

# Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire

Enterprise Partnership

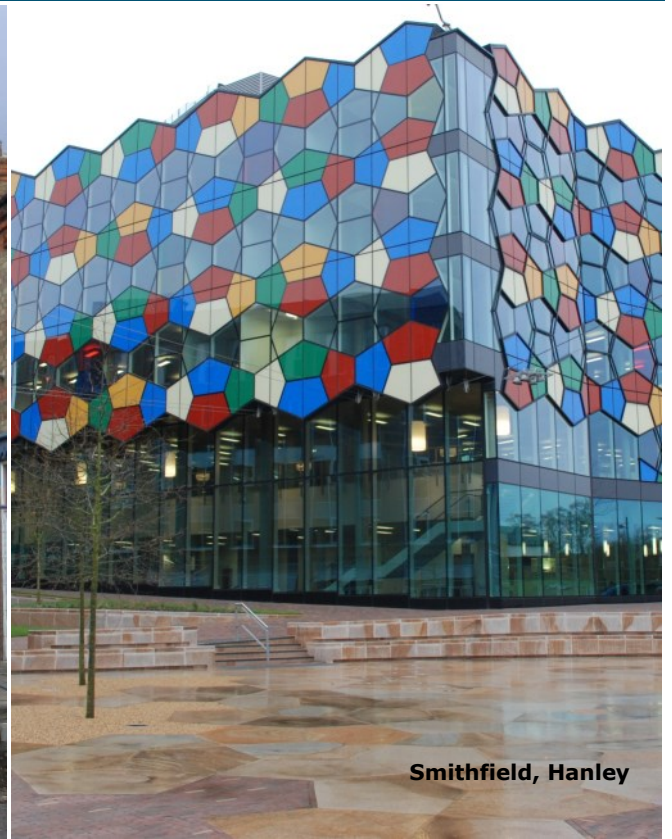


# Annual Report 2016





**University Quarter  
improvement works**



**Smithfield, Hanley**



**Branston Locks**



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# A Statement from the LEP Chairman

It has been another year of solid performance for the LEP. Our focus is on delivery. We have been successful in attracting Government funds into Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire and our priority is to ensure it is spent in ways that maximise opportunity, creating the conditions for growth and providing jobs for local people.

The scale of the funds we have attracted into the area is considerable; some £238m of public funds will flow into our area between 2015 and 2021 as a result of our successful bidding for City Deal and two rounds of Growth Deals. European funds continue their important role. This is positive news.

We have been helped in our work by the strong performance of the economy. Unemployment has continued to fall, driven by business confidence leading to more recruitment.

Much of this investment has been driven by our unique location in the centre of the country, connected to the whole of the UK by an integrated road and rail network. The LEP has facilitated this growth. We have seen the completion of Liberty business park in the south of the county. Our infrastructure investment has opened up the Meaford park in the centre of the Staffordshire and in the North we have seen the awarding of Enterprise Zone status to the Ceramic Valley in Stoke.

The Enterprise Zone is the flagship project for the LEP. Consisting of six key sites along the A500 corridor it will bring to life the concept of the wider Stoke-on-Trent area being the "world capital of ceramics".

We cannot stand still. Businesses in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire are competing globally and we are also competing for investment. We are outward looking and

are playing a leading role in the emerging Midlands Engine which is building a global brand for the central belt of the country. We have to relentlessly explain to an international audience the real benefits of locating in our LEP area.

The coming year will see challenges, not least as we negotiate a deal with the EU for a future trading relationship. Business thrives on certainty and the pressure is on the Government to deliver a deal which will allow local companies to plan for growth as well as securing their long-term future.

Your LEP will continue to focus on ensuring we have the conditions for growth. We will work with Government and others to do this. This will be helped by the unique public/private partnership that underpins our work. It brings together not only business and the local authorities, but Further and Higher Education, essential if we are to provide the skills necessary for our growing economy.

All of our partners should be thanked for their continued contribution and the collaborative way they work for the interests of the communities of Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire.



David Frost CBE, DL  
LEP Chairman





# Introducing our LEP

Local Enterprise Partnerships were established by the Government to bring all the stakeholders in local areas - from the private *and* public sectors - around the table to drive local economic growth. In total there are 38 LEPs across England.

Our business-led partnership of private, public and academic partners aims to ensure that local expertise and experience are instrumental in supporting local growth. Our wide remit allows key partners to work together to develop all aspects of economic development: setting overall priorities for local growth, negotiating significant investment for infrastructure, coordinating support for business, encouraging outside businesses to invest and trade in our area, and supporting skills development.

Our LEP is chaired by David Frost, former Director General of the British Chambers of Commerce, and includes senior representatives of vibrant local businesses, universities and local authorities. This means we have access to all the knowledge we need to ensure our area has a prosperous future full of opportunity for our people. We also work closely with local business organisations including our chambers of commerce and the Federation of Small Businesses.

To create the right climate for business the LEP is focused on:

- Stimulating enterprise, innovation and inward investment
- Bringing forward key employment sites
- Supporting towns, city and service centre developments
- Building on existing industrial sectors and those with future potential for growth
- Developing a well skilled workforce to meet current and future labour market needs
- Ensuring appropriate housing to meet the needs of current and future workforce
- Developing and improving infrastructure to promote connectivity and mobility



## Our Pledge

50

thousand  
more jobs

50

percent rise  
in GVA







10

years to  
deliver

Target set in 2011  
To be achieved by 2021



# How Does Our LEP Compare?

	aged 16-64							% Full Time	Av Salary
England	34.7m people	23.5m homes	2.24m enterprises	25.1m jobs	£1378bn GVA	£25k GVA pp	53.8% AC5EM <sup>†</sup>	68.5%	£27.8k
West Mids	3.6m people	2.5m homes	199k enterprises	2.5m jobs	£115bn GVA	£20k GVA pp	55.1% AC5EM <sup>†</sup>	68.6%	£25.6k
Our LEP	0.70m people	0.49m homes	37k enterprises	0.45m jobs	£20.2bn GVA	£18k GVA pp	54.4% AC5EM <sup>†</sup>	68.5%	£25.1k



Maier UK, Burntwood






## Map Key:

### Transport Routes:

- Motorways ..... 
- A-Roads ..... 
- Railway ..... 




