

# Public Document Pack

**Date of meeting**      **Wednesday, 26th June, 2013**

**Time**                      **7.00 pm**

**Venue**                      **Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, Merrial Street,  
Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, ST5 2AG**

**Contact**                      **Martin Stevens ext 2250**

## **Economic Development and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

### **AGENDA**

#### **PART 1 – OPEN AGENDA**

- 1**      **Apologies**
- 2**      **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**  
To receive declarations of interest from Members on items included in this agenda.
- 3**      **MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING**                      **(Pages 1 - 4)**  
To agree as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2013.
- 4**      **NEWCASTLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY - YEAR TWO ACTION PLAN AND YEAR ONE REVIEW**                      **(Pages 5 - 16)**  
To receive a report on the Newcastle Economic Development Strategy – Year Two Action Plan and Year One Review.
- 5**      **TOWN CENTRE PARTNERSHIP - BUSINESS PLAN**                      **(Pages 17 - 42)**  
To consider the Town Centre Partnership Business Plan. Matt Taylor (Town Centre Manager) will be in attendance. The Plan is a continuously evolving document and is always open to new additions.
- 6**      **BROADBAND**                      **(Pages 43 - 48)**  
To receive a verbal update on Broadband provision. A copy of a recent newsletter on the subject is attached.
- 7**      **HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCY SERVICES**                      **(Pages 49 - 54)**  
To receive a report on the Home Improvement Agency Services.
- 8**      **WORK PLAN**                      **(Pages 55 - 58)**  
To discuss and update the work plan to reflect current scrutiny topics.

## 9 URGENT BUSINESS

To consider any business which is urgent within the meaning of Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

**Members:** Councillors Mrs Astle, Miss Baker (Vice-Chair), Cairns, Clarke, Holland, Jones, Loades, Matthews, Olszewski, Stringer (Chair) and Wilkes

**Members of the Council:** If you identify any personal training/development requirements from any of the items included in this agenda or through issues raised during the meeting, please bring them to the attention of the Democratic Services Officer at the close of the meeting.

**Meeting Quorum**

16+= 5 Members; 10-15=4 Members; 5-9=3 Members; 5 or less = 2 Members.

Officers will be in attendance prior to the meeting for informal discussions on agenda items.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW AND  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, 20th March, 2013

**Present:-** Councillor Ian Matthews – in the Chair  
Councillors Mrs Astle, Cairns, Fear, Holland, Olszewski, Stringer, Studd  
and Wilkes

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor Miss Baker.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received.

3. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 December 2012 be agreed as a correct record.

4. **STOKE-ON-TRENT AND STAFFORDSHIRE LOCAL ENTERPRISE  
PARTNERSHIP - WAVE 2 CITY DEAL**

The Committee received a briefing note regarding the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) – Wave 2 City Deal.

The LEP had been in existence for around two and a half years and it had been agreed that the Committee would be informed from time to time of matters of business that were of interest, and the City Deal was one of these.

Within North Staffordshire, there was no recognition of a core city, whereas cities such as Birmingham and Manchester had worked with the Government on City Deals. In November 2012 there had been a second wave of City Deals. The Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP had engaged in dialogue regarding this and had got through the initial hurdles. The second wave of City Deals was expected to be completed in November 2013, and although the briefing note was for information, Members may wish to have further update reports regarding the matter.

5. **HIGH SPEED 2 PHASE 2**

The Committee received a briefing note on High Speed Phase 2. The Executive Director for Regeneration and Development stated that the issue was starting to gather momentum. The recent announcement did not mark the commencement of the formal consultation process, but began the process of engagement with stakeholders allowing any significant issues to be identified before the formal consultation process. A working group had been established by the Council and Members with affected wards had received the latest information. It was important

for the Economic Development and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be engaged in the process and to determine on which areas the Committee would focus.

A Member stated that the working group had not yet appointed a Chair. High Speed Phase 2 was becoming a bigger issue than in the previous 12 months. There had been a number of issues arising from the working group meeting. He stated that it would be beneficial to increase the membership of the working group to a total membership of 5 or 7. It was agreed that the membership should be increased, with the new membership details reported back to the Scrutiny Committee.

There was a discussion about the level of noise from HS2 on the wider area. Trains travelling a 225 MPH could create a sound of up to 87 decibels. A Member stated that they were concerned about the lack of Central Government consultation thus far on HS2, particularly at a local level.

The Executive Director for Regeneration and Development reported that a separate consultation was currently ongoing concerning the Exceptional Hardship Scheme for HS2 Phase 2. The Council had to respond by the 29 April. If the scheme was eventually implemented, communities that were affected would be able to protect their interests. The consultation provided an opportunity to identify criteria and to consider whether it needed to be widened. It would be possible for the working group to consider all of these issues. A Member stated that there was a local group considering the legality of the consultation.

**RESOLVED:** That the Scrutiny Committee receives a report confirming the new Membership of the HS2 Phase Working Group.

## **6. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY**

The Executive Director for Regeneration and Development presented a report on the Community Infrastructure Levy. The work taking place would provide a greater degree of certainty for anticipated development expected in the next few years and the likely infrastructure requirements. Over the last few months work had taken place on the Joint Viability Study. It had been determined that there would be three categories, residential, retail and commercial.

A Member stated that the Community Infrastructure Levy was a very complicated area. It was important that the levy was comparable to Stoke-on-Trent City Council and other neighbouring Councils to ensure that the Council was not disadvantaged with regard to development opportunities. The Executive Director for Regeneration and Development commented that the Council had used specialist consultants to advise on the changes and reassured Members that the issues highlighted by the Committee had been raised by Senior Officers and Cabinet Members. There remained scope to levy Section 106 obligations.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

## **7. UPDATE ON THE TOWN CENTRE PARTNERSHIP AND EMERGING BUSINESS PLAN**

The Chair reported that the Town Centres Manager had been invited but had been unable to attend the meeting. He would however attend a future meeting in June with the intent of looking at the Business Plan. The Head of Housing stated that the Town Centre Partnership's had identified a number of priorities including the night

time economy and business and enterprise. A Business Plan had been considered by the board in the previous week. A website was scheduled to be launched in the third week of April. A more in depth discussion could be had at the scrutiny meeting in June. The Business Plan had been approved in principle by the Board.

A Member stated that the work taking place by the Town Centre Partnership sounded good in principle and whilst it made a good start it would be important to evaluate their work over the next 12-18 months. There was a general agreement that the Partnership was doing an excellent job. The Executive Director for Regeneration and Development said that the Town Centres Manager was preparing some key performance indicators for the Partnership.

The Chairman suggested that a meeting of the Committee with the Town Centres Manager should be arranged. Some suggested dates should be obtained and then circulated to the Committee.

**8. TOWN CENTRE INITIATIVES FOR VACANT SHOPS**

The Committee received a briefing note on Town Centre Initiatives for Vacant Shops.

The Executive Director for Regeneration and Development reported that the Chair and Vice Chair had met Officers on the 12<sup>th</sup> September. He stated that the wider commercial portfolio was performing better than previously anticipated.

A Member asked about privately owned empty shops and the private sector's approach to reoccupying these shops. In response, the Executive Director for Regeneration and Development referred to the draft Business Plan for the Town Centre Partnership. The report clearly demonstrated that Newcastle Under-Lyme Borough Council was playing an active role. It was however true that when big shops were empty, adverse comments would be received.

A Member stated that the growing demand for brands meant a decline in traditional shops because of the rise of the supermarkets.

**9. TOWN CENTRE CAR PARKING**

The Engineering Manager stated that a Task and Finish Group on Town Centre Car Parking had been established in November. The group had met on a number of occasions and had considered a range of options. There was a discussion about the options considered.

**RESOLVED:** That the Scrutiny Committee endorses the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group.

**10. NEWCASTLE TOWN CENTRE PUBLIC REALM AND MARKET REFURBISHMENT PROJECT**

A summary was given of the main tasks of the Newcastle Town Centre Public Realm and Market Refurbishment Project.

**RESOLVED:** That the current project plan be noted.

**11. NEWCASTLE HOUSING ADVICE (NHA) - HOMELESSNESS, HOUSING OPTIONS AND HOUSING REGISTER CONTRACT RETENDERING EXERCISE**

The Committee received a report on the Newcastle Housing Advice Service (NHA). Cllr George Cairns declared an interest as he was on the board of Aspire Housing.

The Head of Housing reported that a retendering process for the Newcastle Housing Advice (NHA) service was taking place to ensure that the service was available beyond April 2014, as the contract with Aspire Housing was due to expire on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014. A working group for the retendering process had been established. The working group was proposing to develop an in house bid.

**RESOLVED:** That the Committee accepts the proposal of the NHA Contract Retendering Working Group to develop an in house bid, as an option to be considered as a tender submission for comparison purposes and to ensure the best service is delivered, whilst achieving good value for money aims.

**12. WORK PLAN**

**RESOLVED:** That the work plan be agreed as it stood.

**13. URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

**COUNCILLOR IAN MATTHEWS**  
**Chair**

## NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & ENTERPRISE SCRUTINY

#### COMMITTEE

26 JUNE 2013

#### **NEWCASTLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY: YEAR TWO ACTION PLAN AND YEAR ONE REVIEW**

**Submitted by: Neale Clifton, Executive Director, Regeneration and Development**

**Principal author: Simon Smith, Regeneration Manager**

**Portfolio: Regeneration and Planning**

**Ward(s) affected: All**

#### **Purpose of the Report**

To review progress made in taking forward the Borough's Economic Development Strategy, in particular by reviewing the Year One Action Plan and considering the Year Two Action Plan.

(For Scrutiny Committee) to consider what comments, if any, the Committee wish to make to Cabinet on this report.

#### **Recommendations**

That the review of the Economic Development Strategy Year One Action Plan be noted and Year Two Action Plan be approved.

(For Scrutiny Committee) to consider the report and the appendix containing a review of the 2012-13 Action Plan and the proposed 2013-14 Action Plan and pass comment to Cabinet on what modifications, if any, the Committee wish to make.

#### **Reasons**

To ensure that the broad objectives contained in the agreed strategy are converted into realisable actions. .

#### 1. **Background**

Cabinet agreed a new Economic Development Strategy for the Borough at its meeting last May following consultation with partners and the local business community on an earlier draft. Printed copies of the strategy, illustrated with plans and photographs, have since been widely disseminated, including to Cabinet Members. The approved strategy has a five year timescale (2012-17) and included

the preparation of an Action Plan for Year One (2012-13) which identified a number of concrete actions which could be taken in a shorter time scale.

This report provides a review of that Year One Action Plan and (in part informed by this) sets out a Year Two Action Plan (2013-14) for your consideration and approval. By its nature this Action Plan is fairly detailed and for this reason is contained in appendix form.

This report is substantially that which will be submitted to the next meeting of the Cabinet but additionally seeks the views of Scrutiny Committee. Those views can then be reported to Cabinet in the usual way.

## 2. **Issues**

Strategy is inherently about making choices – making the case for why certain actions should be prioritized over others and to what intended effect. The annual action plans on the other hand are more about adding the flesh to those priorities, setting out what actions are to be taken, so that the actions proposed can be seen in the context of the broader objectives. While it is intended that the broad thrust of the strategy will have a long enough life to see demonstrable progress made (in this case a five year time horizon), the annual action plans are drawn up anew each time and are able to reflect changing circumstances and (sometimes unforeseen) opportunities as they arise. This should have the benefit of keeping them relevant and fresh. This annual review may also take the opportunity to consider new Government initiatives or changes in the economic or financial landscape and capitalize on them. It may also suggest changes in emphasis or priority (and perhaps what might no longer be pursued so that new things might be tried).

