

Our City, Our Wellbeing

Creating Shared Wealth, Reducing Inequality

Stoke-on-Trent City Council Corporate Strategy 2024-28



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Foreword

When I became Leader of the City Council following the May 2023 local elections, I was determined that my administration would put the needs of its citizens first. This strategy sets out our vision for raising the quality of life for everyone and so preventing social problems before they happen. By making our city greener, cleaner, safer, healthier, wealthier, fairer and more skilled, we can enable more people to benefit from an improved feeling of wellbeing. We want families in our city to know there is always the chance of getting on in life.

I am passionate about our city and I truly believe that Stoke-on-Trent is a unique and amazing place, but one which suffers from some significant problems and often loses out to other places when it comes to investment. We urgently need to reverse the damaging cycle of declining resources and worsening deprivation and inequality. Only through a serious and sustained focus on improving the quality of life for our residents can we hope to ensure that our children and grandchildren have access to the same opportunities as those in other parts of the country. Our goal is to help families to lead more fulfilled lives and enable our businesses to get on, grow and employ more local people in decent jobs.

However, we must also acknowledge the fact that, like many other councils, our spending power is not what it used to be. The proportion of our funding that comes from central government has been declining steadily in recent years, leaving us without sufficient money to meet our city's needs. The financial reality that we face underlines the need for close collaborations with our partners and stakeholders, including local businesses, voluntary and community organisations, and most importantly, our residents. We also know that the council does not hold all of the answers to our city's challenges, and that we may not be the best-equipped to exploit emerging opportunities. The City Council therefore has a vital role to play in marshalling energy and resources to improve people's lives and give families and communities reasons to be optimistic about the future.

That is why this strategy is not just a vision for change; it is above all an invitation: to share knowledge and expertise, to help us to make vital changes to improve life chances and create opportunities, and to help eliminate the terrible inequalities which hold our city back. I invite you to work with me and use your voices, your energy and your influence to help us unlock important and lasting improvements for everyone who lives and works in Stoke-on-Trent.

Cllr Jane Ashworth

(Leader of Stoke-on-Trent City Council)



Introduction

This Corporate Strategy sets out Stoke-on-Trent City Council's vision and priorities for the next four years. It explains how we will improve the wellbeing of our residents by making our city healthier, greener, safer, wealthier, cleaner, fairer and more skilled.

We are immensely proud of our city and its people. Stoke-on-Trent is a fantastic place to live, work and visit. But as a city, we also face many disadvantages and barriers. This strategy is therefore grounded in hard reality, based on a sober assessment of the main challenges and opportunities that we expect to deal with over the next four years and beyond.

This Strategy is first and foremost an invitation. We believe fundamentally that people and communities know the most about their own needs and about their priorities for change. We want the next four years to be marked by a redistribution of power in this city, whereby communities themselves get to contribute to decision making. So, while this strategy provides an overall vision and a framework, the detailed strategies and plans will be developed with local people, businesses and organisations. We will dedicate time and resources to listening to people, so that the right things get done. It will then be our job to show how we are aligning our resources, delivery plans, supporting strategies and operational activities to achieve those shared priorities.

The Strategy has been developed in the context of the most severe resource constraints facing local government. This has particularly impacted those authorities with more deprived populations as the gap has grown through years of austerity between the needs of local people and the resources available to local councils. Unless and until this situation is addressed by central government, then our financial position will impact on our ability to deliver this or any progressive strategy for our population.

The Strategy has also been developed amid the Cost of Living crisis. Our city suffers more acutely than most places because we are less economically resilient due to our relatively low wage economy and the high number of households dependent on welfare support.

Over time, our aim is that this Corporate Strategy evolves into a City Strategy that has much wider ownership, so there is alignment not just between our plans and those of the NHS, the police, our educational bodies but also with voluntary and community organisations and cultural bodies as well. Right now, we need to build these alliances into more trusting and collaborative relationships.

The Strategy will be used to inform the scope and overarching aims of the council's core policies (e.g. Medium-Term Financial Strategy, Children & Families Strategy, Housing Strategy), as well as relevant delivery plans and strategies for specific service areas and initiatives. It will be underpinned by a performance framework consisting of measures and indicators which align closely with the corporate priorities and objectives.

A City of Strength, Kindness and Creativity

Stoke-on-Trent is a unique and wonderful place. It was forged through its industrial past, built on layers of enterprise and craftsmanship, and infused by waves of migration. It is a tightly-woven city where the importance of family, community and place all contribute to a strong sense of personal and collective identity. It is a city of unusual kindness, where care for one another runs deep. It is a green city with a superb network of parks and open spaces, traversed by the waterways that once connected our pot-banks to the great ports.

Stoke-on-Trent is the key centre of The Potteries, the only region in the country to be named to this day after the product for which it is best known. Today, North Staffordshire has a highly diverse economy, backed up by the research and innovation provided by its two excellent universities, Staffordshire and Keele.

Over the last ten years, the city has experienced economic growth from a low base, taking advantage of its location as a crossroads in the North West Midlands. Through the development of its Enterprise Zone it has benefited from significant expansion in its logistics and distribution sector. It retains a strong manufacturing base, combined with growth in the creative tech sector and the benefit of having anchor companies such as Bet 365 located in the city.

The city has also striven to be a first mover with respect to some of the global opportunities and challenges that exist. It was the first city in the country to develop a city-wide, gigabit-enabled full fibre network. It has started to address the challenge of achieving zero carbon through early development of a District Heat Network.

And yet, despite this economic growth and an enduring spirit of innovation, the city has remained relatively deprived compared to the rest of the UK. Since the 1990s its position has actually worsened as it slipped from 39th to 14th most deprived district in the country. This is despite having multiple Government programmes directed at the city over this period. Frankly, none of them have been able to address successfully the underlying issues that the city faces.

That is why this strategy seeks to adopt a radical and different approach, based on community-led development of prevention, support and enterprise activity. What gives us confidence that over time this change of direction will work is the evidence from the people themselves. Given opportunity and resources, history shows us that Stoke-on-Trent's citizens and communities do amazing things.

The Key Challenge

Persistent Inequality and Consequent Low Wellbeing

For more than a generation, a multitude of factors have conspired to hold back our city and harm the life chances of many of its residents. Significant gaps between outcomes for people in Stoke-on-Trent and those in other parts of the UK have continued to exist, and in some cases have actually widened in recent years.