Urban Centres ..... Universities ..... 

### Map Statistics :

- AC5EM<sup>†</sup> ..... 
- Dwellings\* ..... 
- Enterprises\* ..... 
- Working Age Population\* ..... 
- Jobs\* ..... 

(\*as a percentage of total numbers in the LEP)

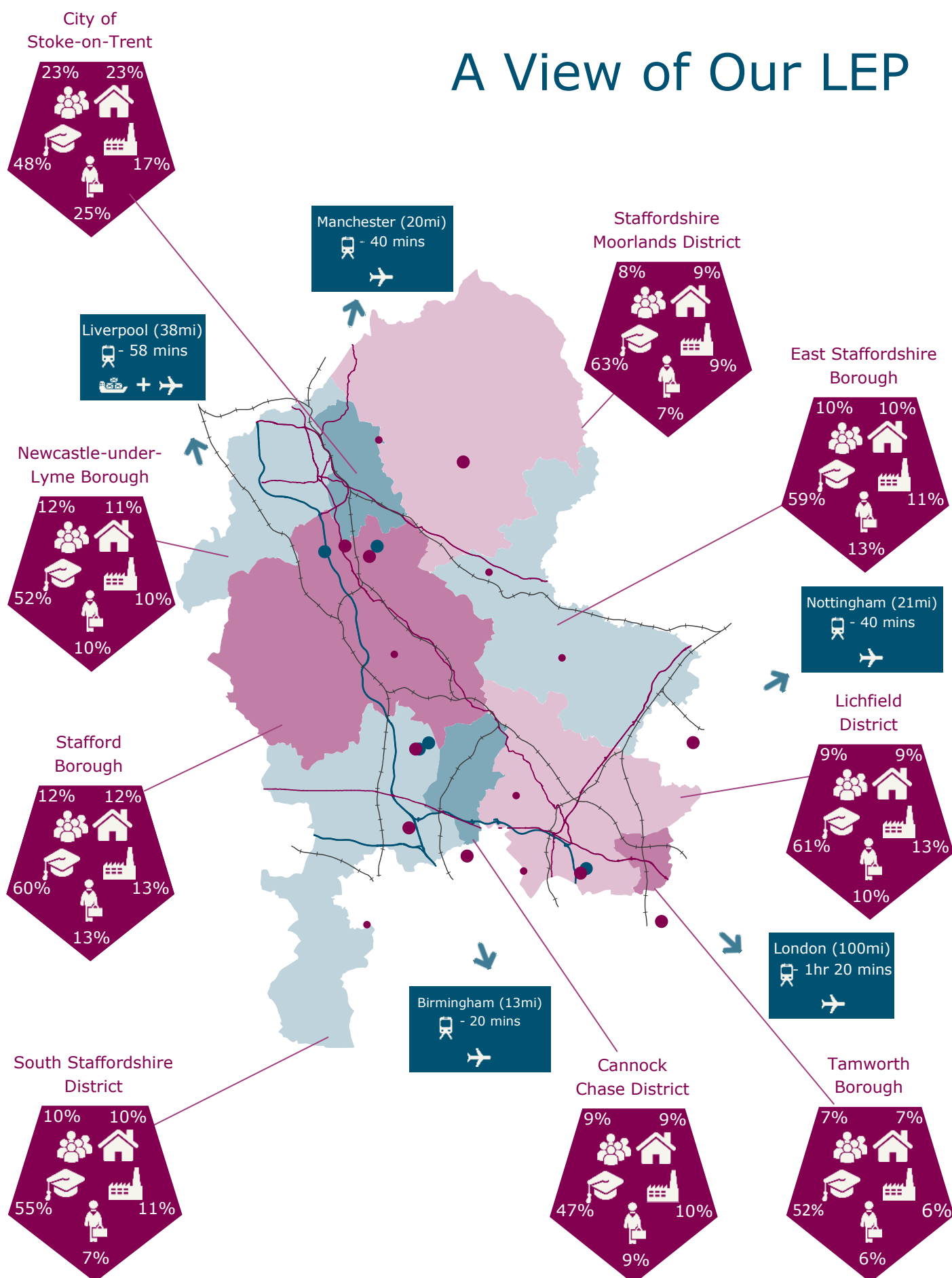
### Nearby Cities:

- Journey time by train ..... 
- City has an airport ..... 
- City has a major port ..... 

<sup>†</sup>AC5EM is the proportion of KS4 students graduating with 5 or more grade A\* to C GCSEs including English and Mathematics



# A View of Our LEP





Engineering students at  
Staffordshire University





# Our Vision

We will ensure that Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire is “an economic powerhouse driven by the transformation of Stoke-on-Trent into a truly competitive and inspiring Core City and by accelerated growth in our County Corridors and urban centres.”

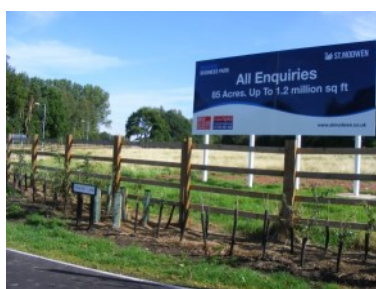
The future prosperity of the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire economy depends on growth and competitiveness within our business base. We are committed to ensuring our businesses grow, generate global customers, collaborate with suppliers, nurture new enterprise, drive innovation and draw in investment.

# Our Focus

We have identified a number of central objectives in which success will act as a driving force for growth:

## Core City

The rapid, planned growth of the city of Stoke-on-Trent through the development of a strong, competitive city centre brand offering the full mix of city centre uses.



## Connected County

Building on our central location, excellent external connectivity and existing peri-urban sites to deliver the right blend of employment sites and infrastructure to meet the needs of business.



## Competitive Urban Centres

Significantly enhancing growth opportunities within our core city and promoting the other attractive and vibrant towns across Staffordshire.



## Sector Growth

Ensuring globally competitive innovation, investment and enterprise-led expansion in large and small businesses across our priority sectors.

