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Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire
Local Enterprise Partnership
Board Members

Sent via e-mail



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Dear LEP Colleagues

Ceramic Valley Enterprise Zone Extension

One of the flagship projects of the Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire LEP in recent years, the Ceramic Valley Enterprise Zone (CVEZ) has become a key component of the North Staffordshire economy. As Board Members, you will be aware of the extremely positive economic impact that CVEZ has had and is continuing to deliver for not only the City of Stoke-on-Trent but also North Staffordshire. Since its launch 5 years ago, the programme has reimagined and regenerated 90Ha of brownfield land, built over 500,000 sq. ft of employment floorspace and is close to delivering 1,000 jobs with a firm pipeline for the future too.

I have been proud to lead the CVEZ project from inception, and know that its success is in no small part due to the strong partnership of the three local authorities (Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, and Staffordshire County Council), the landowners, developers and also occupiers of the sites. Certainly, its success to date has contributed strongly to Stoke-on-Trent being named the fastest growing economy in the UK when measured by jobs growth.

Unsurprisingly, we are regarded as having one of the best EZs in the country, which I know you will join me in feeling incredibly proud of.

However, the continued success of the CVEZ is predicated on both its continued commercial appeal as well as availability of land within that. As you may be aware, businesses within the CVEZ benefit from a healthy business rates exemption/reduction scheme, which has allowed a number of the sites to not only bring forward developments that addressed issues within the local commercial property market, but also supported the growth of smaller businesses into them, thereby supporting the pipeline of available premises for new businesses. The business rates element of the CVEZ ends in March 2021, meaning any business occupying after this date is unable to benefit from it, which does reduce the commercial appeal of the CVEZ, although I know a number of the developers are nonetheless confident that the positioning and success of the CVEZ to date will bridge that gap.

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We also face the challenge of availability of land within the CVEZ. Three quarters of all new floorspace is already in occupation, and there is a very healthy pipeline of investment interest. It is therefore vital that we ensure the supply of land, with the benefit of EZ status is identified, thereby further enabling investment and growth opportunities to be secured. Opportunity that is essential when considering economic recovery and planning for new-normal given the outbreak of Covid-19.

The expansion of the existing CVEZ has always been a key enabler for the Local Industrial Strategy, the current pandemic has, however, highlighted the urgency to progress this expansion through the identification of additional sites.

Both of these issues have been talking points at recent meetings of the CVEZ Project Board, and as Leader of Stoke-on-Trent City Council, we as a council have recently reconfirmed our commitment to CVEZ with an additional £14m of capital investment, on top of a previous £3m, to continue to open up the remaining sites in the city. I am aware that Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council and Staffordshire County Council are also considering similar for their site within CVEZ. I have already lobbied in recent months for both extension of business rates and sites alongside the 5 North Staffordshire MPs, in conjunction with my fellow North Staffordshire leaders - and indications through the LEP Network are that government are interested in propositions such as ours for CVEZ. Low cost but high delivery, a strong narrative and confident public/private leadership.

Given the huge success story of CVEZ I am keen to ensure that our board remains committed to both extension of business rates and also land to the CVEZ, enabling a strong and robust case to be developed and made to government, thereby ensuring that our flagship project and prime catalyst for growth in Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire continues to deliver new investment, sustainable economic growth and the jobs our residents need to access.

Whilst the LEP Local Industrial Strategy does make reference to the strength and potential of CVEZ, I feel that the Covid-19 recovery process shines a new light on the potential we have and would very much welcome your support in ensuring CVEZ continues to be successful for North Staffordshire.

I attach a copy of a recent black book outlining the CVEZ, and of course, I would very much welcome any opportunity to talk more about it!

As ever, with my very best wishes.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Abi Brown
Council Leader
Stoke-on-Trent City Council

CC: Jon Rouse, Stoke-on-Trent City Council
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