

Members: Councillors M Astle, Baker, G Cairns, A Fear, M Holland, T Lawton, I Matthews (Chair), S Olszewski, M Olzewski, Peers, R Studd, Taylor (Vice-Chair) and I Wilkes

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

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

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 25th April, 2012

Present:- Councillor Mark Olszewski – in the Chair
Councillors E Boden, D Clarke, M Holland, D Loades and S Olszewski

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations stated.

2. MINUTES OF A PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2012 be agreed as a correct record.

3. TOWN CENTRE PARTNERSHIP ISSUES

The Town Centre Partnership resulted from work carried out in 2009/10 in readiness for changes in the economic climate. In the last two years there have been changes in the Personnel of the Chamber of Trade. The Council has a good relationship with the new personnel and the retailers.

Champions for projects were selected from the groups, for example champion for markets, parking etc. Newcastle, along with 362 other towns, submitted applications to be a Portas Pilot town. Twelve would be selected in May with a possible further 12 selected in June.

The pilot provides a blueprint of what Newcastle would like to do.

If the Council did not receive funding from the Portas Project, there would still be things that Newcastle could do. The town centre was in need of re-marketing and re-inventing itself.

A large amount of independent traders were not on the internet although it was possibly the internet which was destroying high street trade.

Members felt that the town needed to find new attractions and to promote tourism into the area with more cultural and family oriented aspects.

A use needed to be found for the empty shops such as pilot schemes for entrepreneurs etc.

The Scrutiny Brief on the Town Centre Partnership was considered. Members agreed that the Work Plan of the Town Centre Partnership be scrutinised and it should be made known that the Economic Development and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been set up to help organisations such as the Partnership.

A calendar of events should be created with some thought and planning going into them.

Resolved:- (a) That the information be received.

(b) That the Town Centre Partnership be carried over to the next Municipal Year for scrutiny by this Committee.

4. BROADBAND UPDATE

The Council's Head of Customer and ICT Services, was a representative on the County Broadband Group but they had not met as yet. She would report back to a future committee when a meeting had taken place.

It was important to have the broadband provision upgraded in areas with poor or no signal. This may encourage businesses to locate in Newcastle.

Resolved:- That the information be received.

5. WORK PLANS FOR SCRUTINY

Members considered a report outlining the topics being considered by the different Scrutiny Committees.

Resolved:- That the information be received.

6. FORWARD PLAN ITEMS

Members considered the items listed within the Forward Plan, but agreed that no Work Plan be decided upon until the new Municipal Year.

The Council's Executive Director for Regeneration and Development explained that this Committee had requested to scrutinise the Staffordshire Strategic Assets Review but information had not been available at the time. This item should therefore be carried forward into the new Municipal Year.

Resolved:- (a) That the information be received.

(b) That the Staffordshire Strategic Assets review be considered by this Committee in the next Municipal Year.

COUNCILLOR MARK OLSZEWSKI
Chair

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Title	Action	Method of Scrutiny and Way Forward
Preparation of a new Economic Development Strategy for the Borough	Updated Strategy requested for future meeting	<p>Officers to provide an update on the Strategy at each meeting of the Committee.</p> <p>That Scrutiny of the Strategy remain with the Whole Committee.</p> <p>An additional meeting of the Committee was arranged to consider the Strategy prior to its submission to Informal Cabinet on 28th September – comments from this meeting were fed into the Cabinet report.</p> <p>No progress regarding the strategy has been reported since the last meeting.</p> <p>Updated Strategy to requested for future meeting</p> <p>Feedback expected around the end of quarter 3 regarding implementation of the strategy</p>
The Stoke on Trent & Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership's proposals for the designation of an Enterprise Zone in North Staffordshire	Set aside for consideration at a later date due to recent national decisions.	None at present.
Broadband Provision	Working Group has now met twice. A meeting is due to be held on Wednesday 30 th when a presentation will be	<p>Small task and finish group (3 members) to be convened to look at the topic in detail.</p> <p>Working Group established: Cllr Kearon, Cllr Wilkes and Cllr Holland.</p> <p>Working Group received a presentation from Ian Binks from BT</p>

	<p>give by a representative from BT.</p> <p>Request from Cllr Kearon that Map of future work be obtained – Jeanette Hilton sitting on County Council Board - will report back to the Committee (Board has yet to meet)</p>	<p>regarding the future provision of Broad band in Newcastle under Lyme. Officers would liaise with colleagues with regards to organising an event with Ian Binks/BT and local businesses.</p> <p>Map obtained and would be taken to additional meeting of the Committee on 25th April 2012</p> <p>County Group has not met to date.</p>
<p>High Speed 2 Limited</p>	<p>First meeting of the working group has been held.</p> <p>Awaiting advice from Officers regarding how to proceed with this subject. No further action required pending release of consultation documents from Central Government</p>	<p>Small task and finish group (3 members) to be convened to look at the topic in detail.</p> <p>Working Group established: Cllr Becket, Cllr Loades and Cllr John Williams.</p> <p>No further action pending Government decision in the New Year.</p> <p>Officers will look into restarting this working group following the government's decision to proceed with HS2.</p>
<p>Proposal to jointly commission a viability assessment for the</p>	<p>NEED TO CHECK PROGRESS - NO</p>	<p>Further reports to be brought to the Committee prior to a decision regarding how to proceed.</p>