At the end of the five year period covered by this strategy (2017), the Council will publish an evaluation report of the effectiveness of the strategy and assess the successes achieved and what might have been done better (or differently). This more detailed review will be undertaken after the period of the Strategy by which time changes in the economic and financial circumstances of the country (and the area) will be clearer and it may then be more appropriate to consider more fundamental changes in direction, including new initiatives.

## 3. **Options Considered**

When the preparation of a new Economic Development Strategy was first discussed, it was initially proposed to provide a 'mid-term report' half way through the five year horizon of the strategy to review progress made and consider whether any changes in emphasis (or even direction) were required. Cabinet instead requested an *annual* review in the form of an annual Action Plan in which progress made in the previous year's Action Plan was reviewed and a detailed Action Plan for the following year drafted and agreed. This report follows that approach. .

## 4. **Proposal**

The appendix to this report contains a review of the Year One Action Plan (2012-13) and sets out a proposed Year Two Action Plan (2013-14) for your consideration and approval. The annual Action Plans set out in more detail how the aims and 18 broad objectives agreed will be carried out. Like the strategy itself, these will also be based around the four themes of

- Economy



- Place and Infrastructure
- People, and
- Image & Marketing

#### 6. **Reasons for Preferred Solution**

To ensure a commitment to agreed objectives (the Strategy) while also ensuring that actions are flexible and reflect changing opportunities and circumstances (the annual action Plans).

To continue to act as a basis for dialogue with other partners to encourage complementary action

#### 7. **Outcomes Linked to Corporate Priorities**

An Economic Development Strategy falls within the Borough Council's corporate priority of 'Creating a Borough of Opportunity'.

#### 8. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

It is not a statutory requirement on the Council to prepare an Economic Development Strategy though it is good practise to do so and to take decisions against the background of agreed priorities, up to date data and following consultation with partners.

#### 9. **Equality Impact Assessment**

No differential impact had been identified. Specific actions which are designed to improve the prospects of particular sections of the community (for instance, those without work), will be subject to subsequent reports, which may themselves require an EIA.

#### 10. **Financial and Resource Implications**

Where actions are proposed which require proposals for expenditure these will be the subject of specific reports to Cabinet. The Economic Development Strategy and the annual Action plans will provide context for that expenditure but there is no presumption that funding will be met by the inclusion of an action within the Action Plan and any action requiring Borough Council expenditure will be subject to its own report and justification.

#### 11. **Major Risks**

These will be dealt with project by project.

#### 12. **Key Decision Information**

This report has been included in the forward plan. The strategy will affect more than two wards of the Borough. Approval for specific expenditure will be subject to more detailed later reports.

#### 13. **Earlier Cabinet Resolutions**

At its meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2012, Cabinet resolved

- (a) That the draft strategy be amended in the light of comments received.
- (b) That Cabinet given further consideration to any other improvements / modifications Members wish to see made to the draft
- (c) That the modified (final) version of the strategy be reported to next meeting for approval.
- (d) That the final version of the strategy be accompanied by a first year action plan demonstrating in more detail timescales, lead bodies and resource implications.
- (e) That the approved version of the strategy be re-formatted with plans and photographs added and printed for wider distribution.

At its meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2012, Cabinet resolved

1. That the Economic Development Strategy and the first year Action Plan be approved.
2. That arrangements be made to publicise the strategy.

14. **List of Appendices**

Newcastle Economic Development Strategy 2012-17, Year One Action Plan Review 2012-13 and Draft 2013-14 Action Plan.

**Economic Development Strategy 2012-17 Year One Action Plan Review 2012-13**

No.	Action	2012-13 review	2013-14 Actions
<b>Business – Objective: Strengthening the Business Base</b>			
1	<b>We will develop a long-term economic strategy built on 'diverse specialisation', aiming to increase both the proportion of knowledge intensive employment and the proportion of high quality jobs in retail, leisure, tourism and distribution</b>	1.1 This objective cuts through the strategy as a whole and actions which flow from it are covered in the other sections	
2	<b>We will develop a co-ordinated enterprise strategy</b>	2.1 Produce 'route map' to setting up a business, concentrating on council services	Simple route map for food businesses being set up as a trial, others to follow, including generic business start-up.
		2.2 Seek funding to ensure continuation of North Staffordshire District Enterprise & Education Partnership group (DEEP)	Unable to establish appropriate funding to support continued employment of the education/business co-ordinator after Staffordshire partnership funding ran out in July 2012. However, the successful Job Carousels, developed by the DEEP group are being reintroduced from Feb 2013.
		2.3 Pilot single telephone contact point for local business support and link from Stoke & Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership; (The LEP) website	The Helpline was launched in Feb 2012 as a six month pilot scheme which has now been extended to a full time, 6 day a week service contactable by telephone and e-mail. The contract for delivery for the first 6 months was held by NSCCI but is now with Winning Moves.
		2.4 Develop innovative ways of engaging young people in enterprise activities	Job Carousels re-introduced from Feb 2013 to give primary school children a taste of the many career paths open to them in the future, 8 schools have already expressed an interest in running carousels and a bank of around 30 employees from a wide range of local businesses has been set up to service them.. LYLM 'schools market' trialled in Jun/Jul 2012 with 6 schools taking part and more expressing an interest in future events. This will be repeated in 2013.
		2.5 Continue to grow and develop the Newcastle Business Boost competition	Highly successful year again, including bringing in a new sponsor, the County Council. 24 Newcastle-based businesses entered, most of which went on to submit a business plan for the second round. Three overall winners were presented with cash prizes at an awards ceremony attended by over 80 people.
		2.6 To provide business events in line with The LEP with the aim of unlocking the potential of the private sector	The LEP has held a number of dissemination events for Staffordshire businesses throughout the region. The Make It team has also held commercial property events. The Stoke and Staffordshire website also publicises partner events on its website
		2.7 Actively manage business pages of NBC's website	This is ongoing. The council website is being revamped in 2013/14 which improve the customer journey.
		2.8 Introduce Planning Charter Mark	
		2.9 Delivery of faster and more reliable broadband across Staffordshire	The BDUK Superfast Broadband project in Staffordshire is underway, the BDUK allocation of £7.44m has been match-funded by the County Council. A project manager has been appointed to keep stakeholders informed and ensure they are ready to assist with the delivery phase.
		2.10 Establish business enterprise coach in Newcastle. Initially focusing on unemployed people.	Newcastle Business Enterprise coach established working with unemployed people based centrally at the Civic offices, Guild Hall and Library. 27 people assisted to start a business and 12 business starts
		2.11 Set up Newcastle Partnership Social Enterprise	Newcastle Partnership have completed work to identify public services across the Borough with potential for SE delivery and gaps in provision that could be commissioned by SE
		2.12 Work with local business community to develop proposals for funding from the Regional Growth Fund	GE Power Conversion successfully applied for a grant from the RGF in 2012 to enable the expansion of its Butt Lane factory
3	<b>We will support development of emergent knowledge intensive sectors, building on higher and further education</b>	3.1 Develop the Business and Innovation Group (BIG) to support high growth companies	BIG set up as informal partnership comprising Keele and Staffordshire Universities, KSBP and NSCCI. Has held a number of events including the Technology Strategy Board and one on exporting. Over 100 businesses supported this year

	expertise	3.2 Mentoring & work placements for students wishing to pursue a science based career	NuLC running the 'Britten Academy' for V1th formers studying Maths/Economic/Accountancy which will include a mentor and work experience.	Ongoing in 2013-14
		3.3 Use 'Career Academies' to raise aspiration and attainment for young people	NuLC no longer affiliated to the organisation 'Career Academies' but using a similar model (mentors, guru lectures, placements, etc). NBC mentored one student and offered two paid placements during 2012-13. The Enterprise & Business Academy is working closely with Argos and includes a 'Dragon's Lair' competition for students.	On-going in 2013-14. Looking at developing more flexible ways for employers to engage with courses.
		3.4 Attract more young people into education, training and employment through the STEM sectors	NuLC actively promoting STEM to 6th formers. Student mentors include representatives from Siemens and Alstom. STEM profile raising events held by LEP and STEM prioritised as a key curriculum area.	NuLC looking for more employers to offer work experience relevant to STEM students.
		3.5 Promote Keele University as an exemplar of environmentally aware and sustainable campus to demonstrate the expertise offered and grow the low carbon & environmental sustainability expertise in the Borough	Approximately 12000 people have visited the hub including borough schools and a wide cross-section of demographics have visited, particularly on the Community Day. A vertical axis wind turbine developed by a Keele based business has been erected on site and Nissan have donated a zero emissions car for use on campus. Environmental Masters' students are based in the hub who are required to undertake an industrial project as part of their qualification.	Ongoing in 2013-14 (more details can be obtained the Sustainability hub strategy)
4	We will support development of the professional and business services sector	4.1 Continue the development of Finest as the region's leading professional services network	finest has continued to offer its members a comprehensive programme of lectures, talks and seminars, to encourage B2B activities and collaborations and to promote training at all levels including senior management. Futurefinest continues to provide mentoring, networking, social and CPD opportunities for young professionals. NBC held its annual 'meet the chief executive' event at J2.	As finest enters its 10th year of operation it plans to refocus its activities on business basics concentrating on member to member business generation, standards and training, economic development business opportunities and investment. Restructuring of the Steering Group and working groups will also take place. NBC will hold another 'meet the Chief Exec event' in 2013-14.
		4.2 Bring forward suitable business accommodation in Newcastle Town Centre. See also 8.4, 8.5 and 8.6	1. Work on new 'Civic Hub' project which aims to co-locate Borough and County Council employees and bring outlying staff into the town centre. 2. Work on 'seeing is believing' brochure which aims to convince agents and developers of the potential (and suitability) of town centre office sites for office development and deter recourse to out of town development. 3. Discussions with agent acting for Blackfriars site to share market intelligence and enquires. 4. Support for Morston Assets in seeking funds for the refurbishment of Blackburn House.	Continue to progress actions listed in 2012-13 (Civic Hub, Blackburn House, Blackfriars, 'Seeing is Believing')
		4.3 Encouraging local procurement of professional services	finest continues to promote member and public sector procurement opportunities on its website.	Plans to develop good practice examples with NBC Procurement Officer and to disseminate these to other local authorities.
5	We will make the most of the Borough's successful logistics sector	5.1 Marketing the Borough for inward investment	1. Worked with the 'Make It Stoke and Staffordshire' Inward Investment team to prepare promotional copy about the area. 2. Prepared North Staffs investment brochure. 3. Responded to development enquires with appropriate property options in the Borough. 4. Worked with the Make It team and Mickeldore to identify prospective growth sectors which North Staffordshire has a realistic prospect of success and developed marketing strategies to target these.	Continue to progress actions listed in 2012-13 (Make It, Mickeldore, North Staffs brochure, responding to development enquiries)
		5.2 Exploit the PR value to the Borough of the outstanding environmental standards attained by the Blue Planet building	This is used in much of our promotional material.	As 2012-13
6	We will seek to optimise the benefit to local companies from public sector procurement.	6.1 Make more use of the Think Local for Business (TL4B) website to promote business opportunities	TL4B has now been incorporated with Lichfield, Tamworth and Stafford districts as founding members. A business manager has been employed to increase membership. Membership of Newcastle businesses has grown over the last 12 months, albeit only slightly.	Continue to promote TL4B as a B2B option for local businesses. Explore possibility of Newcastle becoming a founder member of the TL4B company
		6.2 Set up procurement hub on council website for lower value contracts	Procurement hub ready to go live, but delayed whilst the Procurement Gateway Process and expected outcomes were rolled out to each of the departmental management teams. This has now been completed.	Roll out of the procurement hub.
		6.3 Set up internal 'gate keeping process' to provide assistance to officers preparing larger contracts	The 'gate keeping process' is the procurement gateway process mentioned in 6.2. A briefing paper was submitted to Executive Management Team and ratified and presented to departmental management teams.	Inform NBC business managers of next steps
		6.4 Development of 'Platform' as a North Staffordshire contracts portal covering all sectors	As part of the Staffordshire Procurement Group three District Councils have agreed to contract with Bravo Solutions as a provider for their E-Tendering platform. Stoke City Council already has the Bravo platform in place and has rolled training out to local providers in utilising this solution.	Further development work around a Staffordshire platform.
<b>Place and Infrastructure – Objective: Physical Transformation</b>				
7	We will draw up a Masterplan to guide the future development of Newcastle Town Centre	7.1 Further development of the Newcastle Town Centre Strategic Investment Framework (SIF) - see further Objective 18	Cross refer to the projects in objective 18	Cross refer to the projects in objective 18

