

## Newcastle Economic Development Strategy 2012-17

### Year Three Action Plan 2014-15

In May 2012, the Borough Council approved a five year economic development strategy (for the period covering 2012-17) to focus its efforts for stimulating growth and bringing jobs to the borough (both directly and through working with partners). An annual action plan is also prepared to show what actions are being taken to take this forward. The EDS Year Three Action Plan (2014-15) sets out a number of actions which are planned to be taken over the coming 12 months in pursuit of the strategy. These actions are grouped under four broad headings:

- **Promoting enterprise and supporting local businesses to grow**
- **Improving the skills of the local workforce**
- **Marketing and development, and**
- **Strengthening the vitality and appeal of the town centres**

(Note, More detail on context, background and links with other initiatives can be found in the strategy itself.)

In each of the four following sections, a summary is provided on action taken in Year Two (2013-14) and this is followed by action proposed in Year Three (2014-15).

The Borough Council's Economic Development and Enterprise Scrutiny Committee has identified its priorities for those actions proposed in Year 3 (2014-15) in **bold**. *Text in italics* shows changes or additions made to an earlier draft of this Action Plan by Scrutiny Committee.

#### Promoting enterprise and supporting local businesses to grow

Action taken in Year Two (2013-14)	Action proposed in Year Three (2014-15).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Worked with partners and co-sponsors to deliver the 'Newcastle Business Boost' competition (awards ceremony October 2013), twelve businesses supported through help with business planning and receipt of awards.</li> <li>- Newcastle Town Centre Partnership (NTCP) engaged landlords, including the Borough Council, and ran an 'Enterprize' initiative to encourage new retail start-ups incentivised by free rents in vacant town centre shop units. Three businesses supported.</li> <li>- NTCP, in conjunction with the Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce, organised a mystery shop and training programme for town centre businesses, fifteen town centre businesses took part.</li> <li>- Organised a number of events with local schools to promote enterprise including four 'job carousels' and schools markets in which three schools took part.</li> <li>- we introduced the 'Trade for a Tenner' scheme on Newcastle market, as part of the national 'Love your local market' initiative, which gave three home based entrepreneurs the chance to test-market their ideas.</li> <li>- Promoted and signposted the LEP sponsored full time, 6 day a week single telephone contact point (Stoke &amp; Staffordshire Business Helpline) for local business support, run by Winning Moves.</li> <li>- In partnership with Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Business Enterprise Support (BES), recruited a Newcastle Business Enterprise coach to work with unemployed people based centrally at the Civic offices, the Guildhall and Newcastle Library, who engaged with 175 people of which 26 have gone on to trade as self-employed.</li> <li>- Produced a 'route map' guide to setting up a business (see NBC web site Business Pages).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to work with partners to set up an Education Business Partnership (EBP) – see also section 2 on improving the skills of the local work force.</li> <li>- <b>to continue to grow and develop the Newcastle 'Business Boost' competition, including looking for new sponsors and introducing new prize categories. The competition will launch in May / June with an awards ceremony in October 2014.</b></li> <li>- <b>to support the Newcastle TCP in exploring a second 'Enterprize' competition to encourage new retail start-ups in Newcastle Town Centre and also possibly in Kidsgrove Town Centre (with the KTCP). This may develop into a biennial, rather than an annual competition. (See also section 4 'Strengthening the appeal and vitality of the town centres').</b></li> <li>- to run further schools / youth markets in Newcastle Town Centre and explore the possibility of a youth market in Kidsgrove. As part of the 'Love your local market' fortnight, the 'Trade for a Tenner' scheme will be reprised in May 2014 with the emphasis on getting more young people involved.</li> <li>- support for the Newcastle TCP to introduce a town centre business awards scheme, celebrating the 'best of Newcastle' in a variety of categories.</li> <li>- continue the management of the Business pages on the Borough Council website to ensure that businesses are provided with up to date relevant information.</li> <li>- continue signposting businesses to sources of assistance, in particular via the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) business helpline and the 'Make It' Inward Investment Service.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continued to actively manage the business pages on the Council's website to facilitate up-to-date advice and guidance.</li> <li>- Worked in partnership with the County Council to deliver a faster and more reliable broadband across Staffordshire, the BDUK Superfast Broadband project is underway; the BDUK allocation of £7.44m has been match-funded by the County Council and a project manager appointed.</li> <li>- Worked with local businesses to develop proposals for funding from the Regional Growth Fund giving support in meeting BIS requirements and town planning matters, resulting in successful bids for both JCB and GE Power Conversion at Blue Planet and Butt Lane respectively.</li> <li>- Worked with partners on the development of emergent knowledge intensive sectors, specifically the FE and HE sectors through the Business and Innovation Group (BIG) to help high growth companies.</li> <li>- Continued to work with Finest as the region's leading professional services network to help the development of the professional and business services sector. Including a comprehensive programme of lectures, talks and seminars to encourage B2B (Business to Business) activities and collaborations and to promote training at all levels including senior management.</li> <li>- Encouraged local procurement of goods and services through the development of the 'Bravo Solutions' contracts portal which allows the Borough Council, the City Council (+ 3 other neighbouring Districts) to advertise tender opportunities, which can be accessed by local SMEs. NBC staff are currently being trained in its use.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- collaborating with the Aspire Group and the County Council to provide standard tender documents, the first one being a common pre-qualification questionnaire (PQQ) to be used by all three organisations. The next stage will be that once a provider has completed the standard PQQ it will be entered on to a single data base that can be accessed by all partners to avoid the company having to complete the same form for every new tender. We will also ensure that such procurement opportunities are publicised adequately so that local businesses know about the tenders and where to find out more. Opportunities for consortium bids are also being explored.</li> <li>- continue to provide active support for Finest, including the popular 'Meet the Chief Exec.' event.</li> <li>- work with the LEP to secure investment from the European Union (EU) for funding for business support and development.</li> <li><b>- continue to support the Newcastle Enterprise Coach to encourage unemployed people into self-employment.</b></li> <li>- an EU-funded project worth £214,000 across Staffordshire and Shropshire is to be developed to provide training and support to ensure that small firms are well placed to take advantage of superfast broadband in increasing productivity.</li> <li>- introduce improved support for new market traders and provide support for up-skilling existing market traders to improve the overall performance of the outdoor market.</li> </ul>
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### Improving the skills of the local workforce

