



City of
Stoke-on-Trent

POWERING UP STOKE-ON-TRENT

A Prospectus to secure Partnership and Investment



FOREWORD

Stoke-on-Trent is the national litmus test for the Government's levelling-up ambitions.

Before COVID-19 the city was undergoing the most significant transformation in its economic fortunes it has experienced for over 30 years. Having been among the fastest local economies to rebound from the last recession, the city had continued to outstrip swathes of the UK in terms of economic growth, job creation and innovation.

Physical regeneration has been important in this process, but alongside the cranes and resulting development, there has been a rise in levels of confidence and aspiration which have, in turn, helped to recalibrate external perceptions of Stoke-on-Trent and its economy. Seeing our growing civic pride reflected back at us in the positive media coverage and the changing perspectives of government, investors and other important stakeholders, is fuelling local aspirations and local belief in what is possible. We have thrown off the shackles of an imposed external narrative of managed decline to forge a fresh identity as a city punching above its weight, generating wealth from a diverse and growing industrial base.

Businesses and developers have been drawn in increasing numbers by Stoke-on-Trent's locational advantages as a North Midlands gateway connected to all key regional infrastructure, with access to high quality, affordable accommodation and a committed local labour force. This has been complemented by a major expansion in private housing development, drawn by the combination of an attractive location and a local authority with a growing reputation of getting quality development away.

As we look ahead beyond the pandemic, in a post-Brexit landscape, we are determined to regain this momentum as quickly as possible. We need Government's support to do that. We know that over this next period there will be many national initiatives and funds to support economic recovery,

but we want one conversation, one shared plan.

Through this prospectus and the dialogue that follows, we want to forge a partnership that crosses all relevant government departments and agencies.

**Stoke-on-Trent
national litmus test
for the Government's
levelling-up ambitions**

As a city, and working with our regional partners, we need to work at pace with Government to agree a single set of priority projects and interventions that are right for this city, deliverable in the next few years and to which we all commit. We can then all make the available resources serve that agreed programme and make best use of the new, fairer Treasury Green Book.

The core purpose of this joint endeavour would be to drive economic development by fostering high growth sectors, creating the high skilled well-paid jobs our city needs.

Stoke-on-Trent is the perfect test ground for the Government's ambitions

Those priority sectors will include digital, advanced manufacturing (especially ceramic components), green energy and creative.

We will need to use targeted investment in improved infrastructure to connect to and build on the existing strengths in the city.

We must ensure that the city's residents have the quality of education, health and skills needed to access the opportunities the realisation of this Prospectus would create. We will reduce individual dependency on the state and build the resilience of our communities through the strength of local partnerships, including the crucial role of the voluntary and faith sectors.

What is most exciting about this invitation is that it describes a prospect that is eminently achievable. So much is already in place.

We already have a city-wide full fibre gigabit-enabled network, developable land and developers ready to invest and build, amazing heritage assets, a network of extraordinary green space and waterways, two complementary universities with highly relevant offers, the potential of HS2 connectivity and major resident companies committed to the city.

Most importantly, we have our hard-working residents, unrivalled in their kindness to each other and loyalty to their city.

They represent a massive reservoir of potential that with the help of the right deal, can make this city even greater, an economic powerhouse in the North West Midlands, serving the nation.

Councillor Abi Brown
Leader, Stoke-on-Trent City Council

Jack Brereton
MP for Stoke-on-Trent South

Jo Gideon
MP for Stoke-on-Trent Central

Jonathan Gullis
MP for Stoke-on-Trent North

WHERE WE START

Our Key Strengths

One of the

fastest growing economies
in England ranking

1st for job
growth

UK Powerhouse 2020 Report



Growth

17

making us the

8th fastest growing
per capita in England

Between 2015-2018 wage levels increased by

Stoke-on-Trent

11.7%

(3.9%
annually)

West Midlands

10.7%

Nationally

9.2%

5.1
visitors

to local attractions
and museums



over

1,000

new homes built in 2019/20,
97% on brownfield land,
with a further c. 7,000 dwellings
with planning permission

Our Key Challenges



12th highest
proportion
of deprived neighbourhoods,
out of 317 councils in England



Worst in the region in terms
of life expectancy and most
other health indicators.