		7.2 Bringing forward the development of a major new retail scheme for the Ryecroft site (further detail see 8.1)	1. Engaged expert commercial advisor (Cushman & Wakefield) to help secure a development partner for the site; 2. agreed marketing plan for the scheme; 3. commissioned planning consultants to advise on appropriate planning policy document to make the case for comprehensive treatment.	Secure preferred development partner by Summer 2013, complete Development Agreement, apply for planning permission and sign up key anchor tenants by Spring 2014
		7.3 Bringing forward the development of a new Civic Quarter potentially on council owned land at Nelson Place or the Ironmarket	This project has not been subsumed within the 'Civic Hub' proposal intended to co-locate all Newcastle-based County Council and Borough Council staff. Business case under preparation as well as options appraisal of three potential sites within the town centre.	See comments in 2012-13; make business case for scheme, secure commitment of two councils to the investment required, complete options appraisal for three sites under consideration by summer 2013.
		7.4 Securing the satisfactory redevelopment of the former Blackfriars Bakery site, Pool Dam	No success to date.	Discussions will continue with agent and developer and potential enquiries shared. Unsuitable proposals will not be supported.
		7.5 Adoption of design briefs for each of the town centre's three key development sites (see 7.2, 7.3, and 7.4 above) as agreed planning policy	Design briefs completed and will be subsumed within proposed Town Centre SPD.	Ryecroft Local Plan completed in draft form Autumn 2013, and agreed for consultation purposes.
8	<b>We will bring forward proposals for retail and business accommodation in Newcastle Town Centre with priority placed on growing its professional services and a distinctive retail offer</b>	8.1 See also 7.2: Procure development partner for the Ryecroft scheme (ensuring that the partners' Development Agreement makes provision for elements which play to the town's qualities (a department store, a quality food store, family friendly eateries/ restaurants); ensure scheme design encourages the circulation of retail footfall around the town).	Formal marketing not yet underway; aim is to secure development partner by Summer 2013 selected on the basis of those stated objectives (and others)	As comments 2012-13
		8.2 Town centre promotion (including that of its independent shops offer) see further Objective 18	See section 18	
		8.3 Develop a new Civic Centre with co-located services between NBC, SCC and the PCT	see 7.3	see 7.3
		8.4 Market key town centre development sites for office development	see 4.2	as 2012-13; explore potential for addition resource from Make It to ensure that this is given greater priority (especially while the Hanley CBD is not available); detailed discussions with agent acting on behalf of two known large scale office enquiries.
		8.5 Bring Blackburn House back into use	Successful bid for funding from the Growing Places Fund. Not yet taken up as Morston now seeking a pre-let prior to committing to refurbishment. Sharing market intelligence and enquiry information with Morston in respect of two current large scale office enquiries.	Successfully bring one of two known enquires to fruition.
		8.6 Market Lancaster Buildings for office occupation	Advertising of the availability of the 2nd floor offices has continued both on the Borough Council's website and via the appointed estate agent. Unfortunately the second floor offices remain vacant.	Continue to market the remaining office space for occupation including exploring innovative models for new business occupation in conjunction with Keele University.
		8.7 Undertake complementary investment in the town centre to attract further developer interest, in line with the Town Centre Strategic Investment Framework (see further objective 18)	See detailed commentary Objective 18	
9	<b>We will promote the further development of Keele Science and Business Park</b>	9.1 The development of further Innovation Centres and the Conference Hotel	University has decided not to develop the conference hotel itself but to seek interest from hotel operators to build and run the hotel. Currently in discussions. Likely to be 150 beds. Would support the university's conference business. Staffs County Council are in talks with an anchor tenant to take a third of the planned IC5. If agreed, this will trigger its construction, later in 2013. The three storey building provides for labs on the ground floors and two storeys of offices over.	Secure sufficient interest in IC5 to encourage SCC to begin construction. Support, where possible, university actions to find a hotel developer.
		9.2 Marketing of the Science Park for inward investment of further high tech businesses	The university has prepared a marketing brochure to promote interest in IC5 (see 9.1) and is actively working with the Make It team to promote the area and the science park for inward investment, including a presence at the UK Renewables Conference at Glasgow last year and sponsorship of Make It's trip to the Mippim Conference in March.	Insider Magazine investor event planned. Ongoing in 2013-14. It will also host the Midlands Insider Property event Spring 2013.

		9.3 Successful occupation of the Nova Centre by graduate enterprises and other businesses	The Nova Centre is now full with 16 small companies based here (some hot desking). Currently looking at how to sustain the model and ensure that (a) businesses currently based here are able to stay in the area after their two year business occupancy expires, and (b) space is freed up for new enterprises	Develop strategy to help tenants move on after 2 years - may include potential accommodation on campus
10	We will enable the development of higher quality housing for current and future residents, with an explicit aim to increase the attractiveness of North Staffordshire as a home to affluent residents	10.1 Identify housing development sites specifically for 'high earners' in the Site Allocations Development Plan Document	Local Plan is still at the 'Issues and Options' stage.	as column 2
11	We will bring forward new sites for employment and housing through the Site Allocations Development Plan Document to enable the further growth of the Borough.	11.1 Identify an appropriate and attractive range of new employment sites in the Site Allocations Development Plan Document to replenish the supply of development land in the Borough	Local Plan is still at the 'Issues and Options' stage.	as column 2
<b>People – Objective: Transforming Ambition</b>				
12	We will raise skills, reduce worklessness and raise aspirations as a core element of all transformational strategies	12.1 Equip young people and adults with basic employability skills required by local businesses based on research into local employers needs	NULC futher development of Employment and Skills agenda. Specific work to encourage more apprenticeships through the 100 in 100 campaign launched during national apprenticeship week March 2013	Promote the Council's shared apprenticeship scheme with partners to recruit 12 apprentices. Support the Talent Match project to encourage young people aged 18-24 yrs unemployed for 12mths, into training and employment.
		12.2 Provide a programme of support and training back into work to reduce worklessness	Family Employment Initiative continues to work with people across the Borough and has engaged with 288 people, supported 117 into training and 82 people into employment. Continue to coordinate Newcastle Employment and Skills Group to enable futher joint working especially in realtion to welfare benefit cuts.	Continue to work with FEI to explore options to sustain the service.
13	We will work towards getting the right skills mix to increase productivity	13.1 Identify business growth sectors over the next 5-10 years and identify the specific skills required within these sectors.	Work with Make It inward investment team to develop a sector-specific marketing campaign based on the recommendations of last year's Mickledore study.	LEP Education Trust established to improve links between business, schools and education and training providers. Also to match supply to demand and identify communication and networking opportunities. Develop annual calendar of events.
14	We will stimulate demand for higher skills and create opportunities for people to acquire skills for current and future industrial structure	14.1 Increase the number of people in Stoke and Staffordshire qualified to graduate level and above	LEP Education Trust Established. Council representation on the Communications and Networking group.	LEP Education Trust will promote a calendar of activities that seek to raise the achievements of pupils and students and to raise educational and training aspirations. Work will focus on schools and business links, supply and demand and communications.
<b>'Image and Marketing' – Objective - Transforming Perceptions</b>				
15	We will develop an external marketing strategy for the Borough	15.1 Support the work of the 'Make It' team	Fortnightly team meetings to share market information, current enquires and prospective leads. Follow up leads and offer sites and premises which meet clients' requirements.	Continue to pursue, as column three
		15.2 Produce North Staffordshire Employment Land Compendium	Work under preparation, completion planned March 2013.	Design and production of the North Staffs site Brochure widely disseminated amongst local and regional agents.
		15.3 Actively develop links at strategic and operational levels with The LEP	Enterprise and Skills Implementation Group wound up in 2012 to focus on the establishment of the Stoke and Saffordshire Education Trust.	Continue to play an active role in the Education Trust Communications and Networking Group
16	We will improve the quality of life offer for current and future residents	16.1 Confirm existing customer profile of town centre users to see if any changes since previous surveys carried out	After discussion with the TCP shadow board it was agreed that this work would be deferred until the town centre manager was in post.	Carry action over to 2013-14
		16.2 Identify gaps from the research and define target market for marketing campaigns	See 16.1	Carry action over to 2013-14
		16.3 Develop appropriate marketing material for town centre assets	Town centre website, commissioned by NULTCP under construction (launch planned for Apr 2013.	Carry action over to 2013-14
		16.4 Develop marketing strategy for Newcastle Town Centre and the market	Marketing strategy for Newcastle town centre curently under development by the NULTCP. The aims of the strategy are to raise Newcastle Under Lyme's profile as a destination for retail, leisure and business, develop and promote a consistent brand image based on the overall Town Centre Partnership vision, bring cohesion to town centre marketing messages, develop and promote a year-round programme of professional and community-led events. The first event NULTCP event of 2013, Keele RAG parade, took place in Mar.	Ongoing in 2013-14