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) with Stoke on Trent City Council	FURTHER PROGRESS TO DATE	No action to date since last meeting.
Staffordshire Strategic Assets Review	LOOKING AT MAY FOR NEXT UPDATE Check on progress of Mouchel report.	To be considered at the next meeting on 27 th February - postponed from previous meeting due to delay of report from Mouchel. Report to be considered at meeting on 21 st June
Asset Management Strategy	FINISHED Second additional meeting held on Wednesday 7 th March in order for the portfolio holder to update the Committee on progress.	Considered at additional meeting on 23 rd November - comments fed back to Cabinet meeting on 18 th January. A version of the strategy is expected in mid autumn 2012.
Strategic Tenancy Policy	Scrutiny Brief/Report to meeting on 27th Feb	Comments to be fed back to Cabinet Meeting on 14 th March 2012.
Housing Allocations Policy	Scrutiny Brief/Report to meeting on 27th Feb	Comments to be fed back to Cabinet on 14 th March 2012.
Town Centre Partnerships Development and Initiatives	Scrutiny Brief to Committee on 25th April 2012	Scrutiny brief prepared and would be discussed by the Committee at an additional meeting on 25 th April, representatives of the partnership would also be in attendance. Documents provided for consideration at the 21 st June meeting

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STAFFORDSHIRE STRATEGIC PROPERTY REVIEW

Submitted by: Head of Regeneration and Assets

Portfolio: Regeneration and Planning

Ward(s) affected: Non-specific

Purpose of the Report

To review the Staffordshire Strategic Property Review Report and consider the implications for the Borough Council and local stakeholders.

Recommendation

That the report is accepted and that the programme and project management arrangements established regarding the opportunities within the borough are noted.

Reasons

- To enable the project's key conclusions to be assimilated into the next Asset Management Strategy.
- To assist in identifying underutilised assets across public sector partners and to promote collaborative working that will achieve more comprehensive disposal / development opportunities.
- To promote discussion amongst key partners about the necessary steps to take forward the Newcastle-specific opportunities.

1. Background

1.1 Staffordshire County Council invited all District Councils across the County, along with Stoke on Trent City Council, and other public bodies including the NHS and the Police, to participate in a project to review the public sector estate. The project had two main objectives which are as follows:

- Comprehensive identification of the Public Sector Estate across Staffordshire.
- Analysis of the information to promote the most efficient/effective use of the combined assets.

1.2 Consultants Mouchel were engaged to co-ordinate/manage the project, paid for from funding provided by the West Midlands Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership. The report has now been published and the executive summary to this report is set out below:

Context

Alongside people and technology, property represents one of the highest cost inputs for the public sector. Staffordshire County Council (SCC) alone has £1.5 billion of property assets along with all the attendant operating costs. Through property rationalisation, Staffordshire County Council and its public sector partners in the districts, health, fire, police and others have much to gain both in terms of reduced property costs but also higher productivity and improved services that result from integrating service provision and property use.

Much of the county estate is out-dated and services are undergoing broad transformation. An approach is needed that delivers change in the portfolio in line with the requirements of

service transformation and provides a flexible, future proofed estate based on shared public sector use. Property must be organised so it facilitates rather than hinders service transformation.

This strategic property review engaged a wide group of public sector partners and these can and should be widened, both in terms of the number of partners and their depth of their engagement, as the strategic property plan develops.

Stakeholders share many common priorities around improving social cohesion, care and health, creating a safe and attractive environment, promoting regeneration and economic success, focusing on people and communities and being well-managed.

Strategic Property Review Objectives

The primary objectives of this review were the generation of specific rationalisation opportunities and the development of closer property collaboration across the public sector in Staffordshire to deliver better buildings and financial savings for the public purse. Workshops and one-to-one interviews were adopted as the primary engagement method.

All ideas are assumed to be good ones unless proven otherwise but to provide a focus of effort, opportunities have been given an initial categorisation; either 'very good', 'good' or 'moderate' depending on their suggested benefits case, degree of constraints, dependencies and risks and their alignment with corporate priorities. Over 100 opportunities have been identified with 39 categorised as 'very good'. 25 of these have been developed in outline terms to provide an indicative financial case as a precursor to individual detailed business cases. Further work will be required to develop indicative figures for all opportunities captured.

The Size of the Prize

Financial modelling for the 25 opportunities, assumed to be delivered over a five year period, suggests the cost and benefit ranges below. This demonstrates a significant potential upside and considers only 25% of the total number of opportunities identified to date.

The investment and return profile will of course be dependent on which opportunities are taken forward, when they are implemented and variations in the actual costs and benefits, compared to the assumptions modelled. In particular, there are two assets whose proposed disposal should yield relatively high capital receipts (£ 17 million). The overall cost/benefit profile modelled could clearly be sensitive to any variations in respect of these disposals.

Sensitivity analysis on required investment and capital receipts suggests the range above. While the timing of the cost inputs can be controlled by scheduling the delivery of the opportunities, the timing of the resulting capital receipts will be less readily controlled and will be subject to market conditions. Further sensitivity has therefore been applied to the timing of capital receipts resulting in the year on year range shown below. This demonstrates a likely need for initial capital investment in year 1 in order to benefit from capital receipts and revenue savings in subsequent years.

Key Themes

In addition to the specific rationalisation opportunities, some key themes have emerged. These relate primarily to the mechanisms for future multi-agency collaboration and property sharing and the consolidation and improvement of property management information (MI).

Local Strategic Property Forums

Strategic property planning must integrate the requirements of the service directorates and ideally do this across a wide base of public sector organisations. Local Strategic Property

Forums, with representation from as many public sector organisations as possible, provide a good model for achieving this integration.

Two 'tiers' may be appropriate with a county-wide group establishing overarching principles and cross cutting work streams and more local district groups developing and delivering the specific plans and opportunities whilst engaging a greater diversity of local stakeholders.