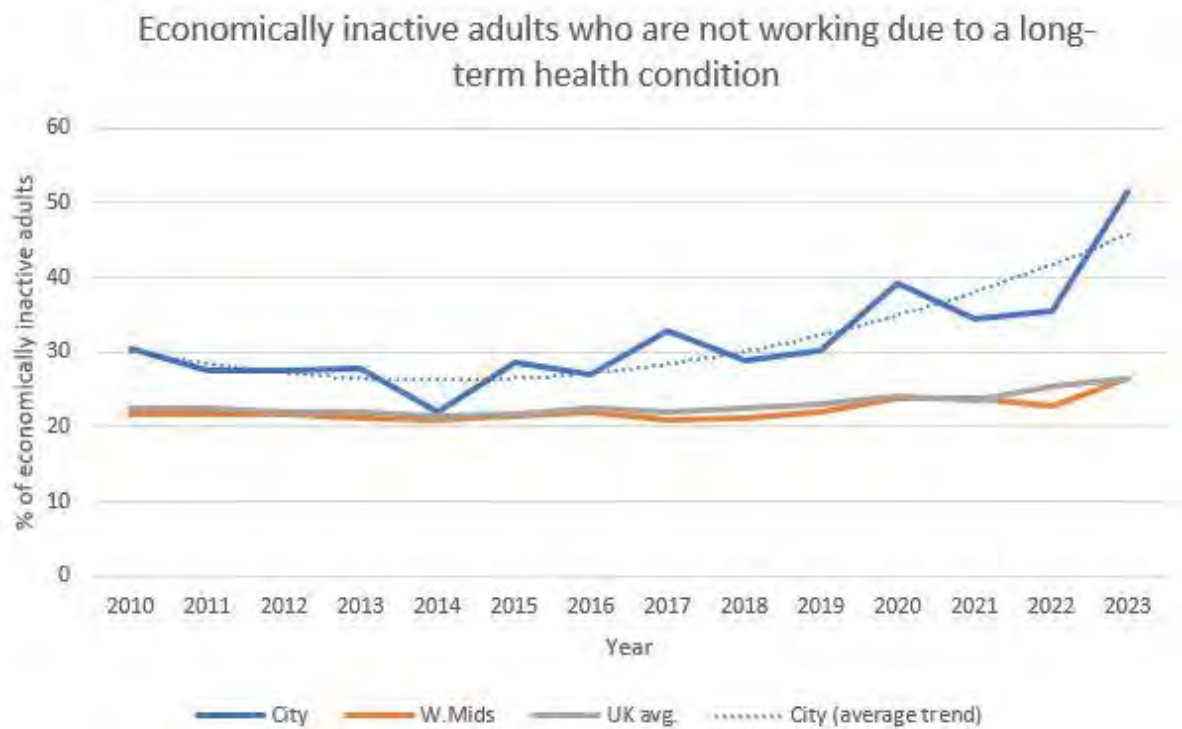
These persistent inequalities contribute to the hardship and deprivation that continues to blight lives and communities throughout our city. The most serious inequalities relate to gaps in outcomes for life expectancy, educational attainment, the development rates for young children, economic productivity rates, wage levels and numbers of children in local authority care. The table below highlights the scale of the gap between Stoke-on-Trent and average levels for the UK as a whole:

Indicator	Gap between city and UK average levels (2023)
Healthy life expectancy	6.9 years shorter (men); 8.5 years shorter (women)
Health-related unemployment	24.8 per cent higher (4,530 more adults out of work)
Educational attainment at GCSE	7.7pts fewer
Adults who achieve Level 3 qualifications	22,000 fewer
Children who are school ready at five years old	3.9 per cent fewer
Economic productivity	£4,888 less per capita (£1.263bn in total for the city)
Gross full-time pay (by place of residence)	£90.20 less per week
Children in Care	365 more children than statistical neighbour avg.

Earnings

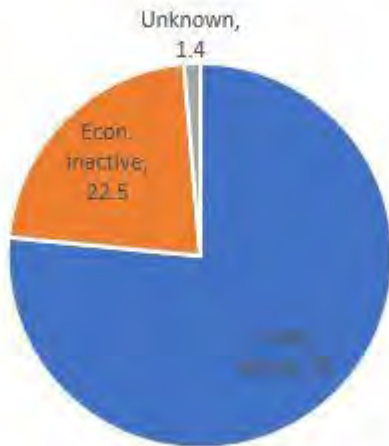


Health-related economic inactivity

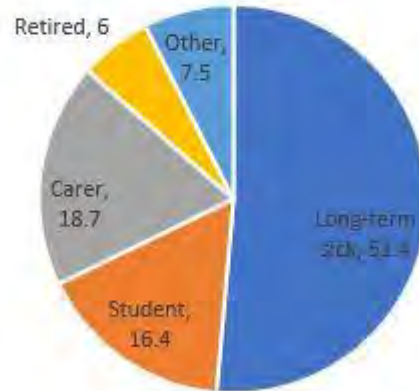


(The dotted line in the table above shows the average trend for Stoke-on-Trent over time. This provides a more reliable indicator, as the data for economic inactivity is drawn from a relatively small sample and can be prone to minor fluctuations).

Percentage of working age adults who are economically active



Breakdown of economic inactivity (% of economically inactive adults)



One of the most important aims of this Corporate Strategy will be to explore and address these discrepancies and ensure that most people in Stoke-on-Trent can benefit from the same opportunities and outcomes as those living elsewhere in the UK. This requires a city-wide response. Our aim is to strengthen our community organisations so that they can get alongside people who are struggling and help them address their problems and get back on an even keel, as well as enable people to create a bridge to opportunities that allow them to achieve their ambitions for themselves and their families. It is not only the people who find themselves at the bottom on the pile who will benefit from this strategy. It is our ambition to raise the standard of life for all our residents – including those held back by the consequences of Covid and the Cost of Living crisis.

Our vision

That is our challenging context, stated plainly. But we believe in our city. We see the creativity, fortitude and industry of our residents and the ambition and innovation of our businesses. The central aim of this Corporate Strategy is to harness these great strengths and break the vicious cycle that 13 years of austerity has created.

We will do this by developing an environment in which people and institutions can work together to improve the wellbeing of all residents.

By 'wellbeing' we don't just mean good health, important though that is. We all know wellbeing is so much more than that. It is about having a decent life, with access to good amenities and opportunities, and having enough money and time to do the things that really matter to us. It is about having pathways to realise ambitions at individual, family and community levels. It is also about considering the needs of future citizens, for example, in prioritising the drive to achieve zero carbon and promoting the mental health of our young people. And it is about addressing environmental sustainability and harnessing and conserving the benefits of the natural environment through the adoption of greener approaches and solutions and by tackling pollution.

It also means we have to work very hard to unlock what we know to be the key enablers of improved wellbeing. In Stoke-on-Trent, one of those critical success factors is improved connectivity, particularly developing a much improved and affordable local public transport system. Another is promoting nature recovery, both for the overall sake of our planet but also for its therapeutic benefit in a city where too many residents struggle with their mental health.

