

Draft
Economic
Development
Strategy 2018 –
2023

Our Approach

This Economic Development Strategy (EDS) is about how Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council (NuLBC), working with the business community, local partners and wider community can improve the economic prospects of the area for everyone living within our borough. It has been shaped with the following aspects in mind:

The strategy is driven by the Council Plan – “Our Newcastle Plan 2020” to create a Borough that is Prosperous, Clean, Healthy and Safe. The EDS focuses on Creating a Borough of Opportunity to encourage investment and inclusive growth in the Borough which will bring jobs and improve prosperity as well as improving the well-being of our citizens and their communities.

The Council will seek to use its assets both in terms of commercial portfolio and community assets to support the economic development of the Borough. We recognise the provision of such facilities plays an important role in supporting SME businesses and community based organisations that provide valuable services in our community.

The Strategy also reflects our links to the Council’s Stronger and Safer Communities Strategy which highlights the importance of partnership working between the Council and its key partners, which is integral to the delivery of inclusive growth.

The Strategy is closely aligned to the Stoke and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SSLEP) Strategic Economic Plan and reflects the inclusive growth approach, which is detailed in the emerging post-Brexit, UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Strategy at a glance

The Strategy will set the context for long-term investment. Each section sets out a series of priorities the Council proposes to take forward and looks at the strengths which the Borough has to offer, the opportunities which may be capitalised on and develops proposals which take advantage of these.

A number of challenges are identified relating to the economy, skills, perceptions of place and interventions to address or mitigate them.

Newcastle is positively changing. All around us we see new development, which will result in over 2000 student accommodation spaces in the town centre by 2020, a bespoke dementia care facility “Belong Village” providing 100 accommodation spaces and 150 new jobs, a new Civic Hub “Castle House”, we will be relocating to along with the Police, Staffordshire County Council, Newcastle Library, Newcastle Registry Office and the Aspire Housing Group. This will make the existing Civic Offices site available for the planned Ryecroft retail and housing development with completion planned for 2020.

Over the last few years, working with our partners at Newcastle Business Improvement District (NBID), the Creative People and Places Programme including Appetite and The New Vic Theatre, the towns emerging cultural economy has grown from strength to strength. Recent investment from Arts Council England and Heritage Lottery amounts to over £1M to celebrate the legacy of Philip Astley, founder of the modern circus and born in Newcastle 1742. 2018 will see Newcastle at the heart of national celebrations C250 to mark 250 years since the first circus, which will encourage more visitors and raise the profile of the town.

The Council will continue to approach this strategy with ambition. That is, we will set ourselves challenging goals and set out a programme of action which will seek to improve the economy of the Borough and its communities.

This will be achieved by building a broad consensus, through consultation with our partners, with the local business community and wider community who will help to influence the work that the Council should undertake and will also play their own part in delivering elements of this strategy.

A key element of the approach will be prioritisation. The Council (and ever reducing public budgets in general) cannot do everything. It is important therefore to focus on the things which are going to have the greatest impact and which the Council is best placed to influence. Where possible, we will follow the principal that ‘resources follow priorities’.

Some of our priorities are sub-regional (rather than specific to the Borough) and here we will work closely with our partners such as Stoke on Trent City Council, Staffordshire County Council, Stoke and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SSLEP), The Constellation Partnership and The Midlands Engine

The strategy is accompanied with an annual action plan. This sets out in greater detail who will lead on each activity, what it will achieve and how this will be resourced.

We will learn from past interventions and use this experience to improve our approach and overcome barriers to change; we will be open to external challenge and use this to learn from the experience of others.

The Council and its partners have shown that they have the capacity to effect change and this is shown by the examples of achievements documented throughout the strategy.

Strategy focus

Our strategy focuses on four key areas:

- Business Intelligence and Support
- Place and Infrastructure / Sites and Premises
- Skills
- Innovation

Within these areas we will focus on the following:

1. Business Intelligence and Support – Objective: Growth and sustainability of the Business Base

- Increase both the proportion of knowledge intensive employment and the proportion of high quality jobs in retail, leisure, tourism and distribution
- Support development of emergent knowledge intensive sectors, building on higher and further education expertise
- Support development of the professional and business services sector
- Make the most of the Borough's successful logistics sector
- Seek to optimise the benefit to local companies from public sector procurement.

2. Place and Infrastructure/Sites and Premises – Objective: Physical Transformation

- Work with Newcastle BID to promote Newcastle town centre as a place to visit, work and live
- Work with the developers of the Ryecroft area of town to secure a development that will add to the economic vitality of the town.
- Promote Keele Science and Innovation Park for high tech inward investment including new Innovation Centres and a new Training and Conference Hotel
- Work with partners in the Enterprise Zone to attract employment investment to sites and premises around the Borough including land at Chatterley Valley
- 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
- Enable the development of a wide range of housing, including affordable and higher quality housing for current and future residents.
- Bring forward new sites for employment and housing through the Site Allocations Development Plan Document to enable the further growth of the Borough.

3. Skills – Objective: increase skills and encourage more people into training, apprenticeships and jobs

- Continue to work with Newcastle Employment and Skills Group and providers to support people furthest from training and jobs and ensure effective communication between service deliverers
- Work with the SSLEP Education Trust and partners to deliver the Skills Strategy priorities
- Work with the SSLEP Locality Project and Stoke on Trent and Newcastle Cultural Education Partnership to encourage a more enterprising culture within our schools
- Continue to work with both Keele University, Staffordshire University and Newcastle and Stafford College Group to address skills gaps
- Raise skills and increase training and employment rates to increase productivity
- Stimulate demand for higher skills and create opportunities for people to acquire skills for current and future industrial structure

4. Innovation - Objective: Ensure that we take full advantage and build on the strengths of innovation in our area

- Continue to support further development of Keele University and Science and innovation Park as detailed in The New Keele Deal
- Encourage a greater level of innovation amongst our local businesses including Medtec.
- In line with our Local Plan develop employment sites and premises that support creation and investment of innovative businesses
- Make the most of the med-tech sector, (Newcastle has more than twice that seen nationally) to market our area for relocation and further investment
- Mitigate potential negative impact of Brexit re EU funding for innovation

Strategic Alignment and Borough Profile

District Deal

We work in partnership with Staffordshire County Council to deliver the District Deal, which focuses on the following key priorities for delivering economic regeneration benefits to the communities of our borough.

- Newcastle Town Centre Ryecroft Development
- Public Sector Service Hub (Castle House)
- University Town
- Newcastle Business Improvement District (NBID)
- Kidsgrove Town Centre Partnership (Go Kidsgrove)
- Villages and Rural Communities
- Keele University Science and Innovation Park
- Strategic Transport
- Knutton Enterprise Centre

Keele University

We are privileged to have Keele University and Keele Science and Innovation Park located within our borough. The Stoke and Staffordshire Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) identifies the Science and Innovation Park as the premier development site in North Staffordshire.

The Council is one of five partners signed up to a plan for investment in innovation-led growth called The New Keele Deal, which is a plan for £70 million of investment by Keele University, Staffordshire County Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust and the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP, which sets out eight development priorities over the next five years:

- Keele Research and Innovation Support Programme (KRISP)
- Mercia Centre for Innovation Leadership (MCIL)
- Smart Energy Network Demonstrator (SEND)
- NHS-University-Industry collaboration
- Harnessing global reach and visibility for local economic impact
- A strategic site of The Constellation Partnership
- Higher level educational provision
- A spatial masterplan for the University campus and local area

The Council recognises the University is a priority investment site which will help to accelerate economic growth across our Borough as well as further afield. We will continue to support the University's growth plans in accordance with existing planning policies.

The Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SSLEP)

The Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SSLEP) was formed in 2011 and brings businesses and local authorities together to drive economic growth and create jobs. The vision is to create 50,000 jobs and grow the economy by 50% in the next 10 years by building on the region's strong transport links, educational institutions and high quality of life to ensure that Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire continues to be an attractive place to live, work and do business.

The SSLEP wants to make Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire the best place in Britain to do business and focuses on providing the support that businesses need whether they wish to start-up, grow or relocate.

The SSLEP has a single inward investment team Make it Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire and an Education Trust, which is working with education providers and businesses to address the skills gap, while Destination Staffordshire is working with tourism businesses to market the county as a place to work and visit.