## Skilled Workforce

Developing a modern and flexible skills system which enables people to up-skill and re-skill to meet the needs of our growth sectors and benefit local communities.





## The smart approach to sustainability

Sustainability is a priority at Keele University. By taking action now, the university aims to become more energy self-sufficient with increased carbon saving, while also becoming a national research and development facility undertaking world-leading research in environmental sustainability. To achieve this, the university plans to work with graduates, academics and businesses to create a smart energy network demonstrator - a 'living laboratory' where new energy-efficient technologies can be researched, developed and tested in a real world environment.

Enabled by a commitment of £4.6m from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy as part of the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP's City Deal, Keele is designing the first 'at scale' smart energy network demonstrator in Europe.

This government investment, alongside targeted co-investment from the European Regional Development Fund and the university, will deliver a world-class demonstrator facility for smart energy network research and development and business support programmes. This will enable collaboration with business and industry, and the testing and evaluation of new and evolving smart energy network technologies and services.

The demonstrator will build on the university's privately-owned and managed smart energy network infrastructure, optimise energy distribution and improve the management of a range of building-based and campus-wide on site renewable or lower carbon energy sources, such as wind, solar and geothermal.

It will use a wide range of renewable and lower carbon energy sources to meet the network's energy needs and allow energy to be transferred across the network accordingly. The Keele campus is a unique model because of the diverse range of activities within it - 3,100 students in halls of residence, 1,000 commercial users on the Science and Innovation Park, 200 standard domestic households, and academic activities serving around 10,000 students. The demonstrator will be divided into five zones that can be monitored and controlled separately - this will be a European first and will allow other comparable communities to assess how to install more efficient, sustainable and secure energy using a local energy network.

The university is seeking to appoint new professorial roles to lead development of the demonstrator and to head a new collaborative research and development centre with business and industry, capitalising on this significant investment. This will include establishing a collaborative doctoral training centre with business and other universities, leading to the development of new smart energy products and services, higher value job growth in partner businesses and a significant contribution to national greenhouse gas reduction commitments.

Implementation of the smart energy network demonstrator is set to start in 2017 and it is expected that, once established, the network will have the potential to save 3,800 tonnes of carbon dioxide each year, benefit 243 businesses in the LEP area, create up to 440 jobs and support the UK renewables sector.



# Our Priority Sectors

Our business growth agenda is based on recognised strengths in key areas of advanced manufacturing, as well as a small number of other complementary sectors in which our economy performs well or has significant potential for growth.

## Advanced Manufacturing

**Energy Generation:** building on the presence of GE Power, ABB and Siemens Wind Power in our area, and the sustainable energy programme centred on Stoke-on-Trent, to meet growing local and international energy demands by diversifying into geothermal, anaerobic digestion, biomass and energy-from-waste and increasing transmission efficiency.

**Applied Materials:** building on our expertise in ceramics in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire and capitalising on the creation of the Ceramics Valley Enterprise Zone while exploiting opportunities with globally recognised advanced materials specialists - such as Lucideon - will support development of new technologies for engineering.

**Agri-Tech:** drawing on our large agricultural and forestry sector alongside research institutes such as nearby Harper Adams University and the agri-plant capacity at JCB to respond to the global need for food security.

**Auto-Aero:** capitalising on the supply-chain opportunities emerging from global businesses such as JCB, Michelin, Jaguar Land Rover, Moog, UTC Aerospace Systems and Rolls-Royce who all have significant operations in and around our area.

**Medical Technologies:** in which Keele University and companies based in its Science and Business Park are international research leaders.



## Complementary LEP Strengths

**Tourism:** National attractions such as Alton Towers, Drayton Manor, the Staffordshire Hoard, Cannock Chase, our canal network and ceramics heritage form the core of a much wider tourism offer that can both draw in day visitors to our economy and help attract and retain families living locally.

**Business and Professional Services,** including the **Digital and Creative sector**, have a crucial role in supporting the growth of our priority sectors. Our plan for urban growth, in particular the development of a Central Business District in Stoke-on-Trent, combined with our excellent connectivity, will support the expansion of this sector.







## Country life and city facilities

Country life with city facilities is proving a winning combination for a Staffordshire business development.

Dunston Business Village began life in 2008 with the small-scale conversion of redundant farm buildings into business space on a site just over a mile from Junction 13 on the M6.

Today, with the help of Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEAs Growing Places Fund, the village is home to more than 50 businesses, employing 450 people.

Growing Places provided £585,000 of funding to assist the venture in speeding up its expansion plans to meet growing demand, enabling the village to triple its size. Further development is in the pipeline, potentially creating up to 300 more jobs.

The 'village people' seeing the appeal of Dunston range from one-person start-up businesses to blue-chip firms such as Hope Construction, Jones Lang LaSalle and RPS Environmental Management, which all have regional offices at the site.

Dunston Business Village was the brainchild of entrepreneur Adrian MacLaughlin, who was looking for premises for his IT business when he came across the redundant buildings and decided to exploit the economies of scale available by creating a shared site for numerous businesses.

"All the experts said you couldn't have a successful business park in the countryside, but if you get the location and the infrastructure right people will flock to somewhere that has a better quality of working life," Mr MacLaughlin said. "They don't want to spend an hour or more a day travelling into a big city centre, and they appreciate having an attractive base that they can invite clients to.

"Growing Places has enabled us to expand at a much quicker rate, which in turn has allowed our clients to expand and take on more employees."

Dunston's location and transport links mean it draws its tenants from a wide catchment area, including Stafford, Wolverhampton, Walsall, Cannock, Stoke-on-Trent and Telford. The business village, which boasts a total of 360 solar panels plus rainwater harvesting to water its plants and landscaping, has been recognised in a string of award schemes, including regional winner and fourth place nationally in the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors Regeneration Awards.

The Growing Places fund assists firms with expansion plans such as buying or constructing new buildings, refurbishing existing premises, improving access or introducing environmental improvements. The £11m fund is designed to boost economic activity by offering firms interest-free or low-rate loans.