We can only achieve this vision by working in partnership across sectors and with communities. We want to amplify the voice and influence of citizens and communities, so that how we achieve this vision is based on their lived reality of what works and what doesn't. And that will differ to some extent from place to place. That is why we will seek to devolve resources down to the neighbourhood level, using tools such as place-based budgeting to ensure the public £1 has maximum effect at the local level.

In pursuing this vision, we will be joining a growing community of places, both nationally and globally, which are finding the right balance between traditional productivity-based economic models and more wellbeing-centred approaches to economic development, placemaking and environmental stewardship. These are places that have realised that the current rat race generated in the wake of globalisation is actually just a race to the bottom for too many people, with only a small few benefiting from ever increasing wealth. We want to ensure that the wealth we create stays in our city and benefits the many, not the few.

Investing in prevention

In pursuit of greater wellbeing, we will have an unrelenting focus on increasing preventative activity deep within communities that stops bad things happening to people. We will make a deliberate and permanent shift towards investment upstream in activity that helps people to stay well, to develop themselves and to collaborate with others.

We will always start from the perspective of understanding the strengths of people and communities, rather than just seeing their needs. That means looking for the positive foundations on which we can build resilience and growth and involving people and communities in more of the decisions about their lives and places, including through the use of 'citizens' juries' to help shape approaches to local issues and challenges.

Working with our partners, including crucially, voluntary, community and faith organisations, we will invest in early support services, getting alongside people in their communities, giving them the tools to deal with the challenges they face. That might be help to maximise their welfare support or access to some training that will enable them to get back in the job market. Or it may be the chance to set up a small enterprise or help to parent children who have additional needs. This extends to those who are homeless or addicted; we will work with them without judgement to address the root causes of their difficulties while dealing with behaviours that are unacceptable such as anti-social behaviour and violence.

The good news is that, when we give power away to communities and trusted local organisations, it enables them to develop the solutions that make sense to them, because they know their communities better than anyone else. And we are not just talking here about geographical communities. We are also talking about communities of interest such as parents of children with special educational needs, or adults with autism, or a group of market stallholders, to give just a few examples. Our instinct going forward will be how do we give power away to these communities to help them develop better solutions for themselves and others.

This shift to a preventative model of local democracy is how we will also get out of the current vicious circle that sees ever increasing amounts of local tax-payer's money spent on crisis care. The aim is to work together to stop those crises happening in the first place.

Our priorities

To achieve our vision, we will organise our plans against seven themes, each of which will contribute to improved community wellbeing. We will develop baseline indicators of current levels of wellbeing so that we can track the programme we make, including the contribution of each of the seven themes. Later in the strategy, we set out the main actions we will pursue under each essential theme.



1. Healthier

Creating a healthier standard of living for all our citizens

2. Wealthier

Reducing hardship and enabling greater shared prosperity

3. Safer

Building empowered communities, safe from the threat of harm

4. Greener

Conserving our environment and living more sustainably

5. Cleaner

Working together to clean up our city and our communities

6. Fairer

Tackling inequality and improving life chances for everyone

7. Skilled

Providing opportunities for people to improve their skills and education

Addressing the Critical Issues

The citywide responses to the Covid-19 pandemic and more recent cost of living pressures have highlighted the importance and effectiveness of working collaboratively with engaged and influential partners and stakeholders and pooling knowledge, expertise and precious resources to maximise potential positive outcomes for residents, communities and businesses throughout the city.

This Strategy represents a holistic approach, setting out a range of activities aimed at influencing all of the main factors which contribute to, or impact upon, wellbeing in our city. Some of the most important challenges that we face as a city cut across several workstreams and they will receive special strategic attention. They are:

Supporting Family Life - We will prioritise working with the NHS, the voluntary and community sector, businesses and others to ensure families are helped to give their children the best start in life. This will include access to better housing, improved education, opportunities to increase their income and help when things start to go wrong. That help and multi-generational support will be available wherever possible in the communities in which those families live, including via neighbourhood groups and peer networks. Support on offer will also include teaching life skills and personal resilience from an early age as part of a shift to focus on prevention activity, as well as working with young people on budgeting and priorities around managing money, as well as developing a citywide approach to play with a focus on all 0-3 year-olds.

Reclaiming our Streets – We will enable residents to take ownership of our streets, alleys, public spaces and greenspaces through appropriate sustainable development and ongoing maintenance that aligns with improvement or enhancement projects; and a zero-tolerance approach to anti-social behaviour. We will also continue to invest in improvements to the City Centre and our town centres to prevent degradation and boost their appeal to residents, businesses and visitors. And we will invest in training and support to enable residents and community groups to improve their capacity to actively participate in decision-making about their areas.

Addressing Hardship and Poverty – At the same time as working hard to improve the local economy, we will organise special support for those who have the least. We will focus on addressing poverty in the longer term by helping those residents secure better jobs and higher wages through improved education, skills development and employment opportunities; helping them maximise welfare entitlement and tackle debt, and ensuring access to a decent home. We will also continue to invest in improvements to transport services, infrastructure, accessibility and affordability to enable more people living in our city to access good jobs.

Ensuring Decent Homes for All – We will enable people to achieve their housing ambitions, including home ownership. We recognise the crucial importance of affordable, safe, decent housing and its influence on health and wellbeing, particularly for more vulnerable groups. Living in inadequate housing is a major contributor to poor physical and mental health and wellbeing outcomes for both adults and children. Too many households are living in fuel poverty, in poorly insulated homes that they cannot afford to keep warm. We will listen the views of communities and use our influence and strong partnerships to address persistent and harmful problems such as fuel poverty, damp and mould. We will invest in energy efficiency improvements to our own housing stock and use existing powers and legislation to encourage and, if necessary, compel private landlords to provide decent accommodation to their tenants.

Supporting People to Live Independently - Too many people from our city end up in institutional care when they could be supported to live in our communities. This includes young people and adults with physical and learning disabilities, those with long term mental health conditions and older people becoming frail. We will work with our partners to change this, including providing a better choice of supported accommodation for people of all ages and ensuring that support is tailored to the specific needs and preferences of individuals wherever possible.



Our values

Delivering this Corporate Strategy successfully will require a fundamental shift in the relationship that has existed between the City Council and the residents and communities that it serves. The nature and scale of the challenges facing our city are so significant that we cannot address them effectively on our own with the limited resources at our disposal. We must forge and strengthen vital partnerships across the public, voluntary and commercial sectors, but we will also need to find new ways of working with local communities and equipping them with the ability to make more of the decisions which shape their places and daily lives. The transition from 'delivering more' to 'enabling more' will require a major change in the culture of our organisation which will affect every service, team and individual. In this context, our corporate values will not only shape our behaviours, but also define the nature of our offer and commitment to both existing and future partners.