At the county level, for example, the principles to be agreed would include the setting of public sector rent levels (perhaps at discounts to commercial rents), simplified standard lease and licence terms for property sharing, delivery of a portal for booking shared accommodation, consolidation of property management information and systems, etc. At a local or district level, the forums will have an important role in, for example, managing the release of planned disposals to optimise the value returned.

Management Information and Systems

All of the above relies on high quality management information to inform the strategic planning process.

Further improvements in the quantum and quality of property data is required as well as the systems on which it is managed. Convergence, or at least compatibility, of systems across the partner organisations will greatly assist the work of the property forums and facilitate greater asset sharing.

Back Office Accommodation

Several of the identified opportunities relate to back office accommodation and this asset class is one where the vision of shared property is readily achievable and offers real efficiency benefits. In the short term tactical consolidation possibilities can provide a 10% reduction in office space with the longer term potential to develop multi-agency shared 'hub' offices in the principal county towns, supported by a network of 'touch down' facilities in public buildings such as libraries, to enhance agile working potential. The longer term prize is space reductions in office accommodation of up to 40% overall.

Service Asset Strategies

Direct engagement with service directorates has been limited within the constraints of this review although the 'Business Leads' from each organisation provided a channel to capture their stakeholder requirements.

Many service lines are undergoing transformation themselves and are not yet in a position to articulate firm property needs in many cases, but the development of Service Asset Strategies should form another integral element of ongoing work with the Local Strategic Property Forums serving as facilitators.

Future Property Operating Models

Across the county, the stakeholders operate individual property management organisations. The strategic forums will greatly improve collaboration and provide a platform for delivering shared property consolidation.

In time, a greater level of integration may be possible with more formalised partnerships, joint public property companies and the transfer of assets to a separate legal entity considered.

Delivery Framework

A large number of specific rationalisation opportunities and 'key theme' initiatives have been identified for consideration. The scale of the delivery framework required will depend on the number and rate at which these are taken forwards.

As the holder of the largest public sector property portfolio in the county, Staffordshire County Council is well placed to lead the implementation of the property rationalisation programme but it is important that as many of the other public sector partners play as full a role as possible.

Political and executive sponsorship and support for the programme will also be key to build and maintain momentum and overcome some of the challenges that will inevitably arise.

The partners should seek to simplify governance arrangements as far as practicable and some degree of delegated authority to a representative Programme Board would be beneficial. A three tier governance structure is proposed.

Corporate: Providing the participating organisation's overarching authority for the programme and its strategic aims and objectives, agreeing collaboration principles, contributing programme funding/sites and providing robust challenge.

Programme: – a new governance layer introduced for the specific purpose of delivering the county-wide strategic property plan. This could use the existing programme architecture established within the county council's transformation programme and would need to be representative of the participating organisations. The principal work streams, sub-programmes and cross-cutting solutions would be developed at the 'programme' level.

Sub-Programme/Project / Initiative: – delivery and control of the individual elements or schemes within the programme. Many of the skills to deliver the programme exist within the partner organisations but additional resources are likely to be needed. A 'capacity' and 'capability' gap analysis should be undertaken when the firm scope of implementation is agreed.

Conclusion

There is a very good potential for estate rationalisation across Staffordshire and the size of the prize is considerable. There appears to be good support for greater collaboration across the public sector partners and the delivery of the initial opportunities identified by this review will foster closer working and integration at the same time as enhancing the portfolio while delivering meaningful financial benefits. In tandem with the development of the initiatives from the 'Key Themes', the potential for further efficiency gains exists.

The strategic property review represents one element of an iterative and continual property planning process and is not exhaustive in terms of the potential that exists. In particular, the work of the proposed local strategic property forums can facilitate the generation of ongoing opportunities for property transformation across Staffordshire.

- 1.3 One of the primary aims of this review was the identification of specific rationalisation opportunities. The three that were identified within Newcastle Borough were the rationalisation of the office estate within the Newcastle area, Newcastle Town Centre redevelopment (Sainsbury's and the civic offices sites) and Knutton Urban village (site of Knutton Recreation Centre and adjacent land/buildings – see pages 41 and 42 of the report (as attached).

2. **Issues**

- 2.1 This project provided an opportunity for the Council to engage in a comprehensive process to review the majority of publicly owned land in the Borough which will enable:

- a proper review of the potential for public sector organisations to co-locate to both, share the cost burden of accommodation and to encourage joined up service delivery.
 - The identification and release of assets for each partner to rationalise their respective land and property portfolios.
- 2.2 The release of assets will provide capital to maintain/modernise the public sector estate or alternatively promote partner led regeneration initiatives.
- 2.3 In terms of the Newcastle-specific opportunities it should be noted that programme and project management level arrangements have been established to follow the broad principles set out in the executive summary. So a Corporate Property programme board has been established (comprising senior property officers from the two local authorities) to maintain the overview of the overall programme for the borough. Whilst at a project level, arrangements have been put in place to steer the implementation of the three opportunities highlighted at paragraph 1.3. It is intended that the latter groups would report progress into Cabinet at key decision milestones.
3. **Proposal**
- 3.1 To accept the report and to note the programme and project management arrangements established regarding the opportunities within the borough.
4. **Outcomes Linked to Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Priorities**
- Shared use of public assets (sustainability)
 - Partner led regeneration (Borough of opportunity)
 - Rationalisation of assets (achieving excellence)
5. **Legal and Statutory Implications**
- Not applicable.
6. **Equality Impact Assessment**
- There are no implications.
7. **Financial and Resource Implications**
- 7.1 No significant implications arising directly from this report. There will be some 'in-kind' officer and member support to take any Newcastle-specific opportunities. There are likely to be both capital costs and receipts to be derived in due course depending on the preferred approach to disposal.
8. **Major Risks**
- 8.1 The main risk relates to the potential failure of the two local authorities (and other potential public sector partners) to agree on the preferred approach to rationalisation / joint use of the public sector estate.
9. **List of Appendices**

Appendix A - Staffordshire Public Services Strategic Property Review Report – February 2012

10. **Background Papers**

File in Property Office

Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Centre Partnership

Incorporating the
Newcastle-under-Lyme Chamber of Trade & Enterprise
and the
Newcastle-under-Lyme Partnership Against Business Crime

What is Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Centre

Newcastle-under-Lyme town centre has been a historic market town and is now located close to the growing City of Stoke-on-Trent and other significant out of town retail developments. The town centre is re-inventing itself for the future and the establishment of the partnership project is part of this process.