# Support for Sector Growth

Ensuring that our priority sectors grow depends on creating a balanced offer for the businesses who want to move to our area and those already here with ambitions to grow. We are delivering a wide range of activity to support growth with a focus on the following:

## Our LEP's Support Offer

Supporting businesses to access finance for growth, including through our own business loan fund

Supporting enterprise, both mature enterprises and entrepreneurs looking to start new ventures

Business support delivered through our comprehensive Growth Hub, including a helpline and mentoring

Helping businesses commercialise R&D and IP, and developing infrastructure and facilities for innovation

Raising our global profile, promoting inward investment and supporting businesses to increase exports

Promoting high-skill jobs, improving the skills of the workforce and linking up business and skills providers

## Case Study — Infrastructure investment paves the way at Meaford

Development of a business park, set to support 2,200 jobs on one of the area's largest brownfield sites, has been given a major boost following the completion of supporting road and infrastructure works.

Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, Staffordshire County Council and regeneration specialist St Modwen, which jointly funded the works at Meaford, near Stone, marked the milestone at an event with business and civic leaders in July.

Following a 12-month construction period, the new infrastructure provides a new roundabout on the A34, improvements to Meaford Road and a new access serving St Modwen's Meaford Business Park.

Meaford Road has been realigned and access for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders has also been improved.

Extending to around 85 acres, Meaford Business Park has outline planning permission for up to 1.2 million sq ft of office, industrial and warehouse development, and detailed

permission has recently been granted for a 36,000 sq ft unit. The Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy also granted approval in July for a new gas power station to be built on the site.

Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP chairman David Frost CBE said: "We are delighted to celebrate the latest in a series of development schemes across the area being delivered on schedule and on budget. It is yet another demonstration of the can-do attitude and successful partnership working across the private and public sector in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire."

The road and infrastructure project was carried out by Staffordshire County Council with the backing of the Government's Local Growth Fund, together with significant contributions from St Modwen. A total of £6million was also secured by the LEP.

The funding is part of an £82 million package of major Growth Deal projects being delivered across Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire by the LEP.



# Our Key Deals

In order to deliver our ambitious programme of work we are continuously negotiating with Government on a range of deals to maximise the impact of local investment from the public and private sectors. Most significant of our secured deals are the City Deal known as Powerhouse Central, the first two rounds of the Local Growth Deal, and our allocation of European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF). The government funding allocated enabled major investment with more to come in the future.

## Powerhouse Central

The Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire City Deal, Powerhouse Central, is based on four connected strands:

- Delivering a new and local approach to energy production.
- Providing local and incoming businesses with support to develop the next generation of products and materials.
- Developing local sites for new businesses or existing business to expand into, along with a strengthened local planning and development context.
- Bringing employers and education together to ensure residents have the skills and training that they and our businesses need to drive the economy forward.

To achieve this, City Deal partners are continuing to make good progress across a range of projects.

We have initiated a major energy

programme that includes the development of a District Heat Network in the City of Stoke-on-Trent, a Smart Energy Network Demonstrator at Keele University, and opportunities for energy provision at strategic employment locations.

We also have a Low Carbon Task Force up and running, in cooperation with the Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce.

We have delivered a joint Innovative Growth in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire investment programme and a Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Business Support Programme, which provides funding and support to encourage growth among local businesses in priority sectors.

Work is under way at strategic locations around the City of Stoke-on-Trent using Growth Deal funding to improve transport links and access.

We are continuing to working on improved alignment of learner demand and employer need through increased local control of the Skills Funding Agency's Adult Skills Budget and promoting the Advanced Manufacturing Training Hub, providing state-of-the-art skills training.



Deep Geothermal District Heating Network  
£19.75m from Government  
£51.25m total investment  
12.5kt less CO<sub>2</sub> per year  
1,600 construction, permanent and indirect jobs



Keele University Smart Energy Demonstrator  
£5m from Government  
£19m total investment  
440 construction, permanent and indirect jobs  
3.8kt of CO<sub>2</sub> saved p.a.



# Local Growth Deals

All 38 LEPs were asked by Government to develop Strategic Economic Plans, prioritising actions and interventions to support local growth. These strategies were used to negotiate Local Growth Deals, through which the Government is devolving significant funds to LEPs to deliver projects to benefit the local economy.

Our first deal has seen major business, transport and skills development projects getting off the ground, creating up to 5,000 jobs and 1,000 new homes. Examples include the successful completion of Liberty Park, Lichfield, which involved the construction of a new bridge over the West Coast rail line, road and infrastructure works completed at Meaford Business Park, opening up an 85-acre brownfield site, and a new road at the Bericote Four Ashes site, facilitating a number of investments including auto components manufacturer Gestamp's move to a purpose-built facility. The Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering Skills Hub's specialist training provision being delivered in Stoke-on-Trent, Newcastle-under-Lyme and Tamworth has now been joined by South Staffordshire College's new AgriSTEM development at Rodbaston.

Our round two Growth Deal focuses on town and city centre development, with major improvements to Stoke-on-Trent city centre access and public realm, alongside programmes to enhance the appeal of our attractive town centres, encouraging footfall and growing business opportunities.

We have bid for a further £45m of Growth Deal funding under round three, which is currently being considered by the Government. This £45m will be matched by a further £281m of funding from other sources to deliver more than 8,000 new jobs, more than 3,000 new homes and nearly 900,000sqm of commercial floorspace through a range of transport, employment site, and skills and R&D projects.

Total Investment Package  
City Deal and LGD 1&2  
£237.58m for 2015-2021

£124.25m LEP funding  
£15.52m Government, Growing Places & EU  
£35.02m LAs & Colleges  
£62.79m Private Sector

## Growth Deal 1 Investment Package Breakdown

- £26.7m** - Etruria Valley
- £4m** - Lichfield Park Employment Site - Completed
- £4.2m** - Meaford Employment Site - Completed
- £1.9m** - Bericote Four Ashes - Completed
- £5.1m** - Branston Interchange
- £24.3m** - Stafford Western Access Route
- £5m** - Local Sustainable Transport
- £6.9m** - Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering Skills Hub



## Growth Deal 2 Investment Package Breakdown

### Town and city centre development

- £2.95m** - Tamworth Enterprise Quarter
- £3.35m** - City centre access: North West approach
- £0.8m** - Leek Mill Heritage Quarter
- £3.35m** - City centre access: South East approach
- £1.29m** - Rugeley town centre
- £1.01m** - City centre access: South West approach
- £2.66m** - Friarsgate, Lichfield



# European Structural and Investment Funds

Our area has been nominally allocated £127.29m from European Structural and Investment Funds (at current exchange rates) which will be allocated to eligible projects which support economic and business growth in the LEP area to 2020. In addition a proportion of EU funds allocated to the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP, will need to be spent in our area given the overlapping geography of both LEPs.