The SSLEP Strategic Economic Plan focuses on five main objectives – City, Connected County, Competitive Urban Centres, Sector Growth and Skilled Workforce. This is informed by an evidence base recently gathered, which focuses on Infrastructure and Place, Site and Premises, Skills, Innovation, Business Intelligence and Growth. This EDS is aligned to delivering these.

The Constellation Partnership

The Council is one of seven local authorities along with two Local Enterprise Partnerships, which form The Constellation Partnership. The partnership has strong Ministerial backing from Government and a unified fast-track approach to plan-led economic development. The partners share a single vision - a single economic footprint creating a coherent investment market boosted by the international investment magnet of High Speed Rail connectivity. The partnership's ambition is to deliver 100,000 new homes and 120,000 new jobs by 2040.

The Midlands Engine

The Midlands Engine is focusing on five priority areas to improve connectivity, strengthen skills, support enterprise and innovation, promote the Midlands and enhance quality of life. It plans to create 300,000 new jobs and £34billion worth of growth over the next 15 years to 2030.

UK Industrial Strategy

The emerging Industrial Strategy focuses on 10 pillars; Investing in Science, Research and Innovation, Developing Skills, Upgrading Infrastructure, Supporting Businesses to Start and Grow, Improving Procurement, Encouraging Trade and Investment, Delivering Clean Energy and Clean Growth, Cultivating World-Leading Sectors, Driving Growth across the whole Country, Creating the right Institutions to bring together Sectors and Places

Brexit

With Brexit talks still at an early stage we can only assume at this point that the regeneration of our areas, including the funding we have be accustomed to accessing, will change and we will have to re-think our approach whilst living through these uncertain times.

The Industrial Communities Alliance recognises the unique needs of older industrial areas such as our own, which have benefited greatly from EU Structural Funds such as European Regional Development Funding and European Social Fund. Going forward The Alliance is suggesting a post-Brexit regional policy that is well funded, strongly targeted, within and between regions, driven by objective evidence of need and opportunity, tailored to local tasks in hand, flexible in delivery and managed locally and democratically.

At the time of writing this strategy, in line with the Inclusive Growth Commission's "Making our Economy Work for Everyone", early information on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund is being released.

Newcastle Borough Profile (Data source NOMIS 2017, unless otherwise stated)

The Borough of Newcastle is based around the historic 800 year old market town of Newcastle-under-Lyme. Kidsgrove, six miles to the north, is the Borough's second town. The Borough is part urban (together with neighbouring Stoke-on-Trent forming the western part of the North Staffordshire conurbation) and part rural. The Borough is also home to the country's largest campus university, Keele University, which currently has 10,000 students. Keele graduates are officially recognised as the most employable graduates in the country.

The town lies along the A34 and is well served by the M6, the A500 and the A50. Lying on the West Coast Main Line, four trains an hour connect Stoke-on-Trent Railway Station, 3 miles from Newcastle Town Centre, to London Euston (1 hr 27 minutes) and Manchester (37 minutes). Four airports, Manchester, East Midlands, Liverpool and Birmingham lie within 50 to 75 minutes drive.

Population

The Borough's population continues to grow and is currently 128,500

Households

There are currently 58,283 households in the borough and over the next five years it is planned that this will rise by 1396 to 59,679

Over the period 2012 - 2017, 1489 new houses were completed, an average annual rate of house building of 297.

Employment status

69,700 people work in the Borough, of which 10,600 are self-employed and 55,300 are employees.

The split between full-time (32,000) and part-time (14,000) employment closely reflects the national and regional pattern (2015 figures)

The level of self-employment (11.8% is higher than the GB average of 10.6% and higher than the West Midlands at 9.4)

Employee Jobs by Industry

Wholesale and Retail Trade accounts for 19.6% (GB: 15.8%), Education 13% (GB: 9.2%), Transport and Storage 10.9% (GB: 4.7%), Manufacturing 8.7% of employment (GB: 8.3%), Admin and Support Service 8.7% (GB 8.9%) Financial and Insurance 1.5% (GB: 3.6%)

Significant private sector employers:

Leoni Wiring, Istock Brick, Regina Plastics, Jacuzzi, Keele Science and Innovation Park companies such as Bio Composites, Siemens Wind Power UK, Capita, GVA and Cobra Bio, engineering firms such as, KMF Engineering, Phoenix Dynamics and Simon-Hartley, in the logistics field, New Look, George, TK Maxx, Smyths Toys, Fedex and AAH, and a wide range of professional services firms including Knights, MHL, Hacking Ashton and Aspire Housing. Keele University and Newcastle and Stafford College Group are significant employers in the Higher and Further Education sectors.

Qualifications

The local resident workforce is slightly less qualified than the rest of the country, 36.9% are qualified to degree level (GB 38.2%, West Midlands region 31.5%), 59.9% have two or more A levels (GB 56.9%, West Midland region 49.7%), though the numbers with no qualifications (10.5%) is higher than GB (8.0%), but less than the West Midlands region (11.8%).

Earnings

Earnings on the other hand fall behind the regional and national average with the median weekly pay for full-time workers in 2016 at £459.6 compared to GB £540.2 and WM £510.2

Claimants

JSA claimants are currently lower than at any point over the last 10 years and this is considered to be full employment. However, there are still almost 4,000 ESA claimants who are furthest from training and work.

Business Counts

Total Business Counts at 2016 were 3,495 which is 87.3% compared to West Midlands 88.7

Town Centre Vacancy Rates

Town centre vacancy rates in Newcastle Town Centre remain steady and are currently at 11%

As an indication of scale, Newcastle under Lyme Town Centre has a commercial floorspace of 105,343 m² This compares with Stoke-on-Trent City Centre (203,077 m²); Stafford Town Centre (110,282 m²); Macclesfield Town Centre (96,680 m²); Stoke Town Centre (75,391 m²); Longton Town Centre 66,965 m²; and Leek (46,580 m²).

DRAFT

Delivery of the 2012-2017 Economic Development Strategy

Our current strategy focuses on four themes - Business, Place and Infrastructure, People and Image and Marketing

During the life of this strategy there have been many achievements:

Establishment of Newcastle BID and gaining Purple Flag status for our night time economy...Go Kidsgrove town centre partnership...JCB occupancy of Blue Planet... Smythes Toys occupancy of Alto 415...refurbished town centre Market stalls...development of the Civic Hub – Castle House...former Jubilee Baths site student accommodation...former Maxims site – Belong Village providing specialist dementia care...Blackburn House (now Keele House) student accommodation...Heritage Lottery Fund, Priority Development Area status leveraging in excess of £3M+ to celebrate the borough's cultural heritage...Philip Astley, The Homecoming, Arts Council England funding and No Fit State £1m, Design and Build of IC5 – Keele Science and Innovation Park...The New Keele Deal...The District Deal...Business Boost competition year 8, Silverdale Community Park and Heritage Park housing...

These successes are important not only in their own right but also as a means of reminding and inspiring the Council and our partners that when we work collaboratively things can be achieved over the long-term as long as we;

- Are clear about our priorities
- Are prepared to work in partnership with public, private and third sector organisations
- Are prepared to commit time and the necessary resources

Business Intelligence and Support - Growth and sustainability of the business base

Building on the UK Industrial Strategy Green Paper

- We must become a more innovative economy and do more to commercialise our world leading science base to drive growth across the UK.
- We must ensure that businesses across the UK can access the finance and management skills they need to grow; and we must create the right conditions for companies to invest for the long term.
- We need to keep costs down for businesses, and secure the economic benefits of the transition to a low-carbon economy.
- We must build on our areas of competitive advantage and help new sectors to flourish. Growth and sustainability of the business base

The economic pressures resulting from Brexit, the 2017 Rates revaluation, the development of HS2 and increasingly rapid evolution in technology to name but four will impact significantly on local prosperity over the life of this strategy. Whilst we cannot predict exactly what effect these, and other external forces, will have on local business we will endeavour to mitigate them through the strategic aims set out below.

1. Continue to develop an economy in which the growth of innovative and niche businesses can flourish, thereby increasing both the amount of knowledge intensive employment and the proportion of high quality jobs in new and traditional sectors.