APPENDIX 1 Matters previously explored and still open for discussion

1. Outcomes
2. Principles
3. Measurement
4. Role & Expectations of the Public, Private and Voluntary Sectors
5. Strategy
6. Town Centre Manager qualities

Key elements that will make a difference

1. Unambiguous understanding of what the Borough Council wants to achieve from the project
2. Unambiguous support from elected members, senior managers and officers of the Borough Council
3. Financial core funding from the Borough Council for at least three years

Specific elements that will have an impact on the image of the Town Centre

1. Appointment of the Town Centre Manager/Coordinator that is able to move freely between the public and private sectors
2. Newcastle-under-Lyme brand image based on the words 'Newcastle-under-Lyme' that is consistently used and the removal of competing brand images
3. Town Centre Web site that is engaging, professional and effective
4. 'Newcastle-under-Lyme' Enjoy Card

5. Bi-monthly open meetings for all stakeholders
6. Seamlessly presented Newcastle-under-Lyme events program
7. Bi-monthly newsletter (Physical and web based)
8. Proactive town centre partnership
9. Project funding from several sources

Town Centre Partnership Structure

Irrespective of the form the Town Centre Partnership takes key to its effectiveness will be the policy, leadership, day to day direction, attitudes and behaviours of local authority elected members, officers and manual workers. It is the Borough Council that has responsibility for the town centre. The partnership can bring together, influence, represent, suggest, formulate consensus and deliver some additional services and programs but it cannot replace the Borough Council in its responsibilities.

A concern is that if an independent Town Centre Partnership is formed that is not truly representative there is a possibility of it becoming a quango sitting between the Borough Council and the stakeholders and failing to engage fully the town centre retail and business community that it is intended to serve.

Organisational arrangements

Informal organisation established around a constitution similar to the existing chamber of Trade & Enterprise.	Company Limited by Guarantee	Community Interest Company	Company Limited by Guarantee and also with charitable status. Usually termed a Trust
Flexible and simple to effect change	Protects those involved and establishes a clear degree of structure and legal accountability but profits are taxable. Directors can be paid.	Popular with government. Surpluses are taxable. Directors can be paid.	Potential to gain external funding from many sources, surpluses are kept free from tax. Trustees cannot gain financially from their involvement.

Three tiers of involvement & contribution

Stakeholders

Comprising everyone involved in the defined town centre area and invited to bi-monthly update and consultation discussions to be led by the Town Centre Manager. Initially this body will be all

embracing but after three years when it will be necessary to establish membership arrangements involvement will be restricted to those that engage fully with the project and pay membership fees.

Strategic Consultative Panel

Comprising strategic organisations such as; Keele University, New Vic Theatre, Civic Society, Council for Voluntary Service, Newcastle-under-Lyme College, community organisations, large multiple store operators, Landlords. These organisations are brought together for half-day quarterly review discussions. Representatives are also engaged in specific projects.

Partnership Delivery Panel

Comprising the individuals that demonstrate commitment to day to day action and this group will emerge from their historic actions and energetic commitment. There will be around seven independent business owners from retail, food & beverage, the market traders and night time economy, together with the Shopping Centre managers, two or more multiple chain owners or representatives together with a local authority elected representative and officers empowered to make decisions and cause actions to be taken

Delivering the Partnership

1st July every stakeholder in the following area will become members; the inner ring road, outer ring road business districts including areas such as The Barracks, Brunswick Street, George Street, Albert Street, King Street, Queen Street, Cherry Orchard, Brampton Road, Lower Street, Silverdale Road, Higherland, London Road, in other words taking into account the businesses on the periphery of the town to its natural cut off points.

There will be an open invitation meeting at which the concept and the people that will be initially delivering the partnership for the first year will be introduced. At these gathering expressions of interest will be sought from those present to become more fully involved.

Provisional Budget

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Invitations to launch event | 11. Marketing |
| 2. Enjoy Card production | 12. Travel |
| 3. Enjoy Card leaflets | 13. Education & Conferences |
| 4. Bi-Monthly agenda and briefing note production | 14. Events |
| 5. Web Site development outsourced we have costs associated with this one | 15. Meeting hosting fees |
| 6. Web Site hosting we have costs associated with this one | 16. Business cards |
| 7. Telephone | 17. Letter heads |
| 8. Newsletters | 18. Photography |
| 9. Postage | 19. Out of Pocket expenses for approved activities |
| 10. Town Centre Manager Salary & employment costs £20,000 to 30,000 full or part time | 20. Town Centre Brand - Newcastle-under-Lyme Shop! Eat! Enjoy! |

Action Points

1. Agree the budget with Newcastle-under-Lye Borough Council
2. Appoint a Town Centre Manager/Coordinator
3. Establish a data base of all stakeholders
4. Develop a list of Strategic Partners that may be involved in the Strategic Consultative Panel
5. Develop a list of all potential participants in the Partnership Delivery Panel
6. Establish budget in detail
7. Set up web site
8. Organise the launch open meeting

