

STRATEGIC INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK
FOR NEWCASTLE TOWN CENTRE

Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Centre STRATEGIC INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK

Foreword

Newcastle town centre is at the heart of the Borough's community and it is only right and proper that we invest in securing a strong and prosperous future for it. This Strategic Investment Framework sets out our ambitions for achieving this through strong leadership and co-ordinated action.

Development of this Strategic Investment Framework has been a journey that has engaged many partners and stakeholders with a shared interest in the future prosperity of Newcastle town centre and this has been invaluable in framing the aspirations that are set out in this document. Our strategic partners at Advantage West Midlands, Keele University, the North Staffordshire Regeneration Partnership and Staffordshire County Council have also played an active role in shaping development of the Strategic Investment Framework and they share our aspirations for the future development of Newcastle town centre.

Many of you participated in the 'Town Centre Summit' last summer where a number of the ideas which form the basis of this Framework were first aired. I would like to thank all of you who participated in the Summit for your collective inspiration and your commitment to the future of Newcastle. Thanks also go to Andy Spracklen of Urban 8 who has been the driving force behind a good deal of this work.

Underpinning the Strategic Investment Framework is a vision of the distinctive qualities of Newcastle Town Centre and how we might further develop these qualities if Newcastle is to perform to its potential and play its full role in the wider economic regeneration of the area. Newcastle Borough Council therefore presents this Strategic Investment Framework as a statement of our shared aspirations for the town centre and the actions needed to develop it further and also as a basis for framing both our own and our partners' investment plans for Newcastle town centre.

Kind regards,



Leader, Newcastle Borough Council

Endorsements

We present this Strategic Investment Framework as our shared vision for the future prosperity of Newcastle Town Centre

Henriette Lyttle-Breukelaar
Partnerships Director

Professor Nick Foskett
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Corporate Director (Development Services)



Mark Barrow
Chief Executive



NEWCASTLE·UNDER·LYME
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Explanatory Note

Please note that this document is structured into four parts:

Part One addresses the '**positioning**' of Newcastle Town Centre. This been drafted with a view to firmly establishing and confirming the role, identity and ambition of the Town Centre.

Part Two sets out the **rationale** and 'logic chain' for investing in the town centre. This is constructed in order to provide information and evidence to potential funders and investors, particularly public sector agencies.

Part Three is the '**framing**' of projects. This is based on extensive dialogue with a wide range of stakeholders regarding priorities. It has been prepared as an agreed action plan and programme for the Town Centre.

Part Four addresses the delivery of the programmes and projects, set out as a recommendations and advice for the partners to put in effect. This does not form part of the public part of the document

PART 1: Positioning

1. **The opportunity**
 - 1.1. **Newcastle town centre stands at an important threshold in its eight centuries of history.**
 - 1.2. **We choose, together with the collective will *and* action of our stakeholder partners, to transform our town centre as the jewel in the crown of a transformed North Staffordshire.**
 - 1.3. Economic and social change is now occurring at a more rapid pace than ever before, within an increasingly globalised world. Yet paradoxically within this context local distinctiveness – the very essence of a place – is the key to securing identity and sustainability.
 - 1.4. We have the opportunity to re-create an exciting urban market town which is distinctively Newcastle-under-Lyme, whose streets and spaces are animated by compelling design and activities.
 - 1.5. Set within the North Staffordshire conurbation, the Council commits to strong and consistent leadership of the regeneration of Newcastle town centre, particularly during these times of economic uncertainty.
 - 1.6. **In fact, the town centre is one of the Council's top five strategic priorities for investment in the Borough.**
 - 1.7. The argument for this is simple. The town centre is at the heart of the Borough community, and a key economic driver. It is here that all the Council's corporate priorities come together, and are achievable, in one place.
 - 1.8. Through the town centre we will demonstrate a dramatic shift in organisational and partnership culture towards a more creative, proactive and coordinated approach to delivering local quality of life.
 - 1.9. **We recognise that this will require us all to take bold steps and financial commitments, under the leadership of the Council with the particular support of NSRP. This means holding our nerve and making strategic investments in a planned and coordinated fashion over a long term managed programme.**
 - 1.10. In order to facilitate the delivery of the Strategic Investment Framework (SIF) we will work as partners to work more closely together and the Council is committed to organisational change and improved capacity to support this.
2. **The scale of the challenge**
 - 2.1. We do not under-estimate the scale of the challenge; though that should not dissuade or put off our collective action. Recognising this, the SIF is about setting on a journey for which short term paving actions will help to create confidence and focus to deliver longer term physical change.

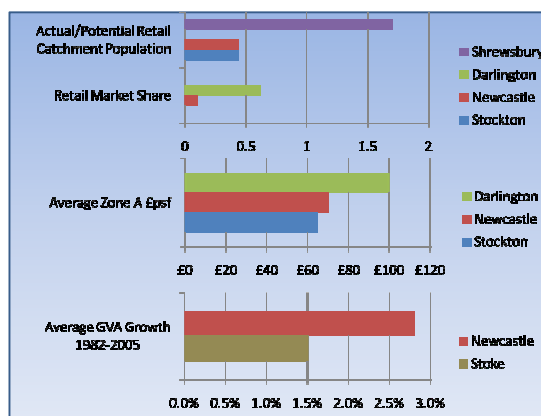
- 2.2. There are few instant fixes. As partners we are in this for the long haul, but with momentum that will achieve results.
- 2.3. The diagram below illustrates the scale of the challenge in numbers:

<p>50%</p> <p>Current occupancy rate of street market by regular traders</p>	<p>9.99%</p> <p>Newcastle's retail market share</p>	<p>20.99%</p> <p>Market share leaked to Stoke</p>	<p>£70</p> <p>Retail Zone A £psf</p>	<p>£200</p> <p>Stoke</p>
<p>134,000</p> <p>Primary catchment population</p>	<p>59,000</p> <p>Actual shopping population</p>	<p>258th</p> <p>MHE Retail Index Ranking 2008</p>	<p>214th</p> <p>Ranking in 2005</p>	<p>366,000</p> <p>Population within 12-mile drive of Newcastle</p>
<p>40%</p> <p>Percentage of top 20 retailers located in town centre</p>	<p>70%</p> <p>In Telford (2006)</p>	<p>1-3 Hours</p> <p>Amount of time 75% of respondents spend on average in town centre</p>	<p>10%</p> <p>Vacancy rate</p>	<p>3.5%</p> <p>Natural vacancy rate</p>

Sources: Retail Distinctiveness Strategy (Miller Research) and Development Options Appraisal Baseline (Cushman & Wakefield)

- 2.4. Newcastle town centre, whilst relatively stable and rather charming, is under-performing in many respects most notably (as confirmed by the recent studies noted above):
- Its ability to attract and retain customers within its catchment area
 - Representation of key multiple retailers is poor notwithstanding the desire to encourage and support the independent retail sector
 - The management and growth of its retail distinctiveness
 - There is no formal town centre partnership and manager, unlike most other significant towns within the Staffordshire county
 - Expenditure is perceived to be driven by value rather than quality, undermining the ability to attract a 'higher class' of retail, food and drink outlets.

When compared to other towns of a similar size or disposition, the figures speak for themselves; our town centre could – and should – be doing a lot better:



Adapted From: Stockton Town Centre Study (NLP, 2009)

Centre	Region	Shopper Population	Retail Ranking 2007	Zone A 2007 (£psf)
Middlesbrough	North East	260,842	33	150
Darlington	North East	166,297	61	100
Wakefield	Yorkshire & Humber	185,578	121	115
Ashton-under-Lyne	North West	85,513	177	100
Stockton	North East	82,937	189	65
Hartlepool	North East	83,796	227	110
Newcastle-under-Lyme	West Midlands	c59,000	c258	70
Leigh	North West	72,005	276	50

Note: Newcastle-under-Lyme Retail Ranking 2007 data inaccessible – MHE 2008 Retail Index data used

- 2.5. Yet despite this regional targets for additional retail floorspace in Newcastle, as set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands (RSS) are ambitious. Given the above and the current market conditions, this is a challenge. As partners working together, however, under a common direction we believe that this is also a great opportunity to ‘raise the bar’ of Newcastle town centre to a new level of economic performance and social and environmental experience.
- 2.6. The RSS Phase 2 Revision sets targets for the provision of additional gross comparison retail floorspace for the 2006 – 2026 plan period. These targets are set out in the table below:

Retail floorspace targets

	Newcastle under Lyme	Stoke on Trent
Additional floorspace (m ²) for 2006-2021	25,000	80,000
Additional floorspace (m ²) for 2021- 2026	10,000	40,000
Total	35,000	120,000

2.7. Furthermore the core strategy of the Local Development Framework covering Newcastle Borough also anticipates:

- *1400 housing units over the plan period in town centre*
- *60,000 sq.m. of business uses over the plan period focused on town centre.*

3. The need for action

3.1. The scale and nature of our challenge therefore requires a dual action approach – one that accounts for immediate-term financial constraints and longer-term value-generating opportunities.