Action taken in Year Two (2013-14)	Action proposed in Year Three (2014-15).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Worked with the LEP Education Trust to improve links between business, schools and education and training providers.</li> <li>- The recruitment of 11 shared apprenticeships with local partners – the largest intake the Borough Council has ever taken on.</li> <li>- Schools markets held in June / July and December to encourage young entrepreneurs to develop early 'business skills'.</li> <li>- worked with the Coalfields Regeneration Trust to provide a programme of support and training back into work to reduce worklessness, the Family Employment Initiative (FEI) worked with people across the Borough until June 2013 when funding for the programme ceased. Since the start of the programme in 2009, 1195 people have been engaged, of which 408 have since gone into training and 328 into work.</li> <li>- Worked with Newcastle College to equip young people and adults with basic employability skills required by local businesses based on research into local employers' needs, and securing 118 apprenticeship opportunities through the successful '100 in 100' campaign.</li> <li>- Memorandum of Understanding established with PM Training and the Aspire Group to encourage closer working with the Council on employment, apprenticeships, procurement and opportunities for joint</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>- the Borough Council, Keele University and Newcastle College will work together to set up an Education Business Partnership to improve links between schools and employers in order to raise aspirations and skills and to increase awareness of employment opportunities in the area.</b></li> <li>- work with the LEP and local partners to establish a Newcastle Employment and Training Service delivered across the borough, funded through the EU, based on successful previous initiatives such one to one support, advice and guidance and whole family approach. The service will focus on people furthest away from the jobs market.</li> <li><b>- continue to implement the 'memorandum of understanding' (MOU) actions that have been agreed with PM Training and the Aspire Group to promote opportunities for apprenticeships through the Council's supply chain, explore joint procurement for delivery of goods and services, investigate opportunities for PM Training learners to access structured work experience placements and extend this, where practical to do so, to private sector providers, such as Martec.. Continue to support the work of Social Enterprise West Midlands</b></li> <li>- continue to work with the LEP Education Trust to establish initiatives to develop a skilled workforce by delivering higher level and employability skills, improving careers advice and guidance, increasing</li> </ul>