Appendix 1

Outcomes - What the Town Centre Partnership may achieve

1. Project an image of Newcastle-under-Lyme
People in the town centre talk in a positive way and feel confident in its future
2. People in the community talk about the town centre in a positive way and feel confident in its future
3. People within the catchment area have the town centre in their mind as a positive and enjoyable place to visit Public and private sector hold respectful and positive views of one another's roles and responsibilities
4. There exists an effective communication system that includes all town centre stakeholders
5. Public sector employees and business owners experience a positive and mutually supportive relationship
6. Local authority officers walk the streets and are recognised and welcomed as supportive partners into businesses
7. Business owners and employees are welcomed as partners into public buildings and are treated as partner investors in the town
8. There is a feeling that everything is on the table for discussion and continuous review and there are no; 'no go areas'.
9. There is a simple and constantly used Newcastle-under-Lyme brand image
10. There is a systematic approach to bringing in investment
11. There is a culture in the town and a reputation in the local authority for 'getting things done now'

Principles -The things that will underpin what is done

1. Keep things simple
2. Avoid reinventing the wheel
3. Borrow everything possible from others to make things happen quickly and cost effectively
4. Respond to requests for information and problem resolution quickly
5. Offer opportunities for the public and private sectors to understand one another and to shift perspectives to partnership
6. Take time to understand what is happening and to learn from others
7. Go and visit other organisations and town centres and bring back the best

8. Avoid the trap of adopting the 'next great idea'
9. Follow through on actions and programs with a determined focus
10. Be ready to abandon failed strategies and program openly
11. The Town centre Partnership is not about replacing the local authority as a manager of services or service provider
12. Remove the presupposition that the project is a precursor to a Business Improvement District
13. Focus on the defined town centre in order to ensure focus
14. Include only those parties that are able to contribute effectively to the town centre in such a way as to be most effective

Measurement

1. Total number of retail units
2. Number of Retail units occupied
3. Total number of office units
4. Number of office units occupied

The role & expectations of the public, private & voluntary sector

View each sector as contributing specifics to the theatre of the town centre

1. The retailers, market traders and service sector business are the actors on the stage. Should they fail to perform the performance cannot go on.
2. The public sector is the production, sales, marketing, maintenance, stewards and overall theme setters for the production.
3. The voluntary sector offer skills and resources that may contribute to the overall effectiveness of the town centre and represent a valuable resource

Private retail and service sector

1. Choose to invest their life 'time' and money in Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Centre in the belief that they will earn a living and give them a life style they wish for.
2. Pay attention to their business and its success or they won't have the money to live
3. Will support logical approaches to make the town attractive but don't have the time to be away from their business
4. Believe they are paying for the public sector to deliver the infrastructure and marketing actions to bring people to the town

Public sector

1. Bring lots of people to the town centre
2. Make the town attractive and welcoming
3. Create and project a consistent Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Centre Brand
4. Adopt do 'it now behaviour'

Voluntary sector

This area embraces;

- The Civic Society
- Community Interest Companies
- Charities
- Community groups and associations

All offer scope for consultation and participation and engagement and positive marketing and events involvement and need to be engaged.

Strategy

Borrow everything from the Stafford Town Centre Partnership model www.newcastleunderlyme-towncentre.co.uk Borrow with acknowledgements to Stafford TCP completely in every respect the www.stafford-towncentre.co.uk web site design and change the colours. Developer <http://www.staffordwebsitecompany.co.uk>

Visit other Town Centre Partnerships and learn from their experience.

Portas Review Pilots Application Form

Please ensure you fill in ALL sections of this form

Guidance on completing this form can be found at:

www.communities.gov.uk/publications/regeneration/portaspilotsprospectus

SECTION ONE		
Organisational details		
The Department will only consider applications from either local partnerships or a consortium with a single lead bidder. This is to ensure clear lines of accountability and communication.		
1.1 Organisation name (in whose name the application is being made – if a partnership/consortium/BI D, state the lead)	Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Centre Partnership	
1.2 Contact name and main role	Trudi Barnard	Pilot Co-ordinator
1.3 Address	c/o Civic Offices, Merrial Street, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, ST5 2AG	
1.4 Telephone Number (a) organisation (b) contact	(a) 01782 742461	(b) 01782 742461
1.5 Email address of contact	trudi.barnard@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk	
1.6 Website address (if any)	http://www.facebook.com/NewcastleULymePortasPilot	

SECTION TWO		
Town Team/Partnership		
2.1 Who will lead the pilot?		
Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Centre Partnership		
2.2 Who will be the Accountable Body (please attach a conformation letter)?		
Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council (letter attached)		
2.3 Please indicate the other partners involved in your application		
Please add further rows if required		
<u>Organisation Name</u>	<u>Organisation address and contact details</u>	<u>Main activities and role</u>
Aspire Group	Kingsley, The Brampton, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, ST5 0QW	Local landlord, community and business engagement, training