3.2. This means that there are short term actions that we must and should do to improve the capacity and confidence of town centre stakeholders to promote and develop the town centre offer, while concurrently preparing larger, capital-intensive projects to be ready-to-go if and when additional funding becomes available.

3.3. The position with public sector funding – particularly that of the regional development agency at the time of writing – means that we have a maximum 2-year window to get major physical change onto the starting blocks.

3.4. So, there is no room for complacency. Momentum and confidence built through the process of developing the SIF has led to increased expectation and anticipation among local stakeholders. We understand this and therefore pledge to work hard to deliver.

4. Purpose of the SIF

4.1. This is an ambitious document, setting out our long term vision and direction of travel for the town centre.

4.2. It is also a realistic and practical document with clear, short term paving actions and programme for achieving the vision and, importantly, where investment should be prioritised.

4.3. Specifically we have aimed to address:

- Role and identity – how the town should see itself and its relationship with Keele University and the rest of the conurbation
- Positioning – its distinctiveness and scale (qualitative and quantitative) relative to its role and identity within the wider sub-regional context
- Principles – what the parameters are by which it should be regenerated
- Leadership – where should this come from and how should it be organised
- Quantitative – what scale of change and development we are suggesting
- Timescales – what phasing and programme we aim to work to

- Projects – what we propose to do and which projects should be gotten on with now and which ones can wait
- Funding – what is required and our general approach, being clear about what is realistic and where investment will come from
- Who does what – who should lead and who should own each project.

It is deliberately strategic, and identifies where we wish investment to be broadly targeted and is designed to be a framework that guides investment, policy, service delivery and development over the next 10 years.

The SIF draws on existing available information and the findings of a specially-commissioned retail distinctiveness strategy. At the time of writing, work is currently ongoing in respect of a development options appraisal.

As such the SIF is a document that will be continuously updated; a journey document. Momentum will be maintained through active programme management, senior management leadership and Cabinet decision-making.

5. Background work

- 5.1. In 2008 Advantage West Midlands agreed to co-fund the development of the SIF and the appointment of an interim development manager to lead and manage the process.
- 5.2. Newcastle Town Centre is identified as one of two strategic centres within North Staffordshire; Stoke on Trent City Centre being the other. As far as possible, the Council seeks to ensure that a complementary role and distinctive offer is developed for Newcastle within the conurbation, rather than a directly competitive one.
- 5.3. It has also been high on our concerns that this SIF is not simply ‘another’ study or plan, but one that is focused on delivery and fosters a more constructive delivery climate that leads to early results.
- 5.4. The following activities were undertaken in the preparation of the SIF:
 - **Strategic assessment of issues & opportunities** (initial review of previous studies and strategies, and conversations with a range of key town centre players)
 - **Best practice & comparator review** (research into comparable towns or towns that could inspire Newcastle town centre, identifying key factors that have led to regeneration success)
 - **Stakeholder, political & leadership engagement** (at all stages of the SIF process)

- **Branding workshop** (facilitated with local leaders and influential figures focused on understanding the intrinsic qualities of Newcastle-under-Lyme, which led to some 'brand values' for the Town Centre)
- **Key themes and priorities agreed** (embedded in the brand values and incorporated into the pillars of the SIF)
- **Key projects being defined** (action plan appended)
- **Outcomes being connected** (between stakeholders and agendas)
- **Programme leadership being formulated/ forward planning** (proposals outlined in this document)
- **Retail Distinctiveness Strategy commissioned** (specialist consultants undertook specific detailed research into the distinctiveness of Newcastle's retail, food and drink offer; the resultant action plan having a direct influence on the SIF and action plan)
- **A summit of nearly 60 decision-makers, funding and delivery agents** across a range of stakeholder organisations was held to prioritise and define projects
- **Task groups established** to develop the detail of projects
- **Urban design and property consultants** appointed to review development options throughout the town centre
- **Transport study being prepared** (SCC has undertaken to prepare a transport study of the longer term options for Barracks Road/ring road)
- A number of related but discrete projects are also being progressed by stakeholder organisations that will have a positive impact on the town centre.

6. Stakeholder engagement

6.1. Nearly 60 participants were engaged in a half-day summit at the New Vic Theatre on June 22nd 2009. Chaired by Andy Spracklen, the summit achieved its key objectives to:

- discuss and refine the projects
- assess their realism and strategic fit
- improve their definition
- agree on the priorities
- agree on who should lead each project
- plan the timescales for implementation, and
- sign up to the task groups to develop and implement.

6.2. Utilising action planning and strategic mapping techniques, participants covered a wide range of potential programmes and projects in breakout groups. Participants included senior and Member representatives of the following organisations:

- Advantage West Midlands
- Aspire Housing Association
- B Arts
- BIC
- InStaffs
- Keele Science Park
- Keele University
- LSC
- New Vic Theatre
- Newcastle Borough Council
- Newcastle Chamber of Trade & Enterprise
- Newcastle College
- Newcastle Local Strategic Partnership
- NHS PCT
- North Staffordshire Regeneration Partnership
- Staffordshire County Council
- Staffordshire Police
- YMCA

6.3. The summit was supplemented with extensive engagement of key partners and stakeholders throughout the development of the SIF, formally and informally, face-to-face and through partnership and steering group meetings.

6.4. Such engagement has been key to aligning our aspirations throughout the process. The branding workshop particularly drove our values for the town centre; the delivery summit very much drove our decisions regarding projects and priorities.

6.5. The summit led from a long list of programmes and projects to a shortlist. Further work was subsequently undertaken to rank the shortlist according to deliverability and stakeholders' appetite to champion. In this sense, we are encouraged that this document has been endorsed by leading delivery agents and partners.

7. Overarching aims and principles

7.1. Through the SIF and its implementation, we aim therefore:

- To bring stakeholders together into a strong **partnership** of common purpose, collaborating through marketing and promotions, festivals and events, and quality of offer and presentation. Collaboration requires trust – trust between each other and trust in the agencies that lead and deliver. This will require relationship building through a town centre

partnership, under the leadership of a town centre manager role as single focus and champion.

- To develop the **distinctiveness** of the place and facilitate, including through development where required, the establishment of a **balance** of appropriate Town Centre uses that supports this, particularly focused upon the cultural and retail offer but also seeking to enable offices, leisure and housing of appropriate scale.

Strategic principles:

- Newcastle town centre will seek to maintain **and develop** a complementary and distinctive offer to that of Stoke-on-Trent City Centre, consistent with the North Staffordshire brand and in a reciprocal strategic manner (complementarity is elaborated in Section 12).
- Newcastle will specifically develop its role as a '**character centre**', focusing particularly on revitalising the soul of the town centre, notably its street markets and marketplace.
- Newcastle will plan to meet the challenging targets within the Core Strategy of the Joint Local Development Framework (LDF), as part of our comprehensive effort to upgrade the quality of life and socio-economic critical mass of the Borough to support an enhanced Town Centre.
- Newcastle will 're-imagine' and reassert itself as an **urban** market town – a key part of the quality of life offer that in turn supports our longer term aim of becoming more recognised as a 'University Town'.
- As a University Town, Newcastle will make more of its local research and development strengths in science and technology. The focus of the relationship of the Town Centre with Keele University will be on wider economic regeneration, complementary physical development and proactive place marketing.
- Achieving this will not mean artificially relocating parts of the university to the town centre. Rather as partners we will work closely to promote new and complementary university activities in the town centre that results in a more open and meaningful engagement of academic institutions in the regeneration of Newcastle.
- As a key driver of achieving our strategic principles, the Council will promote, modernise and upgrade the quality of the street markets, keeping them relevant to our local community as well as developing a higher quality, sustainable markets culture that is distinctive and over time attracts a wider range of visitors.

- **In summary, Newcastle is an urban market town with a progressive campus university. The inter-relationship between these two identities lies in our collective need for maturing and expanding the Borough's overall quality of life offer, investing in both housing development and proactive place marketing that expands the critical mass to support an enhanced town centre.**

8. Strategic investments required

- 8.1. Strategically, our and others' investment in the town centre must be complemented with similar investment in strengthening the economy and quality of life of the town and Borough as a whole.
- 8.2. In particular, we pledge to make concerted efforts – working as appropriately with other key partners such as the Housing and Communities Agency (HCA) – to substantially increase residential development within and on the fringes of the town centre aimed at those looking for a more modern and urban lifestyle.
- 8.3. Combined with efforts to attract back businesses into the town centre, these strategic developments will be aimed at supporting the critical mass required to increase and claw back local spend.
- 8.4. Such claw-back will go hand-in-hand with a proactive and planned strategy – informed by appraisals of development options – for attracting substantial, distinctive retail into the town centre that will both expound the retail multiples offer *and* enhance the independent retail range. This will be of a scale sufficiently compelling to claw back expenditure leakage, but of a concept and feel that is intrinsically Newcastle and complementary to Hanley city centre.