Gross weekly pay average

£501.2
in Stoke-on-Trent
£587 nationally

in GVA per capita of

.1% in period
2015-2018

growing economy

England including London



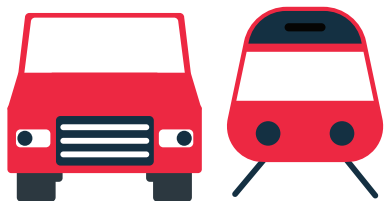
attractions
museums



8,000

jobs created in the
last five years

with job density increasing above
the national average



Excellent road and rail connectivity
to regional and national networks with
potential for further improvement



Ceramic Valley Enterprise Zone

launched in 2016, is one of the **most successful EZ** in the UK

ages at

0
ent,



Lag on all key educational indicators,
from early development through to KS5

Only **22.5%** of people in Stoke-on-Trent
have a qualification of NVQ4 or above.



Unemployment rate has doubled
during Covid pandemic to over 8%

PRIORITY ONE - TRANSPORT

Why?

- Stoke-on-Trent is superbly placed geographically, with four international airports within an hour's drive of the city, identified by Midlands Connect as a key location for regional connectivity.
- A unique, growing city at the heart of the Midlands Engine, serving the immediate North Staffordshire economy of half a million population, and sitting at a crucial north-south, east-west gateway and junction, of national significance.
- Investment in rail and strategic road links is required to unlock that full economic potential, particularly with respect to HS2, the motorway network, air hubs and future freeports
- Intracity public transport improvements are needed to connect the population to economic opportunities in a sustainable way.

What?

The city has an exciting transport improvement programme that includes the Transforming Cities Fund programme, focused on the city gateway at Stoke station and its environs, and the creation of the Etruria Valley Link Road. There is, however, much more that needs to be done. Working in close partnership with the Department of Transport, Highways England and others, we will develop at pace a refreshed transport strategy that will include :

- A full assessment of the local transport improvements required to ensure the entire area is plugged into benefits of HS2 connectivity and that the city is able to make a full contribution to the success of the North Midlands Corridor.
- A commitment to pursue a light rail system for North Staffordshire to act as a centrepiece of the local transport network; we are open to and will explore different technological options including very light rail.
- A radical upgrade in our local bus offer, with improvement to routes and provision of low and zero-carbon vehicles.
- A restored and enhanced role for local rail services, including new and reopened local line and stations, to support residential and commercial development, and existing and planned leisure development.
- Significant improvements to cycling and walking routes.



Transforming Cities Fund Tranche 2 & beyond

How?

1. Establish feasibility of an integrated **light rail system** across North Staffordshire, and if feasibility is established, move swiftly to detailed design and full business case.
2. Prioritise work at **Stoke Station and the wider conventional rail network** to facilitate HS2 Javelin services through Stoke-on-Trent, act to ensure a sufficient service continues to Manchester Piccadilly, and explore potential for HS2 services from Birmingham North via Stoke.
3. Address the neglect of **local rail services** by reopening the Stoke-Leek line as well as stations at Meir (already part of the Restoring Your Railway programme), Trentham and potentially, Etruria as well.
4. Work with the City Council to develop the first **hydrogen bus city** in collaboration with private partner Wright Bus, **improve bus routes** and invest in an **enhanced cycling/walking network**.
5. Prioritise **improvements to East-West connectivity** including enhancements to the **North Midlands (A50/A500) Corridor** and rail services on the Crewe-Stoke-Derby/Nottingham line.
6. Ensure that the capital for the **City East Link Road** is delivered



PRIORITY TWO – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Why?

- Stoke-on-Trent is a crucial economic hub at western end of North Midlands Corridor and on the key routes connecting North West and West Midlands conurbations. It has strength across multiple industrial sectors including manufacturing and logistics & distribution that, when combined with locational advantage, mean it is primed for rapid further growth.
- Pre-Covid the city was a national success story with respect to jobs development, average wage increases, GVA per capita improvements, house-building levels, house price increases.
- Covid has impacted - the number of people on Universal Credit has increased from 16,320 to 29,448 persons - from 10.2% to 18.4% of the working age population. For the same period, the City's claimant count increased from 7,320 to 12,720 persons - from 4.6% to 8.0% of the working age population...
- ...however, the City is also proving resilient with commercial and residential activity and values remaining strong, and independent analysts predicting strong bounce-back compared to most other UK cities.
- Well targeted public investment is already proven to lever rapid economic benefits by attracting private investment, unlocking stalled ex-industrial sites and revitalising urban centres.

Ceramic Valley Enterprise Zone - Tunstall Arrow





City Centre Development

What?

