We have specific know-how and capacity in transformation of materials across sectors (e.g. advanced ceramics and steel-making).
- Our connected creative ecology links together commerce, innovation, arts, heritage, culture and tourism, ensuring that the opportunities created benefit all of the city.
- The digital sector has evolved into thriving clusters which benefit from quality incubation facilities, outstanding FE and HE skills development programmes and a trailblazing citywide gigabit-enabled full-fibre network.
- Our crea-tech sector has achieved a higher GDP contribution density than most UK cities.
- Our Ceramic Valley Enterprise Zone, which spans the administrative boundaries of North Staffordshire, has outperformed most other EZs over the last eight years, but requires infrastructure investment to unlock further expansion.

- There is significant potential for business and sectoral growth, with access to skilled labour and the right financial support and incentives.
- North Staffordshire's two universities already make a significant contribution to R&D and innovation, and can play a pivotal role in driving technology adoption rates across industries and high-growth sectors in particular.



What we need to do

- Develop sectoral clusters, with a focus on advanced manufacturing, digital and crea-tech, green industries, and logistics and distribution, but also on the potential for cross-sectoral transfer of specific common skills and processes.

- Capitalise on the strengths, diversity and versatility of North Staffordshire's engineering industry, unlocking its potential to consolidate recent expansion into developing areas and markets, including the defence and space sectors.
- Facilitate business growth and inward investment through access to high quality advice, sources of finance, a skilled workforce, a good choice of commercial space and effective place marketing.
- Grow community wealth by enabling enterprise, asset building, access to finance, business investment, philanthropy and social value, including the enabling role of anchor institutions.
- Improve regional connectivity infrastructure, including investment in the motorway and trunk road network, improving bus services and maximising the opportunity of the digital network.
- Develop a culture of lifelong learning and skill up our young people so they are ready to thrive in the industries of the future.
- Make investment and business support available to all cultural producers and creative businesses for new creative start-ups and growth initiatives, managed through the Creative Development Office.
- Develop our leisure economy through sport, culture, retail and a broader experiential offer, including strengthening the night-time economy and investing in outdoor spaces. Use this as an opportunity for skills and leadership development.
- Increase participation levels in the local labour market through a combined focus on health and skills.

How we will achieve it

- Developing a strong commercial site delivery pipeline, including a refreshed enterprise centre offer to cater to the needs of high-growth sectors and clusters.
- Working with the further and higher education sector to improve business incubator support and increase business start-up rates.
- Creating an improved business growth support offer in collaboration with Staffordshire County Council and Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce.
- Establishing specific sectoral support and growth plans, with early focus on crea-tech, advanced ceramics and the wider advanced manufacturing sector.
- Engaging with the commercial sector and ensuring that the voice of business is an important driver business support, growth and skills development activity.
- Ensuring that all anchor institutions in Stoke-on-Trent are supporting the development of local supply chains and employment opportunities.
- Working with regional partners to secure a pipeline of business finance, with particular focus on enabling venture capital, business growth, restructuring and decarbonisation projects.
- Securing investment in improvements to the surrounding motorway and trunk road network to enable creation of a designated advanced green manufacturing corridor along the A50 and A500.

- Seeking improvements to Crewe-Derby railway services and ensuring that any post-HS2 alternative railway improvements maintain regular direct services from Stoke-on-Trent to London, Birmingham and Manchester.
- Delivering a tailored community wealth building programme for Stoke-on-Trent, coordinated by a resourced Hub and offering improved access to finance, micro-enterprise support and the creation of alternative delivery vehicles.
- Capitalising on the strong economic ties between the city's creative sector and other elements of the local economy, such as tourism, nightlife and hospitality.
- Creating a business- and sector-led programme for skills development in conjunction with North Staffordshire's two universities
- Seeking support for our traditional ceramics sector.

What difference will this make?

Our aim is that by 2030:

- By continuing to grow 10 per cent faster than the UK average, we will achieve a local economy worth more than £9 billion a year.
- The average local full-time wage will be at least £700 a week with more even distribution of performance across the wage spectrum.
- We will have 5,000 more people in employment from our baseline position of 116,000.
- We will seek to achieve a 10 per cent increase in the value of contracting of local suppliers by anchor public service organisations in the city.