9. Investment principles

Packaging:

- At the time of writing, our collective capacity to invest monetarily in Newcastle town centre is very restricted. The investments we can make therefore should be targeted to programmes and projects that are both fundable and most effective in addressing key issues.
- To maximise their impact, our investments must work as an explicit part of a package, including with those of other stakeholders and town centre investors. Investment must strategically fit within the SIF, and be implemented as part of a coordinated effort across the town, Borough, conurbation and region.
- The outcomes of our efforts will be more integrated and successful where investment addresses co-related issues that we and other stakeholders share. For example, investment in our street markets will be more effective when linked to public realm/ maintenance improvements, and training and

coaching for traders to upgrade their business and marketing skills. In turn, investment in such training will be more cost effective if developed as a conurbation-wide programme that achieves wider regeneration goals.

- Investment packages should also consider the following key strategies:
 - West Midlands Regional Economic Strategy (RES)
 - West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)
 - The NSRP Business Plan
 - North Staffordshire Integrated Economic Development Strategy
 - Stoke-on-Trent & Newcastle-under-Lyme Joint Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy
 - Newcastle Transport and Access Development Strategy
 - Newcastle Town Centre Public Realm Strategy
 - Newcastle Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
 - Other relevant national, regional, sub-regional and local plans and strategies that are adopted during the life of this SIF.

Prioritisation:

- Short-term paving actions will address key weaknesses in the capacity of the Town Centre to regenerate and grow. As a matter of urgency, we will create a single focus of the coordination and delivery of services, place marketing and development of the Town Centre through the establishment of a Town Centre Partnership and the appointment of a town centre regeneration 'champion'.
- Our focus of investment now will be on 'planting the seeds' for more capital-intensive projects to be delivered in the longer term as funds become available. For example temporary uses and marketing measures such as art displays in vacant shops and the development of a town centre shopping guide and website are an immediate investment priority. Capital projects such as the Council's aspiration for an arts and heritage centre should be brought under the spatial framework and packaging of the SIF.

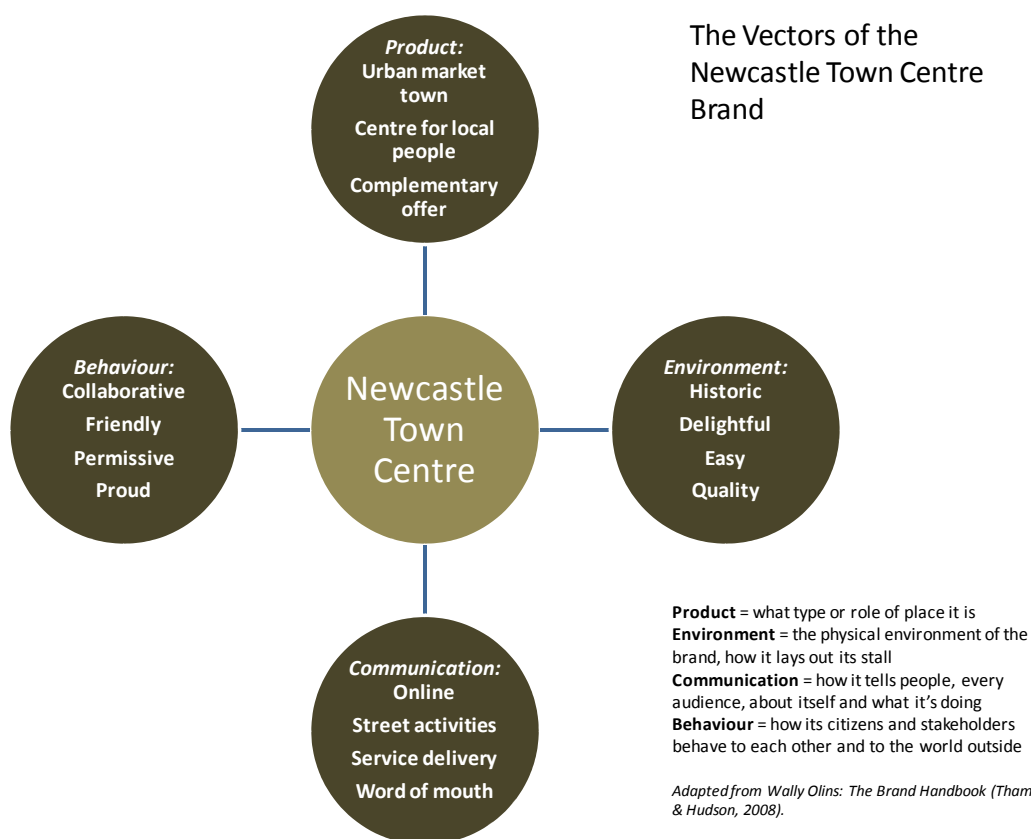
Collaboration:

- Investment between two or more partners should be mutually beneficial, clearly principled and embedded in the SIF's priorities. For example, grants for improving shopfronts should be aimed at enhancing retail distinctiveness and be part of an agreement with retailers that ensures benefits are delivered in the longer term.
- A collaborative approach will require us and other stakeholders to understand the importance and advantages of shared efforts. This will assist in building the capacity of town centre players to work towards a Business Improvement District scheme (BID).
- The greater the engagement, the lesser the propensity for freeloading. Our investment in stakeholder engagement and community support will

provide a stronger foundation upon which to broker more radical change in the town centre in the longer term.

10. Developing the Brand

10.1. Coordinating and focusing investment in the Town Centre will be very much like managing a brand. A brand commonly operates through four key 'vectors'; the emphasis of one over another will depend on the nature and audience of the brand. For a Town Centre such as Newcastle, we will need to manage all four vectors simultaneously in order to maintain and increase vitality and viability. The diagram below illustrates the vectors of our town centre 'brand' and has used as a basis for shaping the key components of the SIF.



11. The ambition level

11.1. Our understanding of the components of the brand and how this can be applied in practice is not very meaningful without a goal or ambition to aspire to and values by which we operate. Given long term cultural and organisational change will be required we have an ambitious agenda for Newcastle-under-Lyme, relative to its current position in the retail and leisure hierarchy. We will achieve this in manageable 'bite sizes'.

11.2. In line with our strategic principles, our ambition level for Newcastle is defined by its key identity as a market town, and its values that relate to its character and potential. Our town centre must work hard to reposition itself

as a 'boutique' alternative and complementary offer to the city centre, of at least the same quality ambition.

- 11.3. Playing on its heritage and character as a market town and as host town to Keele University, University Hospital North Staffordshire and Newcastle College, central to our ambition is achieving local sustainability and world-class innovation.
- 11.4. This will be the key overriding credential that will reposition Newcastle in a leading position in the crowded sub-regional landscape. This has a direct relationship with economic development imperatives to better embed Keele University into the life of the town and the general need to equip local people in the skills they will need for the post-recession new economy.
- 11.5. Such an ambition is in tune with the urgency of tackling climate change, the opportunities presented by changing global geo-politics and the heritage of ingenuity and economic adaptation in the town.
- 11.6. Our ambitions are encapsulated below:

Our ambition is	This means
<i>To be an international exemplar of a distinctive 21st century market town, that is...</i>	Our ambition level is for Newcastle-under-Lyme to be 'put on the map'. We want visitors and practitioners from around the region, UK and even internationally to hear about its pioneering and successful approach to reinventing the marketplace in the 21 st century. Exemplar projects, embedded in the character and needs of the town centre, will be promoted to help achieve this. These could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next-generation computing in the economic development of medium-sized towns • Innovative eco-solutions for market towns
<i>...Delightful</i> <i>(local/ sub-regional scale)</i>	Newcastle Town Centre is a charming, friendly and easy place to visit and get around. These characteristics and its historic market town feel should be accentuated as a first-order priority through development and public realm investment. Its urban design should generate emotions of delight and discovery. The quality and use of the public realm and the range and attractiveness of its retail, food and drink offer should compel visitors to want to use Newcastle Town Centre.
<i>...Cultured</i> <i>(regional/ national scale)</i>	We want a greater balance of arts and cultural activities taking place in the town centre, alongside significantly more people living and

Our ambition is	This means
	<p>working in it. Newcastle will become famous for one major annual or biennial festival in much the same way as Hay-on-Wye has become. Sub-regionally, the town centre will be the alternative centre of North Staffordshire, known for its vibrant arts scene, creative industries, and strong food and drink sector with the support of the whole community.</p>
<p>...Green & entrepreneurial (national/ international scale)</p>	<p>The Town Centre benefits from attractive gardens and 'green lungs' such as Brampton Park that touch its outer edges. This visual greenness should be extended into and throughout the town centre. Newcastle's award-winning Britain in Bloom will be kept up-to-date and focused on the Town Centre. The street markets will take part in this and, together with other retailers and food outlets, will significantly increase the availability of local and sustainable produce. It is though the Town Centre's approach to the new low-carbon economy that will propel it on to the international stage. Keele University is leading research in many eco-solutions. At least one of these will be of world class and applied on a larger scale to Newcastle Town Centre. Partners will make concerted and focused economic development efforts in supporting and developing the 'greening' of all local business, delivering and communicating a strong innovation and entrepreneurial culture equipped for the new economy. Our longer term goal is for Newcastle Town Centre to become carbon neutral, i.e. net zero carbon emissions.</p>