The most successful places are those that build on their existing strength and develop diverse specialisms. This is the Council's strategic approach to promoting the Borough, attracting new business and increasing employment opportunities. North Staffordshire boasts a number of niche industrial specialisms which have been highlighted as providing significant opportunities for growth. Whilst the Council will continue to work with its partners in the LEP and The Constellation Partnership on sub-regional objectives, it will also promote Newcastle's distinctiveness, as reflected in:

- A differentiated town centre offer working with the BID and specific marketing activities aimed at attracting inward investment and new business start-up in the town centres.
- A strong professional and financial services sector
- Prospects for providing a balance of high quality and affordable housing including accommodation for almost 2000 students in our town centre
- A thriving research based university and science park

2. Developing a co-ordinated approach to business support which puts business first and supplies a relevant mix of services that is well publicised and accessible to all businesses.

We will continue to work with the areas strong network of business support providers such as the Growth Hub who encourage the growth and development of new and existing enterprises. We also benefit from a network of enterprise centres which offer a supportive environment to new enterprises and in some cases the capacity to grow on to larger units where required.

We will continue to work with the LEP and with partners to develop a range of measures designed to support business development including:

- Promotion of the area as a premier investment location at a national and international level using the 'Make it' brand
- Continue to work with our single point of contact for business, the Growth Hub
- Development of a business mentoring service
- Support to deliver broadband access and superfast broadband across the area
- Access to finance for business investment via the LEP and other partners

We will continue to support the services of the Growth Hub and other partners by signposting and promoting them to local businesses and seeking to be more proactive in informing businesses of opportunities available to them. The Growth Hub, which is a public/private sector partnership, funded through Regional Growth Fund, helps to drive strong, sustainable business growth by joining up national and local business support making it easier for businesses to find the help they need. The Stoke and Staffordshire Business Helpline is the first point of contact for business support across Staffordshire, including accessing the Growth Hub. The helpline provides a central point of contact for a range of free (and paid for) business support which includes start up, growth, finance, regulation, people and contacts.

- Where the Council is able to add value to the Growth Hub, for example through co-ordination or hosting activities, this will also be on offer.
- Although the opportunity to attract external funding is now much reduced, the Council will support co-ordinated bids, where the opportunity arises, to attract funding for enterprise activity.
- The Council recognise the importance of catering for the needs of existing businesses as well as supporting start-ups and will support improving networking and communications with and between local companies.

3. Support activities which encourage entrepreneurialism and new business formation. We need to address the business formation rate in Newcastle, which is still below the regional and national average and business survival remains a challenge with a business failure rate that is slightly above the national average.

Developing entrepreneurs starts at an early age, and in addition to the actions that our partners already take to support enterprise in schools the Council will continue to support the Newcastle Employment and Skills Group, the LEP Locality project and the Carousel of Opportunity, which focuses on primary schools, to develop innovative ways to engage young people in enterprise

We will support continuation of the annual Newcastle Business Boost competition. This brings together public, private and education sectors in support of local businesses and, since its inception in 2008, has provided in excess of £80,000 direct investment in their growth and development

We will continue to signpost businesses to appropriate sources of assistance, including those offered by the Council such as rates advice, licensing, waste disposal, planning and environmental health. We will ensure that advice on the council's website is kept up-to-date and includes links to appropriate partner sites

4. Supporting our higher and further education establishments in the development of knowledge intensive sectors.

Newcastle benefits from being home to both Keele University and Staffordshire University is just a few miles away in Stoke on Trent. The study range of offered courses between the two includes science, creative, technology, business and humanities opportunities for research and study. These are the drivers of the area's knowledge intensive jobs both

through enterprise support to graduates and through the accommodation and services offered to business.

The New Keele Deal is a partnership with Staffordshire County Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Newcastle-under-Lyme Council, the LEP and University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust to stimulate growth of the knowledge-based economy in the sub-region.

Growth plans include an increase from the current 10,500 students to 13,000 with further potential expansion contributing up to 6,000 jobs and £0.4billion per year to the regional economy.

The Borough is also home to Newcastle under Lyme College, (Newcastle and Stafford College Group since 2016) NSCG is financially one of the strongest of its kind in the country with very high success rates, amongst the top 10% nationally. The group is currently home to a population of over 5,000 full-time students, around 620 students on higher education programmes, over 2,000 part-time or adult learners and 2,000 apprentices with over 800 individual employers.

NSCG has excellent links with many businesses operating in Newcastle-under-Lyme. One of their longest serving employers is Knights, a leading professional and legal services business. Their partnership with NSCG has grown from strength to strength over the past few years and they have continued to recruit local talent.

- **Specialist Business Accommodation**

Keele University & Science Park is the Borough's flagship accommodation offer to knowledge intensive industries. The high specification of the Innovation Centre buildings and the strong links to the University naturally attracts businesses specialising in research and development and higher level skills. IC5 opened in 2016 with plans for further specialist accommodation during the life of this strategy.

- **Keele University Business Gateway**

This is the university's single point of contact for the services it offers to business including research and innovation support, Knowledge Transfer Partnerships, licencing opportunities and smart energy network demonstrator.

- **Low Carbon & Environmental Sustainability**

Keele University and Science & Business Park is the primary driver for growth in the environmental sustainability field. In addition to the Science Park accommodation and business offer, the University is committed to developing an environmentally aware and outward facing campus with an extensive commitment to carbon reduction including plans to introduce renewable energy on campus and BREEAM 'very good' status to all new and refurbished buildings.

Keele University Sustainability Hub acts as a focus for the research into, teaching of, and management for sustainability and green technology that takes place at Keele University. Building upon this the university aims to significantly expand its capacity in energy / renewables research, particularly around wind, solar and geothermal.

The LEP area has a strong cluster of companies within the environmental technologies sector, including the District Heat Network and many renowned international brands such as Siemens and General Electric. These companies already invest heavily in research

and development, and this could be actively supported by high quality academic research to create truly innovative energy solutions.

- **Manufacturing**

Newcastle has a strong manufacturing base which employs a significant number of people. Support for this sector is principally delivered through working with the SSLEP Education Trust and Staffordshire STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) centre to ensure the workforce possesses the skills that enable them to meet market needs and innovate effectively.

Inward investment of manufacturing companies is supported through Make It and ensuring there is suitable employment land available for development in the Borough.

- **Applied Material**

Originally a part of the SSLEP City Deal, the work to develop the Applied Materials Research, Innovation and Commercialisation Company (AMRICC) highlighted the potential to build upon existing strengths of materials companies and innovation in the area. Comprising a research laboratory, pilot plant and educational facility, AMRICC will provide an environment which joins together scientific success with the business acumen needed to make innovation a commercial reality. A number of companies at the heart of this sector are based in the Borough, including, KMF Sheet Metal Fabrication and Precision Engineering and Intelligent Orthopaedics.

- **Medical Technologies**

The medical technologies sector is still relatively small in terms of employment numbers, although employment in scientific R&D in medical technologies has grown over the last few years. The School of Medicine at Keele University, the University Hospital of North Midlands NHS Trust and Keele University Science and Innovation Park represent an opportunity for attracting more growth in this area.

The Research Institute at Keele University focuses on four key themes for research: Bioengineering & Therapeutics; Clinical & Diagnostic Science; Infection, Inflammation & Immunity; and Neuroscience & Metabolism. A number of leading medical technology and healthcare companies are based at Keele including TRB Chemedica, Biocomposites, Cobra Biologics and Intelligent Orthopaedics.

- **Creative Industries**

Digital creative firms continue to be a potential growth area for the Borough. A number of highly respected video production companies set up by Staffordshire University students exist in the area already. Attracting, growing and retaining this type of firm relies on the availability of superfast and reliable broadband, the right style of business premises and the opportunity to cluster with other digital technology firms. The Acava Spode studios based in Stoke on Trent are a great example of creating the right accommodation to encourage a range of creative businesses to cluster in one area.

Further actions include:

- Working with the LEP and its partners in the higher and further education sectors aiming to encourage the growth of creative industries, promote technology transfer and provide specialist business accommodation
- The Council will support the re-use of existing property in the town for businesses such as graphic design, film and media, publishing, animation, music and

computer/console games software development including, where suitable, its own premises

- The Council will continue to work with Keele University and Science Park to encourage development of Keele Science Park Phase 3 and attract knowledge intensive businesses to Keele Science Park through marketing support, lobbying for infrastructure investment and planning advice.
- The Council will work with partners to actively promote opportunities for small businesses to develop expertise through associations with higher and further education establishments.