MISSION 2

DELIVERING CLEAN ENERGY, SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT AND AN IMPROVED LOCAL ENVIRONMENT



Why this matters

Stoke-on-Trent City Council is a pioneer of green energy Innovation and is pursuing exciting plans for an expanded district heat network which will bring cost-effective, low-carbon renewable heat energy to thousands of homes and businesses. However, the wider city lacks a coherent plan for improving carbon reduction, sustainability, environment conservation and biodiversity. As well as posing a risk to the environment, this creates a potential barrier to investment and opportunity. Beginning with investment in sustainable public transport, we will transform energy infrastructure to make Stoke-on-Trent a green energy smart city with a decentralised energy system, a highly effective business decarbonisation programme and ambitious biodiversity and nature recovery strategies. Factors to be addressed include:

- The need for a clear citywide carbon reduction and mitigation plan to strengthen Stoke-on-Trent's competitive advantages around green energy innovation and decarbonisation.
- Stoke-on-Trent has the highest fuel poverty levels in England, with one in four households affected. Continued reliance on fossil fuels risks driving fuel poverty levels even higher due to market instability and regulatory tightening.
- The lack of a sustainable public transport system for North Staffordshire harms people's health due to poor air quality, creates a barrier to opportunity, damages the prospects for city and town centre regeneration, and undermines the performance of the wider city economy through the impacts of traffic congestion.
- The city already has some elements of a smart city infrastructure, and now needs to focus on the expansion of the district heating network and the creation of sustainable energy sources and effective storage solutions.

- The protection and improvement of Stoke-on-Trent's green environment and diverse natural habitats is vital to promote nature recovery and increased biodiversity, to enhance the attractiveness of the city as a place to live and work, and to counter-balance the impact of required new development.
- Focus on restoration of our built environment on grounds of both economic potential and sustainable practice.
- Improving access to decent quality green space, including outdoors recreational amenities, needs to be addressed as part of our work on building social capital in deprived neighbourhoods.

What we need to do

- Develop a de-centralised energy system that improves our local resilience and reduces our carbon impact.
- Make measurable progress in nature recovery, improved bio-diversity and access to high-quality green spaces.
- Achieve a lasting step-change in local bus services with more routes at affordable fares, including a rapid bus network between the main centres and hubs in North Staffordshire.
- Make significant improvements in sustainable transport provision alongside investment in our existing infrastructure and networks, to ensure that the city is able to progress beyond a necessary short-term reliance on greener public transport.
- Deliver a joined-up approach to increasing active travel across the city, including infrastructure and service improvements to integrate active travel and public transport more effectively.
- Enable more low-income households to benefit from affordable warmth by ensuring more housing attains 'decent homes' standards with good energy efficiency.

- Improve the quality of homes in the private rented sector.
- Support local businesses to achieve decarbonisation and maximise the city's green competitive advantage.

How we will achieve it

- Implementing the recently-adopted Staffordshire-wide COP framework and developing a city carbon reduction and mitigation plan on doughnut economic principles which takes social impact into account.
- Developing a refreshed Local Transport Plan which makes a compelling case for long-term investment focused on the creation of a quality bus network and improved road infrastructure to enhance connectivity throughout Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire.
- Creating a sustainable transport infrastructure plan which will identify opportunities and potential investment required to develop sustainable alternatives to existing public transport provision over the longer term.
- Designing a bespoke energy sustainability and decarbonisation plan for Stoke-on-Trent, covering energy generation, storage and efficiency across all sectors and communities.
- Securing vital investment for the continued development of a decentralised energy system for the city.
- Developing a detailed plan and business case for the creation of an innovative eco- business park for North Staffordshire at Chatterley Whitfield.
- Creating a detailed and ambitious affordable warmth plan for the city and maximising opportunities presented by government- and utility-led programmes to improve the energy efficiency of existing housing stock.

