



City of
Stoke-on-Trent

POWERING UP CITY FORUM

———— Stoke-on-Trent ————

Feedback Report
City Forum Launch – 14th May, 2021



FOREWORD

The launch of the Stoke-on-Trent City Forum, just over a month ago, was a momentous event and one of the most exciting and rewarding projects that I've been involved in. We heard from some truly inspiring speakers about the qualities that make me so proud of our fantastic city every day, and the opportunities that we are creating and building on to make Stoke-on-Trent even better.

To have more than 150 partners and stakeholders at the launch was an incredible achievement, and testament to the passion and pride surrounding our city's amazing transformation. And it's that passion and pride that will make the crucial difference as we work together as partners to deliver our exciting plans for our city.

Now that the City Forum is a reality, we need to focus on the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. One of the biggest challenges that we need to address is aspiration. We need to convince people in our city that they can grasp the opportunities we are creating and benefit from increased prosperity as we deliver more skilled, higher-value jobs.

And the key to aspiration is pride – pride in ourselves, our communities and our city. I want everyone who lives and works in Stoke-on-Trent to share the same sense of pride that I feel about my incredible, vibrant and unique city. That's why I've made civic pride one of the key pillars of our Levelling Up plans and why I want talking up our city to be one of the central aims of the City Forum.

We need to exploit every opportunity to harness your combined passion, commitment and love for Stoke-on-Trent, and use your voices to help spread the word that **#Stokeisontheup**.

Please use this hashtag to help talk up our amazing city, make our residents proud of their great heritage and convince the rest of the country that Stoke-on-Trent is a city whose time has finally come.

Councillor Abi Brown

Leader of Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Chair of the Stoke-on-Trent City Forum

INTRODUCTION

The launch of the Stoke-on-Trent City Forum, just over a month ago, was a momentous event and the purpose of this report is to summarise the rationale, content and key findings from the City Forum launch event. It will also present a number of actions which will enable partners and stakeholders to contribute to the development and delivery of citywide priorities and ambitions aimed at ensuring that Stoke-on-Trent secures significant and wide-ranging benefits from the national Levelling Up agenda.

BACKGROUND

The Stoke-on-Trent City Forum is an influential partnership of private, public, voluntary and community sector organisations working across the city with regional partners. The purpose of the City Forum is to deliver the ambitions set out in the Powering Up Stoke-on-Trent Prospectus that was launched earlier this year with the aim of securing partnership and investment in the city.

The City Forum was formally launched on 14 May 2021 at an online webinar event which was chaired by Stoke-on-Trent City Council Leader Cllr Abi Brown. More than 150 partners and stakeholders attended the launch event, which heard from a number of keynote speakers:

- **Nadhim Zahawi MP**, Minister for Business and Industry and Minister for COVID Vaccine Deployment at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. The minister spoke about Stoke-on-Trent's important role within the government's Levelling Up agenda and central government's high regard for the work being done to grow the city's economy and address persistent inequalities.
- **Mark Gregory**, the Chief Economist for EY, spoke about current and emerging economic conditions, Stoke-on-Trent's economic prospects and the potential opportunities and challenges presented by the post-pandemic recovery effort.
- **Tim Heatley**, the co-founder of property development company Capital and Centric, spoke about his firm's plans for the landmark Goods Yard redevelopment project in Stoke town, the social and economic benefits that have been delivered through similar projects across the North West of England, and the potential economic benefits of Stoke-on-Trent's rich cultural heritage.
- **Carol Shanahan**, co-founder and trustee of The Hubb Foundation, spoke about her experiences of the citywide pandemic response effort and shared her insights into what identity and community mean for people in Stoke-on-Trent.

OBJECTIVES

As well as marking the formal establishment of the City Forum, the webinar was also held to enable invited stakeholders to familiarise themselves with the priorities, projects and approaches set out in the Powering Up Stoke-on-Trent prospectus document, and to share their views on how these could be delivered within the context of the Government's Levelling Up agenda.

In order to facilitate this, the webinar incorporated seven breakout workshops covering the four strategic themes in the Powering Up prospectus:

- Transport;
- Economic development;
- Education and Skills;
- Health and Productivity.

Each of the workshops was chaired by a facilitator who is closely involved in delivering elements of these four themes. Participants were specifically selected to join the most relevant workshop for their roles and areas of expertise. Each workshop lasted for 40 minutes, during which participants worked through a number of structured activities designed to facilitate focussed discussion.

Participants were asked to comment on:

- The priorities and proposed approaches for each theme;
- Potential barriers to achieving the priorities and successfully delivering the proposed approaches;
- Steps that could be taken to mitigate potential barriers and risks to delivery;
- The role(s) of partners and stakeholders in ensuring that Stoke-on-Trent secures the proposed benefits from the Levelling Up agenda.

Comments and feedback from all of the workshops have been collated and used to inform the development of a number of proposed actions that will support the development and delivery of key aspects of the Powering Up prospectus.