		16.5 Complete public realm works	Works in the Ironmarket and Barracks Road / the Bus Station complete by September 2012.  Works to introduce a new taxi rank at lower High Street commenced in February 2013.  A test market stall was installed in December 2012 for evaluation although the process of evaluation was somewhat disrupted by the weather.	Complete re-paving of Hassell Street September 2013.  Install new market stalls October 2013.
		16.6 Refurbish three Town Centre Subways	Preparatory work with the County Council to investigate paint systems	Start refurbishment works on three town centre subways summer 2013 and commission artists to work on the community arts element.
		16.7 Provide new community facility in Silverdale	Secure additional funding from HCA to provide adequate services for the facility, transfer the community facility land from HCA to the Council.	Sign agreement with Severn Trent Ltd to realign the sewer April 2013, complete Heads of Terms between the Council and SAFC June 2013, commence community facility build programme April 2013 with a view to complete December 2013.
17	<b>We will support the development of North Staffordshire's 'experience economy'</b>	17.1 Continue to work with the Destination Management Partnership (DMP) to make the Borough a more attractive prospect for visitors, including business tourism	NBC continues to support the work of the DMP. A successful ERDF bid by the DMP has secured £500k additional resource for tourism activities in Staffordshire. Two 'Out & About' guides have been published along with the annual 'Enjoy Staffordshire' tourism guide. In addition, user information collected from the website has been used to send out targeted e-mails promoting events (e.g. the Food festival in May 2012)	Ensure all town centre special events are promoted through the DMP media resources.
		17.2 Work with Keele university and Keele University Students' Union to bring more students into town	The TCP is building up links with Keele at a variety of levels. The TCP board includes a member of the senior management team. The TCM is also engaging with the Students' Union. Plans are in hand to re-introduce student nights on a Thursday in the town centre and a RAG parade is due to be held on 9th March. Student volunteers also participated in the Christmas Lights switch on and Dickensian Market	Develop more permanent links between the Students' Union and the TCP, including inviting student societies to participate in town centre events. Engage students in enterprise activities, including volunteering opportunities.
		17.3 Work with DMP to encourage more take up of membership by Newcastle businesses	No specific work undertaken on this action due to focus on town centres although NBC supports DMP initiatives to grow membership	Ongoing in 2013-14
		17.4 Bring St Giles & St Georges back into use	Unsuccessful attempt to lease to local RSL (refurbishment too expensive). Currently in discussions with local charitable organisation.	Continue to explore re-furbishment options; potential redevelopment to be considered only when other options exhausted.
		17.5 Encourage greater use of Jubilee 2 (J2) conference facilities	A Business Panel and a Finest event have been held at J2. Have worked with the J2 project manager to develop a business offer.	Ongoing in 2013-14 including working with town centre businesses to provide a package of discounts and special offers for the mutual benefit of members and retail outlets in the town centre.
		17.6 Promote the Borough's qualities to existing and potential visitors and residents	This is ongoing but a significant revamp of the tourism pages on the website took place in July to coincide with the 'Newcastles of the World' summit. The Facebook sites are used on a daily basis to keep people apprised of events, activities and offers (over 1600 'friends' and over 600 'likes' for the related community pages).	Use town centre website to further promote Newcastle town centre. Improve tourism information on NBC's new web pages when complete.
		17.7 Develop better links between the town centre and the New Vic Theatre	New Vic MD sits on TCP board and champions the Marketing & Events group. New Vic Youth Theatre seniors performed in town as part of the Christmas lights switch on and are working on other collaborations in the town centre.	This action is completed
		17.8 Improve/diversify the cultural offer within the town centre	A number of different cultural events were held in the town centre including a Food festival in May, the Jubilee Music Festival in May, specially produced open air drama pieces by GCSE students from Newcastle School and a five week pop-up emporium featuring a wide variety of art and craft classes.	Plans for 2013-14 include the 'Lymelight' music festival in May for local talent and a dance festival in July as well as the popular Jazz & Blues Festival in May.
18	<b>We will use the Strategic Investment Framework as the basis for investment in the cultural and retail experience of Newcastle Town Centre</b>	18.1 Set up a Town Centre Partnership	The TCP was incorporated in January 2013. A town centre manager, employed by the TCP, took up post in Jan 2013.	This action is completed
		18.2 Set up Town Centre website	The TCP commissioned a website in Dec 2012, which will be launched in Apr 2013.	Continue to support and promote the website as a source of information about the town centre and offers from local businesses
		18.3 Develop a viable scheme for using vacant shop units to enhance the visitor experience in the town centre	NBC, in conjunction with a local entrepreneur trialed a monthly pop-up shop, featuring a variety of designer-makers. This was extended to a 5-week occupation in the run-up to Christmas. NuLC also set up a pop-up for existing and past students to display and sell their goods.	Work with TCP Business and Enterprise theme group to develop a start-up programme to utilise empty shops. Continue to explore ways of using vacant premises, particularly those in prime locations. B Arts and NMAG working in partnership to develop a creative hub/workspace in the town centre
		18.4 Develop a Food Festival for the town centre	Food festival held in May 2012.	Plans to incorporate a food festival in the 2013 programme of events
		18.5 Explore possibility of setting up local tourism group	No action on this point - defer to 2013-14	Defer to 2013-14

	18.6 Continue to develop events to increase footfall and raise awareness	Wide variety of events held in the town centre during 2012 and publicised through a variety of sources - photographs available on Facebook pages. TCP Marketing & Events group has held an Ideas generation session for 2013 events, which will be implemented by the TCM.	Continue to develop events and focus on delivery of those which were most successful in 2012
	18.7 Undertake a review of parking in the town centre	NBC Economic Development Scrutiny Panel has set up a sub-group to review parking in the town centre, which included representation from the TCP. Free parking after 2pm was offered on all town centre car parks in the run up to Christmas on Tues/Wed/Thur/Sat.	Ongoing in 2013-14
	18.8 Look at the impact of rents and rates on businesses	High rates are an issue, particularly in primary retail locations. NBC has worked with local entrepreneurs to facilitate pop-up shops in Lancaster Building and other landlords, e.g Roebuck Shopping Centre are also looking at ways of supporting new tenants.	Ongoing in 2013-14
	18.9 Encourage more retail start ups through 'Independents Month' and 'Love Your Local Market' campaigns	Newcastle participated in LYLM in Jun/Jul 2012. An Indie Easter Egg Hunt will be held in Mar/Apr 2013 to promote independent retailers.	Ongoing in 2013-14
	18.10 Market the town centre through a variety of electronic and written media	Media press release have been sent out for all town centre events, Facebook has been used extensively, including the setting up of specific event pages (e.g. Portas pilot and Paint the Town Pink) - currently running at over 1550 friends. Twitter and LinkedIn have also been used.	Continue to grow social media presence; develop town centre newsletter in conjunction with TCM; town centre website online.



Acronym Table	
BES	Business Enterprise Support
BIC	Business Innovation Centre
BIG	Business Innovation Group
BIS	Business Innovation Skills
CRT	Coalfields Regeneration Trust
DEEP	North Staffordshire District Enterprise and Education Partnership Group
DMP	Destination Management Partnership
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
FEI	Family Employment Initiative
HEFC	Higher Education Funding Council
JCP	Job Centre Plus
JETs	Jobs, Enterprise and Training
KSBP	Keele Science and Business Park
KU	Keele University
LEP	Stoke & Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership
LEP E&SIG	LEP Enterprise and Skills Implementation Group (E&SIG)
NBC	Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council
NESG	Newcastle Employment and Skills Group
NSCCI	North Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry
NULC	Newcastle College
PCT	Primary Care Trust
SCC	Staffordshire County Council
SIF	Newcastle Town Centre Strategic Investment Framework
SoTCC	Stoke-on-Trent City Council
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
SU	Staffordshire University
TCP	Newcastle Town Centre Partnership
TL4B	Think Local for Business

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# **NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME TOWN CENTRE PARTNERSHIP (NULTCP)**

## **Business Plan**

**2013-2015**

## **Contents:**

Introduction to NULTCP – vision, aims & strategy

Structure of the NULTCP

Action Plan Highlights

Theme group goals and objectives

- Marketing/events
- Outdoor market
- Business & Enterprise
- Night-time economy
- Safety
- Environment & infrastructure
- University Town

A viable & sustainable NULTCP

Supplementary documents:

- Events programme
- Communications Plan
- Outdoor Market: Refurbishment timescales
- Financial Regulations



## Introduction

**The Vision:** To be the best market town in Staffordshire

**Mission statement:** To offer a vibrant and thriving town centre to our residents and visitors based on our traditional market town values of quality and speciality, within an historic, beautiful, well maintained and safe environment.

### What is NULTCP?

The Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Centre Partnership (NULTCP) is a new Community Interest Company which was formed in January, 2013. It is a private-sector led initiative which sets about to improve the vibrancy and performance of Newcastle town centre.

The partnership's board is made up of key stakeholders from the town, as well as strategic partners in the Borough which can help us achieve our aims. But this is an organisation in its advent, and it is evolving continually. The only way it will achieve its mission is by partnership with the whole business community of Newcastle, who we hope will all become members (which is currently free).

This initiative has the support of Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council (NULBC), which has set the town centre as one of its priorities, and through their support and working hand-in-hand with Newcastle's business community we are ready to make positive steps to help revitalise our great market town.

Over the following pages, we set out our goals over the next two years, which we believe will help transform what is already an attractive market town into something which can survive the issues which threaten the high street in these modern times, and become something we can all be proud to be part of.

*Please bear in mind; this is not an exhaustive or limiting document. It is a work in progress, which will evolve over time. So when we identify further projects we consider beneficial and achievable, we will continue to add them to this plan as time goes on.*

*Matt Taylor*

Town Centre Manager

Newcastle under Lyme Town Centre Partnership

## **NULTCP Structure**

In order to achieve what we set out to, the Town Centre Partnership has a board which oversees the strategic decisions, and a set of theme-groups, championed by board-members, which are tasked with improving specific aspects of the town.

**Chairman** – Jonathan Mitchell (Chairman, Cornwell’s Chemists)

**Vice-chair** – Glenda Miller (partner, Knights Solicitors)

### **Board members:**

Edward Leligdowicz (Franchise-owner, McDonalds)

Fiona Wallace (Exec Director, New Vic Theatre)

Susan McCarthy (Manager, Roebuck Centre)

Douglas Morris (Chairman, Partnership against Business Crime)

Carl Evans (Exec Director, BNI Staffordshire/Shropshire)

Jenny Tucker (Commercial Director, Keele University)

Sara Williams (Chief Executive, North Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce)

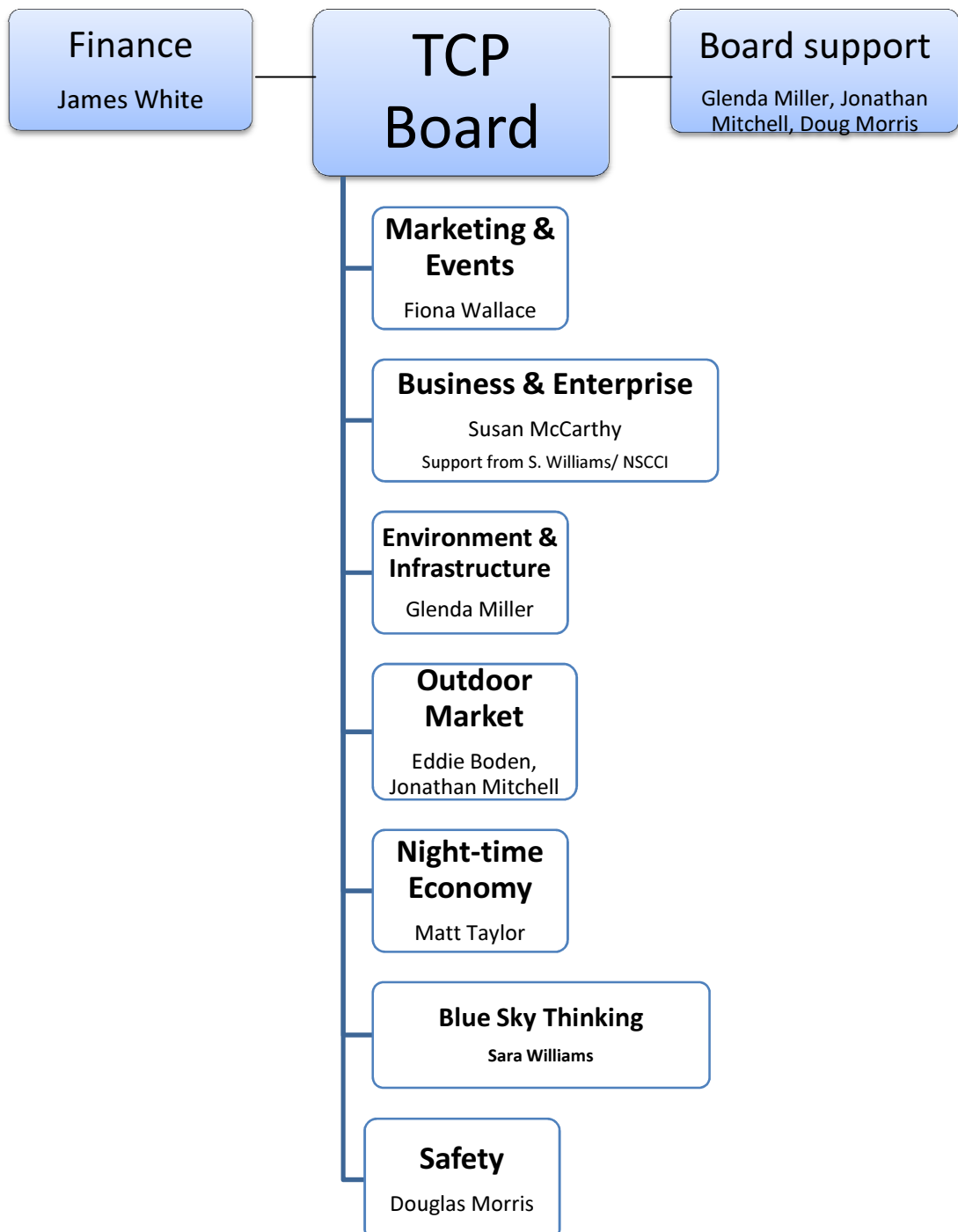
Val Tomlinson (Assistant Principal - Curriculum and Corporate Developments, Newcastle under Lyme College)

Eddie Boden (Deputy Leader of the council)

We already have members from businesses within the town centre and are now – having got things set up in January – looking to expand the membership to include every business in the town. Through being a member of the organisation you will be able to have your say about the future of Newcastle, get involved with events, as well as take advantage of benefits of being involved with the TCP, for example you we are setting up a new website to market the town to visitors, on which all business members have their own page, which they can update with news, information and offers whenever they like.