- Using the development of a new Local Plan to expand the retro-fitting of Stoke-on-Trent's existing housing stock and ensure that all new development in the city is eco-friendly.
- Securing investment to maximise the city's energy from waste (EFW) opportunity as part of wider suite of improvements to the Hanford EFW facility, including the addition of a materials recovery capability.
- Developing a coherent, citywide plan for transitioning to a more sustainable, circular system of resource usage, waste minimisation and recycling and reuse.
- Enabling the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust to actively manage important habitats and wild spaces in the city and repopulate suitable open spaces.
- Providing further improvements to water courses in the city, including our collective contribution to the Trent Headwaters project.

What difference will this make?

Our aim is that by 2030:

- The amount of locally generated energy from renewable sources will treble, from the 2023 baseline of 28 MWh (megawatt hours) to 84 MWh.
- At least 99 per cent of social housing will be classed as 'decent', and 1,750 private sector homes will have been improved as a result of intervention by the city council and partners.
- The number of bus passenger journeys each year will grow from the current 7.5 million to 10 million.



MISSION 3

REGENERATING OUR CITY

Why this matters

Stoke-on-Trent's economic future relies not only on being a regionally important centre for commercial activity and employment, but also presenting a more compelling offer as an attractive, exciting and welcoming place that people and organisations will want to be part of and live their lives in. The city already boasts a rich and diverse cultural heritage stemming from its illustrious history as an internationally renowned centre of craftsmanship and invention, and a distinct cultural identity as a creative, innovative and caring city. By capitalising on our cultural and natural assets and indomitable spirit of ingenuity, creativity and community, we will breathe new life into deprived areas and shape a future city that can support and enhance our economic aspirations. Regenerating Stoke-on-Trent will also enhance the economic appeal of North Staffordshire to employers, investors and workers, thereby strengthening the city region's ability to deliver more rapid and widespread growth and prosperity. Factors to be addressed include:

- A lack of choice regarding good quality housing, including access to affordable homes, damages economic prospects and contributes to homelessness levels.
- A shortage of sufficient, developable brownfield sites will undermine the city's competitiveness, constrain housing supply and increase reliance on greenfield land.
- Our city centre and town centres do not provide a quality of environment or service offer which is commensurate to our city's size and regional importance. This also erodes our prospects of inward investment and makes Stoke-on-Trent less attractive to visitors, workers and prospective residents.

- The city's heritage is integral to our cultural identity and economic aspirations. However, we are experiencing a heritage emergency with many listed buildings and structures having fallen into disuse, disrepair and decay.
- Low-level antisocial behaviour, environmental crime, increased street homelessness and widespread drug and alcohol consumption are having a detrimental impact on perceptions of local centres and public spaces.
- There is significant scope to increase community voice and activism, based on empowerment of communities to develop and deliver their own plans for their neighbourhoods.

What we need to do

- Meet our national target for new housing, delivering a diverse range of affordable and attractive homes in vibrant and thriving communities with a good range of local amenities.
- Co-produce distinctive plans to improve our city centre and town centre offers by securing the right mix of new development, heritage restoration and high-quality public realm, as well as providing supporting infrastructure and effective management.
- Improve life for residents in affected communities through the assembly, remediation and redevelopment of vacant brownfield land to deliver new homes and neighbourhood facilities.
- Respond to the heritage emergency by adopting a prioritised programme for the restoration of culturally important and locally valued buildings, structures and spaces for new uses, and by taking robust enforcement actions against owners who allow our heritage to fall into decay.

- Reduce antisocial behaviour and environmental crime through the adoption of a 'broken windows' philosophy to foster collective pride in our local environment and ensure that everyone can enjoy a safe and clean city.
- Build on Stoke-on-Trent's World Craft City status through the development of the city as an International Centre for Ceramics and potential future UNESCO World Heritage Site.

How we will achieve it

- Creating an ambitious pipeline of housing development opportunities through the refreshed Local Plan and our strategic partnership with Homes England.
- Producing new, realistic and distinctive plans for the city centre and town centres, supported by appropriate delivery vehicles that will strengthen investor confidence.
- Establishing a revolving land fund, in partnership with government agencies, which will be backed by the use of compulsory purchase order powers and will generate a sizeable and sustainable pipeline of developable brownfield land.
- Developing a prioritised heritage restoration plan in partnership with DCMS, Historic England, Homes England and the city's new Heritage Trust, which will focus on acquisition, investment and enforcement.
- Designing a funding model to bring empty properties back into beneficial use, with particular focus on creating more supported housing for tackling homelessness.