6. Making the most of existing strengths in the professional and business services and logistics sectors.

Professional and business services are an important knowledge intensive sector for the Borough. The improvement in broadband connectivity, development of new technologies and new working practices coupled with good transport links means that this sector offers the potential for continued growth. Our approach is based around three main activity areas:

- Ensuring the availability of appropriate accommodation (both commercial and residential), which is necessary to attract and retain highly skilled workers in these sectors.
- Support the growth and diversification of the rural economy. A number of potential funding streams are available to rural businesses during the first few years of this strategy, including new build and conversions to business use. The roll out of superfast Broadband continues making the Borough's rural hinterland an increasingly attractive option for business start-ups.
- Logistics has been a major growth area in our economy which is due largely to the good connectivity that the area enjoys and our position close to the centre of the country.

Through the Ceramic Valley Enterprise Zone the Council plans to continue the development of Chatterley Valley on land to the west of the JCB Blue Planet building, (described as Chatterley Sidings and Peacock Hay). We will work with the landowners and their agents to explore bringing forward Peacock Hay for light industrial development.

7. Making the most of business opportunities in the tourism and leisure sectors.

The Borough is home to a number of business and leisure tourist destinations including the Brampton Museum and Art Gallery, the Dorothy Clive Gardens, the New Vic Theatre, Apedale Community Heritage Park, the Trent & Mersey canal and famous Harecastle Tunnel, Newcastle town centre and Keele University.

Its central location also makes it a good resting place for visitors to other parts of the county. We work closely with Enjoy Staffordshire, the Destination Management Partnership for the county, which is the main organisation responsible for promoting the area to business and leisure visitors. They also recognise the importance of sector specific support to develop skills and products amongst local tourism businesses.

- Promote diversification amongst rural businesses, for example through the LEADER programme and Rural Enterprise Programme.
- Work with the town centre BID to encourage new businesses into the town centre.
- Work with the BID to maximise the opportunities afforded by the growth of student accommodation in Newcastle town centre, expected to reach 2000 by 2018

8. **Optimise the benefit to local companies from public sector procurement.**

Over the life of this strategy, the Council will continue to identify ways of making savings and reducing its spend on procuring goods and services. However, even this reduced amount could represent significant income for local businesses. The council's spend profile includes a significant number of lower value contracts which are particularly suitable for smaller businesses.

The council also considers social value in awarding contracts and is keen to engage with all types of providers, including small and large businesses and social enterprises. New ways of working will be considered such as joint ventures with other partners and procurement models from other areas of the country that encourage tenders from small businesses.

There remains a statutory requirement to advertise all larger high value contracts through the Official Journal of the European Union however this will be monitored as Brexit begins to gather pace. The Council will also comply with the requirement to advertise any contract over £25,000 on Contracts Finder. However, the council will support measures that make it easier for smaller businesses to tender for these. In addition, the council will support emerging processes to standardise tender documentation.

We will also explore the opportunity to work with our key anchor institutions to work towards a procurement model which maximises the local impact of procurement spend. CLES, UK's leading think and do tank on progressive economics for people and place, have worked closely with Preston City Council (anchors spend £750 million annually on goods and services, only 5% spent with local organisations, £458 million leaked out of Lancashire, a switch to spending 10% locally would mean an extra £370 million in the local economy) and Leeds City Council (JRF report shows that 10 anchors in the Leeds City Region spend £1.4 billion a year on procuring goods and services – a 10% shift of total spend to suppliers in the city region could be worth an additional £168-£196 million each year to the city region economy).

Place and Infrastructure – Physical Transformation

This section of the Economic Development Strategy sets out what action the Council will carry out to enhance the quality of the place and infrastructure of the Borough to promote its economic development.

We are focusing on seven principal courses of action:

- Strengthening the appeal and vitality of Newcastle Town Centre
- Building our cultural economy
- Helping Keele University and Science Park to grow
- Realising the economic benefit of housing development
- Maximizing the benefit of High Speed Rail (HS2)
- Making provision for inward investment and for local firms to grow, and
- Marketing and promotion

1. Strengthening the appeal and vitality of Newcastle Town Centre

Creating competitive urban centres is one of the key priorities of the Local Enterprise Partnership's (LEP's) Strategic Economic Plan. We will focus on the following:

- Improving the town's retail offer
- Building our cultural economy, specifically Newcastle's circus heritage
- Increasing the number of people living in the town centre
- Providing new business accommodation
- Improving the public realm and
- Supporting the Business Improvement District

1.1 Improving the town's retail offer

While Newcastle Town Centre is widely seen as the most attractive centre in the North Staffordshire conurbation, its role has declined in recent years due to a number of factors. One of these is the age, size and configuration of many of its retail premises – many of which are nineteenth century, narrow and deep, and while this may be valued as being aesthetically pleasing it is not necessarily what modern retail businesses require and this has led to a reluctance to invest.

However, these premises lend themselves well to the independent sector, which in Newcastle is continuing to grow – from dog-boutiques to gin bars! The annual programme of cultural events organised by the BID is now well established and Newcastle has a growing positive reputation for delivering a high quality and innovative cultural programme.

There is strong competition from out of town retail locations such as Trentham Retail Village, Wolstanton Retail Park and Festival Park, all of which provide free parking and the convenience of level, single storey shop units. However, Newcastle's growing reputation as a town for independents especially in the food sector has helped the vacancy rate to stay at a reasonable 11%, we expect this to decrease over time especially when the students move into the newly built accommodation.

The shape of our town is changing as we see huge developments such as The Sky Building emerging from a former derelict site. It stands at one of the main entrances to the town and will provide accommodation for over 200 students with views directly over the ever popular Queens Gardens and newly build civic hub "Castle House". In addition to this the Council, in partnership with the County Council, acquired the former Sainsbury's site on the northern edge of Newcastle Town Centre and through a competitive process Henry Davidson Developments (HDD) have been appointed to deliver a £50 million investment in the town. This will provide 65,000 sq. ft. of new

retail accommodation in 10 or 11 units, mostly of a size and configuration not currently provided in the town centre with a view to appealing to the modern retailer.

HDD's plans will also make provision for around 530 apartments which will add to the footfall and general 'busyness' of the town, increase spending in local shops and also add to the townscape appeal of the scheme as a whole.

A consequence of the Ryecroft development is the need for the Council to move to new premises. The planned new Civic Hub, or 'Castle House', currently under construction on land immediately to the south of Queen Gardens, will replace the present Civic Offices and provide smaller and significantly more thermally efficient and cost effective accommodation which will be shared with The Police and County Council staff currently based in various locations around the Borough.

In terms of jobs, it is expected that the Ryecroft retail scheme will result in around 350 additional jobs and that Castle House, as well as accommodating the existing staff based at the Civic Offices, will also accommodate a further 100 office jobs currently located elsewhere in the Borough. The new residential development will result in additional jobs in the town centre as well, as a result of the additional spending in local shops and other services estimated at around £30 million per year.

Two more developments underway or planned to take place in and around the town centre will also have a retail element. These are the planned refurbishment / part redevelopment of the former Zanzibar Nightclub on the Eastern edge of the town centre, which is to be converted into an auction house and the 'Belong Village' development on the site of the former Maxims Nightclub on Lower Street, currently under development, which is being developed for assisted living accommodation. As part of the development a new gallery will be created, funded through HLF and linking to the town's existing Brampton Museum and Art Gallery.

Newcastle's town centre offer focuses more on the experiential shopping experience which provides a wide range of independent shops from dog-boutiques to micro-brewery establishments and specialist gin bars. York Place shopping arcade is exploring a different approach which focuses on inclusive growth and a more purposeful shopping experience. Generally, across Newcastle and Stoke on Trent we are seeing a rapidly growing creative industries sector. The Council will work with the private sector and the BID (see below) to explore ways to encourage creative industries development in our town.

1.2 Increasing the number of people living in the town centre

We recognise that new residential development, be it 'living over the shop' or purpose built apartments, increases the population living around the clock in our town centre who, consequently increase trade with local shops, restaurants, bars and other services provided. They also increase footfall and general 'busyness' which help to improve the appeal and liveliness of a town and encourage more people to come and visit (and shop). For these reasons, the Council seeks to encourage residential development in and around the town centre and has taken steps to increase development through the sale of land for residential development and seeks to have a supportive planning regime.

By 2020 we expect there to be over 2000 student accommodation spaces in or near to the town centre.