In this changed landscape, we commit to the following key values:

Empowerment

We will use our powers and resources and the dedication and expertise of our workforce to benefit the communities which we serve, enabling them to shape more decisions about their lives and local environments. We will consider how our citizens and communities can benefit from every £1 we spend and ensure that more wealth stays within our local economy.

Openness

We will be very clear about the challenges that the Council is facing, how we are going to address them and whether we are making progress. We will always be open to new and better ideas, and will strive to involve our residents, communities and partners in understanding and addressing important issues in our city.

Empathy

We will show that we care about the lives of our residents. We will provide help and support without judgement and will actively seek the views of our citizens to improve the services we deliver. We will always look to find the strengths in any situation as we strive to make our city a better place to live and work in.

Partnership

We will be dedicated and supportive partners to all those who want to make our city a better place, forging strong relationships which span sectors and geographies. We will pool knowledge and resources and seek to develop shared objectives which will benefit the people and communities we serve.



Stewardship

We will take ownership of our commitments and responsibilities, be honest about where we can do better and demonstrate the utmost responsibility for the efficient use of public resources and assets. We will always be transparent about our performance and present clear evidence of the progress that we achieve in delivering this strategy.



Representation

We will champion our city and our citizens at every opportunity, talking up its many strengths and fostering and nurturing civic pride. We will seek to promote our city's culture, heritage and future potential to wider audiences without downplaying the significance of local challenges. We will strive to secure additional resources and opportunities which can unlock better outcomes for all of our citizens.



Measuring Progress

If the key objective of this strategy is improved wellbeing, we have to know whether we are making progress. We will therefore need a core set of indicators of wellbeing that we can track over time. We will produce a set of indicators that we propose to measure, first by setting a baseline and then by updating regularly. Some of these will be national indicators for which we can access Stoke-on-Trent data, some will be local measures we already collect, and others will require local surveys.



The seven priorities to improve community wellbeing



Priority 1 – A Healthier City

Stoke-on-Trent will be a city in which everyone can benefit from a healthy standard of living, including good quality housing, affordable healthy food and the development of healthier and more sustainable communities. Improving community wellbeing will be the overarching goal behind everything that we do. The City Council will work with the NHS and other local partners to provide effective preventative approaches to ill health and seamless care and support services for all who need them.

Key challenges:

- Poor rates of life expectancy and healthy life expectancy in the city.
- Higher rates of obesity and lower levels of physical activity.
- High numbers of adults and children with poor mental health.
- Poor lifestyle choices contribute to premature death and chronic ill health.
- Poor physical and/or mental health lead to high levels of economic inactivity.
- Inadequate housing contributes to poor health outcomes for vulnerable residents
- Tackling loneliness and isolation.



Supporting data:

Indicator	Local data	National average
Male average life expectancy	77.9 years	79.4 years
Female average life expectancy	79.7 years	83.1 years
Male average healthy life expectancy from birth	55.9 years	63.1 years
Female average healthy life expectancy from birth	55.1 years	63.9 years
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	6.5	3.9
Suicide rate (per 100,00 population)	16.4	10.4
Adults with a common mental health disorder	17.4 %	12.3 %
Percentage of adults who are overweight or obese	69 %	63.5 %
Adults doing recommended physical activity levels	57.5 %	65.8 %
Premature mortality (preventable deaths per 100,000)	215.1	142.2
Adults who smoke regularly	25.7 %	14.5 %
Over-65s receiving long-term adult social care	5.4 %	5.3 %
Economically inactive adults who are long-term sick	39.6 %	25.4 %

A Healthier City

Objectives

Reduce existing health inequalities.

Enable more older people to live independently at home.

Promote and enable a healthier standard of living for citizens of all ages.

Target outcomes

Health and care integration provide a seamless service for all who need support.

More children get off to a good start in life.

More residents regularly take part in minimum recommended levels of exercise.

Actions

Integrate health and care services to provide seamless approach to those who need support.

Address premature frailty and enable people to stay active later in life.

Embed Healthy Start in Life within new Families and Communities Support Offer.

Overhaul leisure service to provide broader access to activity for all, including preventative programmes for older people.

Performance indicators

- Percentage of residents receiving care who are satisfied with their care and feel safe.

- Avoidable hospital admissions for over 75's.

- Percentage of over 75's in residential care

- Percentage of working age adults with a social care package able to live independently in the community.

- Percentage of 5-year-olds with experience of visually obvious dental decay.

- Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births).

- Adults doing recommended physical activity levels.

A Healthier City

Objectives

Target outcomes

Actions

Performance indicators

Residents are able to benefit from a healthier standard of living.

Build health education into relevant education & skills programmes, including adult learning – focus on healthy, home cooking and reducing excessive alcohol consumption.

- Percentage of adults who are overweight or obese.
- Level of alcohol-related hospital admissions (per 100,000 population).

More of the city's housing stock complies with decent home standards.

Ensure provision of decent, warm homes across all tenures and stock types.

- Percentage of housing stock that meets decent home standards.

Develop and invest in preventative approaches to physical and mental ill health.

More children with additional needs, including mental health conditions, receive a good standard of education.

Work with ICB to deliver additional, targeted mental health support services in schools.

- Rates of self-harm.
- Suicide rate (per 100,00 population).
- Number of children & young people with common conditions that are admitted to hospital (asthma diabetes and epilepsy).

Create healthy and sustainable places and communities, including a thriving green and blue environment to influence placemaking and community wellbeing.

All residents have access to affordable, healthy food.

Ensure that securing access to affordable, healthy food is a key goal in all relevant strategies, including the Local Plan.

People feel safe walking and cycling in their local communities.

Re-balance the city's transport strategy to improve access to safe walking and cycling.

- Adults who walk or cycle for transport (combined).

Objectives	Target outcomes	Actions	Performance indicators
	People are able to contribute to their community if they want to.	Focus on supporting and empowering communities to make improvements to their areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of residents who are satisfied with their local area.
Reduce the number of adults who are economically inactive due to long-term health problems.	Health-related economic inactivity levels fall into line with the UK average.	Work with health partners and employers to develop effective approaches to prevention, support and rehabilitation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numbers of people of working age who are unable to work for health reasons.
Create opportunities for communities to discover and get involved in improving local greenspaces.	More people of all ages take an active role in making use of and maintaining/improving local green spaces.	Work with environmental stakeholders to identify and develop suitable opportunities and approaches to enable resident involvement in conserving, improving and enjoying local green spaces.	

Priority 2 – A Wealthier City

Stoke-on-Trent will be a place where every resident has an opportunity to prosper from the city’s economic growth, and where more of the money that is created in the city stays within the city to sustain our businesses and communities. We do this by building community wealth, stimulating micro-enterprise and fostering collaboration through shared workspace and cluster development. We also invest in high-quality cultural infrastructure, including the Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, which play an important role in contributing to the cultural life and wellbeing of the city, as well as strengthening the visitor economy and tourism offer.

