

STRONGER TOGETHER

*Working together to create a
stronger city we can all be proud of*

Stoke-on-Trent City Council Strategic Plan
Vision, priorities and objectives, 2016-2020



City of
Stoke-on-Trent

Foreword

Stronger Together is the message that underpins our vision for Stoke-on-Trent – working together to create a stronger city we can all be proud of. It is this vision and ambition that runs through our Strategic Plan. In it we set out what we will strive to achieve for the city over the coming years, working with you and the organisations who support us to deliver improvements in our great city.

Our vision will in part be delivered directly by the council but in other areas our priorities will be achieved through working in partnership with others to deliver the very best we can for Stoke-on-Trent. Being a trusted partner and an organisation that is both outward looking and good to work with is at the heart of how we will turn our vision into reality.

We are committed to making the most of what we have and how we work with people, businesses and partners to achieve the best possible outcomes, working together with our residents. With reduced resources that is a big challenge but no greater than many we've faced before in our long and proud history.

We're looking forward to the next four years with confidence and the knowledge that there are tremendous opportunities for us all ahead and I am confident that together we will deliver improvements to our great city.

Councillor David Conway - Leader of Stoke-on-Trent City Council

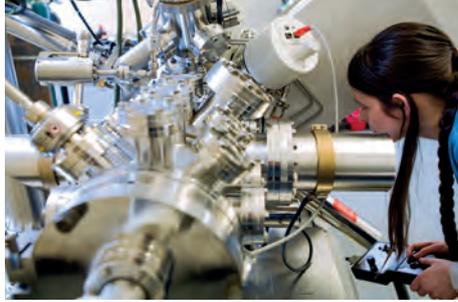
Introduction

The Stoke-on-Trent City Council Strategic Plan sets out the organisation's strategic priorities for 2016-20 and the objectives we will achieve during that time. Driving these priorities is our 'Stronger Together' vision:



Working together to create a stronger city we can all be proud of

This plan describes how we will deliver this vision over the next four years and launches a process for developing an annual delivery plan for 2016 onwards.



Context

Stoke-on-Trent is a city with many great strengths. Since 2009 the economy has continued to recover from the recession, with over 1200 new businesses formed in 2014 compared to just 590 in 2009. This growth in new businesses and expansion of existing companies means that the city has outstripped national growth rates, with strong performance in key sectors including advanced manufacturing which now employs over 13% of workers (compared to just 8.5% nationally). Combined with growth in jobs in information and communications, this demonstrates the potential for post-industrial restructuring of the local economy.

The city's population is growing. Educational attainment is improving (particularly for primary school pupils), the number of young people not in education, employment or training is at its lowest ever level and short-term unemployment is reducing, creating new opportunities for individuals and businesses. However long-term unemployment, low pay, below average secondary school attainment and adult skills continue to be crucial issues. Health outcomes for people in the city are amongst the worst in England: life expectancy is two and half years lower than the national average for both men and women; teenage conceptions are almost double the national rate; infant mortality is 50% higher and smoking related deaths are almost double. Building on our opportunities to address these challenges will be at the heart of the council's work over the next four years, strengthening economic growth in the city and connecting local people to that growth.

National policy changes can have a significant impact on residents, the city and local public services. Over the next four years it is clear that there will be far reaching change in a number of areas. Active engagement with government and a forward looking approach will ensure the city is best placed to benefit from the opportunities available.

Strategic priorities and objectives

Sitting underneath the council's vision are five strategic priorities. Aligned to each priority are a number of strategic objectives that we will endeavour to deliver over the next four years.



Working together to create

Vision

Priorities



Support our residents to fulfil their potential



Support our businesses to thrive, delivering investment in our towns and communities

Strategic Objectives
2016/20

- Support our schools to deliver a step change in educational attainment so that every young person has access to a school rated 'good' or better
- Continue to increase the number of 18-24 year olds who gain the skills necessary to secure a job of their choice
- Protect and improve mental and physical health and wellbeing
- Increase the number of people moving into work
- Transform training and skills provision, supporting business growth and enabling local people to secure good quality work
- Transform participation in sport and physical activity across the city

- Foster enterprise and entrepreneurship to support new and emerging local business growth
- Secure investment to protect and create jobs
- Deliver an increase in the number of new houses of various tenures, prioritising development on brownfield land
- Celebrate and promote our great city and increase the number of visitors
- Develop a transport network that reduces congestion and supports growth in our city
- Deliver a transformation in the number of apprenticeships in the city and in the council

STRONGER TOGETHER

Make a stronger city we can all be proud of



Work with residents to make our towns and communities great places to live



A commercial council, well governed and fit for purpose, driving efficiency in everything we do



Support vulnerable people in our communities to live their lives well

- Ensure our city is clean and well maintained, with high quality green spaces and parks
- Preserve and enhance the unique heritage of our city
- Deliver a significant improvement in housing quality by investing in homes and driving up housing standards
- Reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime
- Involve communities in making each town and neighbourhood a great, vibrant and healthy place to live and work
- Promote security of affordable energy for residents and businesses in the city

- Deliver optimal efficiency in all our services adopting new delivery models that deliver maximum value for residents
- Optimise value from local public spending and increase the proportion of spending with local businesses
- Deliver a customer focussed approach to service delivery and transform accessibility of services
- Embed a culture of continuous improvement, invest in our teams and adopt the 'Stronger Together: One Council, One Vision, One Team' approach in everything we do
- Invest in projects to generate a return to protect services

- Reduce the risk of harm and neglect to vulnerable adults and children
- Enable and support more people to live independently and safely
- Improve quality of life, independence and choice for vulnerable adults
- Enable young people leaving care to live independently and safely
- Improve health and wellbeing of vulnerable groups
- Support residents to manage their money effectively, improving uptake of benefits for those who are eligible



Leadership and partnership: Our Stronger Together values

Working with others is at the heart of everything that we do and we believe that everyone has a role to play in the continued success of the city. Underpinning the delivery of all our priorities and objectives are strong working relationships with residents, leaders in the public, voluntary and faith sectors as well as business, industry and national government.