1.3 Providing for new business accommodation

For many years the Council has promoted the aim of accommodating more business space in and around the town centre, both to strengthen the role of the town and to increase its vitality. Town centres are also the most sustainable location for housing a workforce, given their accessibility by means other than car and the proximity of shops and other services to a daytime workforce. However, it is unlikely that the Council will again have the resources to be able to invest significantly

in the provision of new business accommodation. The co-funding of Castle House is the only direct investment currently planned which is explicitly designed to retain / increase office workforce within the town centre.

The establishment of the Ceramic Valley Enterprise Zone (which includes Chatterley Valley West) will provide some opportunity for Council investment in new business space since it will be a requirement of the EZ governance that the retained business rates will be invested into Growth Priorities. In the Borough these are Keele Science and Business Park, Newcastle Town Centre and Chatterley Valley. As a result, once future rate income arising from development at Chatterley Valley West can be accurately calculated, borrowing can be made against this figure and a schedule of investment in new business accommodation to meet market need can be put to the LEP.

1.4 Improving the public realm

Newcastle has the most attractive town centre in the North Staffordshire conurbation. This is something we value and one which, working with partners, the Council will seek to enhance. Its inherent attractiveness is down to a number of factors including:

- Attractive groupings of well-maintained Georgian and Victorian buildings around the town
- A safe and convenient pedestrianised environment
- The historic six-day street market
- The large number of cafes, bars and restaurants around the town and
- A relatively low shop vacancy rate

All of this helps to convey an ambience and a sense of place which masks a number of economic challenges that the town faces. On its own, enhancing and protecting the best features of the town's public realm will not bring new investment into the town but helps to influence investment decisions and add to the pleasure of visiting, shopping, living in or working in the town.

Ways in which the Council will improve the public realm include:

- Selectively investing in valued buildings, particularly those 'at risk'. This may include the use of Conservation grants, such as those made toward the improvement of Mellards Warehouse or be a factor in negotiating land deals, such as that which helped to enable the refurbishment and re-use of the former Maxims Nightclub in Lower Street to the Dementia Care Belong Village, which also secured Heritage Lottery Funding to create a new town centre gallery as part of the development.
- Working with the County Council in investing and helping to design improvements to the streetscape, such as that which improved the partially pedestrianised High Street, associated investment in new market stalls, improvements to Red Lion Square and improved pedestrian access to Newcastle Bus Station.
- Commissioning artists to create designs for the town centre roundabouts and subway entrances and working with the County Council on structural refurbishments, all of which help to make the town more accessible and safer for pedestrians.
- Investment in, and continued improvement to, the town's parks and gardens which help to make visiting the town a pleasure, such as the Queen's Gardens, The Brampton, Station Walks, Grosvenor Gardens and Queen Elizabeth Park at Pool Dam mainly financed on the back of neighbouring development schemes or sponsorship. The Council's is a regular winner of Britain in Bloom and has a number of parks with Green Flag status.
- Making use of our town centre public spaces to present arts and cultural events to enhance people's visits to the town and encourage more visitors

1.5 Working with Newcastle BID (Business Improvement District)

The Council supported the establishment of a town centre Business Improvement District (BID) in 2015, run by the local business community and funded from an additional levy on the business rates on businesses in and around the town centre. This now operates as an independent entity to: promote the town, develop the distinctive Newcastle under Lyme experience, and support growth, development and investment.

As well as collecting the rate income to enable the BID to operate, the Council also partners with the BID in promoting positive news about the town centre or working with the BID to encourage landowners and local businesses to invest in the quality of the visitor experience and to develop funding applications to secure investment from external bodies, such as Arts Council England (ACE) and the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

The Council has also worked with the BID to gain Purple Flag accreditation, which is a prestigious award for those towns who manage their night life to an excellent standard by providing an entertaining, diverse safe and enjoyable night out. Newcastle has held Purple Flag status since 2014.

2. Helping Keele University Science and Innovation Park to grow

Keele University, together with its Science and Innovation Park, provides a fabulous opportunity for the Borough (and North Staffordshire as a whole) to attract new people, new talent, new businesses and high quality employment that is not easily replicated within the area. It has been estimated that the University is worth around £400 million p.a. to the local economy through staff wages, through employees' spending in local shops and services and through the University's own direct spending on goods and services. The University itself has been recognised in national surveys for its student satisfaction rating, graduate employment and affordability and its graduates are officially recognised as the most employable in the country.

A fifth Innovation Centre (IC5) has recently been opened on the Science Park and there are plans to develop a sixth (IC6). The market evidence is that when these Innovation centres are built, they are occupied, often with existing science park firms looking to expand. With this in mind, discussions are being held with Staffordshire County Council and the University to accelerate the pace of IC development.

Over the next five years The New Keele Deal, announced early 2017, will invest, £70 million and create at least 700 high value jobs to realise the benefits from research and innovation to generate significant local economic growth, improve health and care and put our region at the heart of the UK's transition to a lower carbon economy. There are 8 Keele Deal priorities:

- Keele Research and Innovation Support Programme (KRISP)
- Mercia Centre for Innovation Leadership (MCIL)
- Smart Energy Network Demonstrator 9SEND)
- NHS – University – Industry collaboration
- Harnessing global reach and visibility for local economic impact
- Strategic site for the Constellation Partnership
- Higher-level educational provision
- Spatial masterplan for the University campus and local area

Support for the growth of the University and its Innovation Park is a key priority in the Borough's Economic Development Strategy, together with the LEP's Strategy for Growth.

3. Realising the wider benefit of housing development

New housing development is a significant driver of inclusive growth through the local supply chain as people use local professional services to fit out and furnish their new houses. And, over the longer term, an increased resident population means more money spent in local shops, cafes, restaurants, leisure providers and a whole host of businesses dependent on consumer spending. One of the Borough's economic aims is therefore to significantly raise the number of new houses built in the Borough each year from its modest current annual average of 297 (2012-2017) in order to address the current housing shortage and to provide housing choice

The importance of having an up to date approved Local Plan is key to this, to provide strategic vision guiding the geography of future development to maximise benefit to the wider community.

A key factor in formulating new housing proposals in the forthcoming Local Plan will be the consideration of its impact across our borough, Planning factors such as green field / brownfield, density, sustainability and design will all be considered.

Significant housing development is being included in plans for the Newcastle Western Extension around Keele University as well as new employment proposals. This will provide a mix of housing including provision for housing appealing to higher income groups, provision for self-build plots and affordable housing in line with the Councils policy.

4 Maximising the benefit of High Speed Rail (HS2)

- HS2, what, where and when

Plans for HS2, the high speed rail link between London, Birmingham and the North, have been developed by The Government and HS2 Ltd. to transform the national rail system. HS2 will significantly reduce travel times between London and the key regional cities of Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield, and Birmingham and so improve the attractiveness of these 'northern' cities for future investment and links with the Government's strategy for 'The Midland Engine' and 'The Northern Powerhouse'. The Government announced in November 2016 that the construction of HS2 Phase 2a (the section from Birmingham to Crewe) HS2 has been accelerated and will now be completed by 2027. Through the establishment of a partnership of Local Authorities in Cheshire and North Staffordshire, which is called The Constellation Partnership, work is underway to maximise the economic advantage that can be gained from the siting of the planned new Rail Hub near to Crewe Railway Station with the aim of bringing together a better HS2 service with the existing rail network.

- A stimulus for growth

The Constellation Partnership has ambitious plans to grow the economy of South Cheshire / North Staffordshire by around 120,000 jobs and around 100,000 new houses by 2040, triggered by the stimulus for growth provided by the new Rail Hub and associated investment. The Constellation Partnership will showcase key sites within the Borough for development including Keele University Science and Innovation Park and the Ceramics Valley Enterprise Zone (which includes Chatterley Valley). To ensure that North Staffordshire fully benefits from HS2, a commitment to one HS2 train per hour between Manchester and the Handsacre Junction (near Birmingham) which will stop at Stoke-on-Trent has been sought and the Government has asked HS2 Limited to undertake the additional detailed work needed to reach a firm decision on this option. The Constellation Partnership has now appointed an independent Chair and has commissioned a Growth Strategy comprising spatial plans, a development viability study, financial modelling, masterplans for Crewe and Stoke Railway Stations, a skills supply chain and local labour strategy.

5 Making provision for inward investment and for local firms to grow

- Planning for more jobs

We want businesses to prosper in our borough and there are some things the Council can do to help. These include, a low tax environment, the availability of attractive and affordable development sites and premises which are accessible to the primary road network and for the local workforce, and adequate car parking.