<p>working.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- successful joint supplier event between the Council and PM Training at Keele University to encourage 128 more apprenticeship opportunities.</li> <li>- Support for the Talent Match project designed to encourage more 18-24 year olds who have been unemployed for 12 months into training or employment. A Newcastle-based worker is now in post.</li> </ul>	<p>business engagement in learning and skills and developing high quality education and training facilities..</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>work with Talent Match to identify alternative routes such as mentoring, community buddies and creative routes such as digital media, performance and participatory arts into training and employment for those who are not in employment, education or training ('NEETs').</b></li> <li>- <i>we will investigate the potential for working with Marks and Spencer and the UHNS and local training providers to maximise the prospects of local people benefitting from new employment opportunities.</i></li> </ul>
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### Marketing and development

Action taken in Year Two (2013-14)	Action proposed in Year Three (2014-15).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Marketed the Borough for inward investment by working with the 'Make It Stoke and Staffordshire' Inward Investment team to prepare promotional copy about the area and with the Make It team and consultants Mickeldore to identify prospective growth sectors which North Staffordshire has a realistic prospect of success and developed marketing strategies to target these.</li> <li>- Responded to development enquiries, sharing market intelligence, matching property and enquiries to meet clients' requirements (recent successes, JCB, Mice and Dice, Smyth Toys, Phones 4U expansion, Intellipac, Movehut, Advanced Packaging, J. van Uliet and Overclockers).</li> <li>- Made use of the outstanding environmental standards attained by the Blue Planet building (and the JCB name) to promote good news about the area.</li> <li>- worked with partners to promote the further development of Keele Science and Business Park, including further Innovation Centres (in talks with an anchor tenant re the planned IC5), and marketing of the Science Park for inward investment of further high tech businesses.</li> <li>- Keele Science Park successfully attracted 16 small companies to its Nova Centre designed to accommodate nascent graduate enterprises and other businesses.</li> <li>- Promoted the Borough's qualities to existing and potential visitors and residents, including a significant revamp of the tourism pages on the website. Use of the NTCP managed Facebook sites to keep people apprised of events (over 2200 'friends' and 900+ 'likes' for the Community Page). Developed a new town centre map for Keele University 'Freshers Week' to promote Newcastle to the new student intake.</li> <li>- Delivery of the Town Centre website <a href="http://www.visitnewcastleunderlyme.co.uk">www.visitnewcastleunderlyme.co.uk</a> funded by the Borough Council and managed by the NTCP which contains business listings alongside details of events and special offers.</li> <li>- Development of the new £1.2 million community and sporting facility on part of the site of the former Silverdale Colliery ('Kents Lane'), now complete, funded through s.106 contributions from the adjacent housing development and additional HCA investment. Officially opened by John Prescott in February 2014. Management arrangements agreed with Silverdale Athletic FC.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- continue to work with the Make It inward investment team to attract prospective investors and employers to the area and secure more jobs including the publication of new 'North Staffordshire development sites' brochure specifically aimed to publicities investment opportunities in Stoke and Newcastle.</li> <li>- lobby the Government (BIS) to ensure that the new Assisted Areas Map is drawn in such a way as to help promote the Borough's industrial development sites effectively for both inward investment and to encourage local growth.</li> <li>- <i>Engage with the City Council to explore the potential to bring HS2 through Etruria with a station in the heart of the City.</i></li> <li>- <b>market the Ryecroft development opportunity in the town centre to secure interest from a number of developers prepared to bring forward a significant retail scheme in the town centre and help select the candidate which will bring most appeal and business to the town.</b></li> <li>- provide help to local firms seeking to expand with advice on land and sources of available public funding.</li> <li>- work with the LEP to secure investment in the Borough through European funding and Government funding such as the Regional Growth Fund (RGF), the Growing Places Fund (GPF) and the Local Growth Fund (LGF).</li> <li>- undertake feasibility studies for 5-8 sites within the A500 Corridor to help identify a preferred 60 ha employment site to be put forward in the new Local Plan.</li> <li>- bring forward an appropriate scheme for redeveloping the site of the former Knutton Rec. with the help of public consultation, re-siting current leisure uses and attracting a suitable house builder.</li> <li>- work with Keele University, the HCA and Staffordshire County Council to attract further technology-based companies to the science park.</li> <li>- work with partners in the LEP to identify projects in the borough which could benefit from EU funding (this activity applies across the range of physical development projects, business support and skills)</li> </ul>