- Achieving Stoke-on-Trent's ambition of being designated an International Centre for Ceramics, and pursuing a medium-term plan to become a UNESCO Creative City or even a World Heritage Site in recognition of the wealth of tangible and intangible heritage which exists within the city.
- Developing a robust partnership plan for protecting local centres and public spaces from the impacts of crime and antisocial behaviour. This will include a new approach to protecting public spaces from the impacts of drug and alcohol abuse, designed around combined enforcement and mandatory treatment, as well as the development of support pathways to independent living for those who address their problems.
- Transferring assets and spaces to community ownership and management to enable bases to build social capital and community enterprise.

What difference will this make?

Our aim is that by 2030:

- We will have completed or be building at least 5,000 more homes.
- We will have redeveloped an additional 150 hectares of brownfield land in the city for new housing.
- At least five significant listed heritage buildings and structures will have been removed from the 'at risk' list.



Image courtesy of University of Staffordshire

MISSION 4

REMOVING BARRIERS TO OPPORTUNITY

Why this matters

Stoke-on-Trent's economy is expanding rapidly and creating more higher-value, skilled jobs for its increasingly diverse labour market. However, one of the factors which characterise the latency in the city's economy is that too few Stoke-on-Trent residents are benefiting from these emerging opportunities to secure better pay and prospects. Analysis has shown that the comparatively low levels of education and skills which hold back city workers are rooted in persistent socio-economic inequalities which stunt development and attainment from infancy through to adolescence. To address this problem effectively, there is an urgent need to 'build a bridge from both ends', by strengthening education and skills provision across all age groups and fostering hope and self-belief, while ensuring that the economy creates more and better employment opportunities. Tackling this challenge has the potential to boost the expansion of high-growth industrial sectors and transform social mobility, equality and living standards for future generations of our citizens. Key factors include:

- Stoke-on-Trent is rated among the top third of local authority areas nationally for the quality of its economic environment, but is currently ranked as the 13th most deprived area in England in the National Indices of Deprivation.
- At the age of five, Stoke-on-Trent children are already behind the national position in terms of early development - a deficit which continues to affect education attainment right through to the end of Key Stage 5.
- Stoke-on-Trent has one of the lowest proportions of working-age adults with Level 3 qualifications or higher in

the country, and has an abnormally high proportion of adults with no formal qualifications.

- North Staffordshire employers regularly report that the inability to recruit sufficient people with the right skills represents a major barrier to growth and leads some employers to recruit or relocate elsewhere.
- The city's most deprived neighbourhoods are also affected by a lack of social capital in the form of amenities and organisations, leading to social isolation and reduced access to vital services and support.
- Homelessness in the city is rising and the use of opiate drugs and alcohol addiction levels remain high.
- North Staffordshire benefits from access to two excellent universities and a strong further education offer.



What we need to do

- Create a skills and employment 'climbing frame' that ensures local residents can gain and combine skills that local employers will need in the future. By becoming a 'city of lifelong opportunities' we will support adults to secure the skills they need to progress and prosper, as well as improving school and further education attainment levels.
- Continue to develop vocational skills pathways, including increasing the numbers of apprenticeships and expanding choice to focus on green and conservation skills, as well as delivering a 'grow-our-own' approach in sectors with significant key skills shortages.
- Make higher education more accessible to students from disadvantaged backgrounds in order to increase participation rates locally, and encourage and support more students to remain in North Staffordshire after graduation.
- Address inequalities and promote social mobility by working intensively with the voluntary and community sector to invest and build resilience in deprived neighbourhoods with weak social capital.
- Reduce homelessness through a combination of prevention and better support services to ensure vulnerable individuals get timely and effective help, including addressing drug and alcohol addiction and the creation of better housing pathways to enable people to move on from temporary accommodation when they are ready.
- Become a truly inclusive city in terms of education, access to employment, civic voice and community cohesion.