Chatterley Valley, a 40-hectare development site in the north of the Borough, is one of six sites in North Staffordshire which comprise the Ceramic Valley Enterprise Zone where, as an incentive for investment, businesses are not required to pay business rates for the next 25 years. The Council is working with the developers, Harworth Estates and with the County Council to bring forward the development of this site through help with the provision of a new site access and a 'can-do' planning regime. Potentially this site could bring around 1500 new jobs to the area in addition to the JCB investment made at Blue Planet on former Council owned land adjacent.

It is likely that part of the site (Chatterley Sidings) will be built out for two large units (manufacturing or distribution depending on market interest). In order to widen the range of employment type and make provision for small firms growth, it is hoped to build out the northern part of the site (Peacock Hay) for SME units, potentially funded from the locally retained rates from the large units.

The Council will also review its surplus land holdings on sites around the Borough to bring forward plots for small scale industrial development, with the explicit objective of helping the SME sector to grow.

Keele Science and Innovation Park provides a business environment and technological and research community which businesses are able to draw upon which is second to none in North Staffordshire and consequentially is able to attract a higher calibre of business to the area. The Council will continue to work closely with the University and with Staffordshire County Council to develop these further.

Newcastle Town Centre hosts the Borough's principal collection of professional services companies, many of which are housed along King Street, Queen Street and The Brampton. In order to attract more such businesses (and retain those which exist) lessons need to be learned from the provision in Etruria Valley. We recognise that businesses often prefer modern office premises and need convenient on-site car parking (which town centre premises are rarely able to offer). The Council will work with developers to bring forward potential sites with business needs in mind and will continue to work with the 'Make It' Inward Investment Service to attract firms to available premises in and around the town.

The Council has a strong track record of delivery. During the last 25 years considerable development of employment land has taken place across the Borough including the development of the whole of Lymedale Park, Phase 2 of Keele Science Park (including the first five Innovation Centres and the School of Medicine), Centre 500, High Carr Business Park, phase 1 of Chatterley Valley (JCB), Silverdale Enterprise Park, Knutton and Silverdale Industrial Estates, Rosevale Business Park, the later phases of Parkhouse Industrial Estate, and parts of West Avenue and Rowhurst Industrial Estates. Together these comprise over 150 hectares of development land resulting in an estimated 7500 to 8000 jobs.

Furthermore, significant sites within and on the edge of Newcastle Town Centre have also been redeveloped - the Newcastle College and Performing Arts Centre on Knutton Lane, the new Sainsburys, the new Fire Station, the Castle Walk shopping development, the Aldi development at Blackfriars, Brunswick Court, Berkeley Court, the Barracks Road developments and the new Travelodge.

Our approach demonstrates what can be achieved through long term planning, persistence, collaboration with development partners in the private and public sectors and, where required, the considered investment of local tax payer's money. Taking the long view is helpful in two ways - it

provides encouragement that things can be done and secondly as a pointer for what might be done in the future.

- The local development plan 2013-2033

The Newcastle / Stoke-on-Trent Employment Land Review 2015 (one of the sources the next local plan will rely on to identify need) identified the need for between 44 and 133 hectares of employment land in the next local plan period, 2013-2033. The review also identified that there was an existing supply of 85 hectares of employment land in the Borough. The local plan issues consultation document therefore concluded that it will be critical for additional sites to be identified if full economic growth is to be realised over the plan period.

The new Local Plan will identify a major employment site of 45 – 50 Hectares to address the current shortage of available development land in the mid-term. Only once sites are identified in an approved Local Plan can steps be taken to marshal the resources (people, money and commitment) to bring forward development land, not least the necessary highway infrastructure and off-site services. This will have implications for future bids for Government funding and financial support from Staffordshire County Council as well as funding allocated through the UK Industrial Strategy and post Brexit UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

6. Marketing, promotion and cultural economy

Marketing and promotion in the Borough is primarily carried out by three organisations, which are supported by the Council both financially and through investment in staff time:

6.1 Make It Stoke and Staffordshire

Within North Staffordshire, enquiry handling and promotion of the area as an inward investment and business growth location is primarily carried out by the Make It Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire team. The Make It team has a county-wide remit and provides key links for Newcastle to both Staffordshire wide and regional marketing initiatives. Key examples of this are: MIPIM 2017, Make it was instrumental in developing the 'Midlands UK' approach that gave Staffordshire and the Midlands area a higher profile sales platform than would have been possible through individual action and Ceramics Valley Enterprise Zone, where members of the Make it team are acting as key contacts for sites within the Enterprise Zone.

Whilst attracting investment from outside the area remains an important priority for both the Make It team and Council, support for local business growth is also a vital area to grow the local economy. To this end Make It works with Skills Staffordshire and the Business Growth Hub to ensure that a wide range of business needs can be met, whether these requirements are from new investors to the area or from existing businesses that wish to grow.

To increase its focus on the growth of existing companies, Make It has established a Key Account Management System identifying those firms which have the greatest prospect of growth across the area with which to build a relationship, discuss their expansion plans, respond accordingly and identify any barriers to their expansion which can then be addressed.

6.2 Enjoy Staffordshire

The 'Enjoy Staffordshire Partnership' is the County's principal agency for promoting the area to visitors, including its principal attractions such as its theme parks, gardens, ceramic factories and tours, canals, and the nearby Peak District, all of which are easily accessible from Newcastle. In direct terms, tourism (the 'experience economy') makes a major economic impact through visitor spending (primarily on hospitality, accommodation, in shops and at various attractions).

More indirectly, Destination Staffordshire's promotional campaigns play an important role in raising the public profile and appeal of the area to a national audience which inevitably impacts on the perceived desirability of the area as a place to live, in terms of staff recruitment and, indirectly, on business location decision-making.

Business tourism is also a major asset for the Borough with Keele University Hospitality an award winning destination for conferences and training.

We recognise that a thriving cultural economy is essential for the successful economic regeneration of our town centre and the wider borough. Successful cities and towns across the country acknowledge it is essential to invest in their cultural infrastructure to provide a cultural offer that really makes it a place where people and businesses want to live, work and invest.

6.3 Newcastle BID

The BID was established in 2015, to support all businesses and organisations in the town within the BID levy area. The BID has three Objectives:

- Promotion of the town – its key strengths and characteristics as a vibrant, university, market town and build awareness of its retail, leisure and professional services sectors and its college, regionally and nationally.
- Development of the distinctive Newcastle experience – that is a safe, attractive and appealing experience for visitors, students, residents and workers to enjoy.
- Growth, Development and Investment – to build on the strengths of the businesses and organisations of the town to support and promote growth, development, investment and sense of business community.

6.4 Cultural Economy

We recognise the value of placing arts and culture at the heart of our town to create a vibrant place that people enjoy. Working with our partners over the last few years we have built a positive reputation for delivering high quality cultural activities that celebrate our unique cultural heritage. As well creating experiences for people to enjoy, this has had a positive impact on our local economy by encouraging more people into town and increasing trade for local business.

Working with the Town Centre partnership back in 2010 a seed of an idea was formed when the Council developed its Strategic Investment Framework. The idea was to improve the cultural offer by celebrating the town's connection with circus. Philip Astley, who invented the circus ring, was born in Newcastle in 1742. We recognised Philip Astley's life and legacy is unique to Newcastle and has special value, which should be shared to encourage wider appreciation and enjoyment.

Working with Newcastle BID, Appetite Creative People and Places Programme and Arts Council England (ACE), we have presented the best of national and international new circus at the heart of our town centre and have drawn huge crowds who have returned year on year.

In 2012 we became a Priority Development Area for Heritage Lottery Funding (HLF), which meant we were allocated dedicated officer time to provide information sessions and advice on potential project ideas. This has resulted in over £3 million investment from HLF in the area for a wide range of projects including support for the Philip Astley profile-raising work.

In 2018 there will be national celebrations of 250 years since the invention of the circus. Newcastle will be at the heart of these celebrations and will see an additional £1M invested in the area funded through ACE and HLF. Internationally acclaimed No Fit State circus will return to Newcastle for almost two months to rehearse and present their new show Lexicon as part of the wider Circus, Past Present and Future project managed by The New Vic Theatre. We believe this will place

Newcastle firmly on the cultural tourism map, build on the attractiveness of our town to encourage more visitors and support our local businesses.