<p>- Supported the development of North Staffordshire's experience economy', working with the Destination Management Partnership (DMP) to encourage more tourists and business visitors to the area.</p>	<p>- Assist Keele Science Park in bringing more high tech companies to the science park and attracting more well paid employment to the area.</p> <p>- Promoting Keele University as an exemplar of an environmentally aware and sustainable campus to demonstrate the expertise offered and to grow the low carbon and environmental sustainability expertise in the Borough.</p> <p>- work with developers and landlords to encourage more use of space in the town centre to be used for housing.</p> <p>- identify means of bringing landmark town centre buildings* back into use and good repair and work with property owners, developers and funding bodies to this end. (* Property currently in private ownership is not specifically identified here for reasons of commercial sensitivity).</p> <p>- market Kidsgrove Town Centre through the Kidsgrove Town Centre website (expected completion March / April 2014).</p> <p><b>- greater promotion of the canal through Kidsgrove to both visitors and to local people as part of the wider Kidsgrove Waterfront project (ongoing from April 2014).</b></p> <p>- re-launch of Newcastle Market following completion of the public realm improvements to be accompanied by a suite of events and promotional products.</p> <p>- continue to support the DMP to promote Staffordshire as a tourist destination, particularly for short breaks, promoting the accommodation offer via the 'Enjoy' website, business tourism via the Conference Bureau and using the DMP PR agency to promote town centre events.</p> <p>- work with Groundwork and other local partners to secure funding for the siting of the Miners' wheel on the Apedale County Park on the former Silverdale Colliery site.</p>
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### Strengthening the vitality and appeal of the town centres

Action taken in Year Two (2013-14)	Action proposed in Year Three (2014-15).
<p>- Worked to bring forward suitable business accommodation in Newcastle Town Centre (including plans for potential relocation of office workers from the Civic Offices to another town centre site, dissemination of 'seeing is believing' brochure to market Newcastle Town Centre for new office development, and sharing market and enquiry intelligence with agents).</p> <p>- worked to bring forward the development of a major new retail-led scheme for the Ryecroft site. An expert commercial advisor has been engaged to help secure a development partner for the site and a marketing plan for the scheme has been agreed.</p> <p>- Worked with key partners to explore, through an outline business case, the potential development of a new Civic Hub to co-locate public services and bring outlying staff into the town centre.</p> <p>- Worked with Morston Assets to bring Blackburn House back into use (successful bid for funding from the LEP's Growing Places Fund), which, if all goes to plan, will lead to the creation of 93 new self contained</p>	<p>- market the Ryecroft scheme and appoint a development partner.</p> <p>- support the Newcastle TCP and other partners to build on previous successful events programmes, such as the Lymelight Festival, Paint the Town Pink and the Christmas lights Switch-on and introduce new events.</p> <p><b>- completion of the Newcastle Town Centre Public Realm project and the re-launch of the Market, including training and support for existing market traders and improved support for those who are new to market trading.</b></p> <p>- help to promote new retail businesses opening in the town centre, including the use of social media and the Council website.</p> <p>- extension of the 'Enterprize' competition for new business start-ups being explored in Newcastle Town</p>

apartments in the town centre.