WORKSHOP

Summaries and Actions

1 - TRANSPORT

Facilitator: Jack Brereton MP

Key priorities:

- Transport-led planning to improve the quality and intra-connectivity of local public transport provision.
- Focusing on securing HS2 connectivity and to highlight the benefits for Stoke-on-Trent.
- Developing a list of shovel-ready transport projects which only require funding to be deliverable, in order of prioritisation.
- Focusing on local transport solutions as well as 'big ticket' projects.

Potential barriers / risks:

- Poor quality bus services limit access to employment for some areas of the city.
- Short-term impacts on transport usage due to the pandemic.

Partnerships:

- Engage with the Department for Transport and Network Rail in relation to proposals for HS2 connectivity and light rail network improvements.
- Partnership with the private sector is an important consideration.
- Need to employ a co-ordinated partnership approach to maximise the use of combined skills and knowledge.
- Engagement with the local community to shape proposals and manage any resulting disruption.

Action for the City Forum:

Work stream	Activity	Ownership	Timescale
Prioritisation	Contribute to development of Transport Strategy and ensure we have a strong pipeline of deliverable improvement projects.	City Council to coordinate, considering how best to coordinate relevant partners.	Autumn 2021

2 – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Facilitators: Alun Rogers and Phil Cresswell

Key priorities:

- Raising aspirations and pride in the city and ensuring that people feel sufficiently empowered that they can view opportunities as being realistic and attainable.
- Capitalising on the Green Industrial Revolution to create higher-value, skilled employment opportunities for residents in Stoke-on-Trent.
- Building environmental sustainability and energy efficiency into new developments (e.g. through District Heat Network connectivity).
- Capitalising on Stoke-on-Trent's rich arts, heritage and culture offer to unlock economic opportunities, including by reusing and repurposing key heritage sites to 'build back beautiful'.

Potential barriers / risks:

- Significant site preparation/reclamation costs for brownfield sites.
- The perception that some stakeholders in the city are not yet sufficiently engaged with or involved in, key projects.

Partnerships:

- Need to encourage city residents to be more aspirational and to take advantage of the increased opportunities that economic development and improved prosperity will deliver.

Action for the City Forum:

Work stream	Activity	Ownership	Timescale
Engagement and Civic Pride	Develop a toolkit to enable all City Forum members and other engaged stakeholders to get involved in the #stokeisontheup campaign to promote and celebrate the positive changes taking shape in the city.	City Council to work with BID, Chamber, VAST and other interested partners to co-design and disseminate toolkit.	Autumn 2021

3 - EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Facilitators: Carl Ward and Jonathan Gullis MP

Key priorities:

- Delivering the 'Silicon Stoke' project.
- Developing more effective approaches and pathways for preparing young people in the city for the world of work.
- Sharing data across all sectors of education in the city in a more joined-up way in order to understand where gaps exist and how they can be addressed.
- Improving the quality of education and careers information, advice and guidance to make it more inspiring and ensure that it drives aspirations.
- Strengthening the adult skills offer with a focus on retraining and upskilling to support the post-pandemic recovery locally.
- Focusing on digital skills across all age groups to ensure that skill levels keep pace with the changing demands of the current and future workplaces.

Potential barriers / risks:

- Access to digital technology for children from low-income families.
- Apprenticeships and other career pathways on offer don't always enable participants to gain the skills or qualifications they will need in the workplace.
- Risk that gaps in educational provision may not be addressed unless data is shared more readily between all sectors.
- Risk that impacts from the pandemic may affect children's progression through education and into employment without targeted support.

Partnerships:

- Provide clear asks to partners and stakeholder regarding what support is required and when, in order to achieve the maximum impact and progress in delivering the education and skills elements of Powering Up Stoke-on-Trent.
- Partners should ensure they capture and reflect the voice of the child in developing and implementing the proposals set out in the Powering Up prospectus, including accessing children's views in more authentic ways (i.e. outside educational settings).
- Explore ways of enabling experts from employment sectors to become involved in teaching relevant aspects of the curriculum on a flexible basis.
- Work more closely with national funding bodies and other key stakeholders across the public, private and voluntary sectors to shape and deliver more innovative approaches tailored to local needs.

Action for the City Forum:

Work stream	Activity	Ownership	Timescale
Delivery	Ensure collective ownership of the delivery of the Silicon Stoke programme, with more partners stepping forward to lead on elements of delivery and progressing innovative use of the full fibre network.	Silicon Stoke Board	Ongoing



4 – HEALTH AND PRODUCTIVITY

Facilitators: Simon Whitehouse and Jo Gideon MP

Key priorities:

- Focussing on mental health support for children, young people and younger mothers.
- Delivering health services in more joined-up ways in order to pinpoint gaps in provision and identify unmet needs within specific communities.
- Developing ways of co-producing approaches and solutions, working more closely with communities and service users.
- Developing asset-based approaches to improving health and productivity.
- Exploring ways of building more innovation and exploration into commissioning and service development processes in order to create more effective approaches and interventions (e.g. through the use of open funding frameworks and the creation of consortia of specialist smaller providers).