B-Arts	19 Barracks Square, Barracks Road, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, ST5 1LG	Cultural offer, Community/3 rd sector engagement, training and events
Blackfriars School	Abbots Way, Newcastle- under-Lyme, Staffordshire, ST5 2EY	Student and community engagement
Business Enterprise Support	The Well House, High Street, Burton-on-Trent, DE14 1JE	Business support, enterprise development
Chamber of Trade & Enterprise	49 George Street, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, ST5 1JU	Business engagement, promotion
Civic Society	4 Ostend Place, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, ST5 2QY	Community engagement and awareness of heritage
Churches Together	The Rectory, Seabridge Road, Newcastle- under-Lyme, Staffordshire, ST5 2HS	Community engagement, facilities, prayer support
Keele Science and Business Park	Keele University Science & Business Park, Keele University, Staffordshire, ST5 5BG	Business support, enterprise development, business engagement
Keele University	Keele University, Staffordshire, ST5 5BG	Student engagement, expertise and innovation
Knights LLP (solicitors)	The Brampton, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, ST5 0QW	Expertise, networking, commercial sector engagement
Legat Owen	Albion House, Albion Street, Chester, CH1 1RQ	Managing agent for Castle Walk shopping development
Newcastle-under-Lyme College	Knutton Lane, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, ST5 2GB	Student and community engagement
New Vic Theatre	Etruria Road, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, ST5 0JG	Events, community engagement, bringing in visitors
Newcastle Partnership (Locality Action Partnerships)	Newcastle Borough Council, Civic Offices, Merrial Street, Newcastle, ST5 2AG	Partner, Council, community and 3 rd sector engagement
Newcastle Taxi Association	458 Lightwood Road, Stoke-on-Trent, ST3 7EY	Community engagement, promotion
Newcastle-under-Lyme School	Mount Pleasant, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, ST5 1DB	Student and parent engagement, events
Partnership Against	42 Sterndale Drive,	Business engagement,

Business Crime	Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, ST5 4HS	trader support
Police and Community Safety Partnership	Merrial Street, Newcastle-under-Lyme, ST5 2AB	Safety and security of the town
Roebuck Shopping Centre	54-56 High Street, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, ST5 1SW	Local landlord, tenant engagement, marketing and events
Staffordshire County Council	Newcastle Borough Council, Civic Offices, Merrial Street, Newcastle, ST5 2AG	Highways Authority, Infrastructure and tourism support, community engagement
Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent LEP	mailto:peter.davenport@staffordshire.gov.uk	Strategic support, lobbying
YMCA	Edinburgh House, Harding Road, Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 3AE	Youth engagement and support, training
Market traders		Growing the market
Local retailers, bars and cafes		Playing an active role in the town team, engaging customers, promoting the town

2.4 Please explain how you will ensure information about the use of the grant, decisions made, and outcome of the projects, is made publicly available (maximum 300 words)

Putting this application together has really demonstrated the absolute necessity of great communication – using every available channel! We’re going to use a mixture of traditional and new media to tell people what we’re doing and get their continued support and feedback. We’ll monitor how successful different methods are with different groups using the council’s customer segmentation data so other towns can pick-and-mix from our successes.

This will include:

- * A 'business ambassador' - a trusted contact who regularly visits businesses to update them on projects/events/etc and reports back to the town centre partnership (word-of-mouth is still a very effective form of communication, especially with market traders and independents.
- * A dedicated town centre website (under development)
- * The Council's quarterly newspaper, The Reporter, distributed to every household in the Borough
- * Press releases to local media, e.g. The Sentinel newspaper, BBC Radio Stoke, Signal Radio, community radio stations, etc
- * Town centre Facebook community page and Twitter feed
- * YouTube videos of events and activities
- * Viral marketing through other networks such as Facebook 'friends' and 'recommends', retweets, etc
- * Specific links to students at Keele University and local schools/colleges
- * Reports to partners such as the Locality Action Partnership and the Partnership against Business Crime, which bring together community organisations who can then disseminate to their own networks

- * Regular newsletters to town centre businesses
 - * Open forum meetings
 - * Feedback at relevant meetings such as Chamber of Trade & Enterprise, Newcastle Business Panel, Cabinet and Scrutiny, etc
 - * Posters in the library, Museum, shopping mall, supermarkets, community centres, council-owned leisure facilities, McDonalds and other outlets
 - * Make use of digital technology including the Bluetooth device located in the centre of town and development of a town centre app
- (291 words)

2.5 Please explain how you will monitor and evaluate the impact of the grant (maximum 300 words)

We'll use a variety of methods to collect quantitative/qualitative data so that other high streets can replicate our methods and successes. Increasing footfall is fine but only if it translates into increased revenue for local businesses, repeat custom and a more pleasurable experience for visitors.

- * Footfall monitoring – traditionally expensive so will explore alternative cost effective solutions. We plan to use this activity to engage young people and we already have schools/colleges interested in designing footfall monitors as part of their GCSE/apprenticeship courses.
- * On-street visitor surveys to establish the feel-good factor (again this will become an engagement activity for young people by involving the college's tourism/business students)
- * Electronic surveys particularly making use of the council's well established and growing e-panel
- * Use of the council's customer segmentation data to target specific demographics
- * Website polls on the town centre and partner websites
- * Number of hits on the town centre website
- * Market stall occupancy rates
- * Shop and office vacancy rates
- * Car parking receipts
- * Twitter, Facebook and website comments
- * Google alerts
- * Surveys of specific target groups such as university staff/students, professional service companies

All supporters of the Town Centre Partnership will help with monitoring the impact of our actions by providing relevant data, where appropriate, e.g. independents gathering customer feedback, the university undertaking student awareness surveys, data on visitor numbers from the Destination Management Partnership, etc.

We will also explore ways of capturing data from local outlets on increased business – this has always been difficult to collect so cracking this nut would be a very useful outcome of the pilot

The response to marketing campaigns will be assessed using the above methods and in particular the effectiveness of our different methods of communication to different demographics. (293 words)

SECTION THREE**Criterion One: Mix**

Please check all boxes relevant to your application

TOWN/AREA NAME:

Local Authority (name): Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council

Location Type

Market Town

New Town

Rural Town

Coastal Town

Village

Large Town

Suburban

Parade

Other

Where the following information is easily accessible:

Income (detail can be found on ONS website): Newcastle-under-Lyme parliamentary constituency: Taken from table 'Annual pay - Gross (£) - For all employee jobs: United Kingdom, 2011 (provisional)'. Mean - £20,840; Percentile 25 - £10,854; percentile 75 - £27,653

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/search/index.html?newquery=employed+earnings>

High employed earnings

Low employed earnings

SECTION FOUR**Criterion Two: Strong Leadership**

4.1 Please detail your vision for your high street, and describe how you have begun to secure local support and how you will build on this to make it a reality (maximum 300 words)

We have been a market town since 1173. Our vision is to re-invent Newcastle-under-Lyme as a market town for the 21st century!