Following the outcome of the EU Referendum, funding from the European Structural and Investment Funds is still set to play a key role in supporting the LEP's priorities to stimulate business growth, contribute to key infrastructure projects and raise skills levels, over the next two to three years while the UK still is a member of the EU.

Much of the LEP's indicative allocations from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and European Social Fund (ESF) are already committed and the government has stated that, provided projects and programmes seeking EU funds are contracted by this year's Autumn Statement, funding will be guaranteed even if delivery extends beyond the point that the UK relinquishes its membership of the EU.

Under ERDF, key business support programmes such as the **Growth Hub**, **Mentoring for Growth** and a range of **business grant and finance programmes**, including a £10m contribution to the **Midlands Engine Investment Fund**, are either in delivery or will be in the next six months.

Also, ERDF investment will be secured for key infrastructure projects such as the **Smart Energy Demonstrator** and **Centre for Entrepreneurship and Leadership** at Keele University as well as a **new business grant** scheme to support the conversion of redundant buildings for workshops and other economic uses across the rural areas of the LEP.

Under ESF, key programmes to develop skill levels, improve access to new jobs and tackle disadvantage are being developed in conjunction with match funding from the **Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)**, **Skills Funding Agency (SFA)** and **Big Lottery** national programmes. Committed EU investment to date is almost £36m and programmes are due to get under way by the end of the year. Outside of the national programmes proposals for a Skills Hub are being prepared for an anticipated ESF bidding in Autumn 2016.

Any residual EU funding remaining after the Autumn Statement is still expected to be available although it is

understood the government will be targeting resources at national priorities such as R&D in universities and key infrastructure projects. The Autumn Statement is expected to provide further detail on these arrangements as well as plans for successor exchequer programmes to support economic development, once funding from the EU is no longer available to the UK.



## European Union European Structural and Investment Funds

### Planned commitments to date:



**Innovation—£19.1m**  
Available for Applied Material Research and Innovation Centre  
Research labs and facilities  
Innovation networks  
Rapid prototyping and proof of concept projects



**SME Competitiveness—£35.2m**  
Available for the Growth Hub, mentoring programmes, workspace and incubation centres and business grant and finance schemes



**Low Carbon —£12.9m**  
Available for Energy Demonstrator project and specific energy saving business diagnostic and support services



**Skills, Employment and Social Inclusion—£55m**  
Available to support sector skills programmes, apprenticeships, work placements and employer engagement supported by DWP, SFA and Big Lottery national programmes

**Technical Support to Programme — £1.09m**





## High-gloss technology brings success

High-gloss paint technology is proving to be a shining success for a Staffordshire automotive supplier.

An £8.5m investment in a research and development programme and new equipment at Maier UK's plant in Burntwood has resulted in a massive increase in turnover and the creation of 70 new jobs.

Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership contributed £1.12m to the project, via the Government's Regional Growth Fund. This has helped Maier UK increase its technological capabilities and manufacture new, high-performance exterior automotive plastic parts, with a high-gloss finish.

The innovative painting process for inner and outer car components produces a sleeker, higher quality and more hard-wearing finish, which is much sought after in the luxury and premium vehicle segment of the automotive market.

Maier UK's first customer for its new premium products was Infiniti, Nissan's luxury brand, which is built at Nissan's Sunderland plant.

Since then Maier UK, part of the Spanish-based Maier group, has been selected as a Tier 1 supplier to Jaguar Land Rover, and will be supplying parts for the Range Rover and Range Rover Sport, as well as for a new vehicle currently being developed by JLR. The firm also supplies a wide range of other manufacturers with a variety of conventional and high-gloss plastic components.

Maier UK sales and marketing manager Paul McArdle said: "We identified that the trend in Western Europe was to the luxury and premium end of the automotive market and we had to invest in order to respond and take our products to the next level.

"Without this investment, these new products for UK car manufacturers would have had to be made in our Spanish factory, not right here in Burntwood."

Maier UK worked with Cranfield University to develop the new high-gloss paint, which has improved scratch-resistance and also brings environmental and energy-saving benefits in its production.

Maier UK started production at its premises in Attwood Road, Burntwood, in 2000, achieving an initial annual turnover of £2m. By last year turnover stood at £31m. Before the new investment, in 2014, the Burntwood site employed 150 people, plus 50 agency staff. Today, thanks to booming business, it has 220 permanent employees alongside the 50-strong agency contingent.

"It is very important for us to keep looking to the future, responding to a changing market, investing in R&D and investing in our staff," said Mr McArdle, pictured above right with MD Urko Zelaia.

"The Growth Fund has made a huge difference to what we have been able to achieve and investing in R&D and new technology means we are well placed and equipped to continue to grow and respond to a changing marketplace."







Ceramic Valley Enterprise Zone is part of an ambitious initiative that will continue Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire's remarkable economic growth, driving the area's already enviable reputation as a major centre of manufacturing know-how.

The Ceramic Valley Enterprise Zone is based on a simple premise, unlocking six key sites totalling 140 hectares along the strategic A500 corridor to accelerate investment in a range of employment sectors including: Advanced Materials; Energy and Power Generation; Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering; Business and Professional Services, and Warehouse and Distribution.

Ceramic Valley, launched in April after a successful bid to the Government, is all about capitalising on the unique selling point of Stoke-on-Trent and its surrounding area as the World Capital of Ceramics, taking advantage of our strong strategic location at the heart of an engineering and auto-motive triangle, creating a compelling supply chain offer and building on the momentum created through the city's unique energy offer.