- Co-ordinate a substantial expansion in youth provision, including developing skills and leadership in working with young people.
- Pursue public service reform through the adoption of 'total place' approaches to budgeting to ensure the best use of public resources and the integration of public services deep within North Staffordshire's localities, where joined-up approaches can achieve the greatest benefits for our citizens.

How we will achieve it

- Developing a skills and employment framework for the city that describes the 'climbing frame' for skills progression and identifies key gaps for new or expanded provision.
- Involving businesses in shaping local skills provision and creating new opportunities for Stoke-on-Trent's young people in relation to workplace experience, careers information and apprenticeships.
- Working with our education partners to influence emerging national educational improvement plans to better reflect the context of the city's needs.
- Securing government funding to enable the council and education and health partners to transform educational inclusion, adopting a locality partnerships model to support increased mainstream provision.
- Enabling our universities to successfully enrol and educate more students from the most economically disadvantaged areas of Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire by expanding the available higher education pathways and courses.

- Creating a coherent and holistic plan, in partnership with universities and businesses, to encourage and support more graduates to find good employment and homes within the North Staffordshire area.
- Developing a refreshed Adult Skills Delivery Plan, building on the LSIP, which will make the case for greater collective control over adult skills resources to enable more effective delivery aligned to the needs of North Staffordshire's high-growth sectors.
- Working with schools to ensure that the ongoing focus on the recruitment of youth workers and other specialist roles contributes to, and is informed by, a coherent vision and objectives in relation to citywide education outcomes.
- Delivering our Strengthening Communities programme to address deprivation, weak social capital and a lack of opportunities in three target areas of the city, attracting external investment and employing 'total place' approaches to expenditure review and reallocation.
- Designing a refreshed homelessness strategy based on the 'Housing First' model, providing clear pathways and support so that no one need spend a single night sleeping rough in the city.



What difference will this make?

Our aim is that by 2030:

- The attainment gap with the rest of the country at Key Stage 4 will have closed by at least two percentage points.
- The proportion of working-age residents achieving Level 3 or higher qualifications will have risen by 2.5 percentage points.

MISSION 5

IMPROVING THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF OUR POPULATION





Why this matters

Poor levels of physical and mental health are having a damaging impact on the lives of families and individuals, and creating a significant drag on Stoke-on-Trent's resurgent economy. The comparatively high numbers of working-age adults who are long-term unemployed due to poor health are a major factor undermining productivity, average pay levels and living standards in the city. A low healthy life expectancy is also forcing many adults into economic inactivity around a decade before retirement age, and driving up demand for stretched adult social care services. Addressing these persistent health inequalities effectively will resolve a major cause of the latency which is undermining Stoke-on-Trent's formidable economic potential and remove a key barrier to improving wellbeing and living standards across the population. Key factors include:

- The healthy life expectancy gap to the national average is 7 years for men and 8.5 years for women.
- Stoke-on-Trent's health-related unemployment rate is a third higher than the national average (43 per cent of all economically inactive adults).
- Economic productivity (GVA per capita) is almost £5,000 below the UK average.
- Stoke-on-Trent continues to be affected by high levels of:
 - Infant mortality (the second highest level in England)
 - Poor mental health (children and adults)
 - Children in care (the highest level in England)
 - Working age adults and older people in residential care
 - Adults affected by drug and alcohol addiction
 - Domestic abuse
 - Suicide
 - Homelessness and rough sleeping
 - Food and fuel poverty
 - Physical inactivity

What we need to do

- Develop a comprehensive work and health offer to give people who are unemployed due to ill-health the best chance of being able to gain access to suitable and sustainable employment.
- Address severe hardship by enabling households to maximise their income and access affordable food and other essential goods and services.

- Enable communities to develop social capital through a strong and sustained relationship with voluntary and community organisations embedded in local areas.
- Help residents to take greater charge of their own health and wellbeing needs by providing access to a wide range of preventative physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing services and activities.
- Ensure that investment in transport infrastructure and service improvements enables and supports increased active travel throughout the city to boost physical exercise levels and sustainability.
- Provide a family support offer that is among the best in the country, enabling all families to access the help they need to thrive as close to home as possible.
- Become an exemplar age-friendly city where older people benefit from high-quality homes, local amenities and care and support whenever and wherever they need it.