To guide the delivery of our priorities and objectives we have developed five cross cutting values. They describe how we will work and how we would like to work with others, across organisational and geographical boundaries. Between January and May 2016 we will work with residents and our partners to develop a set of pledges to put these values into practice.

One Council, One Vision, One Team



Ownership and accountability

- We will be accountable for our own actions and take decisions in an open and transparent manner, empowering people to take ownership in their communities
- We would like everyone to play their part by taking responsibility for their community to the best of their ability



Ambition

- We will be ambitious for our towns and the city and make each contact with the council an opportunity to deliver the best possible outcome for our residents
- We would like everyone to share this ambition for the city



Respect

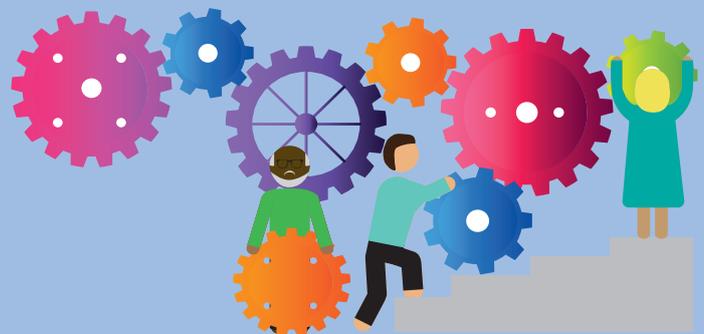
- We will put respect at the heart of how we work with colleagues and residents, valuing the contribution they make to the city, the towns within it and the communities that support it
- We would like everyone to contribute to their community and respect the contribution of others



Involvement

- We will work together with our residents, involving people in decisions, listen and take on new ideas
- We would like everyone to work with and support others, get involved and share their views to help us improve the way we do things

Working with others



- We will seek out opportunities to work with people and organisations to deliver the best outcomes for our residents and the city
- We would like those who have a contribution to make to the city to work with us to shape a positive future for our residents

Making it happen

Annual delivery plans

To translate our vision and priorities into action, each year the council will produce an annual delivery plan setting out the activities that will be delivered between April and March, along with timescales and performance measures. The first of these will run from April 2016 to March 2017.

The process for developing the delivery plan for 2016-17 began with this summer's 'Stronger Together' programme of resident involvement. Through group activities, one to one conversations and events, ideas were generated for new ways we can work together with people in their towns and neighbourhoods to improve the city. We will build on these ideas through engagement with partners from across the city and our neighbouring areas, including leaders from the public, voluntary and community sectors and businesses. We will work in partnership with other organisations in order to deliver our priorities and objectives. Whilst the Strategic Plan is a council document, many delivery plans will be developed and delivered in partnership with other agencies.

A golden thread will run from the Stronger Together vision to the objectives and targets recorded in each individual staff members' Performance Development Plan. These Development Plans contain personal objectives, agreed between the staff member and line-manager, which set out how they contribute to their team plan and the council's strategic priorities and objectives.

Council finances

The reduction in public spending faced by local authorities has been a continuing challenge for the council. The 2010 Spending Review and subsequent local government settlements have seen extensive reductions in central government funding - both revenue and capital. The council has already made good progress in achieving savings, however further reductions in funding mean that in 2016/17 we will need to make £27million in additional savings. So far we have achieved savings through delivering efficiencies, driving greater value from what we buy, reviewing charges for our services, redesigning services for the better and rationalising the council's buildings and land to get the best returns. This outline Plan sets out how the council will continue with its positive approach to tackle the challenges head on and not simply cut services. It is clear that we will have to change what we do and how we do it to maintain services over the coming years. Our Medium Term Financial strategy will be underpinned by some fundamental changes to service delivery. Exploring these options will be a key focus for the council during 2016-17.

Governance and Probity

The council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, that public money is safeguarded, correctly accounted for, used economically, efficiently and effectively to deliver quality services to the community we serve. The council is committed to embedding and achieving a robust set of corporate governance arrangements. These are set out in the Governance Framework within the council's Constitution. This outlines how the council operates, how decisions are made and what procedures need to be followed to ensure the council is efficient, transparent and accountable to its local residents. These arrangements enable us to monitor and manage our performance in delivering cost effective services.

How will we know we have been successful?

Performance Management

As part of the development of the 2016-17 annual delivery plan we will develop a basket of performance measures related to each of our strategic outcomes. Monitoring these will enable us to track our progress at an operational level as well as providing a means for stakeholders to rigorously assess performance, the need for services, the method of provision, value for money, management of risk and partnership impact. Key to the reporting and recording of performance information will be a clear focus on ownership, accountability, risk management and data quality.