Potential barriers / risks:

- Potential risk of duplication due to services working in silo-based ways and not collaborating.
- Lack of long-term commitment by partners could undermine efforts to deliver the programmes in the Powering Up prospectus.
- Risk that small-scale, local VCS organisations may not be able to compete effectively with larger providers for service delivery contracts.

Partnerships:

- Need to encourage city residents to be more aspirational and to take advantage of the increased
- Seeking out the voices of marginalised and harder-to-reach individuals and communities to gain a better understanding of their lives and health needs.
- Encouraging greater collaboration between services and organisations to maximise the impact of service delivery, develop more effective approaches and ensure that all communities' needs can be met.

Action for the City Forum:

Work stream	Activity	Ownership	Timescale
Integration	Ensure progress on development of integrated locality working using asset-based models of prevention and early intervention	Health and Wellbeing Board + Integrated Care System/Partnership	Autumn 2021

NEXT STEPS

NEXT STEPS

The actions identified will be taken forward through various partnership bodies and groups operating in the city, who will work with relevant stakeholders to undertake the work and report on progress to the next meeting of the City Forum, which is expected to take place during Autumn 2021. The precise date, timings and key agenda items for this meeting will be confirmed in due course.



FEEDBACK FROM THE LAUNCH EVENT

A number of comments were submitted during and since the launch webinar. Feedback from participants included the following comments:

“It’s exciting to be involved with the City Forum. I love this city, having grown up here and while I live elsewhere now, I want to be able to give something back. Following the pandemic, there is a huge opportunity around recovery within Stoke-on-Trent and the city forum is a key part of this. I’m proud to be part of the collaboration for Stoke-on-Trent and looking forward to what comes next.”
Mark Gregory (keynote speaker).

“The Stoke-on-Trent City Forum is a massive opportunity to build on the collective power of the people here. It’s about six towns becoming one city and where two football clubs can work side-by-side. Whatever your faith, creed, politics or football club, this is about working together to make this city richer – we are all Stoke-on-Trent – together.”
Carol Shanahan (keynote speaker).

“I’m really pleased to be involved in the Stoke-on-Trent City Forum. I love this city – it’s a really exciting place that often isn’t recognised as such by those who live here. Stoke-on-Trent offers something really different with a community spirit and civic pride that is second to none. I’m proud to be part of the next chapter, embracing collaboration for the city and I’m hugely looking forward to what comes next.”
Tim Heatley (keynote speaker).

“I welcome this initiative: the Stoke-on-Trent City Partnership Forum is an excellent example of local collaboration to drive positive change in places. Strong local partnerships being local authorities, businesses and other local stakeholders are crucial to delivering the government’s plans to spread opportunity and level up the United Kingdom.”
Rishi Sunak MP (Chancellor of the Exchequer).

“I would like to pay tribute to all the hard work that you are doing towards opening up the city. I look at a proud city like Stoke-on-Trent and know that it has the potential to be a high-wage, high-productivity hub in the centre of England. I’m delighted that we have made the commitment as a government to work with economies that have felt ignored and let down and give them greater investment and greater autonomy to decide how those investments are used. I know that there is still plenty of potential to be unleashed in Stoke-on-Trent.”
Nadhim Zahawi MP (Minister for Business and Industry and Minister for COVID Vaccine Deployment).

Other comments:

"...that was the most inspiring launch I've experienced in a long time, and the video is spine-tingling!"

"...great to share in and contribute to this [city forum]. Creativity, innovation and optimism for our city."

"...thanks for the inspiring and very positive webinar and workshop this afternoon. Loved the video also!"

"Not said it for a while, but without doubt, our small but mighty city has got to be one of the most exciting cities in the UK at the moment. Thanks for helping to make that happen, not just yesterday, but every day. #Stokeisontheup"



USEFUL INFORMATION

More information about the Stoke-on-Trent City Forum can be found on the forum's website at: www.stoke.gov.uk/cityforum

For more information about the Powering Up Stoke-on-Trent prospectus, visit: www.stoke.gov.uk/poweringup

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Through the Stoke-on-Trent City Forum, and with so many talented people across the city, we want to help to build an attractive, growing, inclusive and vibrant city we can all be proud of. And you can help with this by building civic pride across the city.

- Talk up the city and join in the conversation on social media using **#Stokeisontheup**
- Get involved by sharing ideas, building partnerships and thinking collaboratively – contact us at cityforum@stoke.gov.uk.
- Sign up to receive our news updates at www.stoke.gov.uk/stayconnected.
- Tell us the brilliant things happening across the city so we can share them.
- See 'While you were away' video shared at the City Forum launch event on [YouTube](#).
- Watch a video of Cllr Abi Brown talking about the City Forum on [YouTube](#).



City of
Stoke-on-Trent