12. Managing the 'brand'

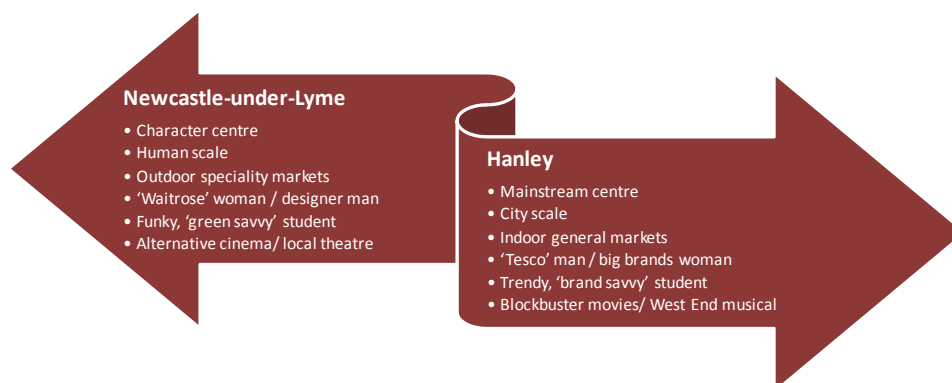
- 12.1. Bringing our strategic principles, brand vectors and ambitions together, we will manage Newcastle town centre in the following fashion.

The Product:

- 12.2. Results from market research recently commissioned, suggests that Newcastle town centre has a loyal local customer base. Newcastle does very well as a local centre serving people's everyday shopping and services (banking etc.) needs. Its complementarity with Stoke-on-Trent City Centre (Hanley) is also evidentially good, at least compared to how

local consumers perceive Hanley at the moment, but less so compared to more affluent centres such as Nantwich and Stone.

- 12.3. **All investment must therefore ensure that it explicitly benefits local customers whilst raising their aspiration, expectations and pride for the town centre over time thereby enabling it to at least maintain its complementarity with a transformed city centre.**
- 12.4. Until such time as transformation of the conurbation has reached a sufficient critical mass to support two equally strong centres, **we will position and promote Newcastle as a more alternative, speciality and independent-focused town centre with a good balance of core multiple retailers and leisure providers that give a sense of stability and familiarity.** Such multiples are more likely to be those for whom the brand of Hanley is more mainstream to attract them there, or brands such as Debenhams and John Lewis/Waitrose who have developed complementary format stores.
- 12.5. This means that whilst developing a more up-market and speciality theme to the town centre will be required, this must not equal exclusivity nor should it be to the detriment of a balanced economy that also caters for the middle consumer market. **A balanced approach to investment is crucial.**
- 12.6. Quality – in terms of friendly customer service, for example – should be a hallmark whatever the audience. This quality and the convenience and physical attractiveness of the town centre continues to attract local residents. As the city centre is transformed over time it will be important that this appeal is maintained and enhanced.
- 12.7. Given the level of investment and transformational change envisaged in Hanley, **it is strategically essential that Newcastle makes substantial strides in reasserting and developing its distinctive and alternative quality offer to Hanley over the next 2-3 years, in advance of city centre redevelopment.** With our collective drive and the Council's single focus through a town centre management approach Newcastle should aim to get ahead of the 'game' by planning and delivering on measures that positions itself as North Staffordshire's 'character' centre to complement that of Hanley as a 'mainstream' centre.
- 12.8. North Staffordshire needs two strong and healthy strategic centres that cater for both localised broad need and wider lifestyle-specific needs appropriate to their character and function within the retail hierarchy. In this sense there is a clear strategic case for a joint funding approach that nurtures and co-motivates their complementary offers.
- 12.9. A notional model for complementarity might look something like this:



12.10. **Meanwhile, the notion of a university town is more about significantly increasing the engagement of further and higher education in the social and economic development of the town, less so about physical development in the heart of it.** Nevertheless in order to make this notion credible, some physical or visual expression will be required. This could be in the form of postgraduate residential accommodation, enterprise and innovation centre, food hub or eco-education centre.

12.11. **Keele University will therefore take active steps to maintain a strong internal culture of external engagement and developmental projects that are not solely for commercial gain, but have a direct and quantifiable economic relationship with the town centre.** In turn, other partners will support the university in developing an innovative and world-class culture of research and enterprise in the Borough, together with the quality of life 'infrastructure' that will help to support that. Where appropriate, partners would consider forming a formal partnership or joint venture vehicle to help deliver this.

12.12. As a crucial part of the quality of life infrastructure, **Newcastle will revitalise its street markets as a key short term priority.** This is a core distinctive asset of the town centre which we believe must be stabilised and reinvented for future generations. Related efforts in the arts, crafts and design and food and drink sectors should be stimulated as part of a package approach to investment, and as part of generating distinctiveness and complementarity with the City Centre.

Environment:

12.13. One of the key strengths of the town centre is its architectural elegance, fine-grain townscape that is charming and surprising, and wide traditional market street at its heart. Recent market research supports this, together with a perception of convenience and friendliness; "pleasant". **These combined elements will be nurtured and enhanced through thoughtful contemporary improvements and exciting new development that accentuates its heritage, setting and human scale in a way that positively "delights" visitors.**

- 12.14. In line with this and the vision of the Town Centre SPD, opportunities will be seized to 'undo' inappropriate past developments to repair the sense of charm and legibility that characterises the historic core. Predominantly bulky, large footprint developments must **not** be an obvious feature of Newcastle town centre. Rather, **'lighter footprint' development with locally distinctive, simple materials and building forms proportionate to the human scale of the town centre will be welcomed through a more robust, proactive and coordinated approach to planning applications.**
- 12.15. Partners will work together to ensure that the pedestrian environment and access/gateways to/from the town centre are convivial, direct and inviting.
- 12.16. A town centre design manual will be developed to guide the interpretation of "quality" to all aspects of design from branding to public realm.

Behaviour:

- 12.17. Whilst market research supports perceptions of a friendly town centre, the culture of many businesses is one of at best apathy and worst deep-seated cynicism. Regrettably, this is also reflected in some parts of our own organisations.
- 12.18. Our behaviour and 'culture', as delivery agencies, will have a direct correspondence with that of stakeholders and visitors.
- 12.19. So, as strategic partners, we will work hard to make radical and urgent steps to improve collaboration between all town centre players, and to streamline, clarify and coordinate roles and responsibilities.
- 12.20. A culture of 'permission' will be developed within a defined structure so that all players feel able to make a positive contribution to the town centre through clearer and faster decision-making channels that enable ideas to be implemented.
- 12.21. We will do this through a town centre partnership approach that will be the beginning of a road to a BID.

Communication:

- 12.22. In an age of bombardment of advertising and brand placement, town centres need to have effective communication strategies. This is currently a key weakness of the town centre, for which urgent solutions are required.
- 12.23. **It is the public's experience of Newcastle town centre that must be the key priority.** This will communicate the 'brand', builds reputation and turns word of mouth into actual footfall. If our communications do not live up to their experience, the opposite happens. This is why getting the experience right must be our top priority. Where specific aspects are right,

but not being communicated well enough – such as local produce – we need to take early action.

12.24. In creating the right experience, service delivery – both in terms of public sector responsibilities such as street cleansing and private sector such as retail customer service – should be given top priority.

All players and operatives in service delivery relating to the town centre will be encouraged, trained and supported in being 'brand ambassadors' for Newcastle town centre. These players are on the front line and are critical in reinforcing the character and values of our place. Whilst behaviour as explained above is important, the messages and manner in which they communicate the message we recognise must be consistent with that and the experience we want people to have of our town centre.

12.25. Street activities will be important in supporting the experience of Newcastle town centre, both in terms of the street markets but also in terms of events, festivals and street entertainment. Such activities will form part of a strategy to re-balance the culture of the town centre and engage young people in a constructive and positive way.

12.26. In doing so, the Council will lead and facilitate the promotion of the town centre online. E-marketing is the most cost effective form of promotion and through social networking is particularly relevant to engaging those with disposable income and time, i.e. younger people and 'grey surfers'.

13. Branding and project themes

13.1. Our key values for the town centre were developed directly from a branding workshop in early 2009. These helped to create the narrative and structure for the projects, themed into three project bundles or programmes - "Remaking Retail", "Town & Culture" and "Green Ambition".

13.2. Cross-cutting all values and themes are those of **sustainability, technology and communications** that should be applied to the overall strategy and each project; founded upon partnership and the principle of achieving a balance of experience.