The market is key to us being a vibrant and welcoming place that appeals to a wide audience due to its range of visitor stimuli and ease of getting around. Our town will be a primary destination for all our communities to enjoy shopping, leisure time, culture, music, starting a business, buying essentials, chatting over coffee, living, learning, working, eating, dining or relaxing.

The economic downturn has stimulated people to come together to revitalise Newcastle-under-Lyme. We've established a town centre partnership comprising strong business leaders and key partners to provide strategic guidance and bring together all the formal/informal groups who will deliver our vision. The Portas review has given us a rallying point to harness momentum and energise activity around the work we've already started. The timing is

perfect for us! The partnership, in looking for the best way forward with limited resources, wants to seize the opportunity to use the Portas recommendations as way of driving change.

We're already engaged with retailers (especially independents), market traders, commercial businesses and local communities through various forums. Capital investment is ongoing, we're committed to maintaining our visual attractiveness and we're developing a cultural programme.

The word-of-mouth buzz agrees that setting up a 'town team' will make a difference to the town, coupled with a pragmatism that it won't be easy! No-one wants to see Newcastle-under-Lyme die and we will be harnessing the support of our existing and potential customers to find solutions that can be replicated elsewhere.

We know actions speak louder than words – we must DO things and then communicate effectively – this is how we plan to realise our vision!
(291 words)

SECTION FIVE

Criterion Three: Commitment

5.1 Please attach any supporting letters (from those organisations and individuals who make up your pilot), detail of proposed match funding, and any other relevant information, including detail of the percentage of landlords and businesses signed up to the pilot (maximum 300 words)

Letters are attached from a wide variety of supporters, plus numerous commendations from other sources. Over 65% of businesses in the town centre have already indicated their support and 6 multiple landlords representing over 30% of town centre properties have signed up so far.

Major capital projects over the last 3 years have made a significant difference to the town.

* Bringing the historic Guildhall back into use as the council's contact centre (c.£1.2m)

* Refurbishment of the art-deco Lancaster Building (c.£2.4m)

* 70,000sq.ft edge-of-town Sainsbury supermarket

* Newcastle-under-Lyme College (c.£48m)

* 80 bed Travelodge

* £2m refurbishment of multi-storey car park

* New community fire station

* County/Borough Council purchase of a former Sainsbury's site to facilitate retail-led development (£3.575m)

* Jubilee 2 leisure centre (c.£10.5m)

* £1.2m allocated for public realm and new market stalls

However, revenue funding will provide the glue to stick the community

together and make our vision for the town centre work.

Match funding includes:

- * Subsidised market stalls during 'Love Your Local Market' fortnight
- * £4k market support budget
- * C.£10,000 summertime 'I Love Newcastle' campaign focussing on independents (increasing start-ups/ improving footfall)
- * Time spent by partners in organising and supporting events
- * Free parking on council car parks (e.g. at Christmas)
- * Significant time input by town centre businesses into developing the town centre partnership and delivering the vision
- * Music Festival and Food Festival (financial contribution from council/participating venues)
- * Time/expertise from Keele University to explore developing their business start-up model for retail businesses
- * Town centre website set-up costs and time commitment from partners into maintaining the site
- * £300,000 for shop front improvement grants in the conservation area
- * Specialist retail advice for the Ryecroft development site
- * Business support from local support providers (295 words)

SECTION SIX

Criterion Four: Potential for improvement

We will be awarding funding on a value for money basis. It is important, therefore, that your bid can demonstrate the potential for improvement in your area.

6.1 Please set out what you consider to be the key challenges facing your high street (including current vacancy rates) and why your high street has the potential to improve (maximum 300 words).

In December 2011 the vacancy rate was 11.3%, in March 2012 it was 12.8% – mostly due to loss of multiples. However, even our fabulous independents are trading marginally so we have to increase their ability to survive.

We have a loyal customer base, but it's ageing and not affluent so our challenge is to grasp the opportunities that exist. 22% of the borough population is ABC1, significant numbers of professional service companies are based around the town, plus a private school (>1000 pupils/staff), Newcastle-under-Lyme College (9000 students/staff), Keele University (9000 students/1500 staff) and Business Park (700 employees) and the 1250-bed University Hospital employing >7000 staff.

A successful market is crucial – we're investing in the infrastructure but there's much more to do if it is to appeal to our potential customers. We're using recommendations from a strategic/retail study to guide our actions.

We have considerable potential to improve - a market town, close to a university, within a large conurbation, in need of regeneration. Independents are essential but we need a story that also appeals to multiples – not to become a clone town but to provide greater choice – attracting visitors for whom these names are commonplace, providing triggers for future growth and sustainability. Expenditure, footfall, demographics and available formats have hitherto weighed against Newcastle.

Developing the former Sainsbury site for retail use should provide suitable formats for inward investment. However, whilst retail is critical, we need more in the town if we are to attract those missing visitors and we plan to build on links with the theatre, schools, college, university and others to develop the cultural offer.