Ceramic Valley Enterprise Zone is already creating an environment where businesses can locate and grow. There are currently more than 40 expressions of interest from a range of businesses across the six sites. There are already occupants on the Etruria Valley site, including DPD, one of the UK's leading time-critical distributors and Brindley Farm, a Greene King pub and restaurant enhancing the leisure offer. In addition the West Midlands Ambulance Service will be locating to the site in 2017. Other businesses occupying Ceramic Valley in 2017 include Tile Mountain, whose new warehouse is under construction on the Highgate



## Capitalising on ceramic strengths and strategic sites

site and Q-railing with a new manufacturing unit at Tunstall Arrow. These early developments already account for more than 600 jobs, providing a positive start to the achievement of an ambitious target of 9,000 jobs.

The delivery of the Ceramic Valley Enterprise Zone is underpinned by a strong offer for business with its prime location, local authority investments in infrastructure and a range of existing sector strengths. New business coming to the area can be assured a soft landing through intensive support from the Make It Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire investment service. Businesses basing themselves in Enterprise Zones can access a number of benefits including up to 100% business rate discount worth up to £275,000 per business over a five-year period and enhanced capital allowances to businesses making large investments in plant and machinery.







## From innovation to commercial reality

Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire's commitment to economic prosperity has been underlined this year with the launch of the new Applied Materials Research, Innovation and Commercialisation Company (AMRICC) – an ambitious initiative that reaffirms the region's position as the hub of materials technology.

A collaboration between academia and industry, AMRICC will help companies move innovative ideas to commercial reality more rapidly and at lower cost, especially those related to advanced ceramics, metals and polymers.

"Once a new material or process is discovered, bringing it to commercial use in the marketplace has traditionally taken 20 years or more – this results in a host of missed opportunities for all involved," said Cathryn Hickey, AMRICC's new chief executive. "It's this 'valley of death' between innovation and commercialisation that AMRICC will address. It will help industry develop, manufacture and deploy advanced materials twice as fast at a fraction of the cost."

The fast tracking of new materials to market isn't the only focus of AMRICC's work. Its team of scientists, engineers and economists will be also exploring wider uses for materials that could bring great benefit to the public.

Take ceramics for example: the wide-ranging applications for this versatile material –

healthcare, aerospace and electronics to name just a few – would not have been realised without extensive scientific exploration.

In addition to state-of-the art research and development facilities, AMRICC will also act as a breeding ground for the materials scientists of tomorrow. Working with some of the world's leading universities, AMRICC will be delivering Master's Degrees and PhDs to develop the 'commercial technocrats' of the future – materials scientists with business acumen and industrial experience.

AMRICC will not only attract inward investment and new technology companies but also, by focusing on innovation and commercialisation, will increase gross value added (GVA) for both skills and jobs locally and nationally.

With a formal launch event in October 2016, this exciting new facility is already talking to national and international companies as well as the local business community about opportunities to get involved in AMRICC – either as an investor, member or client. The ground-breaking work that AMRICC is set to conduct will both contribute to the city's economic growth and attract the future generation of materials specialists to the region.

To find out more about AMRICC visit [www.amricc.com](http://www.amricc.com) or contact Cathryn Hickey, (pictured above) Chief Executive: +44 (0) 1782 764333 / [cathryn.hickey@amricc.com](mailto:cathryn.hickey@amricc.com).



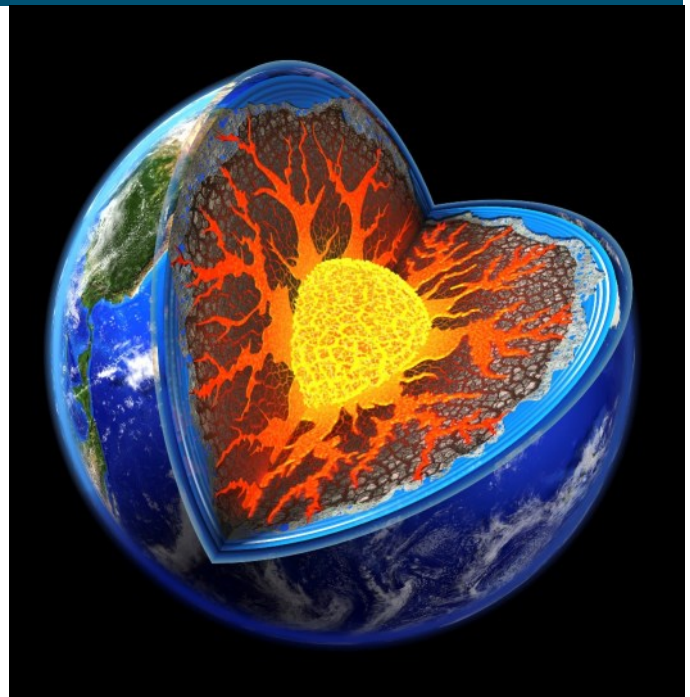
## The heat is on: making progress on exploiting deep geothermal energy

The City Deal's flagship proposal of a low carbon district heat network in the City of Stoke-on-Trent, with the ambition to utilise a deep geothermal heat source drawn from a well located on the Etruria Valley site, is now in motion with significant progress made so far.

Our aim is that energy produced locally will ensure the security of supply for the future, reduce carbon emissions in the city and provide price predictability in a price-volatile industry.

A seismic acquisition survey was successfully carried out earlier in the year to map out the geology underneath the Etruria Valley site, provide the data required to design a geothermal well base and proving the potential for the deep geothermal solution. The construction and operation of the deep geothermal well will be carried out through private sector investment. As a consequence of the successful survey a site has now been acquired by a commercial operator and planning and development work is under way, leveraging an estimated £17m investment. Once completed, the company will supply heat to the district network via heat exchangers under a long term thermal purchase agreement providing secure ultra-low carbon heat in the city.

A detailed survey of key customer buildings has taken place to profile the heat demand along the proposed network route. This will aid in the production of a fully optimised design and drive efficiency of the network. Public sector customers will provide the main anchor loads for the initial phase of the network which will then expand to include new and existing businesses as well as social housing within the city. This will provide a cost-effective alternative to traditional energy supplies allowing businesses and domestic customers to reduce their energy costs and help tackle fuel poverty in the area.