Key challenges:

- Stoke-on-Trent remains among the most deprived places in England.
- Disparity between positive GVA growth and worsening financial hardship.
- Persistent gap between local and national average wage levels.
- Stoke on Trent has some of the highest rates of debt and insolvency in the UK.
- Increasing levels of reliance upon emergency support.
- City has second highest level of fuel poverty in England.
- The city’s productivity gap to the rest of the UK will take decades to close.
- Difficulty of attracting private investment and high-growth, high-value employment sectors.

Supporting data:

Indicator	Local data	National average
Children living in poverty (after housing costs)	43.2 %	30.0 %
Households experiencing fuel poverty	21.8 %	13.4 %
Gross weekly pay by area of residence	£552.00	£642.20
Avg. gross disposable household income (per head)	£15,455	£21,978
Percentage of residents who are living in the most deprived 10 % of areas in England	32 %	-
Proportion of adults who don’t own a car or van	30.9 %	25.8 %
GVA per capita (economic productivity)	£24,175	£31,138

A Wealthier City

Objectives

Establish an economic development model which prioritises community wellbeing and promotes community wealth building.

Target outcomes

Stoke-on-Trent becomes a city where most residents are able to secure good work locally that enables them to live healthy, safe and comfortable lives.

Culture is able to play a key role in influencing placemaking and community wellbeing.

Meaningful participation in society and local communities increases across all age groups.

Actions

Develop a new Economic Development Strategy spanning business support, skills development, employment support, social enterprise, tourism, community asset development and inward investment.

Deliver a partnership Cost of Living Plan to address the causes and impacts of financial hardship and provide targeted support to vulnerable residents and communities.

Roll out and embed a Social Value Strategy across the city's anchor institutions.

Roll out new grass-roots cultural programmes across our communities, working with the Arts Council and Stoke Creates.

Create inter-generational opportunities for transfer of knowledge and skills, including increased volunteering.

Performance indicators

- GVA per capita (economic productivity).

- Children living in poverty (after housing costs).

- Participation in activities and culture in the last 12 months.

- Levels of volunteering.

Objectives**Target outcomes****Actions****Performance indicators**

Enable and encourage alternative business models, including community ownership and social enterprise.

The city's approach to community wealth building leads to a proliferation of alternative commercial ownership models.

Create a clear plan for all our valued heritage assets, alongside creation of Heritage Preservation Trust and a prioritised programme of restoration and re-use, including community asset transfer where desirable.

- Number of heritage buildings categorised as being at risk.

Promote community wealth building and support the development of community micro-enterprises.

- Total number of micro, small and medium businesses in the city.

Support high quality regeneration, with a focus on delivering more homes across tenures and high-quality business environments.

Stoke-on-Trent's housing development strategy improves the availability of affordable, high-quality housing.

Design and implement a transparent process to determine priorities for capital investment, with decisions driven by community perspectives not Government diktat.

Support existing businesses to achieve their potential and attract inward investment.

More businesses are established in the city and survival rates improve.

Develop an enhanced business support offer, including help for social enterprise and community micro-businesses.

- Net figure for business births minus deaths.

Objectives**Target outcomes****Actions****Performance indicators**

Objectives	Target outcomes	Actions	Performance indicators
		<p>Ensure there is effective employment support offer, addressing barriers to employment such as lack of self-confidence, poor mental health.</p> <p>Embed the expanded Family Learning programme within our Families and Community Support offer.</p>	
<p>Support high quality regeneration, with a focus on delivering more homes across tenures and high-quality business environments.</p>	<p>Stoke-on-Trent's housing development strategy improves the availability of affordable, high-quality housing.</p>	<p>Design and implement a transparent process to determine priorities for capital investment, with decisions driven by community perspectives.</p>	
<p>Support existing businesses to achieve their potential and attract inward investment.</p>	<p>More businesses are established in the city and survival rates improve.</p>	<p>Develop an enhanced business support offer, including help for social enterprise and community micro-businesses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Levels of growth of target business sectors.• Numbers of new small businesses and social enterprises.

Objectives**Target outcomes****Actions****Performance indicators**

Support more residents to secure higher-value jobs in the city.

Average wages increase, closing the gap to the regional and national averages.

More adults in Stoke-on-Trent earn more than the National Living Wage.

Residents can access cheaper and more reliable bus services to more parts of the city.

Develop a new Economic Development Strategy spanning business support, skills development, employment support, social enterprise, tourism, community asset development and inward investment.

Improved and cheaper Bus Services through delivery of Bus Improvement Plan and development of plans for future Rapid Bus Network.

- Percentage of working age population in employment.
- Average wage levels by area.
- Welfare dependency across communities.

- Percentage of population with access to a decent bus service.

Priority 3 – A Safer City

Stoke-on-Trent will be a city where residents, workers and visitors should feel safe at all times, where vulnerable people are protected from the threat of harm and where communities are able to help to shape local services and environmental improvements. We will do this by giving people more ownership of local buildings and spaces, ensuring that it is safe to get around the city and by tackling low-level anti-social behaviour.

Key challenges:

- Fear of crime and anti-social behaviour deters visitors and makes residents feel unsafe in their own communities and in our City Centre.
- Rough sleeping is still too prevalent, putting vulnerable people at risk of harm and affecting perceptions of our city as a safe place to work, live and visit.
- Too many children are living in unsafe environments, putting them at risk of ending up in our care or being placed on the child protection register.
- High levels of domestic abuse and violence are preventing adults and children from feeling safe in their own homes.
- Too many residents with social care needs do not feel safe.

Supporting data:

Indicator	Local data	National average
Crime & anti-social behaviour (cases per 1,000 pop.)	14.1	8.1
Levels of violent crime (incidents per 1,000 pop.)	41.2	29.5
Antisocial behaviour incidents recorded	Down 22 %	Down 27 %
Levels of domestic abuse (cases per 1,000 adults)	31.7	30.3
Proportion of adult offenders who reoffend	33.4 %	27.9 %
Level of alcohol-related hospital admissions (per 100,000 population)	2,180	1,500
Adults who are opiate users (per 1,000 pop.)	14.7	8.9
Children in need of safeguarding	5,900	3,520
Level of people with social care needs who feel safe.	75.5 %	70.2 %

A Safer City Objectives

Ensure that residents of all ages can live their lives in safety.

Target outcomes

Reductions in levels of crime, anti-social behaviour and reoffending.

Actions

Refresh the Community Safety Strategy with a focus on key priorities/alignment of resources.

Performance indicators

- Levels of crime.
- Percentage of residents whose fear of crime affects day-to-day life

Residents, workers and visitors feel safer in all areas of our city.

Strengthen the focus on safety of town and city centre environments and parks/green spaces, including physical design improvements.