The fact that we are building mature relationships with the movers and shakers in the town gives us the confidence to initiate and trial ideas that will deliver our vision for the future. (300 words)

SECTION SEVEN

Criterion Five: Innovation

7.1 Please set out how you will test the Town Team approach, what your priorities are likely to be, and whether there are particular recommendations in the Portas review you want to test. We are particularly looking for innovative ideas (maximum 300 words)

People make our town! We need to bring organisations and individuals together with a common purpose to realise our vision. We also want to see how we can take successful ideas from unusual sources and use them to deliver our vision.

Our market is a primary focus where we will deliver demonstrable success (#4/5) - money is being spent on its physical regeneration, there is firm consensus on its importance to the town and we are already working on a plan for its future.

Working with Keele University is another priority, adapting their innovative 'business start-up model' for retail. They can also help test other recommendations; #10, making our town attractive, accessible and safe for young people and high earners; #9, the effect of different parking strategies on these two groups; #27, imaginative re-use of empty properties.

We will also focus on #1, using our town centre partnership to bring together people who are passionate about the future of Newcastle-under-Lyme town centre – and so create evangelists to enthuse others.

Concentrating on these three areas will deliver our vision whilst providing replicability and scalability for other towns - but there are other recommendations we will test.

#16 We are already talking to our two edge-of-town supermarkets about greater involvement. We'll also be engaging multiples in sharing expertise during 'Independents month' – small steps leading to stronger relationships.

#18 Some landlords are already part of the team and we will use them to engage others, with a view to setting up a landlords' forum. This may also have implications for testing #23 (public register of landlords)

#24/25 We will engage communities in developing our vision. And we'll make use of school/college/university focus groups to involve young people to determine their view of the high street of the future.

(295 words)

SECTION EIGHT

Expenditure

8.1 Please set out how much you are bidding for, (maximum £100,000), and how you propose to use it. Please explain how the pilot will be innovative and deliver additional impact. Please also provide detail of other Government funding your partnership currently receives (maximum 300 words)

Pick us for a real bargain! Our value comes not from uniqueness but in replicability and scalability to market towns, larger towns, university towns, secondary centres, urban areas and rural areas (we are a largely rural borough). Indicative costs are attached to each of our proposals, totalling £100k.

* Consolidating our town team –To be replicable this needs to be low cost so we'll be looking at innovative ways of sharing the workload but we do want funding to test the 'business ambassador' concept (£10k).

* Explore how Keele's innovative business start-up programme can be adapted to town centre businesses (£20k)

* Developing and promoting specialist markets to increase footfall/raise awareness, particularly amongst missing demographics (£10k)

* Encourage new market traders using schemes such as NMTF First Pitch campaign (£3k)

* Business support/coaching programme for start-ups, market traders and existing retailers (£5k)

* Trial and monitor effectiveness of parking solutions on footfall (£10k)

* Develop a 'route map' for involvement in the town team, particularly aimed at larger retailers and also the smallest independents. One idea is an 'event in a box' kit, showing how small shops can take advantage of events to build up a customer base (£5k)

* Monitor the effectiveness of different communication channels with different groups. In particular we will explore with young people and higher income brackets the best ways of reaching them and develop new channels (£10k).

* Learn from our biggest competitors – how can successful features of out-of-town malls be applied to a town centre (£12k).

* Work with partners to make use of innovative arts/cultural activities to get people thinking about the high street as more than just a place to shop, for example, skills development through creative industries, crafts and digital media, innovative use of vacant shops (£15k)
(297 words)

VIDEO SUBMISSION

Please upload your video to YouTube (www.youtube.com).

If you do not already have an account you will need to go to the website and use the "Create Account" option.

Please include the URL (link) below. You should not include the video itself with your application.

Video link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rnYEEYws2DBw>

Portas Pilot - First round winners

The first round 'winners' are listed below, together with the key points from their applications

Bedford, Bedfordshire - offering mentoring support for High Street businesses and community use of empty properties.

Croydon, Greater London - transforming the riot-stricken area's historic Old Town market into a thriving market, food and cultural quarter.

Dartford, Kent - opening up central spaces for use by classes and clubs, from the Scouts to Slimming World and starting a 'school for shopkeepers'.

Bedminster, Bristol - putting Bedminster on the map for Street Art and Street Theatre. A bicycle rickshaw service and a review of parking will also tackle the traffic environment.

Liskeard, Cornwall - competing against the edge of town supermarket with a vibrant arts scene, guerrilla gardening and yarn bombing to inject fun back into the town centre.

Margate, Kent - putting education and enjoyment at the heart of the town centre's transformation with courses, 'job club' services and pop up shops.

Market Rasen, Lincolnshire - drawing customers in by restoring the market town look and feel, advertising free parking and mentoring new businesses.

Nelson, Lancashire - attracting local students with a young persons café, sports activities, and a new art and vintage market.

Newbiggin by the Sea, Northumberland - better branding of the town to draw people in, improving local transport and hosting pop up shops.

Stockport, Greater Manchester - realising the character and potential of the Markets and Underbanks area with a creative arts complex, outdoor screenings, a new parking strategy and street champions.

Stockton on Tees, Teesside - live entertainment at the Globe Theatre to boost the evening leisure economy alongside specialist High Street and evening markets.

Wolverhampton, West Midlands - bringing the city will to life with modern day town criers and on-street performers and a 'dragon's den' style competition to support local entrepreneurs.

The competition to become a pilot received an overwhelming response, with over 370 applications from across the country. A second round of the competition, which will see 12 additional pilots will be announced by the end of July. The Greater London Authority are also funding a further 3 which takes the total to 15.

Unsuccessful applicants do not need to reapply, but can sharpen up their bids if they wish and submit them again by 30 June, which was also the deadline for new town teams to apply.

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