13.3. The overall framework is then summarised in the following diagram, which is used to frame the projects in Part 2:

Creating an international exemplar of a distinctive 21st century market town



Pillar 1: Remaking Retail

- A town centre to **delight** in
- *Getting the fundamentals and 'core business' right*
- Focuses on **town centre**



Pillar 2: Town & Culture

- A town centre to **dwel**l in:
- *Creating reasons and spaces to be in*
- Extends focus to **town & borough**



Pillar 3: Green Ambition

- A town centre to **grow** in:
- *Establishing a resilient & sustainable centre equipped for the new economy*
- Extends focus to **sub-region**

PARTNERSHIP & BALANCE

PART 2: Rationale

14. What is the case?

14.1 The strategic case for investing in the regeneration of Newcastle-under-Lyme town centre is not purely an economic one; it is a multi-dimensional one encompassing:

- Quality of life
- Lifestyle and retail choice
- Place distinctiveness
- Economic resilience
- Sustainable development and climate adaptation
- Policy objectives
- Community development
- Consumer demand
- Place positioning and marketing
- Local heritage
- Market advantage
- Economies of scale
- Public aspirations
- Governance and civic leadership
- Business support and local economic development.

- 14.2 Prior to the recent recessionary circumstances (from 2008), a key strategy document prepared by the esteemed Work Foundation supported the case for investing in Newcastle-under-Lyme town centre. It noted that:

The town is an important retail centre within the sub-region, having 7.2 per cent of main food shopping, 14.6% of clothes and footwear shopping and retaining a significant proportion of shoppers from the Newcastle-under-Lyme area. It is identified in the North Staffordshire Retail and Leisure Study as needing a small format food store in the short-term and clearly identified as having capacity in the short, medium and long-term to expand its non-food capacity in a way that is distinctive from the city centre (interviewees have suggested independent boutique shops or even specialising in designer outlets for shoes so that it develops a distinctive profile).

- 14.3 It went on to recommend that a complementary offer of Newcastle to its retail potential is its potential for growing professional services. It sums up the strategic case for Newcastle as follows:

Newcastle-under-Lyme is the other key strategic centre for North Staffordshire. It attracts around 7000 workers each day and, as the Experian update of the Integrated Economic Development Strategy shows, Newcastle-under-Lyme's economy has been performing relatively well in recent years with over half its local employment (53 per cent) in the private sector and growing its employment by 27 per cent in the last ten years. These service sector strengths also mean that Newcastle-under-Lyme is predicted by Experian, even without any interventions, to grow faster than Stoke-on-Trent to 2021.

Newcastle-under-Lyme has a strategic position within North Staffordshire being the nearest town centre to Keele University and the Science Park, sitting between Keele University and Staffordshire University, and having some areas of higher quality housing for higher income workers.

Newcastle Town does not need the substantial investment that the city centre requires, nor should development of Newcastle Town distract or detract from the vital redevelopment of the city centre. Nonetheless, it is important that North Staffordshire takes early action to capitalise upon Newcastle-under-Lyme's position as one of the most attractive places within the sub-region for knowledge intensive businesses to locate.

Specific actions should include:

- *Recognise Newcastle Town as the other key strategic town in North Staffordshire: Experian's predictions for Newcastle-under-Lyme highlight its potential to grow its private sector businesses and particularly its professional and business services, as well as to provide an independent retail offer. RENEW North Staffordshire has also identified Newcastle Town Centre as having the potential to*

“accommodate a vibrant housing market which caters for a mixed income community”. As a consequence the city centre and Newcastle-under-Lyme should both be recognised as key strategic centres in North Staffordshire (although not requiring the same levels of investment).

- *Finalise plans for Newcastle Town’s future development and make some progress on delivery:*
 - *Plans should ensure that the town maintains its historic distinctiveness as well as catering for mixed development (office and retail) that provides an opportunity to capitalise upon Newcastle-under-Lyme’s potential.*
 - *In the short term, given North Staffordshire’s shortage of knowledge intensive businesses and the fact that Newcastle-under-Lyme is in the short-term one of the most attractive places in the conurbation for these businesses to locate, we would suggest that development of professional and business service accommodation should be a key priority.*
 - *[Finalised plans] should be supported by a mix of public and private sector funding - although it should be recognised that the scale of public investment will not be as great as in the city centre. Nonetheless, as one of the most attractive town centres in the North Staffordshire area for knowledge-intensive businesses, it is important to ensure that Newcastle Town receives sufficient investment to fulfil its potential.*

14.3 The strategic case can be further articulated around the following principles and issues:

- **Economies of scale**
 - With tightening budgets across the board, collaboration between sub-regional local authorities is vital to get more done with less money to go round
 - It is in the interests of all partners therefore to identify specific areas of collaboration and co-funding through agencies such as NSRP that gives all partners win-win outcomes
- **Polycentricity as a virtue**
 - North Staffordshire’s physical characteristic as a multi-polar conurbation is often, as a result of its parochial baggage, seen as a liability rather than an opportunity
 - As society is ever-increasingly lifestyle-diverse, often towns and cities develop external facing images associated with particular lifestyles to the extent that they can become exclusive
 - Through careful and coordinated community branding, North Staffordshire has a unique opportunity to nurture the distinctiveness of all its towns and neighbourhoods in a largely

complementary fashion that enables the conurbation to be inclusive

- In this context Newcastle, as the second strategic centre in planning policy and retail ranking, is of equal importance as the City Centre – there is a rightful place for the ‘Burslems’ of the conurbation in a way that creates distinctive places
- **Newcastle as the character centre**
 - Newcastle should be pitched as the alternative centre to the City Centre in the conurbation, focusing on its characterful ambience and specifically its street markets, food & drink and cultural offer
 - In this sense, the City needs Newcastle in terms of attracting the middle and creative classes to North Staffordshire
 - It’s also about retention – without investment in the town centre, expenditure from high earners will ever-increasingly leak outside of the region
 - A strong Newcastle town centre adds to the package that investors buy into, e.g. those locating at Keele and attracting skilled workers
- **A pragmatic response**
 - Newcastle has ‘easy’ pickings in terms of development opportunities in the right condition, which can be brought forward sooner than in much of the City
 - Newcastle Town Centre is one of North Staffordshire’s two ‘Strategic Centre’ even if Stoke-on-Trent City Centre is the largest retail and entertainment centre, it simply wouldn’t be appropriate to place all of our eggs into one basket. Centres develop at different speeds and have different qualities – this is an asset for the area which we would be unwise to ignore.

14.4 Key underlying issues

- Leakage of retail expenditure – Newcastle suffers from a significant amount of retail spend leakage to nearby urban centres. Of the 134,000 estimated primary catchment area population, the town centre captures the retail spend of only 59,000 representing a considerable deficit (Cushman & Wakefield Report). As such, 20.99% of Newcastle’s retail market share is leaked to neighbouring Stoke-on-Trent (Cushman & Wakefield Report). According to research conducted by Cushman & Wakefield, the current volume of comparison retail spend in Newcastle is significantly below the PROMIS 300 centres average. The town centre has witnessed significantly below average growth in the period from 2004-2009.

- Unbalanced retail offer –
 - Lack of multiples - Newcastle town centre undoubtedly suffers from a lack of multiple retailers. Miller Research UK noted that only 40% of the top twenty retailers are represented in the town centre. As such Newcastle does not benefit from the existence of a key retail anchor. Of further concern, is that of the high street retailers interviewed on behalf of Miller Research UK, many did not see Newcastle as a target at present.
 - Value vs. Quality – Miller Research UK identified that Newcastle town centre is dominated by discount and middle range operators. Notable gaps in the retail offer include:
 - Food & Drink – adequate variety of operators , but limited ‘quality’ offer
 - Good quality national or local independent bookshop
 - Men & ladies’ fashion – absence of retailers catering for young, mid and higher range fashion.
 - Lack of good quality independent and niche retailers to appeal to local shoppers and visitors
 - Small/medium format department store
 - Small format food store
- Under-performing street markets – According to Miller Research UK, more than 60% of town centre users saw Newcastle as a market town, emphasising its historic roots as a local centre separate from the neighbouring conurbation. Despite this, Newcastle’s street market currently under-performs. The number of regular traders is approximately 50% of capacity (Miller Research UK). A distinctiveness survey carried out by Miller Research UK noted that the street markets score poorly on vibrancy and local produce/goods. Users identified that the range of goods, the quality of goods and the appearance of the street markets could be improved.
- Threat of out of town competitors – Newcastle Town Centre has lost significant footfall and expenditure over the past 15 years to both Trent Vale (Tesco, Parklands Office Park, Springfields Retail Park) and the retail stores at Festival Park in Etruria. This will be exacerbated if Tesco get planning permission to double the size of their store. Two actions are necessary to address this 1: that the City Council end their (de facto) policy of allowing out of town retail, office and leisure development and 2: that investment in Newcastle Town Centre helps make the town such a draw that shoppers, visitors and businesses will *choose* to come into town.

14.5 As a result of the leakage and the absence of a quality retail offer, retail rents in Newcastle are considered to be notably lower than in

comparable centres (Cushman & Wakefield Report). Low retail rents only exacerbate the problem by attracting further discount to middle range operators which add to the already unbalanced retail offer and distance Newcastle further from that ideal distinctive character.