Work with Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner (PFCC) to align commissioning activity and model of provision to the strategic approach.

Use preventative approaches to tackle crime and social problems.

Adopt (along with police and VCS partners) a 'broken windows' philosophy that engenders greater community ownership and confidence.

- Antisocial behaviour incidents recorded.

Create more age friendly environments, including for those with dementia.

Provide strong support for the PFCC's violence reduction strategy.

- Levels of violent crime.

Objectives**Target outcomes****Actions****Performance indicators**

		Use powers to deal with nuisance households and tackle environmental and heritage crime.	
		Provide more safe activities and facilities for young people to divert them away from crime and ASB.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of residents who are satisfied with opportunities and activities available for young people.
	Fewer people are sleeping rough on the city's streets.	Identify solutions to support the most complex rough sleepers and better move-on options out of hostel accommodation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numbers of rough sleepers.
Work with partners to tackle the causes and impacts of domestic abuse and violence.	Incidents of domestic violence and abuse fall in line with the UK average.	Improve partnership focus on key axes of domestic violence prevention, enforcement and support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Levels of domestic abuse (cases per 1,000 adults).
Deliver an effective programme of family support to prevent crises which can result in children being put at risk or taken into care.	Fewer children in the city need to be protected from the risk of serious harm.	Deliver an enhanced Family Support offer to improve the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of children on child protection register and in care.
		Undertake a multi-agency approach to complex safeguarding of Children and Young People and vulnerable working age adults.	

Objectives

Deliver an effective partnership approach to tackling drug and alcohol abuse and dependency.

Target outcomes

Levels of drug and alcohol abuse decline, with addicts able to access timely and effective support.

Actions

Ensure good and timely access to mental health and drug/alcohol support.

Performance indicators

- Suicide rate (per 100,00 population).

Priority 4 – A Greener City

Stoke-on-Trent will be a pioneer of green energy innovation and environmental sustainability, cutting pollution, substantially reducing fuel poverty and creating an environment that promotes widespread community wellbeing. We will empower communities to reduce their carbon footprint and to become more eco-friendly, including through improving access to high-quality green space.

Key challenges:

- Reducing air pollution levels, particularly around key highways junctions.
- Creating a circular economy which encourages recycling and reduces waste.
- Creating adequate ‘green economy’ employment and skills opportunities for residents
- Maximising the environmental and economic benefits of green energy innovation.
- Using green energy innovation to reduce fuel poverty throughout the city.
- Delivering the infrastructure to enable wider use of electric vehicles.
- Enabling nature recovery, including crucial role of trees and green spaces and corridors.
- Ensuring that green and blue spaces can form or contribute to networks for travel, leisure and access to nature.

Supporting data:

Indicator	Local data	National average
Total gas consumption per year (gigawatt hours)	2,302	2,149
Total electricity consumption per year	317.5	470.4
Average CO ₂ emissions per head of population	4.9 tonnes	4.1 tonnes
Adults who walk or cycle for transport (combined)	11.4 %	17.4 %
Forecast employment levels in green industries by 2050 (total number of people directly employed)	3,362	7,484

A Greener City

Objectives

Target outcomes

Actions

Performance indicators

	Greenhouse gas emissions reduce with transition to renewable energy.	Establish Climate Change Commission and develop zero-carbon strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Levels of carbon emissions.
Reduce the city's carbon emissions in line with the 2050 net-zero commitment.	More residents walking, cycling and using clean transport.	Clear plans for clean public transport, improving active travel and roll-out of EV charging infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of bus passenger journeys.
		Balanced approach to improvement of air quality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Air Quality.
Work towards the creation of a circular economy which prioritises environmental sustainability over consumption and waste.	Recycling rates improve as a result of better education and take-up.	Develop refreshed waste strategy including delivery of replacement energy recovery facility at Hanford, materials recovery, increased recycling.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of waste recycled.
Use low-carbon energy innovation to maximise environmental sustainability.	The City Council delivers all of the actions contained in its Energy Strategy.	Develop city-wide energy plan with focus on use of renewables and delivery of affordable warmth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Households experiencing fuel poverty.
Ensure that our residents and businesses reap the benefits of the green economy.	More residents secure work in green economy sectors and industries.	Plan for development of green business sector as part of economic strategy in partnership with chamber and others.	

Objectives**Target outcomes****Actions****Performance indicators**

Objectives	Target outcomes	Actions	Performance indicators
		Work with other authorities and Midlands Connect to develop A500/50 as green industrial corridor.	
	The City Council and partners actively champion ecological conservation and biodiversity.	Nature recovery plan with county, including strengthening of green/blue wildlife corridors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biodiversity loss gain may be at regional species count? Species abundance or % of land protected by diversity, increase tree cover.
Strengthen biodiversity and opportunities to engage with the natural environment.	The city's green spaces are of a consistently high standard and widely used.	Focus on improvement of our medium-sized parks that have suffered relative neglect over recent years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of people who feel their neighbourhood is relatively clean and tidy.
		Community-led greening programme with many micro projects, including guerrilla gardens, growing, adoption of lost spaces etc.	
Regenerate brownfield sites and preserve our built heritage.	Fewer heritage buildings are at risk.	Protection and re-use of heritage assets, including medium-term strategy with Heritage Lottery Fund.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of heritage buildings categorised as being at risk.

Objectives

Use investment in low-carbon energy to reduce fuel poverty, as well as greenhouse gas emissions.

Target outcomes

Most residents can access affordable, clean energy to heat their homes.

Actions

Expansion of District Heat Network and maximising solar potential.

Performance indicators

Priority 5 – A Cleaner City

The environment in which we live and work is a key factor affecting community wellbeing, which is why we are determined to make our city a cleaner and more attractive place for everyone. We all have a responsibility and shared duty to look after our streets, parks and neighbourhoods. We will support our communities to take greater ownership of their places and take firm action against the scourges of litter, vandalism and illegal dumping which tarnish our city and inflict misery on communities. We will strive to ensure that all residents can live in dignity.

Key challenges:

- High levels of illegal waste dumping blight communities and harm internal and external perceptions of Stoke-on-Trent.
- The City Council lacks sufficient resources to maintain all public land in Stoke-on-Trent to a high standard.
- Recycling rates must improve in order to meet our environmental obligations.
- Environmental problems are often viewed as ‘council problems’ rather than issues that communities can address through supported and coordinated voluntary action.