A soft market testing exercise for investment and partnering was completed earlier this year investigating different options on how to supply heat to customers through different commercial models. This confirmed strong interest in the scheme. The final business case and commercial development work now under way is due to be completed in summer 2017. Construction of the first phase of the network will start soon after with first customer connections targeted for the end of 2018.

Alongside this work, Hotspot Stoke was launched in May as the stepping stone into the UK District Heat Network through the creation of a Centre of Excellence in Stoke-on-Trent. The focus is now shifting from the theoretical question of 'why' district energy into the more practical issues of 'how' to transform visions and plans into projects and operations.

At the scheme's launch, supported by the former Department of Energy and Climate Change (now Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy) businesses found out about the four missions to deliver training, innovation, business support and international co-operation. With partners Staffordshire University, Nordic Heat and HeatNet UK the process of bringing district energy from vision to operation began. A series of masterclasses and business engagement events has already been delivered and a more detailed and extensive programme of activities is being brought together with the support of the Swedish Energy Agency.



# Enterprise Support

The **Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Growth Hub** supports and enables small and medium-sized businesses to access a wide range of business support and finance. The Growth Hub consists of a team of accredited



Tim Toft Violins, Stone

business advisors based at the Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce, working in partnership with local and national business support organisations.

The first port of call is the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Business Helpline. (**0300 111 8002**). This signposts businesses to a relevant business support organisation or for more complex issues to an in-depth review by one of the Growth Hub Advisors. The Business Helpline and Growth Hub team maintain a thorough knowledge of local and national opportunities. They work closely with a wide range of providers of business, innovation, export and trade support, and providers of grant, debt and equity finance.

## Headline Achievements

The Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire Growth Hub has helped more than 3,000 companies find the support they need to start up or grow their business.

A total of 411 diagnostics which help to identify business needs were undertaken by the Growth Hub Advisors between April 1 2014 and March 31 2016 which led to 1,871 referrals to business support partner organisations.

The Growth Hub continually monitors gaps or over-provision of services via the Enterprise Round Table, which meets bi-monthly.

Representatives of all publicly funded business support schemes which receive referrals from the Growth Hub are invited and every attendee

has two minutes to talk about their business support schemes, finance offers and future objectives.

The Staffordshire Business Helpline continues to reach new businesses every month and is averaging 320 contacts a month. In addition targeted e-shots are sent out on a weekly basis providing useful information to businesses on the helpline database.

Referrals are made to business support organisations for the majority of callers, and the GOV.UK tools available on the Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire Growth Hub website are explained.

The first two 'Growth Hub on Tour' events were very successful. At the second event, in Tamworth, Speed

Networking was trialled and this proved very popular with the attending businesses.

This was used again at the next event in Uttoxeter to help promote networking and partnership working.

At the West Midlands FSB Small Business Awards event in November, the Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire LEP proudly accepted a Highly Commended Award for the Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire Growth Hub in the Local Enterprise Partnership Recognition category.

This was instigated by the West Midlands region of the FSB to recognise and celebrate the great, and often unsung, work delivered by crucial partners for FSB members and other small businesses.



# Skilled Workforce

The work of the LEP's Education Trust is crucial in realising the aspiration to develop education and skills among all age groups ensuring successful future economic prosperity and competitiveness of Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire. The Trust's projects focus on developing a well-qualified and adaptable workforce, with the skills sets appropriate to the needs of existing business sectors as well as those with potential economic growth. The projects support the LEP priorities of apprenticeship growth, advanced manufacturing, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and improved careers education and guidance.

## Headline Achievements

### The Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering Skills Hub (AMESH Phase 1)

AMESH has delivered courses to 1,600 learners in the first year of operation, an increase of 27% against the baseline year. Stoke-on-Trent College developed new programmes for Bentley and JCB apprentices, South Staffordshire College started a two-year advanced apprenticeship in construction with Redrow Homes for 26 apprentices and Martec Training developed an introductory course in electric and hybrid cars with more than 80 students.

**A Young Ambassador Network** launched in July 2016 and has 23 young apprentices

supporting careers events and other activities to promote apprenticeships. The second Apprentice Graduation Ceremony was held in July, helping to raise the profile of apprenticeships. More than 120 apprentices graduated.

**The Locality Project**, supported by partners Young Enterprise and the Careers and Enterprise Company, is developing education and industry relationships to improve the work readiness of secondary pupils, via competitions, work experience and industry days.

**Year 1:** 3,333 pupils engaged in enterprise training; 3,600 engaged in employer activities and 1,000 engaged in work experience activity.

## Development Projects

### Skills Hub

Employer engagement and ownership of skills is critical to growth ambitions. A partnership group has been working on scoping and designing a Staffordshire Skills Hub which will provide employers and individuals access to skills information, offering a brokerage and support service and a key source of labour market intelligence. In addition to the access point it will ensure a joined up skills system and co-ordinate all skills initiatives in the local area which align with the Growth Hub, Apprenticeship Hub and Ladder, and the Careers and Employability Framework.

### Apprenticeship Growth Plan

The next stage of the Apprenticeship project will be to produce an

Apprenticeship Hub Growth Plan, which will support businesses in addressing their workforce development needs for the present and deliver growth in the number of apprenticeships available in the area, while considering the potential impact locally of the Apprenticeship Levy which comes into being in April 2017.

### The Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering Skills Hub (AMESH Phase 2)

Stafford College will be developing a technology-rich and industry leading Advanced Manufacturing and STEM centre significantly enhancing the provision of apprenticeships and traineeships. This The centre will support the delivery of employer responsive apprentice-

ship and traineeship programmes in STEM subjects ranging from level 1 through to advanced and higher levels. Facilities in the STEM centre will include Chemistry, Physics and Biology labs, an Information Technology suite, a Cadco suite, and facilities for robotics and laser 3D printing.

JCB Academy proposes to refurbish the former Dove First School to create an Apprenticeship Engineering Centre.

The AgriSTEM Academy at South Staffordshire College's Rodbaston campus will engage an additional 156 employers by September 2017 and deliver an additional 339 apprenticeships and 100 traineeships by September 2018.