- 14.6 Owing to this lack of distinctiveness, visitors to Newcastle town centre perceive it to be down-market and to lack vibrancy (Miller Research UK). These perceptions go a long way to explaining why the average length of stay for visitors in Newcastle is 1-3 hours (Miller Research UK). In relation to this short dwell time, the NLP Market Positioning Study 2003 noted that the average expenditure on both food/grocery shopping and non-food shopping was relatively low for a town centre such as Newcastle (£19.70 on food/grocery; £24.10 on non-food).

Thus any attempt to shape Newcastle town centre into a more distinctive place, requires partners and stakeholders to develop solutions that boldly address visitor perceptions, dwell times and average spends.

14.7 Leadership and Marketing

At a strategic level, Newcastle town centre suffers from a lack of coordinated leadership and promotion. This paucity was identified as early as the NLP Market Positioning Study in 2003. Research carried out as part of this study noted that 44% of the business respondents felt that the marketing and promotion of Newcastle town centre was poor. The SIF aims to address both this lack of leadership and lack of marketing / PR.

14.8 Unbalanced cultural offer

Newcastle town centre currently endures an unbalanced cultural offer with highly contrasting and conflicting daytime and evening economies. This situation is reflected in the short 1-3 hour average dwell time spent by visitors. The SIF aims to address this.

14.9 The Investment Framework approach

To develop interventions in order to address the given problems faced by Newcastle town centre, it is necessary to investigate the potential causes behind them. It is recognised however that there are two types of causes:

- The 'givens' – those that the Council and key stakeholders have no or minimal control over
- The 'opportunistic' – those that the Council and key stakeholders have the power to manipulate/influence

14.10 'Givens' – these include the town's proximity to Hanley, the economic climate and market conditions, and the underlying demographics of the area:

- **Geography** – Newcastle's geographical proximity to the main urban centre of Hanley can be identified as a key cause of retail expenditure leakage.
- **Economic climate** – the weakened economic climate undoubtedly plays a major role in the lack of retail investment in Newcastle town centre. Even in 2003, prior to the recession, 47% of businesses surveyed in Newcastle felt that the general economy was the main constraint affecting their outlet's performance (NLP, 2003). Considering the subsequent decline in the market it is likely that economic concerns have exacerbated amongst Newcastle businesses. Research conducted by Miller Research UK in 2009 noted that many national retailers have adopted a strategy of focusing on the trading performance of their existing stores and if acquisitive are targeting larger towns and cities with affluent expenditure profiles. It is therefore essential that Newcastle town centre develops a distinctive character to complement the inevitable performance of neighbouring urban centres.
- **Demographics** – the dominance of discount to middle range retail operators can perhaps be attributed to the socio-economic profile of visitors to the town centre. Research has identified that Newcastle town centre attracts a below average number of affluent customers and a high proportion of low income shoppers (NLP, 2003; Focus Town Report, 2009).

14.11 'Opportunistic' causes (can change) - Nathaniel Lichfield (2003) have explicitly related Newcastle's struggle to attract higher quality national multiples to image problems and the town's proximity to larger centres such as Hanley. These two causes fall under the given and opportunistic labels respectively. Whilst it may not be possible to directly manipulate the 'given' causes, this does not mean that the related problem cannot be solved. For example, it may not be possible to alter the *local* demographic, however delivery partners may well be able to attract outside demographics to the town centre and may be able to manipulate the behaviour of the *existing* demographic. Moreover Newcastle must develop a *complementary* retail offer in relation to nearby urban centres such as Hanley, irrespective of the fixed spatial proximity.

14.12 Property market research conducted on behalf of Miller Research UK interviewed key retailers to understand whether they would consider Newcastle as a location for a new store. Key messages included:

- Units are undersized for the Newcastle market and configuration not ideal for their purposes
- 2 retailers cited the close proximity of an existing store in Hanley as the prime reason for not considering the town

- Several retailers benefit from sufficient catchment coverage from their stores in larger towns and cities in Cheshire, Lancashire and Midlands.
- 3 retailers cited the expenditure profile, relatively small population and catchment area (or possibly in some instances a negative perception of these factors)
- Other significant factors included lack of a significant population of an affluent demographic, minimum resident shopping population of 100,000 and insufficient footfall

14.13 Aside from bringing forward higher quality and more appropriately configured retail units, it is clear from the above findings that the Council and partners need to address the retail offer and distinctiveness of Newcastle in order to manipulate constraints enforced by those 'given' causes.

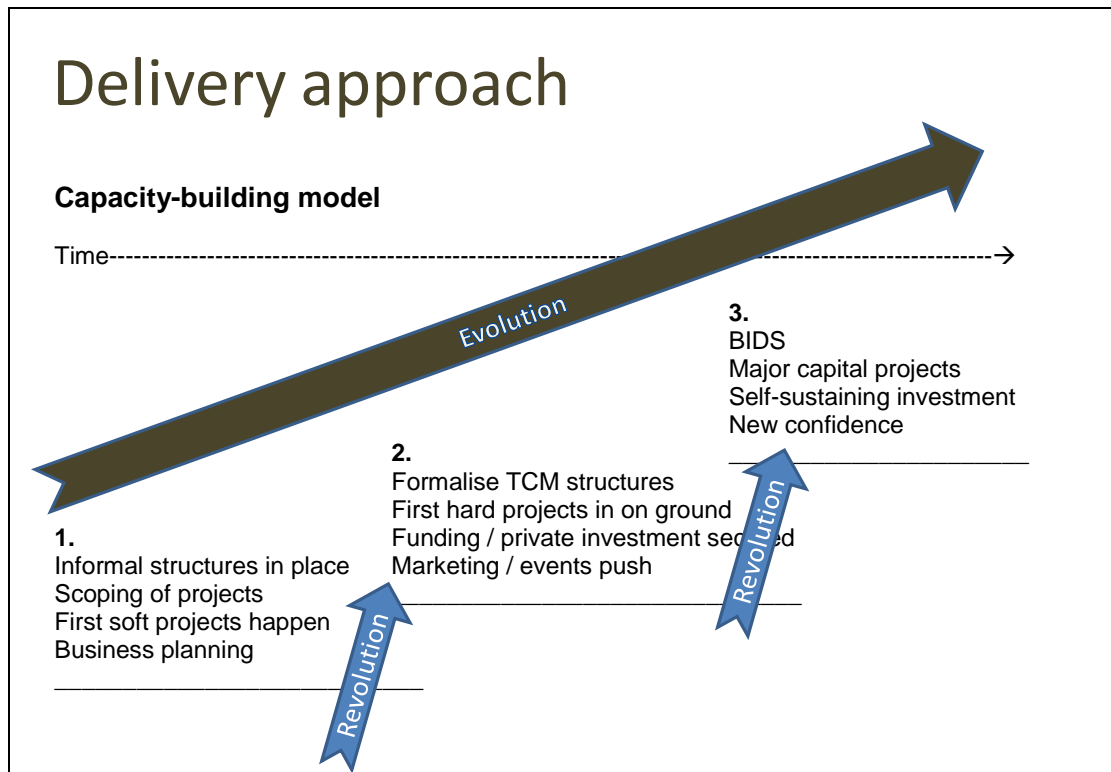
14.14 Marketing

There is no doubt that several of the challenges faced by Newcastle are interlinked and thus any potential solution must be cross-cutting. Property consultants Alder King suggest that the main reason for the lack of retail investment in Newcastle is that there is a general lack of awareness of the town within North Staffordshire and elsewhere, as well as it being blurred amongst neighbouring and competing centres such as Hanley. This suggestion clearly paves the way for, and exemplifies the benefits of, a coordinated marketing campaign for the town centre.

PART 3: Framing

15. Overall approach

- 15.1. Part 2 sets out the programmes and projects and how these will be delivered.
- 15.2. Our overall strategy for delivering regeneration of the Newcastle town centre will be a **dual approach of 'evolution and revolution'**.
- 15.3. **Evolution is required in the sense that we recognise the need for a long-term change management programme to raise ambition and equip stakeholders with the capacity to achieve such ambition.** This will require finer grain sub-strategies that build business and investor confidence, increase consumer aspirations and stakeholder competencies.
- 15.4. **Revolutionary 'leaps', however, will be required to step-change the evolutionary process to each new level of ambition and maturity of partnership along the journey of reaching our ambition.** For example, an initial revolution is required in the way in which we manage the town centre and coordinate public services in an integrated fashion. In particular, a single focus, i.e. a town centre management function, is urgently required for the town centre with access to a wider set of skills. This is something that we will be giving top priority to in 2010.
- 15.5. Allied to this will be an organisational revolution in terms of partnership and collaboration that breaks down traditional silos and professional 'territories'. Over the life of this framework other step-changes will include large-scale redevelopment schemes that will further raise the game.
- 15.6. The ultimate aim, over an initial business plan period of 3 years (2010-2013), is to establish a Business Improvement District (BID) Scheme.
- 15.7. This is reflected in the diagram below:



15.8. This reinforces the point that the SIF is not intended to be a short term wonder, but a sustained and focussed hard-graft plan for turning the town centre around and driving towards the ambitious vision over the longer term, i.e. 10 years.