How we will achieve it

- Securing government support to quickly establish a bespoke work and health offer for the city through the new Connector programme which will build on the success of our JET employment support service and will be delivered in partnership with local NHS providers.
- Expanding the Family Matters programme through external investment to help reduce the number of children requiring statutory child protection.

- Delivering an enhanced citywide drug and alcohol treatment programme to improve access and recovery rates.
- Harnessing the strength of cross-sector partnerships and securing external funding to expand the city's hardship programme.
- Deliver an extensive physical activity and healthy nutrition programme.
- Delivering a comprehensive and integrated 'ageing well' programme through the Integrated Care System (ICS), combining prevention, timely assessment, single plans and proactive frailty management, as well as an emphasis on suitable housing provision and effective dementia care.
- Building on the success of the Changing Futures programme to provide effective support to vulnerable individuals to enable them to live well in their local community.

What difference will this make?

Our aim is that by 2030:

- The proportion of children living in poverty will have reduced by five percentage points.
- There will be an improvement in average healthy life expectancy (broken down by gender) of two years.
- The percentage of adults in the city who are inactive will have reduced from 27.6 per cent to 25 per cent. The percentage of children who are less active will have reduced from 36.5 per cent to 30 per cent.



OUR ASKS OF GOVERNMENT

This prospectus sets out a single shared, coherent plan for addressing the current challenges facing Stoke-on-Trent and capitalising on the generational opportunities that now exist to secure powerful and lasting changes – to our economy, to the lives and wellbeing of our citizens and to the social and physical fabric of our city and the wider North Staffordshire region. Without significant, timely and targeted investment and support the opportunities it identifies will slip from our grasp and the challenges stemming from deprivation and inequality will become more entrenched.

This is our plan, but we acknowledge that we do not possess all of the resources to deliver it within the pressing timeframe in which we must act in order to seize these opportunities and unlock our city's potential. We have demonstrated that our plan aligns very closely with the Government's own ambitions for the United Kingdom and its regions and places. The fact that we are working towards the same objectives means that resources invested in the approaches and solutions set out in this prospectus will enable more rapid and effective delivery against national policy goals, as well as realising transformative changes locally. In this context, we would welcome an early dialogue with government departments around a number of key asks and reciprocal offers, outlined in this section.

Devolution

- We need additional powers and funding to enable us to achieve our economic growth ambitions and unlock the enormous latent potential of the North Staffordshire economy, supported by a transport network that can provide cheaper, sustainable and more reliable connectivity, and the ability to shape a local skills offer that can meet the needs of our high-growth sectors and transform employment opportunities for our citizens.
- There is a need to ensure that any devolution of powers or funding to local areas enables and incentivises greater collaboration between local authorities and other public sector providers to achieve shared objectives which can unlock more rapid and widespread economic expansion within Stoke-on-Trent and throughout North Staffordshire.

Investment

There are seven critical areas where we need Government investment:

- The level of economic expansion that we intend to deliver will require targeted investment in North Staffordshire's transport infrastructure, particularly our connections to the M6 motorway at Junction 15 and Junction 16 and the strategically important A50/A500 'growth corridor'. Rail connectivity also requires investment: existing services are at capacity and additional local stations are needed to ease the pressure on road networks and enable more parts of the city to connect with the economy, jobs and services. Critically, any plans for HS2 must include regular direct services to and through Stoke-on-Trent to our major cities.
- Our renewable energy plans are already taking shape, but will require continued investment to realise their phenomenal potential. Delivering the extended District Heat Network will be game-changing for the decarbonisation of key sectors, the decentralisation of energy generation, storage and supply and the eradication of fuel poverty in deprived communities. The ground-breaking links between renewable energy and AI represent a transformative economic opportunity which can catalyse growth and propel North Staffordshire to the forefront of digital innovation.
- Education provision requires sustained investment to improve quality and develop a truly inclusive approach that will enable all working-age adults to gain the skills needed to ensure the rapid expansion of high-growth sectors, widen participation and enable associated improvements in pay, living standards and population wellbeing.