A Cleaner City Objectives

Objectives	Target outcomes	Actions	Performance indicators
Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities.	Residents feel happier living in their local communities.	Ensure contribution from other public bodies, e.g. National Highways.	
Empower communities to become effective stewards for their areas.		Ensure that Financial Strategy enables better targeting of resources re highways, green spaces etc.	
Encourage, support and facilitate community ownership of local assets.		Build up community ownership infrastructure to enable neighbourhood stewardship of places and spaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Levels of volunteering.
Deliver public realm improvements throughout the city.	Visitor numbers increase as people regard the city as a more attractive destination.	Set medium-term capital strategy that puts greater focus on quality public realm, including town centre and corridor improvements, alley-gating etc.	
Strive to eradicate environmental crime in our city.	Reduced levels of illegal waste dumping in our towns and green spaces.	Intensive approach to addressing fly-tipping.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of people who feel their neighbourhood is relatively clean and tidy.

Objectives

Target outcomes

Actions

Performance indicators

Enforcement action provides an effective deterrent against all forms of environment crime.

Use powers to tackle private land owners.

Ensure addressing environmental crime is integral part of ASB approach.

Develop role and volume of community payback contribution.

Priority 6 – A Fairer City

This strategy has been developed to address a range of persistent inequalities which have combined over a number of years to exert a highly negative impact on the lives of many people in Stoke-on-Trent and eroded people's sense of being in control of their lives. Tackling these persistent inequalities and transforming the way we provide support for vulnerable residents will help to ensure that people in Stoke-on-Trent are able to access the same opportunities to live healthy and productive lives as those living elsewhere in the UK. The approach set out in this strategy aims to empower people and communities to take more of the decisions which affect their lives and the places they live in, while focusing targeted support at helping the most vulnerable in our city.

Key challenges:

- Deprivation and financial hardship are stunting life chances and inflicting unnecessary harm on families and individuals.
- Outcomes for looked after children and care leavers are not good enough.
- Poor transport connectivity linking communities to employment sites.

Supporting data:

Indicator	Local data	National average
Percentage of school-ready children aged four to five	61.3 %	65.2 %
Children eligible for, and claiming, free school meals	24.5 %	17.0 %
Children with learning disabilities or difficulties (per 1,000 pupils)	62.0	34.4

A Fairer City Objectives

Objectives	Target outcomes	Actions	Performance indicators
Enable residents of all ages to have greater control over their lives.	The majority of residents believe they can enjoy a good quality of life in the city.	Use data analytics & GIS to identify and directly address specific issues in more deprived neighbourhoods.	
	Residents feel more in control of their own lives and able to shape their futures.	Implement the Adult Social Care Transformation plan to ensure timely access to support, using strengths-based model.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average ratings of personal well-being - Life satisfaction out of 10.
		Provide stronger, more integrated support for carers.	
Take steps to ensure that council policies and actions actively promote greater fairness.	Residents feel more in control of their own lives and able to shape their futures.	Revise the Housing Strategy to ensure a clear focus on affordability, including older people's accommodation.	
		Test all policy and programme decisions for contribution to reducing inequalities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Male average healthy life expectancy from birth. Female average healthy life expectancy from birth.
		Use all available programmes/ resources to address hardship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avg. gross disposable household income (per head).

A Fairer City Objectives

Objectives	Target outcomes	Actions	Performance indicators
<p>Enable residents of all ages to have greater control over their lives.</p>	<p>The majority of residents believe they can enjoy a good quality of life in the city.</p>	<p>Use data analytics & GIS to identify and directly address specific issues in more deprived neighbourhoods.</p>	
	<p>Residents feel more in control of their own lives and able to shape their futures.</p>	<p>Implement the Adult Social Care Transformation plan to ensure timely access to support, using strengths-based model.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average ratings of personal well-being - Life satisfaction out of 10.
<p>Provide stronger, more integrated support for carers.</p>			
<p>Take steps to ensure that council policies and actions actively promote greater fairness.</p>		<p>Revise the Housing Strategy to ensure a clear focus on affordability, including older people's accommodation.</p>	
		<p>Test all policy and programme decisions for contribution to reducing inequalities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Male average healthy life expectancy from birth. • Female average healthy life expectancy from birth.
<p>Use all available programmes/ resources to address hardship.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avg. gross disposable household income (per head). 		

Objectives**Target outcomes****Actions****Performance indicators**

Public transport is an enabler for securing employment within the city, rather than a barrier.

Strengthen the focus in the Transport Strategy on access to affordable public transport.

- Number of bus passenger journeys.

Use an adequate proportion of our Network North funding to address highway maintenance issues.

- Percentage of highways in good condition (ABC unclassified).

Work with larger employers to tailor transport provision to their shift patterns, where possible.

Provide timely, accessible and effective family support services.

Fewer children need to be taken into care or placed on the protection register.

Provide access to early help in communities as part of the enhanced Family Support offer.

- Numbers of children in need through neglect.

- Number of children on child protection register and in care.

Ensure that every child born in the city has the best possible start in life.

Child health and development rates get closer to the national average.

Work with partners such as Thrive at Five to boost child development and school readiness levels.

- Percentage of school-ready children aged four to five.

Objectives**Target outcomes****Actions****Performance indicators**

Children with significant barriers to learning and achievement are able to access the same opportunities and life chances as other children and young people.

Act as an exemplary corporate parent for all children and young people in our care.

- Percentage of care leavers in Education, employment or training.

Support schools to access early welfare support for students and their families.

- Early years development gap for those on free school meals & through education system.

Continue delivery of the Special Educational Needs improvement plan.

- Levels of satisfaction with SEN provision.

Encourage more use of cycling for routine journeys.

More workers use cycling to commute to work on a regular basis.

Support more workplaces to develop sustainable travel plans for their staff.

- Adults who walk or cycle for transport (combined).

Enable and support wider engagement with culture and heritage as a means of improving people's quality of life.

Visitor numbers to city museums and art gallery increase for all ages.

Promote free access to museums and art gallery to encourage more families in the city to experience culture and heritage.

- Participation in activities and culture in the last 12 months.

Priority 7 – A Skilled City

An important element of improving wellbeing and living standards involves ensuring that people are equipped with the knowledge and skills required to secure good work which will enhance their quality of life and enable them to provide for themselves and their families and plan for a comfortable future. One of the key factors holding our residents back is a legacy of comparatively poor educational attainment and skill levels which prevent them from securing higher-value, better-paid jobs. In order to give our citizens greater equality of opportunity when it comes to employment and pay, we must ensure that people of all ages are able to access the same education and training opportunities as people in other parts of the UK, as well as effective, accessible, targeted support for those who experience barriers to employment.

Key challenges:

- Too many adult residents are trapped in low-paying, insecure work.
- Educational attainment is lower than in most other places.
- Too few residents gain high levels of skills or go on to higher education.
- Need to enable upskilling and develop vocational routes into education to improve fairness in relation to accessing better jobs.
- Too many higher-value, higher-skilled jobs go to workers from outside our city.
- Need to develop credible skills pathways into employment and progression.
- Raising aspirations and awareness regarding further and higher education and technical qualification will be vital to driving up skill levels.