## Structure (cont.)

See below diagram of the structure, including details of theme-group ‘champions’



## Action plan highlights

### We will:

- ✓ Develop a consumer-focused website to promote Newcastle
- ✓ Create & operate a town centre loyalty card voucher
- ✓ Put together an events programme including four festival events in 2013, six in 2014
- ✓ Work & communicate with businesses for communal benefit
- ✓ Attract new businesses to the town centre that can survive the modern high-street arena
- ✓ Support existing businesses to help them thrive in the town
- ✓ Run more specialist markets
- ✓ Provide a series of development courses/projects for new and existing businesses
- ✓ Create a better, more attractive environment and atmosphere
- ✓ Implement the 'Totally Locally' brand to support and promote independent businesses
- ✓ Introduce a town-centre guide promoting businesses and events
- ✓ Work together with Keele University and Newcastle College to create a true "University Town"
- ✓ Create a more vibrant, varied and safer night-time economy

### We aim to:

- ✓ Increase footfall in the town-centre by 50% in two years
- ✓ Create the best outdoor market in Staffordshire
- ✓ Introduce a town-wide shopping gift-card system for town
- ✓ Develop a town centre arts/sculpture attraction & trail
- ✓ Create a covered entertainments space where regular outdoor events take place
- ✓ Work with partners to attract major investment & redevelopment of key town centre sites



## Marketing and Events Strategy

### Our aims are to:

- Raise Newcastle Under Lyme’s profile as a destination for retail, leisure and business
- Develop and promote a consistent brand image based on the overall Town Centre Partnership vision
- Bring cohesion to town centre marketing messages
- Develop and promote a year-round programme of professional and community-led events

The Marketing and Events group is responsible for the strategic overview of marketing (including branding) and events, including allocation of resources.

### This includes:

- Leading the branding of the town centre
- Website development and content management
- Promotional activities
  - Publicising events
  - General publicity for the town centre
  - Publicity for TCP ambitions and achievements
- Overseeing and monitoring town centre events programme
- Development of on-line marketing
- Budget setting for marketing and events

### To do this we will:

What	How	When	Who
Commission and develop a website	Content being collected, photographs supplied & local web company in development process	By End of April 2013	NULTCP/NULBC/private sector partners
Develop online marketing activity	Through social media Through TCP website	On-going, and evolving May 2013	NULTCP
Promote a loyalty card voucher & system for town centre retailers	Using TCP web-site Through social media Press releases Through newsletters	July 2013 July 2013 July 2013 Jan 2014	NULTCP
Agree a PR & Comms Plan	See supplementary document	April 2013	NULTCP/NULBC

Put together an events programme	Put together a year-round programme of events including: Four thematic festivals during 2013 / six in 2014, Bring bandstand back into use and regular smaller events in town. <i>See supplementary Events Programme document</i>	April – but constantly evolving	NULTCP/NULBC/private sector partners/voluntary organisations
Publicise a town centre events programme	Online Hard-copy	May 2013 Dec 2013	NULTCP NULTCP/NULBC
Events Toolbox	Create an information pack for businesses/public to use to put together their own events	March 2014	NULTCP
Promote wider TCP ambitions and achievements	To promote projects being managed by other theme-groups to general public	April 2013 – on-going	NULTCP/NULBC
Develop town centre sculpture / art trail / heritage walking trail	Working with cultural partners to develop historical and cultural attractions and events in the town centre  Possible Heritage Lottery Funding (HLF) bids	Spring 2014	NULTCP/NULBC/Cultural partners (museum/library)
Online newsletter to members of website	Keep businesses informed and create a forum of communication	June 2013	TCP
Printed newsletter to members of TCP	Keep businesses informed and create a forum for	Jan 2014	TCP/NULBC

	communication. Eg "Talk of the town" newsletter		
Online newsletter to visitors	Keep visitors new and old abreast of all things going on, offers and news about the town centre	August 2013	NULTCP
Postcards of the town	Use photos of events run by TCP to compile a set of postcards promoting the town	Feb 2014	NULTCP/tourist info/library/museum
Develop social media	Regular Facebook/twitter activity to promote TCP events/projects, competitions to increase 'likes' and followers	On-going	NULTCP
Develop a town- centre 'app'	To work alongside NULTCP website to promote visiting the town, offers and events	Pending funding – Nov 2013	NULTCP/private sector

## Outdoor Markets strategy

We believe a successful and vibrant outdoor market is key to securing Newcastle's future and our vision is to have the best market town in Staffordshire.

There are major works going on to improve the market, as detailed in supplementary information, to design, construct and install new market stalls, and to design & construct new paving for the new and improved market. The new layout will be located in High Street and part of Hassell St. It will be outward-facing, with a service lane in the centre, creating a dual-fronted street-scene with shops on one side, and market stalls on the other.

This project is being undertaken by Newcastle borough council, but the TCP is holding regular theme-group meetings with market representatives and other concerned parties to ensure this project takes place in conjunction with and retaining communication with the traders, with the least disruption, and with the intention that the result is one which everyone involved is happy with.

What	How	When	Who
A new outdoor market	Project under way to renew the market, the physical stalls, and relocate.	Sept 2013	NULBC
Attract new, high-quality market traders and goods for sale	Run an 'into market' programme to identify and develop potential new traders	October 2013	NULBC/NULTCP
	Run young enterprise/market apprentice projects	July 2013	NULTCP/NULBC/ Newcastle College (NULC)/Newcastle High School (NULS)
Develop programme of specialist markets	Christmas/German Market	Dec 2013	NULTCP, NBC support & private sector partners/voluntary Orgs, NULBC, Keele Uni
	Charity markets	May 2013	
	Continental market	Spring 2014	
	Summer market	July 2014	
Markets review	Review to ascertain the current status, room for	June 2013	NULBC

	improvements and gaps in offer on the market		
Agree action plan for market development	Agree forward plan to ensure market strategy will deliver the best market in Staffordshire by 2015	Oct 2013	NULTCP, NULBC
Improve internal and external communications	Monthly meetings with trader representative, council market managers and TCP  A new markets PR strategy, agreed with market traders	March 2013  August 2013	NULBC/NULTCP
Support the introduction of a 'Totally Locally' market	to support the totally locally brand being introduced to support local independent traders	July 2013	NULTCP/Past & Presents
Introduce a Sunday Car boot sale	Car boot sale to drive footfall into the town on Sundays (which has knock-on-effect of increasing trade opening over Sundays)	July 2013	NULTCP/Caudwell Children's Charity

## Business & Enterprise Strategy

### The Challenge

Like most traditional town centres, Newcastle-under-Lyme (NUL) has been affected by changes; through changing retail patterns and the introduction of new technologies, as well as the lacklustre economy. However, NULTCP does not feel that the town centre's importance has been diminished and that by actively supporting and working with town centre businesses and alongside local government we will ensure NUL prospers.

The challenge is for the TCP and its partners to respond imaginatively and to use the appropriate town centre management structures as drivers of change.

### Objectives

- To encourage and support the growth of businesses within the town centre
- To encourage and support the development of new businesses within the town centre
- To create a friendly business community environment to support the growth of all commercial and social enterprises.
- Encourage greater community involvement in the life of the town centre

## Two year action plan

### Health Check

- Carry out a Town Centre Health Check to highlight key issues.
- Carry out a SWOT analysis of NUL Town Centre.
- Vacancy Rate Analysis
- Retail Index Scheme for all town centre retailers with the understanding that results will be restricted to those willing to contribute.

### Partnership Development

- Town Centre Manager to reaffirm the identity and raise the profile of the TCP
- Hold networking events so that NUL businesses can meet TCP members and learn more about the partnership
- Maximise opportunities to tap into external funding.

### Investment Campaign

- Inward Investment Campaign with a proactive approach to attract new investment into the town centre using a detailed information pack targeted at potential investors and commercial agents.

## Training

- Providing a warm welcome and sharing knowledge of the town is vital to encouraging visitors to stay longer and spend more.
- NUL TCP will be working with keystone holders to look at introducing a number of training programmes to members of the TCP.
- Using M&S offer of retail training, as well as 'gurus' scheme to utilise training options from within NULTCP

## Reward Schemes

- To recognise success, NULTCP will launch an awards programme aimed at rewarding those who excel in their day-to-day work.
- To look at ways to encourage shoppers & visitors to increase spend within NUL town centre.

## Business Communication

- Town Centre Manager - first point of contact (hosting monthly drop-ins)
- Street Representatives appointed to assist with the face-to-face communications adding a personal touch of keeping all town centre businesses up to date
- Quarterly Business E-Newsletter for TCP members giving feedback on the town's vibrancy and regular updates on the TCP

## Projects & Timescales

What	How	When	Partners
Loyalty/discount card	Set up dual-branded Staffordshire/NUL discount card scheme	Summer 2013	NULTCP/NULBC/County Council (Enjoy Staffs)
Gift Card	Set up NUL town centre shopping gift card scheme	Nov 2013	NULTCP/NULBC
Development Projects	Quarterly Networking Events for NUL Businesses	Feb 2014	NULBC/NULTCP/NSCCI
	Retail/business coaching programme	Jan 2014	M&S, NULTCP members/NULBC
	Audit & training business support scheme	June 2013	NULBC/NSCCI/BES?
	To develop a programme of capacity	Jan 2014	NSCCI/BES/NULTCP partners



	building in relation to; IT, social media, digital sales		
Website B2B Section	Develop a members' B2B area on NUL TCP website	Dec 2013	NULTCP/TCM
Street Ambassadors	Assign representatives in various areas of town in order to communicate easily with whole business community	August 2013	Members of the NULTCP
Business start-up and mentoring project	Dragon's Den Style competition & mentoring scheme to bring new, innovative businesses and business- people to Newcastle	Autumn 2013	Local business leaders, NSSCI, NULTCP board members/NULBC
Totally Locally	Implement 'Totally Locally' branded scheme to support and promote independent traders/retailers	July 2013	NULTCP members (champion: Past & Presents)/NULBC
Town Centre Maps	Project to develop Maps of independent retailers/food outlets developed to support/promote businesses	Initiated: Multiple maps to be developed – end Dec 2013	NULC/NULTCP
Events & Competitions	Quarterly events to increase foot flow and sales for NUL businesses, to include but not be limited to:  Indie Easter Egg Hunt Event NUL Fashion Show	Within 12 months  March 2013  12 months	NULTCP  NULBC/NULTCP  NULTCP
Business Mentoring	Mentoring scheme for new businesses	Within 12 months	Keele/NULBC/ NSSCI/NULTCP/BES
Young Entrepreneurs	Work with partners to	March 2014	NULC/NULBC/NULTCP/

scheme	run projects involving young people in business and on the markets		NULS
Premises promotion	Promote empty units, offices, and businesses for sale to public using TCP website  And newsletter	May 2013  Jan 2014	NULBC/NULTCP/ Private sector partners
Enterprise development	To identify opportunities for Keele development centre and NULC spawned businesses to establish in the town centre  Encourage & promote pop-up shops, workshops & restaurants in disused properties	Apr 2014  On-going	NULC/Keele/NSCCI/ NULTCP  NULTCP/local creative organisations
Blue-sky thinking	Creation of an Indie department store/permanent pop-up emporium  Develop town centre as a 'department store' website – people shop from whole town as if it's one store online, and get products delivered	TBC – relies on funding  Pending funding – July 2014	Pop-up traders & entrepreneurial Partners  Private sector, web-design company, NSCCI, NULTCP
Promote Sunday opening	To create a genuine shopping day on Sundays – promote free parking & car boot sale	Autumn 2013	NULTCP retail partners

## Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

(these KPIs are also relevant to the NULTCP as a whole)



## Night-time economy Strategy

### Objective:

Strengthen the night-time economy of Newcastle

Our aims are to:

- ✓ Increase footfall into town centre from 5pm-2am.
- ✓ Improve the evening leisure/catering offer in town
- ✓ Create a more vibrant night-time economy in Newcastle
- ✓ Strengthening the links between the daytime and night time economies/activities

We will do this through:

**Projects:**

<b>What</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Partners</b>
Entirely new student night event on Thursdays, offering Keele and Staffordshire University Students a night where bars/restaurants put on offers for students, with free buses from Keele campus	March 2013	Keele/NULTCP
Develop cross-trade promotions: Vue cinema – orange night out New Vic theatre and between Between bars and restaurants	Oct 2013 July 2013 Feb 2014	Vue/New Vic/NULTCP members
Build another themed night out in town to increase week-night activity	March 2014	NULTCP members
Trial late-opening 5-8pm on Thursdays	Nov 2013	NULTCP members/ NULBC
Encourage street-cafes to allow owners to put furniture at the front of coffee shops through easy to attain “street café licenses”	Summer 2013	NULBC/NULTCP members
“Get your clobber” project to link daytime to night-time economy	March 2014	NULTCP
Film Festival Spring/Summer 2014	Funding pending Summer 2014	Local film companies, NULTCP members
Develop Purple flag accreditation scheme: See more info in “Safety” section	March 2014	PABC, Safer nights partnership

**Safety**

**Priority: Develop Purple Flag Scheme. (Timescale 12 months)**

We are under-way with the project to attain a ‘Purple Flag’ accreditation for Newcastle town centre over the next 12 months.

Purple Flag is an objective assessment designed to provide a recognisable recognition system so that people know that the town manages its night-time experience well and overcome any previous negative misconceptions.

It provides the opportunity for successful centres to present themselves in their true colours and in a positive light to town centre users, including operators, residents, tourists and visitors.

### Other Projects:

Finalise Town Evacuation Strategy	Complete a town centre evacuation strategy and circulate as appropriate	June 2013
Crime Manager	Submit a case for enhancement of Crime Manager to become a full-time role	Submission made
Incorporate Kidsgrove Pubwatch	Discussions in progress	Dec 2013
Implement membership recruitment strategy	To recruit members of the safer nights partnership, and persuade venues/retailers to be part of radio communication scheme	On-going – depth of strategy dependent on crime manager’s position
Monitor other issues	Monitor all Theme group activity to pick up on any safety issues that may arise from new or existing activity	On-going
PABCIS	Continue on Board of PABCIS (Partnerships against Business Crime in Staffordshire.	On-going
CCTV	Expand CCT Volunteer coverage and explore possibility of becoming a service provider for the CCTV Centre.	Work started, on-going issue
Web-based exclusion	Expand web based exclusion process in the ‘behave or be banned scheme’	On-going
Justice Centre	Continue work on Justice Centre Group to monitor issues relating to it	On-going
LAP involvement	Forge closer liaison with Town Centre Locality Action Partnership.	(Ongoing).
Crime Manager		
Charity shop inclusion	Set up Group membership for Charity Shops	On-going
Communication	Set up collaborative links between Crime Manager and TC Manager	Initiated

	Ensure local Councillors kept abreast of our activities	April 2013
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Theme Group consists of:

D Morris -- Jason Bould Crime Manager - Police Partnership Manager Steve Lovatt - Trevor Smith NBC Community Safety Officer. Mark Bailey - NBC. Assisted when required by M.R.S Communications.



## Board Support

Payroll services	Set up and Administer Payroll systems for on behalf of TC Manager. (Doug Morris)	On-going
Provide support to TCM	To support the TCM in his role and advise where possible	On-going

## Environment & Infrastructure

### Objective:

To enhance the built environment and infrastructure of the town centre environment

What	How	When	Who
Britain in Bloom	Sustain Britain in Bloom campaign and expand – sponsorship from	On-going	NULBC/NULTCP

	local businesses		
Create a town-centre community	Progress town centre redevelopment scheme, and town-centre living / Living over the Shop (LOTS) schemes	End of 2013 and on-going	NULBC/developers/ NULTCP
	Put together a project to promote 'living & working' spaces in town centre	Pending funding	NULTCP/nulbc/Aspire/ Private landlords
Subways improvements	Through funding already assigned from Sainsbury's	Jan 2013	NBC/NULC/creative industries
Parking	To improve convenience, appearance, safety and price structure of car parking in the town centre	Implement changes by Summer 2013, but on-going improvements	NULBC/NULTCP
Improvements to appearance of town and repairs to environment	Work with county council to ensure repairs are made to damaged environment around the periphery of the town centre	On-going	County council
	Chewing gum project – Iron-market. To rid the area of chewing gum debris and promote an awareness campaign to prevent a reprise	Pending funding	NULBC/NULTCP, funders

	Work with partners to make empty units more attractive – eg. art projects	July 2013 and on-going	NULTCP/NULBC/creative industries
Large-scale investment/infrastructure projects	To bring forward and to have input into the Ryecroft scheme and other large-scale projects to redevelop key sites in and around the town centre	On-going	NULBC/developers
Landlords Database	To facilitate improving of look of town, put pressure on to make improvements, and create a forum so they can join schemes by Business & Enterprise group	June 2013, on-going project	NULBC/private sector/NULTCP members
An entertainments space	To attract funding, design and construct a sustainable covered entertainments space in the town centre	TBC (blue-sky thinking idea)	NULBC/Arts Council/Developers/TCO members/NULTCP
Communication board	Fund and install a digital information board in the centre of town to display news messages and publicise events	TBC (blue-sky thinking idea)	NULBC/funders/NULTCP members
Wi-fi zones	Install wi-fi hubs in the town	TBC (blue-sky thinking idea)	NULBC/NULTCP/funders

## University Town





We are in the process of setting up a theme group led by Keele University, as well as representatives from Newcastle under Lyme College.

It is clear that there is some talent to harness from young people at both establishments who can contribute to blue-sky thinking ideas about how their generation would like to see in the town centre, as well as the fact that they have skill sets which could be harnessed to work on projects in partnership with NULTCP.

Potential projects include:

- ✓ Develop arts programmes and events
- ✓ Business Innovation project (with NULC – already initiated)
- ✓ Establish programme of work placements and internships
- ✓ Involve students from both organisations in NULTCP projects to harness skills, and give them a chance for work/project experience
- ✓ Introduce NUS extra scheme – to offer students discounts in participating outlets

## **Outcome**

A better connection with local educational organisations, increased vibrancy through more young people involved with and visiting the town.

## **To establish a sustainable and viable NULTCP**

It is highly important that we continue what we have started. For that reason, we are encouraging all businesses in the town to become members of the TCP. There is no charge, and now and in the future, there will be many benefits. Currently businesses are able to sign-up to the partnership and register for the new town centre website for free. They can do so by following the link below, or by contacting one of the officers (details overleaf).

<http://nultcp.digitaldelight.co.uk/>

## **Other plans to ensure the sustainability of the NULTCP:**

Develop the Membership of the Town Centre CIC	Website & online member sign-up	March 2013 and on-going	TCM, marketing group
Regular communication	Ensure regular briefings between key members are arranged, theme groups are organised effectively & outward communication is effectively carried out (according to PR Strategy)	March 2013, on-going	TCM, marketing group, administration support
Review structure & board	Review TCP structure & board membership every six months to ensure best performance and effectiveness  Consider gaps in skills that could be filled through new members	August 2013, Jan 2014  On-going	Chair, TCM  Board members, TCM, Chair & VC
Review best practice	Communicate with other similar organisations to review best practice and learn from others rather than reinvent the wheel  Learn from case-studies in other towns and cities in the UK and abroad	On-going	TCM, chair & board members
Prepare a robust financial framework	Ensure that the partnership has a continued financial viability through funding	On-going	Board support
Business Improvement District (BID) / membership charging structure	Consider the proposal of a Business Improvement District and/or the implementation of a membership charging structure to help fund NULTCP & its projects	Autumn 2014	Board support
Apply for funding	Identify possibilities & apply for funding of NULTCP to cover ongoing	On-going	NULTCP/NULBC/County council/NCVS

	costs and specific projects		
Review Business plan	Review Business plan, add new projects, ensure continual progress	Quarterly	NULTCP & board support

## Finance

We are in the process of formulating a budget/cash flow forecasts.

Current income to support the above projects comes from the following funds:

£10,000: from 'Town Team' fund (Central Government)

£10,000 from an agreement with M&S

£100,000 from a Section 106 agreement with M&S (some but not all projects rely upon this)

Aside from this, we are, and will continue to be, putting in bids for funding from a variety of bodies, local and national, and through this we aspire to deliver the above projects, and more to come.

## Key Contacts at NULTCP

Matt Taylor  
Town Centre Manager  
[tcm@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk](mailto:tcm@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk)

Jonathan Mitchell  
Chairman  
[jonathan@cornwells.co.uk](mailto:jonathan@cornwells.co.uk)

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## Superfast Staffordshire

### Newsletter 1 5<sup>th</sup> June 2013

Welcome to the very first edition of the Superfast Staffordshire Newsletter!

This newsletter is for the benefit of:

- all those people who are working on the project, whether they work at the County Council, BT, BDUK or other organisation;
- any body who manages/works with the above people and feels they really ought to know a bit more
- Our County Councillors
- Our partner organisations

The newsletter aims to:

- Let you know “what’s occurin” on a reasonably regular basis
- Provide you with a point of contact for each work area

I (Katrina) shall be asking for regular contributions to the newsletter from those working on the project – I promise not to make it onerous – nobody wants to read long rambles anyway!

For those just reading this – if you know of anyone else who could benefit from receiving a copy, please let me know and I will add them to the distribution list.

**Contact: Katrina Manegold, 01785 277690,  
[katrina.manegold@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:katrina.manegold@staffordshire.gov.uk)**

### **A Welcome from the Broadband Manager**

It gives me great pleasure to announce the launch of the Superfast Staffordshire project. It is the result of a lot of hard work by the various members of the project development team over the last two years. I would like to say a big “thank you” to all of them.

Now the next phase begins, as we work with BT, BDUK and key stakeholders to deliver the physical infrastructure and more importantly the benefits for Staffordshire’s businesses, services and communities.



**Contact: Paul Chatwin, 01785 895935 or 07964 330420,  
[paul.chatwin@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:paul.chatwin@staffordshire.gov.uk)**

## The Contract is Signed

On 23<sup>rd</sup> May, SCC signed a contract with BT to extend the “fibre” network across the county, which, when combined with the commercial rollout (BT and Virgin) will provide access to high-speed broadband services to 97% of the premises (approx 472,000) by 2016. 95% are expected to be able to access speeds of 24Mbps or more. In addition the project will ensure that everyone gets access to a minimum of 2Mbps by 2016.