- Fixing the foundational economy of Stoke-on-Trent is vital to delivering economic growth and will require targeted investment in areas such as building social capital in key neighbourhoods, bringing at-risk heritage assets into economic use, expanding the reach and offer of our successful Family Matters support programme and investment in our universal and targeted youth offer.
- We will require directed investment under the national Industrial Strategy to accelerate growth in our strongest sectors – digital, creative and advanced manufacturing. Government can also use our wider industrial base and transferable skills to grow new regional sectors, for example, defence.
- We need significant investment in our skills base and employment support, based on maximum local devolution to ensure resources meet local need.
- We will need significant pump-priming capital investment to regenerate our urban centres, bring brownfield land back into beneficial use and rapidly build new homes.

More details regarding these key asks are provided in the tables on pages 31-35.



MISSION 1 SECURING ECONOMIC GROWTH

WHAT WE NEED	WHAT WE WILL DELIVER	TARGET MEASURES
<p>A package of investment to speed up economic growth including improving road infrastructure (M6/A50/A500), unlocking new commercial sites and an incentive model to allow us fully to keep and reinvest the proceeds of business investment and growth.</p> <p>Targeted investment to support the rapid expansion of high-growth sectors in North Staffordshire, in line with the Industrial Strategy, with a particular focus on creative, digital and advanced manufacturing (including ceramics).</p>	<p>Stoke-on-Trent has the potential to be a nationally important generator of economic growth, innovation and employment. We will address the significant latency which has acted as a drag on the city's resurgent economy and facilitate the rapid growth of key industrial sectors, including advanced manufacturing, digital and creative industries.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GVA growth rate • Average wage levels • Participation rate

MISSION 2 DELIVERING CLEAN ENERGY, SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT AND AN IMPROVED LOCAL ENVIRONMENT

WHAT WE NEED	WHAT WE WILL DELIVER	TARGET MEASURES
A serious capital funding allocation to transform bus services, including creation of a rapid bus or very light rail network to connect the main North Staffordshire towns.	We will deliver a sustainable, reliable and accessible transport system across Stoke-on-Trent and the North Staffordshire city region which will connect communities to employment, local services and each other, facilitate commercial activity and bring the city closer to achieving net-zero.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of population using local public transport • Percentage of decent homes • Percentage of city's energy supplied from local renewable sources
Support for the continued development of a decentralised energy system for Stoke-on-Trent and the development of Chatterley Whitfield as an eco-park, including potential host for a major server centre.	Delivering the expanded District Heat Network and capitalising on emerging opportunities around energy capture and carbon reduction will make Stoke-on-Trent one of the UK's most energy self-reliant cities, enabling access to cost-effective, low-carbon heat energy and providing a major competitive advantage to attract and sustain energy-intensive industries.	
Priority access to government-led housing energy efficiency programmes, recognising levels of fuel poverty in the city.	Addressing the poor quality of much of the city's housing stock will remove a major barrier to net zero and reduce fuel poverty.	

MISSION 3 REGENERATING OUR CITY

WHAT WE NEED	WHAT WE WILL DELIVER	TARGET MEASURES
Creation of a revolving land fund, working in partnership with Homes England, to assemble and reclaim brownfield sites to deliver an increased housing pipeline.	Geographical constraints limit the availability of development land for industry and housing in the city. Addressing brownfield site reclamation issues will open up a sustainable pipeline of viable sites which can enable us to exceed our housing completion targets and expand our thriving commercial sites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New homes completed • Brownfield land reclaimed for productive use • Listed buildings and structures considered 'at risk'
Support the city in its plans for city centre renewal by backing an empowered delivery body, and for town centre renewal by inclusion of one or more of our towns in the Government's plans for long-term investment in towns and neighbourhoods.	Our city centre and main towns require regeneration but they also provide a means of delivering thousands of additional new homes and ancillary amenities, while claiming brownfield land and restoring heritage assets.	
Enabling the City Council to build hundreds of new council homes by ending the constraints on use of borrowing and providing direct access to affordable housing grant.	The City Council is fully committed to delivering the Government's housing targets but with high constraints on viability, needs Government to unlock the means of delivery.	
Providing a significant line of funding to develop and implement a prioritised heritage restoration plan and support for the city to seek UNESCO Creative City status.	Our built heritage is one of our greatest assets. Protecting culturally important structures and sites and bringing them into productive use will catalyse our cultural placemaking work, regenerate blighted communities and deliver an important competitive advantage for Stoke-on-Trent's expanding economy.	