Indicator	Local data	National average
Adults with at Level 3 qualifications or higher	50 %	61.5 %
Adults with at Level 4 qualifications or higher	28.3 %	42.9 %
Adults with no formal qualifications	12.4 %	6.2 %
Key Stage 4 educational attainment score	43.2	50.9
Young people aged 16-17 who are NEET	16.5 %	10.4 %
Percentage of young people going to University	38 %	44 %

A Skilled City

Objectives

Improve opportunities to secure fairer employment and better paid work.

Target outcomes

The proportion of residents in higher-skilled/managerial roles rises in line with UK average.

Actions

Build up employment support offer through JET service and linked SPF-funded programmes.

Performance indicators

- Claimant Count.

Attract inward investors who are wanting to make a long-term commitment to city, including developing local talent.

Improve the quality of education provision across all stages and settings.

The educational attainment gap to the UK average is significantly reduced at all levels.

Embed access to community learning, with focus on level 1/2 provision and pathways back to work.

- Key Stage 4 educational attainment score.

More students from the city go on to successfully complete higher education.

Make participation in higher education a key focus for the Education Improvement Programme and Local Skills Improvement Plan.

- Adults with Level 4 qualifications or higher.

Support more residents to secure higher-value jobs in the city.

Average wages increase, closing the gap to the regional and national averages.

More adults in Stoke-on-Trent earn more than the National Living Wage.

Develop a new Economic Development Strategy spanning business support, skills development, employment support, social enterprise, tourism, community asset development and inward investment.

- Avg. gross disposable household income (per head).

Objectives**Target outcomes****Actions****Performance indicators**

Residents can access cheaper and more reliable bus services to more parts of the city.
Public transport is an enabler for securing employment within the city, rather than a barrier.

Improved and cheaper Bus Services through delivery of Bus Improvement Plan and development of plans for future Rapid Bus Network.

- Number of bus passenger journeys.

Strengthen the focus in the Transport Strategy on access to affordable public transport.

Work with educators and employers to transform education and skills outcomes for residents of all ages.

A higher proportion of adults achieve Level 3 qualifications or higher.

Deliver the Education Improvement Programme, working with schools and colleges to raise educational standards, ensure the right learning pathways are available for all learners, teach life skills and improve work readiness.

- Adults with at Level 3 qualifications or higher.

Develop a Skills and Employment Strategy that ensures the skills match the future needs of employers, with particular focus on digital skills.

- Adults with no formal qualifications.

Objectives**Target outcomes****Actions****Performance indicators**

Provide an expanded employment support offer, addressing barriers to employment such as lack of self-confidence, poor mental health.

Embed the expanded Family Learning programme within our Families and Community Support offer.

- Percentage of young people who are EET.

- Numbers of permanently excluded young people.

How we will deliver this strategy



Supporting strategies and plans

The implementation of the Corporate Strategy will be supported by a number of key policies, strategies and programmes of work, some of which will be developed following the adoption of this strategy in order to address specific priorities and objectives. These supporting strategies and plans fall within several groups:

Budget and policy framework – mandatory and discretionary policies and strategies relating to specific areas of activity where the City Council has a statutory duty to provide services (e.g. finance, planning, licensing, children’s and adults’ social care, community safety, equality and diversity, transport, waste management and health and wellbeing).

Delivery strategies – support and enable the effective delivery of targeted approaches to specific challenges and objectives which are relevant to the priorities and objectives contained in the Corporate Strategy (e.g. Energy and Carbon Reduction Strategy, Cultural Strategy, Economic Strategy, Cost of Living Plan).

Operational strategies – Strategies which aim to enable the City Council to improve performance or enhance service provision in relation to a particular area of day-to-day service delivery. These strategies will necessarily reflect the relevant priorities and objectives contained within the Corporate Strategy (e.g. Customer Services Strategy, Digital Strategy, Library Strategy, Green Space Strategy).

The Operating Framework

The Operating Framework is designed to ensure that every team across the organisation is always focused on what it needs to do to improve its offer to residents, partners and other parts of the council, and that service teams have the confidence to develop and transform their services to meet this requirement. To be able to do this with confidence, the Council also requires a clear system of accountability that ensures priorities are being delivered and money is being spent wisely. The Operating Framework is intended to provide a system of development and assurance that should give Members confidence that the Council is performing at a high level.

There are five elements to the Operational Framework: Operating Plans, performance management, assurance model, governance for delivery and organisational development. All of these elements play a part in ensuring that the organisation is able to deliver the Corporate Strategy effectively. Two of the most important elements are:

Operating Plan : The annual plan translates the Corporate Strategy into priorities for delivery and improvement, setting out the allocation of resources in line with the Budget, key performance measures, efficiency and productivity requirements, identified key risks and mitigations and details of key enablers of continuous improvement.

Performance Management : Delivery of the Corporate Strategy will be underpinned by a Strategic Performance Framework comprising a set of carefully chosen performance indicators which will be closely aligned to the priorities and objectives set out in this document. These performance measures, which will be largely taken from the indicators set out against the seven priority themes, will enable us to gauge the effectiveness of our approaches and assess whether our actions are having the desired impact in relation to the challenges highlighted in this document.

The City Council is also investing in new approaches to **data collection and visualisation** which will strengthen our ability to gather and analyse a wide range of performance data and use them to inform and improve decision making throughout the organisation. Enhanced data collection and visualisation will enable us to achieve a much more detailed understanding of the causes and impacts of the problems which affect residents and communities in Stoke-on-Trent and devise more effective strategies to address them.

Developing Our Organisation to Deliver

We know from experience that to deliver a strategy as ambitious as this one, then we have to invest in our workforce and supporting infrastructure, including digital assets. This will be difficult given our financial position but it is essential. The way we can square the circle is to rationalise our property base and reinvest some of the proceeds back into the development of the Council. The priorities for that investment will be:

Training and development: Our staff are going to need new and improved skills, and to some extent a different way of going about their work, embracing partnership models of delivery and learning how to empower residents and communities. Some of this work has already started, using the idea of restorative practice, but we can go much further.

Recruitment and retention: We are operating in a very competitive market where we can never take our workforce for granted. We need to make sure that we are not only fair on pay and conditions, but also that our staff really feel like they are supported to give their best in the crucial roles that they undertake. We also want our workforce to be reflective of the community they serve, with increased diversity at all levels of the organisation.

Digital opportunity: While digital functionality will never be a substitute for some of the crucial services that the Council provides, such as personal care, it can do some of the heavy-lifting for us in terms of simpler, transactional services. It can also reduce back office costs, releasing more resources to frontline delivery of essential services.

Use of our property: The Council still owns too many buildings that it is using sub-optimally. It therefore needs to divest of some of these buildings, including through community asset transfers, and then maximise use of those it retains, including inviting partners and communities to make use of them as well.