15.9. Our proposed programmes and projects are therefore split between short term paving actions and long term projects, grouped under the three pillars of the framework introduced in Part 1:

- **Remaking Retail** – this is about us, as partners, getting the fundamentals of the ‘core business’ of the town centre right; significantly improving the retail offer, environment and experience, building on existing strengths and character
- **Town & Culture** – this pillar of the strategy is about us creating more reasons and spaces to dwell in the town centre throughout the day and week; addressing weaknesses such as the imbalanced cultural and leisure offer, lack of residential development and poor range of quality office accommodation
- **Green Ambition** – finally, taking a longer term and more strategic view, a range of programmes that put sustainability and technology at the heart of the regeneration of our town; repositioning and equipping our local economy as part of a North Staffordshire effort to develop the new green economy.

16. Short term paving actions

- 16.1. Long term gains will require short term pains. Such actions will pave the way for a stronger town centre. At the moment there is very little 'software' in place to produce the 'hardware' that will last.
- 16.2. As a priority, our concerted action is required to develop a Town Centre Partnership, based on efforts already taken to establish a retailers' forum and to focus the role of the Economic Development and Enterprise (EDE) group of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).
- 16.3. Alongside this, projects to develop confidence in local stakeholders and change perceptions of the town centre will be invested in. Subject to funding, these will comprise a coaching and mentoring programme for local independent retailers and marketing initiatives including online promotion to improve awareness of the town centre's offer. In parallel with promotion of this SIF itself and the delivery of visible changes, these streams of activity will be mutually reinforcing, developing a reputation of the town centre as a progressive, distinctive town centre that stands apart from the more rural image of neighbouring Staffordshire and Cheshire market towns.
- 16.4. Our paving actions will require intensive programme management, working to a clear delivery timetable that sets deadlines and targets that can be monitored and to which the Council can be publicly accountable.

17. Long term projects

- 17.1. Projects for which a longer term view will be required generally relate to major physical improvements and the redevelopment of specific sites.
- 17.2. Although at the time of writing this is being informed by independently-produced commercial options appraisals, major development projects will comprise:
 - A major retail-led mixed use scheme on the Ryecroft area of the town centre – on the condition that strategies are implemented concurrently to improve and extend footfall circulation and to address the economic structural changes to the southern High Street
 - A coordinated and civic uses-led approach to the comprehensive redevelopment of the area adjacent to the Health & Wellbeing Centre at Nelson Place
 - A phased programme of public realm transformation in synergy with the regeneration of the street markets.
- 17.3. Long terms projects are likely to require specialist skills and tight project management to ensure that they are planned to a high and thorough standard.

18. Priorities

- 18.1. Following the development of a 'long list' of programmes and projects, a short list was agreed at the stakeholders' summit in June 2009.
- 18.2. The long list was developed in consultation with the SIF steering group and incorporated actions from the Retail Distinctiveness Strategy produced by Miller Research (UK).
- 18.3. The priority projects agreed from the long list (or suggested by summit participants) are broken down in the **table below**. These have been further prioritised according to the level of project definition and sense of urgency afforded to them at the summit and during subsequent discussion.

PRIORITY PROJECTS – Tier 1: Short term paving actions & 'early wins'					
Pillar	Programme/ project	Description	Suggested leadership	Possible* funding sources	Provisional timescales
Cross-cutting	Integrated Regeneration Champion	Multi-skilled service-head level manager of the town centre programme	NBC (initially); Town centre partnership once established	Town centre partnership partners	Establish TOR & prepare business plan 2009/10; appoint 2010/11
Cross-cutting	Marketing/PR Coordination & Development	Deliver a clear and consistent message about what Newcastle has to offer	NBC lead, with support from NSRP, Enjoy Staffs, InStaffs & Keele Uni	NBC	
Cross-cutting	Long term local public/private property strategy	Options appraisals and development briefs/design coding lead to marketing of specific sites, site assembly and delivery	NBC lead; NSRP co-funding and advice	NBC; NSRP; SCC; private sector	Options appraisals & briefs by early 2010; development promotion 2010; site assembly & developer procurement 2010-2012
Remaking Retail	Retail Networking and Communication	Capacity-building, networking, awareness-raising and collective working through trade associations and business forums; leading to formalised town centre	Facilitated by NBC; championed by Chamber & Business Panel	NBC; local businesses	Initiate in 2010; limited company 2011

PRIORITY PROJECTS – Tier 1: Short term paving actions & ‘early wins’					
Pillar	Programme/ project	Description	Suggested leadership	Possible* funding sources	Provisional timescales
		partnership and eventually a BID			
Remaking Retail	Retail Support Programme	Business coaching to improve confidence, raise aspiration and equip retailers/restaurateurs with updated and new business skills to take their businesses to the next level, within the new ambition for the town centre	NBC, LSP or NSRP lead; run by private partner	NSRP partners, e.g. Business Link, EU; Chamber	Initiate in 2009/10; programme runs 2010/11
Remaking Retail / Town & Culture	Transforming the street markets (i) upgrading the Markets	Major programme of modernisation to their appearance, mix of goods and produce for sale, better promotion and links to wider retail offer; showcasing the best of Newcastle	NBC lead; championed by town centre partnership and market trader associations	NBC; SCC; national & regional food initiatives; traders/private sector	Engage traders and agree proposals 2009; new programme of markets 2010/11
Remaking Retail / Town & Culture	Transforming the street markets (ii) promoting the Markets	More imaginative and targeted marketing and promotion, focusing on presentation and promotional activities, as well as wider publicity through the media	NBC lead; supported by Chamber & Taste of Staffs	NBC; SCC; national & regional food initiatives; traders & trader associations	Engage traders and agree proposals 2009; new programme of markets 2010/11
Remaking Retail / Town & Culture	Conservation Area Shop front Grants Scheme	In conjunction with English Heritage (EH), a programme of grants for improving shop fronts and building frontages in the distinctive heart of the Conservation	NBC lead, advised by English Heritage	NBC; English Heritage match funding	Application 2009/ 2010; scheme commences April 2010 (subject to EH approval)

PRIORITY PROJECTS – Tier 1: Short term paving actions & ‘early wins’					
Pillar	Programme/ project	Description	Suggested leadership	Possible* funding sources	Provisional timescales
		Area			
Town & Culture	Establish a Local Cultural Partnership	Bring together the diverse range of arts and sports providers in Newcastle to plan, organise and publicise cultural provision in the town centre; better coordinate Council departments with a remit in culture, as part of this process	NBC lead	N/A	Establish in 2010 following intensity of work around health & wellbeing centre; Corporate Working Group already established

PRIORITY PROJECTS – Tier 2: Long term projects to start planning now					
Pillars	Programme / project	Description	Suggested leadership	Possible* funding sources	Provisional timescales
Remaking Retail	Public realm enhancement programme	Phased programme of works comprising: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interim De-cluttering & Tidy-up of Public Realm • Interim Closure of Hassell Street • Lower High Street Environmental Improvements • The Guildhall Area Environmental Improvements • Upper High Street/ Bridge Street/ Merrial Street Environme 	NBC/SCC lead; championed by town centre partnership	NBC; SCC; AWM (beyond 2012); S106/ private sector	Review of existing plans & new proposals 2009/10; De-cluttering/ interim improvements 2010/11; keynote projects from 2011/12

PRIORITY PROJECTS – Tier 2: Long term projects to start planning now					
Pillars	Programme / project	Description	Suggested leadership	Possible* funding sources	Provisional timescales
		ntal Improvements			
Town & Culture	Shops for Art/ Creative Spaces / Rehearsal & Performance Spaces	Conversion (permanent and temporary) of vacant shops and buildings to support the above; Encourage young musicians and other performers to develop their talent by identifying and allocating space to practice and perform	NBC, with support from arts groups, Keele Uni, Newcastle College & schools	NBC; Arts Council Empty Shops Initiative; NSRP partners; landowners; arts & music funding organisations ; education providers	Active discussions already underway, but no timetable currently available
Green Ambition	'Room to Grow' balanced office offer	Proactive promotion of development of range of new and refurbished office space for spin-in and grow-on businesses (professional, creative, public administration & environmental) in and around the town centre	NBC, with support from NSRP & InStaffs	Private sector; AWM	To be determined through Options Appraisal & ongoing discussions with Keele Uni; Lancaster Building on site

PRIORITY PROJECTS – Tier 3: Projects requiring further definition or champion					
Pillars	Programme / project	Description	Suggested leadership	Possible* funding sources	Provisional timescales
Remaking Retail / Town & culture	Consolidating the Food and Drink Offer in the Town Centre	Bring together the existing food and drink suppliers in Newcastle and close any identified gaps in provision – linked to increase in urban gardening and promotion of	NBC lead with support from Taste of Staffs	NBC; SCC; national & regional food initiatives; local businesses/ private sector	Promotion & skills training 2010/11; possible food festival in medium term; distinctive food quarter by 2015