In pursuit of our key objective of the development of high growth sectors, we can build on the momentum of existing programmes, agreeing an overall investment package against a clear set of projects. We will build on our excellent track record in using well targeted public funding to leverage private sector investment. The priorities would be:

- Ensure the ongoing provision of a diverse range of affordable commercial and light industrial space to support business growth and attract further inward investment.
- Continue at least the current rate of provision of new market homes on brownfield land, with increasing levels of quality.
- Tackle the next stages of the city centre regeneration based on the opportunities created through improving public transport and previous investment, e.g. at Smithfield.
- Regenerate the main towns across Stoke-on-Trent through distinct plans and investment based on repurposing key assets, new residential provision and improving footfall through new learning, leisure and cultural activities.
- Reap the benefits of full gigabit fibre broadband connectivity, attracting and growing digi/tech businesses to create high skilled jobs and to enhance local education and skills offer.
- Harness the potential of the Green Industrial Revolution by weaving the national ten-point plan through our economic, housing and regeneration plans and programmes.
- Develop the city's cultural and wider creative offer.



How?

1. Deliver an agreed next phase of **city centre regeneration programme** with focus on redevelopment of key sites, especially the East-West site - plans would be mixed use, with a focus on leisure and including an arena/conferencing facility, but also a significant residential offer.
2. Agree a single **Towns Fund** programme to address the specific challenges of towns like Tunstall and Longton by focusing on delivery of key town centre sites and building restorations; priority would be to overcome viability constraints caused by lower property values and to facilitate reoccupation of key heritage assets. The approach would be to build on the distinct identity of each settlement in increasing the demand to live, work and visit each of the towns.
3. Develop a fresh housing delivery plan to establish a clear pipeline of major brownfield opportunities for the next 5-10 years. Secure against the plan a strategic partnership deal with Homes England to focus on delivering **significant housing growth** on key brownfield sites; locations to include City Centre, Station Gateway, Stoke South (Longton).
4. Expand on the huge success of the **Ceramic Valley Enterprise Zone**, through agreement of a package of targeted incentives made available for the right sites and premises to grow businesses and jobs.
5. Agree the **Silicon Stoke delivery programme**, backed by targeted Government investment in key projects including an Innovation Hub, 5G roll-out, tackling digital exclusion, development of gaming and creative production sectors, and exploring the potential to position the city as a national hub for gaming/e-sports mass events.
6. DCMS and the key national cultural and heritage bodies, including Historic England, Arts Council England, the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Canal and Rivers Trust, to join with the city to form a Creative City Partnership, delivering an agreed multi-agency programme of development and capital support to improve the cultural offer and make the most of the city's heritage assets, including specific opportunities in Burslem and Stoke.



PRIORITY THREE – EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Why?

- The level of educational outcomes in the city remains very low. We are in the bottom quartile for almost all measures nationally and in the bottom 10 areas for many.
- The problems start in early years. The gap that exists at EYFS doesn't grow that much thereafter but nor does it close. The same goes for the inequality gap.
- Our academic outcomes at KS5 are weak; just 10% of the cohort achieve AAB or equivalent against 21.3% nationally, with too few young people going to university.
- Our vocational offer is not strong enough with need for much better alignment with the skills that local employers require.
- Only 22.5% of people in Stoke-on-Trent have a qualification of NVQ4 or above, 40.3% nationally.

What?

A comprehensive Education and Skills Challenge programme over five years with the following key aims:

- All early years, primary, secondary and FE settings to be rated 'good' or 'outstanding'
- To close the gap by at least half to the rest of the country with respect to school readiness levels.
- Our KS2 measures for reading, writing and maths move out of the bottom quartile, and we move into the top 100 authorities for both attainment 8 and progress 8 scores at KS4.
- To be renowned nationally for our ambition and progress on specialist digital education and skills pathways.
- To have one of the best technical education and skills offers in the country, properly aligned to needs of growth sectors.





How?

1. Build on the work of the Stoke-on-Trent Opportunity Area with a new **Education Challenge Area** to drive up educational standards across the city, ensuring all schools have trusted sponsors and very deliberately bringing some of the best Multi Academy Trusts and other support in the country to work with under-performing schools. The emphasis would be on improving teaching practice and the professional development of leaders at all levels with a dedicated expert team based in Stoke-on-Trent to support the delivery of the required improvements over a 5-year period.
2. Fulfil the conditions to secure the **Wave 14 secondary free school** development on the old Longton High School site and advance a **Wave 15 digital academy** to disrupt current underperformance, creating a more diverse educational landscape and providing the high-quality places needed. The Digital Academy would offer world class education to students across North Staffordshire with the potential and drive to make a significant contribution to the growing digital sector, and would support all schools and colleges in the city with respect to the quality of digital education.
3. Deliver an integrated **early years development programme** as a national exemplar for a holistic model for early years development, linked to the forthcoming outcomes of the Leadsom review and the Government's support for public-private improvement models.
4. Provide intense support to improve the quality of the **further education offer** in the city, including securing an **Institute of Technology** to strengthen this offer, allowing more people to access higher level skills and meet the skills needs of local growth sectors.
5. Through the Strength in Places programme, and in partnership with Midlands Engine, enable the **Midlands Advanced Ceramics programme** to support research and development, and facilitate growth in highly skilled advance manufacturing jobs in Stoke-on-Trent.