SCC will invest £7.83m, BDUK £7.44m and BT £12.47m over the lifetime of the project.

**Contact: Paul Chatwin, 01785 895935 or 07964 330420, [paul.chatwin@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:paul.chatwin@staffordshire.gov.uk) or Frances Sawford (for legal info), 01785 255118, [frances.sawford@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:frances.sawford@staffordshire.gov.uk) or Paul Taylor-Grime (for procurement info), 01785 854510, [paul.grime@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:paul.grime@staffordshire.gov.uk)**

## The Partnership is Launched

Thanks to help from the Comms Team, the Partnership was officially launched at the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust on 23<sup>rd</sup> May very shortly after the real contract was signed.

Short but poignant speeches were heard from Steve Burrows, Philip Atkins, Mark Winnington, Bill Murphy and Chris Welch before everyone was herded outside on a wet windy morning for an official photo call and the ceremonial signing of a giant contract on a giant log somewhere in the middle of a damp field. Sam managed to get some great shots though.

The launch resulted in some great publicity:

- TV – BBC Midlands Today
- Radio – BBC Radio Stoke, Signal FM, BBC Radio WM
- Online – v3.co.uk, Light Reading – Europe, Recombu, Tech Week, Digital by Default news, Europe, IT Pro, Guardian online technology blog, techradar, Ashbourne News Telegraph, Express and Star, BBC Online News, teleography





- Press – Express and Star (lead story), Burton Mail (lead story)



This is the photo for the Christmas Party caption competition!

It was also a fab opportunity to get to meet other partners who will be helping to shape delivery of the project.

**Contact: Katrina Manegold, 01785 277690,  
[katrina.manegold@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:katrina.manegold@staffordshire.gov.uk)**

### **The Partnership Structure**

Attached to the email that accompanies this newsletter is a diagram showing the partnership structure and where known a list showing who the responsible officers are. If you're really interested you can read their little biographies!

**Contact: Paul Chatwin, 01785 895935 or 07964 330420,  
[paul.chatwin@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:paul.chatwin@staffordshire.gov.uk)**

### **The Fast Start Process**

BT is in the process of finalising their project delivery team and will be introduced to the SCC counterparts shortly.

In addition to the normal project set up related activities there will be a series of events that are aimed at informing and involving the key stakeholders, to ensure a smooth transition into the delivery phase.

Events are likely to include:

- Launch event

- Operational briefings to start the dialogue with the local planning authorities, highways and power distribution companies.

The purpose of these events is to ensure early engagement with stakeholders who can influence the delivery of the project.

Paul and Katrina attended the informative launch event held by Shropshire County Council recently and will be filching all their good ideas and reviewing how things can be improved upon for our own events.

**Contact: Paul Chatwin, 01785 895935 or 07964 330420,**  
[paul.chatwin@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:paul.chatwin@staffordshire.gov.uk)

### **ERDF**

In partnership with Shropshire County Council and Worcestershire County Council we have applied for £329,794 funding over a period of 2 years from the European Regional Development Fund. Should we be successful, the three councils will be match funding the project with an additional £329,794.

Called officially the **Optimising Business Broadband** project the plan is to support businesses in each of the three counties to exploit the improvements in broadband infrastructure to access the higher-level applications such as: value-chain and customer-engagement portals, collaboration tools, business intelligence, CRM, Software As A Service (SaaS) and distributed ERP – and stimulate demand in these new services.

We are expecting a decision on the application early in June and should we be successful you'll get more information as the project progresses.

**Contact: Katrina Manegold, 01785 277690,**  
[katrina.manegold@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:katrina.manegold@staffordshire.gov.uk) or Nigel Senior, 01785 277365,  
[nigel.senior@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:nigel.senior@staffordshire.gov.uk)

### **Branding**

We would like to give Superfast Staffordshire a distinctive and recognisable brand and to that end Katrina has send out a brief to a number of companies with the requisite skills. They have been asked to submit a quote by 7<sup>th</sup> June and the successful bidder will be required to produce the ideas for the brand by 5<sup>th</sup> July.

**Contact: Katrina Manegold, 01785 277690,**  
[katrina.manegold@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:katrina.manegold@staffordshire.gov.uk)

### **Demand Stimulation**

Trying to prove that they can do more than eat Paul's biscuits, Katrina and Louise have been working hard on bringing together our plans for the future.



The first thing achieved is the production of a Demand Stimulation Strategy setting out what we want to achieve and how we plan to do it.

We plan to stimulate demand through a range of media including:

- Branding (see above)
- Specific website presence
- Awareness events
- Training events
- Social media
- Posters and fliers
- E-newsletters
- Broadcast media
- Bus back and bus shelter advertising

At the moment we are looking at the proposed phase 1 area and planning how the above communication types be applied in practice and during what timescales.

**Contact: Katrina Manegold, 01785 277690,**  
[katrina.manegold@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:katrina.manegold@staffordshire.gov.uk) or Louise Clayton, 01785  
276513, [louise.clayton@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:louise.clayton@staffordshire.gov.uk)

As work progresses on with the project I will report on other work areas. One that comes to mind is the partnership working with utilities – Becky – you have been warned!

If there is any work area that you particularly want covered, please get in touch with me (Katrina) and I can add it in.

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## NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

### EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S REPORT TO THE SCRUTINY

Date June 13

<b><u>REPORT TITLE</u></b>	<b>Staffordshire Local Authorities Commissioning and Procurement of a Home Improvement Service</b>
<b><u>Submitted by:</u></b>	<b>Mike O'Connor, Housing Manager</b>
<b><u>Portfolio:</u></b>	<b>Economic Development, Regeneration and Town Centres</b>
<b><u>Ward(s) affected:</u></b>	<b>All</b>

#### **Purpose of the Report**

To seek Scrutiny views on the participation of the Council in the procurement of a county wide Home Improvement Agency through a Partnership Agreement, to deliver Supporting People Services and Enhanced Support, including assistance to residents to enable them to repair, adapt or improve their homes.

#### **Recommendations**

That Scrutiny Members consider the approach to jointly procure Home Improvement Agency Services in partnership with the County Council and highlight any issues to the Cabinet for their consideration.

#### **Reasons**

The Council has utilised the local Home Improvement Agency, Revival for many years to support vulnerable residents to repair their homes and specifically with adaptations through the Disabled Facilities Grants programme. It is appropriate that the Council seeks to secure the services through competitive tender to ensure good quality services are offered efficiently. This report outlines the options for procuring the services and outlines the potential benefits of the working in partnership with the County Council.

#### 1. **Background**

- 1.1 The Council has a statutory obligation to ensure dwellings in the Borough are safe to occupy and are not a nuisance to the neighbourhood. This is achieved through; the provision of advice, enforcement of statutory housing standards, or financial assistance in the form of grants and loans. The latter is targeted to vulnerable groups unable to afford repairs and improvements and where necessary disabled adaptations.
- 1.2 Vulnerable households find it difficult to access assistance and to fill this gap Home Improvement Agencies (HIA's) have developed initially with government help. The Council has worked in partnership with Staffordshire Housing Association for the delivery of the Home Improvement Agency branded as Revival since 2009. The agency operates in Stoke and Staffordshire Moorlands and is locally based in Stoke-on-Trent. Revival assists the Council to deliver its Renewal Assistance Policy including disabled facilities grants, home safety grants and a home loans scheme. It helps vulnerable people to fully consider their housing options and where appropriate enables them to negotiate the processes necessary for them to make applications for grant assistance and find reputable contractors, thus enabling them to remain living at home in safety.

- 1.3 Revival Home Improvement Agency receives funding from the County Council and Borough Council. The County Council provides a Supporting People annual grant of £38,000 and the Borough Council a grant of £26,000 towards the running costs and in support of all services provided. In addition the Borough Council pays fees of 7% of the cost of works eligible for disabled facilities or health and safety grants.

## 2. **Issues**

- 2.1.1 The County Council has given Supporting People Grant to three HIA's in the county, including Revival, since 1993. It now considers it necessary to re-tender the Service and wishes to use their Supporting People Grant funding to procure a new contract for a single county wide HIA provider. It is suggested that this will achieve an improved and consistent service across the county. This will require the participation of all the district councils in the county who will need to agree to promote the new HIA service to residents requiring financial advice and assistance.

- 2.1.2 The proposal is that the County Council will act as the lead authority to procure the service with a contract commencing on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2014 for an initial term of three years and nine months with an option to extend by one further year.

## 2.2 **Service Specification**

- 2.2.1 This includes three levels of support

1. 'General Advice' providing people considering their housing options with a light touch service such as internet and telephone-based information and advice;
2. 'Support for Choice' offering more intensive support for those most at risk, including those who do not have alternative personal and social resources, to allow them to consider their options and make decisions; and
3. 'Enhanced Support' for those who need help to implement their chosen options. This will involve arranging for changes to the physical fabric of the home to meet the need. It will usually result in an application for a disabled facilities grant from the district Council and arranging for the works to be completed.

- 2.2.2 The Provider will be required to enter into a contract with Staffordshire County Council for funding the delivery of 'General Advice' and 'Support for Choice'. The Enhanced Support will need to be funded by the resident. Whilst some residents will be able to fund the works themselves the majority will not and will become eligible for grant funding from the Council in accordance with the Housing Assistance Policy. It is expected that the HIA will charge a fee for assisting the resident and this will be included within the grant paid.

- 2.2.3 Tenderers are required to submit bids for the three levels of service. All management and overhead costs will be apportioned pro-rata across the three levels. The funding for Enhanced Support has been capped in the specification at 10% of the cost of the works completed, with a maximum total fee of £2,000 and it is possible that a Provider will offer a lower cost.

## 2.3 **Participation Agreement**

- 2.3.1 The Council is being requested to sign up to a Participation Agreement. This formalises the County Council as the Accountable Body and sets out the governance arrangements which comprise a Project Board, Steering Group and Local Advisory Group. The Board will have overall decision making authority including budgets, timescales and risks and approval of all major variations. The chair of the Steering Group will represent all the councils on the Board. A lead officer from each council will be a member of the Steering Group.

- 2.3.2 The Participation Agreement signifies the Council's intention to work with the preferred provider but does not commit the Council to a particular level of funding or spend or to remove the rights of any grant applicant to use an alternative service provider. It will, however, require that all the participants promote the winning bidder as the preferred service provider. Signing up to the Participation Agreement will ensure participants are able to utilise the county wide contract and engage in the governance arrangements for procuring and monitoring the delivery of the contract.
- 2.3.3 If the Council does not sign up to the Participation Agreement it will need to make alternative arrangements if it wishes to provide a HIA service from June 2014.

## 2.4 **Value for money**

- 2.4.1 The current costs of the HIA to the Council are approximately 11% of the grant budget. The tender specification sets a maximum fee of 10% capped at £2,000 per application. Furthermore it is hoped that through the competitive tendering process that these costs will be reduced significantly.
- 2.4.2 Currently Officers of the Council approve grant applications and carry out site visits to ensure that the works for which Council grant have been paid have been completed to a satisfactory standard and this will be unchanged as part of the proposals. The tender specification requires that the Enhanced Service is divided into three elements with each to be separately costed. It is intended that the Council should not pay for the site supervision element which will further reduce the fees payable by the Council to the new provider.
- 2.4.3 The separate costing of the elements provides an opportunity for the service to be promoted to self funders who would be able and willing to pay for assistance, therefore providing help particularly, to an increasing numbers of elderly residents who experience mobility problems.