PRIORITY PROJECTS – Tier 3: Projects requiring further definition or champion					
Pillars	Programme/ project	Description	Suggested leadership	Possible* funding sources	Provisional timescales
		local food through Britain in Bloom and other established local initiatives			
Town & Culture	Develop the Jazz and Blues Festival	Broadening its scope and seeking further skilled professional input to support and develop the excellent work of the current Jazz Fest team; positioning it as a major attraction for the town	Cultural Partnership, championed by local venues	NBC; Arts Council; foundations; local venues & arts organisations; private partners/sponsors	To be determined; aim for 'new, improved' festival in 2011, subject to commitment & funding
Town & Culture	Stage an International Circus Festival	Development of a distinctive new festival focused on the town centre, with its roots in the circus connections of Newcastle that affirms its new role as a festival town in the sub-region; comprising strong community outreach, education and cross-generational development	Cultural Partnership, championed by New Vic Theatre and/or other key arts organisations	NBC; Arts Council; foundations; local venues & arts organisations; private partners/sponsors	To be determined; aiming to coincide with 2012 Cultural Olympiad, subject to commitment & funding
Green Ambition	Newcastle Online/ Green Cloud**	A programme of 'green' ICT-led initiatives to increase online exposure of Newcastle shops, restaurants and businesses, and to improve connections and learning with the university/college, through projects such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> shopping/visit or portal with online shopping with local shops support for business websites 	LSP, Keele Uni or NSRP	Private sector providers; Keele Uni and high education research grants; Lottery; NSRP partners such as Job Centre Plus; Chamber of Trade; Business Panel members	To be determined; projects need greater definition, as tasked to the LSP Economic Development & Enterprise Theme Group

PRIORITY PROJECTS – Tier 3: Projects requiring further definition or champion					
Pillars	Programme/ project	Description	Suggested leadership	Possible* funding sources	Provisional timescales
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • community digital inclusion projects • town centre-wide wi-fi & cloud computing zone • public access with supporting training programmes at key hubs such as library and eco-innovation centre 			

* **Note funding sources are not currently committed;** nor programme/project leads yet confirmed. Subject to Council approvals, and those of relevant public sector partners.

**At the summit it was felt that this programme could be broader – a ‘Green Umbrella’ initiative – that puts Newcastle town centre on the map as an exemplar in reducing carbon footprint, encompassing transport, local sourcing, green energy demonstration project, loyalty card scheme, green walks and a possible eco-innovation drop-in centre. This programme therefore requires further definition, focus and stakeholder agreement. There is also clearly synergy with wider North Staffordshire initiatives that should be explored too.

19. Cross-cutting themes

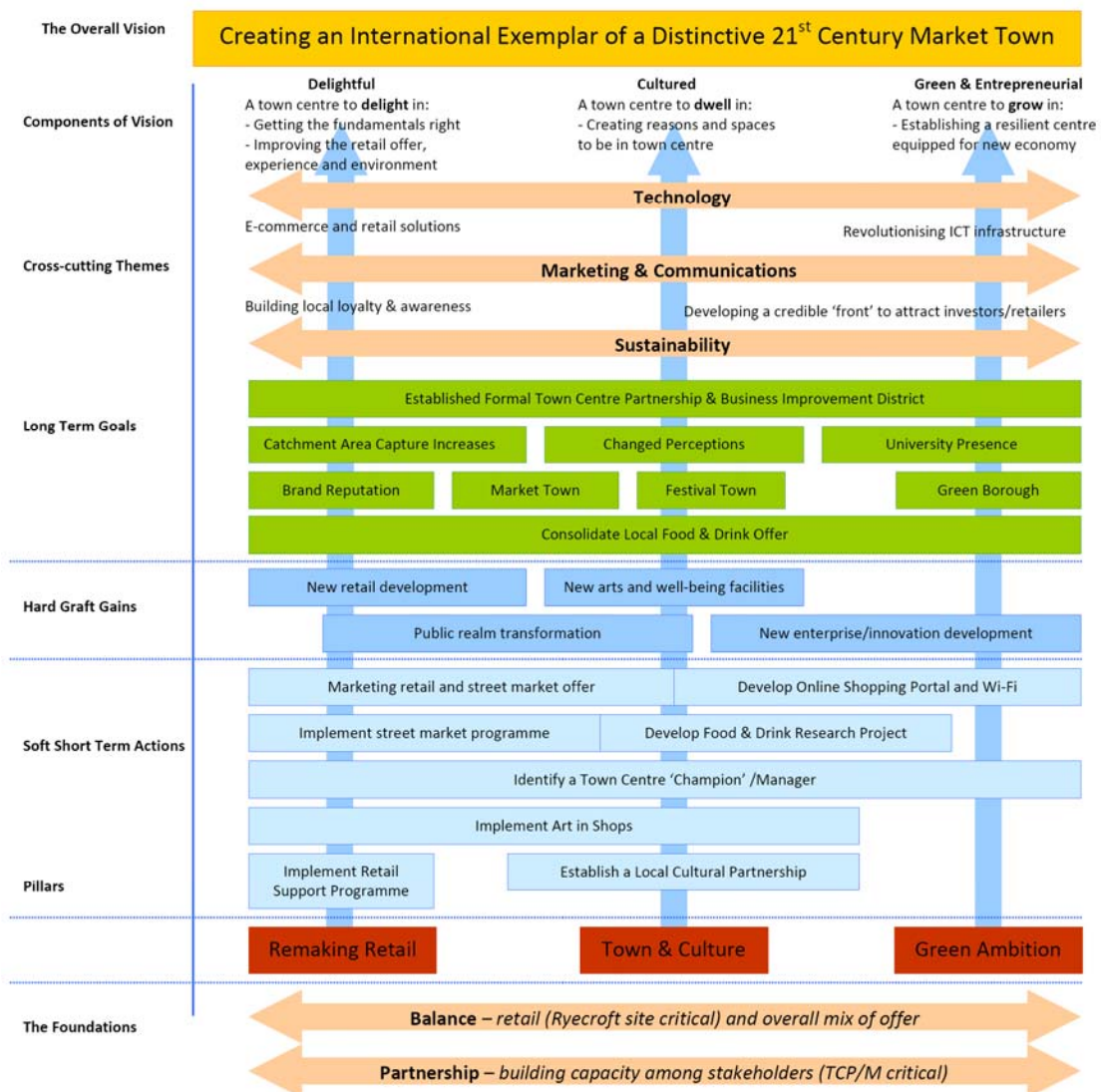
- 19.1. All our proposed programmes and projects will be founded on the principles of balance and partnership, outlined in Part 1, but we also aim to demonstrate best practice in marketing and communications, technology and sustainability.
- 19.2. **Marketing and communications** is a key cross-cutting issue. Without raising consumer, visitor and investor awareness of our town centre management and regeneration programme it will be ineffectual. We recognise that we must all work together to invest ample resources into targeted and monitored marketing– both in respect of specific projects but crucially in the promotion of the town centre offer as a whole.
- 19.3. Equally, **sustainability** will be a concurrent theme – both environmentally and economically. Without a sustainable, i.e. realistic and fundable, business plan for each projects action will fizzle out. Without a strongly green agenda to each project, actions will be inconsistent with the Green Ambition pillar of the framework and wider climate change issues. We want Newcastle to be a regional leader of

the application of green business to every aspect of our town centre, both from a branding point of view and because it makes economic sense.

19.4. Finally, we pledge to optimise new **technology** in delivering creative and innovative solutions to the needs of Newcastle town centre. Utilising the breadth of skills already prevalent in the Borough such as at Keele Science Park, Newcastle town centre is a perfect location as a ‘test bed’ of new ideas. For example, Newcastle Jazz Festival has proven the advantages of social media. We wish to take such technology to the next level, seeking ways of moving with the times and demonstrating the value of new technology to raise awareness, grow business and create an entrepreneurial culture.

20. The Framework Model

20.1. The SIF, then, as outlined in the foregoing can be summed up by the diagram below. Based on the foundations, the vision will ultimately be fulfilled through the three pillars (read from the bottom) and strengthened by the cross-cutting issues described above.



21. The action plan

- 21.1. Project development is at the time of writing an ongoing process. **An action plan** is appended at **Appendix 1** and will be updated on a regular basis.

22. The spatial consequences

- 22.1. As part of the SIF process, we have commissioned a specialist team of consultants to advise on the viability of key development opportunities across the town centre and how we can control these in a more proactive and coordinated manner. Utilising the Council and other partners' land and other property assets we will optimise the longer term opportunities to regenerate key sites in and around the town centre in a way that achieves our ambition for Newcastle town centre.
- 22.2. At the time of writing, the team of consultants are drawing up their conclusions. Their recommendations will have implications for the spatial construct of the town centre, the planning policies to support it, and the infrastructure, funding approaches and resourcing that will be require to implement it.
- 22.3. We will update this document accordingly, as we progress through the journey of delivering the SIF's aspirations.