- Ongoing marketing of the second floor of Lancaster Buildings for office occupation (first floor let).
- Newcastle Town Centre Partnership was established as a CIC and a full time Town Centre Manager appointed. In parallel, a Kidsgrove TCP CIC was also set up (September 2013).
- Supported the NTCP to improve the cultural offer within the town centre including the 'Lyme light' music festival and the Jazz & Blues Festival in May, Global Groove in July, Bread Beer & Buskers festival in Aug 2013 as a prelude to larger festival in 2014 and the week-end long Christmas lights switch-on event which included specialist markets, music, dance and performance.
- Worked with the NTCP to produce marketing material for the latter events and other town centre assets, promoting town centre events, such as the Lymelight festival through the DMP. Marketing now expanding into social media.
- Applied to the Arts Council for a town centre cultural animation programme
- Launched a town centre newsletter in conjunction with the Town Centre Manager for Newcastle and a business newsletter for Kidsgrove town centre businesses.
- Supported NTCP to work with Keele University and Keele University Students' Union to bring more students into town including re-introducing student nights on a Thursday in the town centre and a RAG parade in March and student participation in the Christmas Lights switch on, the Lyme light Festival and the preparation of a student map of the town centre, a Keele band performing in town.
- Newcastle College established a design outlet in Lancaster Building (M.A.D.E.) for existing and past students to display and sell their goods.
- supported the NTCP with the Dragon's Den style 'Enterprize' competition launched in July 2013 with the three new businesses winning space in empty shops in Newcastle town centre plus a support package and mentoring from local business gurus. One winner is already trading, a second is to start before Easter 2014 and a third contestant was offered a job with a competitor on the strength of the post competition publicity (which included coverage on Midlands Today)..
- Supported independent shops and start up businesses through the 'Independents Month', 'Trade for a Tenner' and 'Love Your Local Market' campaigns.
- Completion of town centre public realm works (Bus Station works and a new taxi rank at lower High Street completed, pedestrianisation of Hassell Street and new stalls to be introduced in Spring 2104.
- Work on refurbishment of three Town Centre Subways (Enderley Street, Bridge Street, Liverpool Road) are underway. Enderley Street and Bridge Street structural works now complete. The Community Arts project at Bridge Street started February 2014.
- Free car parking introduced after 2pm on all town centre car parks in the run up to Christmas on Tues/Wed/Thur/Sat, and the introduction of double ticketing to enable the Town Centre Partnership to develop a car parking refund scheme in conjunction with local businesses.

Centre, and encourage the Kidsgrove Town Team to consider extending this to Kidsgrove Town Centre.

- **Kidsgrove Town Team to formally launch its business plan (March 2014) including the development of an events programme to encourage further footfall; also to develop an action plan for the Kidsgrove Waterfront project and to apply for HLF funding for canal-related heritage projects.**
- work with the NTCP and Appetite Arts to apply for funding from the Arts Council to deliver high quality art and cultural animation in the town centre summer 2014.
- *work with the Roebuck Shopping Centre to introduce new signage on the Midway Car Park which promotes the town centre to potential customers on the ring road.*
- work with the NTCP and KTCP to support local arts and cultural providers to apply for HLF funding for town centre based projects.
- work with Newcastle College and local arts organisations CANS to complete the Bridge Street community arts project.
- refurbish Liverpool Road subway, work with Newcastle College to commission community arts project and explore options with the County Council for a legal graffiti area.
- continued financial support for NTCP and staff resource to support the KTCP.