

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	Merial 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, Merial 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=rnYEWs2DBw>