As we write our EDS, Stoke-on-Trent has been shortlisted for City of Culture 2021, which is already raising the profile of our area and giving more recognition to the important role of arts and cultural activities. If successful it will create even more opportunity for Newcastle to celebrate its cultural heritage.

DRAFT

Skills

In line with our approach of inclusive growth, the Council's focus on creating a Borough of Opportunity, the LEP Skills Strategy and the emerging Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire Strategic Economic Plan refresh we will work with our partners and skills providers to address the gaps identified by our local employers and ensure we have the right skill base to attract new employers to the area.

1. Addressing issues around the skills agenda

The Newcastle Employment and Skills Group (NESG) has been established in Newcastle for 10 years and brings together key providers who deliver in Newcastle along with the Council, the core membership is the Aspire Group, Newcastle and Stafford College Group, DWP/Job Centre Plus, National Careers Service, Business Enterprise Support, Support Staffordshire, Staffordshire County Council – Libraries and Adult Learning. Local providers such as IXION and Reed in Partnership deliver regular updates on those people furthest from training and jobs. As well as keeping everyone up to date, NESG provides the opportunity for providers to work together to resolve specific issues.

The LEP Skills Strategy provides a framework within which to address the skills gaps through more focus on schools and business working together, further education and business working together and higher education providers and business working together.

Employers in the SSLEP area reported both skills gaps and skills shortages, with up to 40% reporting vacancies being difficult to fill as well as school leavers lacking employability skills.

The Locality Project was established in response to employers after the Education Trust identified a clear need to bring schools and employers together in a structured, sustainable and systematic way. The Locality Project seeks to embed 3 priorities; Enterprise, Employability and Careers (EEC) into school strategy, curriculum and culture. Working alongside the Locality Project is the Careers Enterprise Company, which aims to inspire and prepare young people for the fast-changing world of work. In Newcastle five schools have benefitted from the Locality Project.

Aligned to the Locality Project is the Careers and Enterprise Company, which is an employer-led organisation that has been set up to inspire and prepare young people for the fast-changing world of work. Its role is to take an umbrella view of the landscape of careers and enterprise, supporting programmes that work, filling gaps in provision and ensuring coverage across the country.

Since 2009 we have been working with partners to successfully deliver the Carousel of Opportunity, which is aimed at primary school students to introduce them the career opportunities available in the current jobs market. A 'speed-dating' format is used to introduce a wide range of career options from engineers to administrators and dog-wardens to IT specialists. Students spend two minutes listening and one minute asking questions. Feedback from the schools, students, parents and businesses has been very positive.

1.2 Long-Term Worklessness

Although we currently have historically low Job Seekers Allowance (JSA), Income Support and Universal credit levels, which are running at 1.3% (1085) we still have almost 4000 people who have been out of work over a longer period of time claiming Employment Support Allowance (ESA). These are the people who are furthest from the training and jobs market who require more intensive support from a range of agencies.

Up to 6% of people claiming ESA are living with mental ill health – listed as 'Mental and Behavioural Disorders'. Ixion and Reed in Partnership, funded through the Big Lottery and European Social

Fund are working specifically in this area to provide support for people to access training and employment.

Locally the Aspire Housing Group made a commitment to its customers to provide employment and training support as a means of supporting social regeneration in addition to its commitment to the physical regeneration of its properties and neighbourhoods. The Employment and Skills Team at Aspire Housing, which was launched in 2010 continues to support Aspire Housing customers to become less dependent on benefits by helping them to gain employment, whilst tackling generations of worklessness that resided in many neighbourhoods. The service was and is still called Aspire to Work, with a team of qualified and experienced Employment and Skills Advisors delivering the provision.

The Aspire Employment and Skills Team has also delivered a range of externally funded employability contracts over the years, including DWP, Coalfields Regeneration, NHS and Staffordshire County Council funded contracts. During 2017/18 team has started to deliver several ESF funded employability contracts aimed at enhancing the employability of local people in our borough.

1.3 Apprenticeship LEVY

We know that apprenticeships provide people with the chance to learn and to gain nationally recognised qualifications whilst receiving a weekly wage. They are also recognised in the SSLEP Apprenticeships Strategy 2015-2017 as a key component in the drive to increase employability and growth and a main route for increasing participation in education and training. The most significant change to apprenticeships has been the introduction by central Government of the Apprenticeship Levy April 2017, which aims to create 3 million quality apprenticeship starts over the next 5 years. All large businesses with a pay bill over £3 million have to pay the levy of 0.5% of their annual pay bill.

The Levy provides funding on the digital apprenticeship service which each employer can use to spend on apprenticeship training and assessment to meet their individual needs. The funding will be directly controlled by employers via the digital Apprenticeships voucher, firms which are committed to training will be able to get back more than they put in.

Through the Apprenticeship Levy the Council is investing in existing staff by providing a Management Development Programme delivered by a local provider and exploring options to build on the successful shared apprenticeship programme, which has been successfully delivered in partnership with Newcastle and Stafford College Group and PM Training (part of the Aspire Group).

There is also a wider range of higher apprenticeships available. Locally these are delivered by Newcastle and Stafford College Group and Staffordshire University.

Newcastle and Stafford College Group is recognised as the region's leading education and training provider, the groups Work Based Learning team works collaboratively with employers throughout Staffordshire, Cheshire and Shropshire to foster long term relationships and support both learner development and business growth and prosperity.

NSCGs (incorporating Newcastle-under-Lyme College, Stafford College and training provider, Axia Solutions) high quality, flexible service provides expert advice, guidance and support on all aspects of work based learning, including: apprenticeships, traineeships, bespoke training and professional development. The group has been confirmed as an approved apprenticeship training provider on the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers (RoATP).

NSCG conducts surveys each year to find out the destinations of the apprenticeships we have supported to achieve in the apprentice year, 1st August through to 31st July, and the outcomes for 2015/16 demonstrated that over 90% are still employed across Staffordshire.

Our challenge is to use this expertise to retain and grow employment in the Borough and drive a more prosperous economy.

The Staffordshire Providers Association (SPA) provides a network of Staffordshire training providers many of which are based in Newcastle. Two of the main local providers are PM Training and Newcastle and Stafford College Group (NSCG).

PM Training is the social enterprise arm of the Aspire Group and is one of the largest social enterprises in the country. It aims to tackle worklessness among young people by offering those with limited or no formal qualifications an alternative route into employment. PM Training is recognised as Staffordshire's leading provider of apprenticeships, helping over 250 young people each year gain new skills and employment through various routes to apprenticeships, employment and further education through vocational courses, employability training and study programmes for 16-19 year olds.

The LEP Education Trust Group and the Newcastle Employment and Skills Group (NESG) provides the opportunity for all partners to share information on apprenticeships and further develop this area of work.

1.5 Volunteering

We recognise that formal volunteering opportunities can offer similar routines to regular paid work and can help people who are unemployed build their confidence and self-esteem to help them get back into training and work.

Locally a number of Staffordshire Libraries are now managed by volunteers. This provides valuable opportunities for people to learn a wide range of new skills and build on existing ones.

Support Staffordshire provides services from libraries in the borough (Silverdale, Kidsgrove and town centre) and offers a range of volunteering opportunities. It also provides support and development advice to Voluntary Groups, Community Organisations and Social Enterprises operating for the benefit of those who live or work in Newcastle and surrounding area.

York Place shopping centre, which is based at the heart of the town, recognises the value of volunteering. The centre gathered ideas and suggestions about how it could be improved. Based on people's responses the centre is now developing a more innovative approach to delivering the shopping experience. As well as housing a range of thriving businesses, they are providing opportunities for people to volunteer their time, build on existing skills and learn something new, which is rewarded by a token called Counter-Coin. This can be used to buy goods, services and experiences. This inclusive approach which is focused on supporting employability, education, health and well-being and community, creates the opportunity for a wider range of people to get involved in helping to run the centre and makes it a welcoming place where people can enjoy a wider experience.

2. Working towards getting the right skill mix to increase productivity (skills strategy)

Skills are integral to accelerating economic prosperity; creating competitive business advantage and empowering individuals to change their lives for the better. Higher and further education plays a critical role in ensuring that we have the right skills mix to help build a stronger, evenly balanced and more vibrant economy.