## 3. **Options Considered**

### 3.1 **Option A - Provide a HIA service in-house**

- 3.1.1 Officers already complete site supervision visits to check the quality of the work for which grant is claimed. This could be extended to include a client advocacy role helping applicants to complete applications, obtain necessary permissions as well as engaging suitably reliable local contractors. This local authority HIA model exists in other LA areas. The Council would retain full control and decisions would not be subject a joint arrangement involving a Project Board comprising other districts and the County. However, there is insufficient capacity at present. This proposal would require the employment of caseworkers and there will be a substantial extra workload for the officers to set up a new service and ensure that it was as comprehensive as that envisaged in the county wide scheme. There is a significant risk that the in-house option would be more expensive than the current service.
- 3.1.2 Assuming the other districts in the county sign up the Council would be isolated in respect of this activity. It is possible that the funding from the Supporting People Grant may be lost, It is more likely, however, that the county would still keep the advice and support elements and would signpost customers to our service, although it would be necessary to set up a working arrangement with the new provider to ensure clients are swiftly referred for assistance.

### 3.2 **Option B - Retender HIA as a Borough only service**

- 3.2.1 This option will require the Council to tender for the services of an HIA outside the county wide arrangement. This would be resource intensive to set up but would enable the Council to determine and monitor its own service without the need to attend meetings in a county wide arrangement such as the project board and steering group. However, the prospective

fee income may be too small to attract a bidder or if bids were made the required % fee would be higher to cover overheads.

- 3.2.2 If the Council were to procure the services of a different HIA than that of the County's preferred provider it is likely that there would be duplication of services and residents would need to be referred between the various agencies unnecessarily.

### 3.3 **Option C - Retender in partnership with Staffordshire County Council**

- 3.3.1 Joining the county wide HIA would give a single agency across the county which would be better resourced and co-ordinated to produce a consistent service. Partnership governance may lead to improved standards, monitoring and a more co-ordinated forward thinking service. Furthermore a 4 year contract ensures stability for planning within the partnership.
- 3.3.2 The costs to the Council would be lower than the present arrangements and procurement with the county will enable risks being spread to a number of partners. The specification makes it clear that although the contract will be for 4 years future funding beyond this financial year is indicative only and could reduce given uncertain future funding from central government and the council over this period, therefore any risks will fall to the provider. A county wide steering group would enable good practice and funding opportunities to be shared.
- 3.3.3 The disadvantages are that efficiencies envisaged may not be achieved and a central larger agency could increase bureaucracy and reduce speed of decision making leading to the loss of local service identity and the control of a statutory important service for residents in the Borough.
- 3.3.4 This model may also enable greater discussions with health commissioners around future commissioning and funding of support services related to hospital discharge and independent living in the home.

## 4. **Reasons for Preferred Solution**

- 4.1 It is proposed that the Council should join the county partnership. This would be value for money and give a better resourced and co-ordinated service. Prior to this recommendation being made to Cabinet the views of Scrutiny members are sought.

## 5. **Outcomes Linked to Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Priorities**

- 5.1 The delivery of the HIA service clearly contributes to the corporate priority of creating a clean safe and sustainable Borough

## 6. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 6.1 The Council has a statutory obligation to approve a valid application for a Disabled Facilities Grant and receives central government grant allocation for this. There are no adverse legal implications to joining the Partnership. The County Council will be the Accountable Body and will be legally responsible for the procurement and operation of the contract.

## 7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

- 7.1 The Service is aimed at assisting vulnerable residents and an Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for the DFG service.

## 8. **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 8.1 The Council has a statutory duty to provide a DFG to an eligible applicant. The 2013/14 allocation is £864,000 made up of a government grant of £514,000 and capital funds from the Council of £350,000. The HIA is funded by an additional council grant of £26,000 and 7% fees based on the costs of works which form part of the grant payable to the applicant. Delivery of this level of adaptations gives a total charge of £86,480 paid to the HIA.

Clearly the level of costs payable to the HIA is dependent on the level of service offered and the total funding allocated to DFG's. If the new service was capped at 10% fees then the total payment on a DFG allocation of £864,000 would be £86,400 so this approach would be similar to current costs.

- 8.2 The tender is for the HIA service and not for the actual construction costs which form the majority of the costs. Membership of the Participation Agreement does not commit the Council to a minimum or maximum level of expenditure in the future years of the commission, only to the promotion of the service provider as a preferred supplier.
- 8.3 Membership of the Participation Agreement does not commit any resident to the preferred provider they remain free to use alternative providers. It will however set the level of fees payable so any service user opting to use a more expensive supplier will have to meet the additional costs themselves.
- 8.4 Failure by the Council to formally sign up as a participant would mean that it would not be able to use the service provision agreement once completed.

## 9. **Major Risks**

- 9.1 Risk assessment completed by the County Council with the involvement of the District Councils.

## 10. **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

- 10.1 Whilst the aims of the Home Improvement Agency services are based around ensuring that vulnerable residents are able to repair and adapt their homes to meet their needs there are occasions whereby the agency are able to highlight opportunities for funding based around energy efficiency. Within the current financial climate funding opportunities can arise at short notice and may in the future be able to support customers of the HIA service.

## 11. **Key Decision Information**

- 11.1 The service affects vulnerable residents in all wards.

## 12. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

- 12.1 The Housing Capital Programme allocated financial resources for DFGs and the HIA (Cabinet January 2013).

## 13. **List of Appendices**

- 13.1 None.

## 14. **Background Papers**

- 14.1 Participation Agreement and draft specification.





**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 20 MARCH 2013**

Title	Scrutiny Method	Progress to Date/Actions from last Meeting	Expected Completion Date	Expected Outcomes/Date for Progress to be Assessed
Economic Development Strategy ( <b>AMBER</b> )	Full Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cabinet agreed strategy &amp; 1<sup>st</sup> year action plan 23.05.12</li> <li>Feedback &amp; progress on action plan possibly end Q4 or Q1 2013/14</li> <li>Report on agenda for 26.06.13</li> </ul>		
The S-O-T & Staffs LEP ( <b>AMBER</b> )	<b>Working Group:</b> Cllrs Matthews, Peers & Studd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Receiving summary paper. Will meet as/when required.</li> </ul>		
Broadband Provision ( <b>AMBER</b> )	County Council Working Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jeanette Hilton to attend working group &amp; feedback to EDE.</li> <li>Re-scoping required. WG need to define what needs to be scrutinised &amp; where they would like to go with it.</li> <li>Update on agenda for 26.06.13</li> </ul>		
High Speed 2 Limited ( <b>AMBER</b> )	<b>Working Group:</b> Cllr Becket Cllr Loades Cllr Cairns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>04.07.2012 - wg resolved to recommend: <b>1)</b> continue stance to object, but should it take place then local station should be provided <b>2)</b> EDE (through WG) continue to scrutinise &amp; meet when consultation stage begins <b>3)</b> highlight to Cabinet consultation due to begin in Autumn.</li> <li>Cabinet resolved 18.07.2012: <b>1)</b> modify Council stance to offer support for principle of HS2 as long as potential economic benefits for N. Staffs could be demonstrated to outweigh environmental consequences &amp; whether such benefits would be derived from local station to serve area. <b>2)</b> EDE continue to monitor through wg who will reconvene when consultation begins.</li> <li>Update provided to EDE 17.09.2012.</li> <li>Report presented to March meeting.</li> <li>Working Group meeting to be arranged for mid/late July 2013</li> </ul>		
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) ( <b>AMBER</b> )	Full Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brief report received 17.09.2012.</li> <li>Report presented to December meeting.</li> <li>Report presented to March meeting.</li> </ul>		
Staffordshire Strategic Assets Review ( <b>GREEN</b> )	Full Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report discussed at 21.06.2012 meeting. To be considered at Jan Cabinet with the Asset Management Strategy.</li> </ul>		
Asset Management Strategy ( <b>GREEN</b> )	Full Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report presented to December meeting 2012.</li> </ul>		
Town Centre Partnerships Development ( <b>AMBER</b> )	Full Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update report for 2nd round Portas Pilot bid on 17.09.2012.</li> <li>Update briefing at Dec meeting clarifying status of TCP incl. appointment of Town Centre Manager, funding update &amp; key priorities.</li> <li>Report presented to December meeting.</li> </ul>		

Page 57		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report presented to March meeting.</li> <li>• Scrutiny Committee to consider business plan at future meeting with Town Centre Partnership Manager in attendance.</li> </ul>		
Town Centre Initiatives for Vacant Shops (AMBER)	Full Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chair &amp; vice-Chair met with officers to discuss town centre initiatives for vacant shops 06.09.12. Briefing note provided 17.09.2012 to update EDE. EDE comments to be considered by Portfolio Holder &amp; Officers</li> <li>• Officer briefing note re pop-up emporium initiative 19.12.12</li> <li>• Report presented to March meeting.</li> </ul>		
Former St Giles and St Georges (AMBER)	To be decided, possible working party	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recs for Cabinet 28.06.12: EDE would support further investigation of combination of options 'A' &amp; 'C'. 'B' should be discounted completely</li> <li>• Reconsidered 17.09.12. Museum resiting still considered desirable. Indoor market suggested. EDE remain opposed to demolition, but would be less hostile if could be satisfied replacement would be correct scale &amp; design. Likely value of cleared site, costs of indoor market &amp; museum suggestions requested. More info required before a preferred option can be offered.</li> <li>• Cabinet agreed option A (market bldg again in current condition) 17.10.12. Requested Officers look into option 'e' (use site for housing). Open item for EDE while waiting for decision, can discuss without referring back to Cabinet.</li> </ul>		
Knutton Recreation Centre (GREEN)	To be decided, possible working party	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional meeting 28.07.2012.</li> <li>• Recs to be passed to Sept Cabinet.</li> <li>• Will be brought back to Committee if necessary.</li> </ul>		
Town Centre Car Parking (AMBER)	<b>Working Group:</b> Cllrs Baker, Peers, Studd & M. Taylor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leader request to investigate &amp; consider potential options that may exist to improve current arrangements</li> <li>• Scrutiny brief for 17.09.12. WG formed – 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting 24.10.2012. Interim report expected.</li> <li>• Report presented to March meeting.</li> </ul>		
N/C Town Centre Public Realm Project (AMBER)	<b>Working Group:</b> Cllr Baker Cllr Cairns Cllr Holland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WG met 24.10.12. EDE considered 22.11.12.</li> <li>• EDE expressed some concerns, passed to Cabinet.</li> <li>• Await outcome of Dec Cabinet.</li> <li>• Request for review 12 months after implementation – dependent on Cabinet decision.</li> <li>• Report presented to March meeting.</li> </ul>		
Empty Homes Strategy (GREEN)	TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report provided for consideration on 17.09.2012.</li> <li>• Considered at Dec Cabinet.</li> </ul>		
Home Improvement Agency Services	TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report/scrutiny brief to Committee –originally expected for Dec meeting. Report on agenda for 26.06.13</li> </ul>		

<b>(AMBER)</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service currently provided by Revival, options to be reviewed incl county wide service or NBC standing alone.</li> </ul>		
Housing Capital Programme 2013/14 <b>(GREEN)</b>	TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To consider the allocation of funding, particularly from New Homes Bonus funds to deliver housing priorities ensuring that the most vulnerable residents receive support.</li> <li>• Report presented to December meeting</li> </ul>		
Newcastle Housing Advice (NHA) – Homelessness, Housing Options & Housing Register Contract Retendering Exercise <b>(GREEN)</b>	TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation in March 2014</li> <li>• Report presented to March meeting.</li> </ul>		
<b>MEMBERS SUGGESTIONS FOR SCRUTINY TOPICS</b>				
<b>Suggested by:</b>	<b>Suggestion for Scrutiny Topic:</b>			

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