PRIORITY FOUR – HEALTH AND PRODUCTIVITY

Why?

- 11,000 people aged 16-64 in the city are economically inactive due to long term health reasons, that is just under 10% of those in work. This accounts for about 29% of all economic inactivity, compared to 21.5% nationally.
- Healthy life expectancy for men is 59.5 years (compared with 63.4 years in England) and 58.7 years for women (compared with 63.8 years in England.) The city has the 2nd highest rate of premature mortality in the country.
- Almost a quarter of deaths in Stoke-on-Trent are preventable, significantly higher than the national average.
- There are c.32,000 GP-registered patients (18+) suffering from anxiety or depression, some 14% of the population compared to 10% nationally.
- Many issues stem from childhood through low birthweight, obesity, tooth decay, mental health conditions and self-harm.

What?

Develop and deliver a refreshed Health & Wellbeing Strategy with a focus on:

- including emphasis on mental health, levels of physical activity and reductions in risky behaviours
- Reducing prevalence and improving access with respect to adult mental health conditions
- Reducing incidence and impact of those conditions that are preventing people working, specifically muscular-skeletal and respiratory issues, including addressing underlying lifestyle issues with respect to good nutrition, physical exercise, quitting smoking and moderate alcohol intake.





Community mental health support group

How?

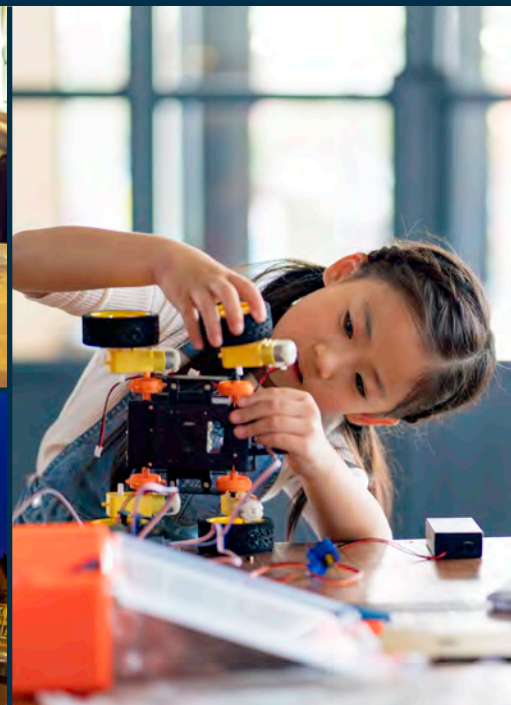
1. Invest in a city-wide **Health & Work programme** to prevent and address long-term unemployment through ill health and provide intensive back to work support. Use GP referrals into dedicated programmes that combine mental health support, management of physical health conditions, life coaching and job support. Establish programme for employers to support and equip them to improve the health of employees and prevent individuals becoming long term sick and ultimately dropping out of the labour force.
2. Demonstrate benefits of **Integrated Care System** by accelerating delivery of integrated care and population health measures across North Staffordshire, backed by capital investment in provision of integrated health and care hubs. Agree priority improvement measures and track progress against them.
3. Designate Stoke-on-Trent a **Mentally Healthy City**, based on delivery of an agreed multi-agency strategy and improvement plan for North Staffordshire, delivered through the Integrated Care Partnership. This should cover public mental health, maternal mental health, early years development, support to schools, liaison and diversion services, improvements in access and waiting times for common conditions and integrated crisis care.
4. Re-set the **local NHS financial position** by addressing comparative underfunding per head of population based on need of local health system and writing off burden of Royal Stoke PFI debt.

NEXT STEPS

Much of the work described in this prospectus is already underway. Over the next few months this will translate into:

- refreshed city strategies for transport, housing, digital, educational improvement and health & well-being
- bids into the Government's funding opportunities, starting with the Levelling Up and Shared Prosperity Fund
- dialogue with the relevant government departments and agencies on realisation of specific priorities.

We are also inviting our local partners to form a **Stoke-on-Trent City Forum** that will bring together leadership across sectors to ensure that we make the most of our collective resources in pursuit of our shared ambitions for the wonderful city we serve.



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Stoke-on-Trent

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