The Council will continue to work with the SSLEP who have identified three priorities;

- Developing a more enterprising culture both at school and beyond
- Ensuring that young people and adults are equipped with basic employability skills required by local businesses
- Ensuring we are delivering the education and skills needed to fill jobs now and in the future

2.1 Employability

As well as having the right qualifications and skills, employers require people with employability qualities and competencies, which include a positive attitude, professional approach and commitment to the work.

Keele University is a great example of commitment to ensuring that in addition to subject knowledge, all students acquire generic employability skills and have the opportunity to develop these further through the completion of a personal development portfolio, Keele Certificate of Employability and through work placements and internships.

Finest is the professional services network for Stoke and Staffordshire. Its mission is to be a catalyst for the growth and development of member businesses and the professional services sector in North Staffordshire. Finest's key objectives are the recruitment and retention of skills in North Staffordshire along with supporting and raising aspirations in all tiers of education

Newcastle and Stafford College Group offers every type of post-16 further education course available and at Newcastle-under-Lyme College (NULC) alone, the College offers 34 different A Level subjects, a large variety of vocational subjects and a huge range of apprenticeships. Annually around 95% of NULC students' progress to university, an apprenticeship or employment. More than 850 students go on to study a higher education qualification each year at more than 92 different universities.

Innovation

It is widely recognised that innovation at the heart of business will improve efficiency and increase production. Reflecting the UK Industrial Strategy and Midlands Innovation we will work with our partners to create a more innovative economy building on our world leading sectors based at Keele University Science and Innovation Park and others such as KMF Sheet Metal Fabrication and Precision Engineering and JCB World Logistics.

Working with SSLEP we will help our businesses to access the resources required to build on existing good practice and introduce new innovative approaches to enable further growth and development of new technologies to drive growth across the borough.

We will work with partners to make the most of the Medical Technology sector, which has seen significant growth in our area. Although it is still quite a small sector when statistically defined, accounting for nearly 500 jobs across Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire, Newcastle-under-Lyme has a concentration of employment in this sector that is more than twice that seen nationally, primarily comprising companies involved in the wholesale of pharmaceutical products.

Working with SSLEP we will help to further raise the profile of the growing number of leading medical technology and healthcare companies, including TRB Chemedica, Biocomposites, Cobra Biologics and Intelligent Orthopaedics, which are based at Keele Science and Innovation Park and in the Borough. The School of Medicine at Keele University, the University Hospital of North Staffordshire and the Keele University Science and Innovation Park are recognised for the additional local growth they can attract to this sector.

We will continue to encourage further growth using our well-established networks to sign post businesses to bespoke support from partners such as the Growth Hub, Staffordshire Chamber and the BIC. Our aim is to support a greater level of innovation amongst all our local businesses and identify innovative companies with the potential to grow.

We will also work with our partners to support stronger links between businesses and Keele University and Staffordshire University and to develop employment sites and premises that support creation and investment of innovative businesses such as further development of Keele Science and Innovation Park.

In line with the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) Strategy, which aims to deliver growth and success in STEM related industries, we will work with partners in education and skills to encourage growth and success within this area.

We are also aware of the movement led by NESTA Innovation Foundation, Creative Industries Foundation and Cultural Learning Alliance to incorporate the arts into STEM (STEAM), to bridge the gap between arts and sciences and introduce a wider sense of creativity in order to enhance STEM. It is recognised this will encourage students who might not otherwise consider a STEM job to do just that and to get them excited about how important the STEM fields are especially those links to new media and wider creative industries.

Implementation, Monitoring and Review

An Action Plan will be prepared each January/February and will set out in more detail how the aims and objectives agreed will be carried out. Like the strategy itself, these will also be based around the four themes of

- Business Intelligence and Support
- Place and Infrastructure / Sites and Premises
- Skills
- Innovation

The Action Plans will identify lead bodies and timescales for implementation.

At the end of each year the Council will publish an annual progress report, reviewing the year as well as agreeing the action plan for the following year.

The annual report will give decision makers in the Council and their partners the opportunity to assess success to date. The review may also take the opportunity to consider fresh Government initiatives or changes in the economic or financial landscape.

ACTIONS

We will work with our partners to deliver the following:

Business Intelligence and Support

| Action | Partner / Lead | Resources | Timescale |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Increase both the proportion of knowledge intensive employment and the proportion of high quality jobs in retail, leisure, tourism and distribution | LEP Keele NSCG Council | Review in line with changes to EU funding | 2020-22 |
| Support development of emergent knowledge intensive sectors, building on higher and further education expertise | LEP Keele NSCG Council | EU funding | 2020-22 |
| Support development of the professional and business services sector | Growth Hub Finest Chamber | LEP funding Company membership of relevant organisations | On going |
| Make the most of the Borough's successful logistics sector | LEP Make It | LEP | On going |
| Seek to optimise the benefit to local companies from public sector procurement. | Council SCC Anchor companies | Staff time | 2020 |

Place and Infrastructure

| Action | Partner / Lead | Resources | Timescale |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Work with Newcastle BID to promote Newcastle town centre as a place to visit, work and live | BID Council SCC Town Centre Businesses Appetite York Place and other investors | BID membership levy | BID until 2020 subject to re-ballot |
| Work with the developers of the Ryecroft area of town to secure a development that will add to the economic vitality of the town. | HDD Council SCC LEP | Private sector investment Possibly LEP funding Possibly Sustainable Transport funding | 2018-20 |
| Promote Keele Science and Innovation Park for high tech inward investment including new Innovation Centres and a new Training and Conference Hotel | Keele Council SCC LEP Make It | Private sector investment EU funding SCC funding Possible central government funding | 2018 onwards |
| Work with partners in the Enterprise Zone to attract employment investment to sites and premises around the Borough including land at Chatterley Valley | LEP Council SCC Stoke CC Private Investors | Private sector investment EU funding SCC funding Possible central government funding | 2017 onwards |

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| 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 | BID Council HDD York Place | Private sector investment Rural Enterprise Grants | Ongoing private investment Up to 2020 for grants |
| Enable the development of a wide range of housing, including affordable and higher quality housing for current and future residents. | Homes and Communities Agency Registered Providers Council Private Developers | Private Developers HCA funding S106 funding to support affordable housing | Ongoing |
| Bring forward new sites for employment and housing through the Site Allocations Development Plan Document to enable the further growth of the Borough. | Council SCC Stoke CC | Staff time | 2022 |

Skills

| Action | Partner / Lead | Resources | Timescale |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Continue to work with Newcastle Employment and Skills Group and providers to support people furthest from training and jobs and ensure effective communication between service deliverers | Council Aspire Housing NSCG DWP National Careers SCC / Libraries Providers | Staff time | Ongoing |
| Work with the SSLEP Education Trust and partners to deliver the Skills Strategy priorities | LEP Council SCC Stoke CC | Staff time EU funding Central Government Funding Private Sector Investment | Ongoing (including review of EU funding) |
| Work with the SSLEP Locality Project and | LEP – Education Trust | Staff time | On going subject to EU |

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Stoke on Trent and Newcastle Cultural Education Partnership to encourage a more enterprising culture within our schools | Council Careers and Enterprise Company Cultural education Partnership | EU funding | funding |
| Continue to work with both Keele University, Staffordshire University and Newcastle and Stafford College Group to address skills gaps | LEP Universities NSCG | Staff time | On going subject to EU funding |
| Raise skills and increase training and employment rates to increase productivity | NESG partners Universities NSCG LEP Providers | Staff time EU funding | On going subject to EU funding |
| Stimulate demand for higher skills and create opportunities for people to acquire skills for current and future industrial structure | NESG partners Universities NSCG LEP Providers | Staff time EU funding | On going subject to EU funding |

Innovation

| Action | Partner / Lead | Resources | Timescale |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Continue to support further development of Keele University and Science and innovation Park as detailed in The New Keele Deal | Keele LEP SCC Council | EU funding Private Sector Funding SCC Staff time | Ongoing |
| Encourage a greater level of innovation amongst our local businesses including Medtec. | LEP Universities Local Businesses | EU funding Private Sector Funding SCC | Ongoing |

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------|
| | | Staff time | |
| In line with our Local Plan develop employment sites and premises that support creation and investment of innovative businesses | Council Universities Private Developers LEP | Staff time Private Investment | Ongoing |
| Mitigate potential negative impact of Brexit re EU funding for innovation | LEP | UK Shared Prosperity Fund | Ongoing |

DRAFT