MISSION 4 REMOVING BARRIERS TO OPPORTUNITY

WHAT WE NEED	WHAT WE WILL DELIVER	TARGET MEASURES
Making Stoke-on-Trent a national incubator for public service reform focused on higher educational attainment for our children and young people.	The evident disconnect between economic growth and supply-side benefits is rooted in low educational attainment and skills. Additional powers and funding will enable us to transform the quality and inclusivity of our education and skills ecosystem, creating viable pathways into good quality, sustainable employment, boosting economic activity levels and meeting the urgent skills needs of our expanding industries and sectors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Levels of attainment at Key Stage 4 • Working-age adults with Level 3 qualification or higher
Making Stoke-on-Trent a national test-bed for educational inclusion, based on schools, NHS, local authority and the VCS sector working together to enable far more children to learn in mainstream schools.		
Devolve control over adult skills resources, making Stoke-on-Trent a national pilot for developing flexible pathways from foundational to level 4 qualifications for those who need a second chance in life to progress.		
Direct investment and partnership in our Strengthening Communities programme to improve life and opportunities in doubly-deprived neighbourhoods, making the city a national exemplar for neighbourhood renewal.	Doubly-deprived neighbourhoods are cut off from the economy and wider society by an absence of amenities, organisations and meaningful connections. Rebuilding the social and economic fabric of these places will bring purpose and opportunity to the lives of thousands of people and ensure that all of our city can contribute to, and benefit from, economic growth.	

MISSION 5 IMPROVING THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF OUR POPULATION

WHAT WE NEED	WHAT WE WILL DELIVER	TARGET MEASURES
Facilitate the rapid creation of a bespoke work and health programme for Stoke-on-Trent, including work with employers to prevent people dropping prematurely out of the employment market.	Economic inactivity linked to poor health is a significant factor in the latency which continues to constrain economic growth. A dedicated work and health offer under the Connector programme will increase participation and productivity levels and unlock supply-side benefits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of children living in poverty • Improvement in average healthy life expectancy (by gender)
Increased investment in the Family Matters programme to ensure a better start in life and to reduce numbers of children in care.	Family Matters is already having a transformative impact on the lives of children and families, ensuring that they receive vital support to overcome problems which can lead to damaging crises. Expanding this essential service will have a momentous effect on the lives, health and wellbeing of hundreds of families each year, and help to ensure that Stoke-on-Trent children can grow up free from the threat of harm and able to lead and build fulfilling lives of opportunity and possibility.	

Organisations involved in developing this prospectus

Alice Charity
Asha North Staffs
Beat the Cold
Citizens Advice Staffordshire North and Stoke-on-Trent
Claybody Theatre
Co-op Academies Trust
Keele University
Michelin Tyres Plc
Middleport Matters Community Trust
Midlands Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust
North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust
Office of the Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Port Vale Football Club
Potteries Education Trust
Re-Form Heritage

SABLE Unity CIC
Saltbox
St Thomas More Catholic Academy
Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board (ICB)
Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce
Staffordshire Police
Stepping Stones Community Organisation
Stoke Creates
Stoke-on-Trent Business Improvement District (BID)
Stoke-on-Trent College
University Hospitals of North Midlands
University of Staffordshire
VAST
YMCA North Staffordshire



Contact us

Please get in touch for a further discussion regarding any of the points contained within this prospectus.
Councillor Jane Ashworth, Leader of the City Council: Jane.Ashworth@stoke.gov.uk or Jon Rouse CBE,
Chief Executive: Jon.Rouse@stoke.gov.uk.