# Place Building

The central location and excellent connectivity of Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire give the area a real advantage, with our key transport corridors acting as a catalyst in the attraction of inward investment.

We continue to build on and enhance the connections and infrastructure that support the continued growth of the area, lobbying Government and other agencies for support in delivering the improvements that will maintain our competitive advantages.

A balanced portfolio of good quality, well located employment land and premises is crucial in meeting our long term growth ambitions. Through our Local Growth Deals we are bringing forward the development of a range of strategic employment sites across the region, adding significantly to the attractiveness of the area for potential investors. The launch of our Ceramic Valley Enterprise Zone and rapid progress on opening up new sites for development have raised our profile nationally and internationally.

Connectivity improvements include improved access to superfast broadband and improved local transport, while creating more attractive town centres also plays a significant role.

## Headline Achievements

- ◆ Local Growth Deal investments at Bericote Four Ashes, Etruria Valley, Liberty Park Lichfield, and Meaford have opened up new high quality employment land, creating conditions for the creation of up to 10,000 jobs. This is already bearing fruit with the planned relocation of car components manufacturer Gestamp to Four Ashes, securing the firm's long-term future in the UK and providing the scope for expansion. Meanwhile the major Branston Locks development is proceeding at pace. This will see 2,500 new homes, community facilities and a 50-acre employment site developed next to the A38.
- ◆ Work has started on site to improve the road access to Hanley and around Stoke Station, with associated improvements to the public realm, as well as flood protection and town centre improvements in Rugeley. The development of more competitive centres in Leek, Lichfield and Tamworth is also progressing as part of a £15.4m investment through the Growth Deal.
- ◆ Improvements to transport across Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire through the Local Sustainable Transport Package.
- ◆ Continued rollout of superfast broadband in partnership with BDUK and assisting businesses to access broadband through Connection Vouchers initiatives. A total of 436,000 premises across the county can now access 24Mbps broadband.
- ◆ Continued work with Highways England to improve the A50 at Uttoxeter and identifying opportunities for further improvements to the strategic highway network across Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire.
- ◆ Working with partners across the West and East Midlands through the Midlands Engine and the associated Midlands Connect transport initiative to improve connectivity and maximise opportunities for economic growth across the Midlands.
- ◆ Working with our partners in Cheshire and Warrington LEP and a range of local authorities on the Northern Gateway Development Zone, aiming to capitalise on our strategic location linking the Midlands Engine and the Northern Powerhouse and promote a package of development sites.
- ◆ Working to maximise the benefits of HS2 for Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire while safeguarding and enhancing other rail links.



# Inward Investment

Make it Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire, the inward investment team, work on behalf of Staffordshire County Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council and the LEP to attract new business investment into the area as well as support our existing companies to expand. The team promote the full range of benefits that will enable businesses to continue to grow.

The team liaise with potential investors and intermediaries to ensure that they can find what they are looking for in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire and that they receive a full package of support to facilitate their investment.

The emphasis of the Make It Inward Investment Strategy is on promoting our sector strengths within the UK's offer to inward investors and to distinguish our specific offer from other locations, both in the UK and overseas, utilising multipliers and promoting our key sites and assets. We prioritise the targeting of large, high value and fast growing companies in our key sectors and markets, aligning propositions to customer requirements.

Looking to the future, we are enhancing the approach to inward investment through targeted lead generation and a structured approach to investor development and key account management, working with lead generation specialists to utilise market research and intelligent targeting to identify and profile key prospects.

## Headline Achievements

- ◆ Make It Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire assisted 21 companies to relocate or expand within the LEP area during the financial year 2015/16. This resulted in the creation/safeguarding of 2,122 jobs in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire.
- ◆ There were a total of 18 Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) projects in our region in 2015/16. These led to the creation of 1,094 jobs. Of the 18 FDI projects, five were supported by Make It on behalf of the LEP.
- ◆ A key element of lead generation is a calendar of sector-focused events, marketing and campaigns. This includes international property show MIPIM and MIPIM UK, and automotive exhibition Automechanika. The team joined other West Midlands partners at Automechanika in Birmingham in June 2016 as part of the Drive West Midlands initiative to promote the area as the home of the UK automotive industry. It followed on from the Society for Motor Manufacturers and Traders Open Forum in October 2015 and Advanced Engineering UK in November 2015. These were opportunities to engage with key players in the automotive sector including up to 400 companies in the supply chain.
- ◆ MIPIM UK in October 2015 saw the launch of the Northern Gateway Development Zone (NGDZ), aiming to capitalise on the Government's investment in HS2. Visitors to the Make It stand included five government ministers.
- ◆ At MIPIM 2016 in Cannes the team's key targets were developers (commercial and residential), property investors, and decision-makers in government. Events included the launch of the NGDZ prospectus, a seminar on growth in the NGDZ area targeted at developers and investors and a session on our enterprise zones. We were also involved in the launch of the Midlands Engine Regeneration Opportunities Pitchbook and this will be followed up in 2017 with the team exhibiting in a new UK Midlands pavilion.
- ◆ The Make it team also took lead generation overseas by exhibiting at Ceramics Expo in Cleveland in April 2016 and the International Ceramics Festival in Jingdezhen, China in October 2015, using these events as joint trade and investment missions with local companies.
- ◆ In partnership with the Department for International Trade (DIT) the Make it team joined a pilot of the Project Matchmaker programme where LEPs are matched with overseas DIT posts according to their sector strengths. We were linked with Central and Eastern Europe for energy, New York for life sciences (with Keele University) and Milan for automotive. In phase 2, launched in February 2016, we were linked with Toronto and Milan for advanced engineering, Lisbon for automotive, Delhi for retail, Helsinki for energy and Vienna for Life Sciences.





Small Business Minister Margot James meets local firms at the Emma Bridgewater Pottery

## Using Our Voice

### Headline Achievements

- ◆ Our Chairman and board members contribute to the national and local media, make presentations to conferences and brief Ministers.
- ◆ We issue a regular email newsletter as well as working with the press locally and nationally to promote our area. We constantly review our website, are active on LinkedIn, and have doubled our Twitter following in the past 12 months.
- ◆ We hold local events, engage with partners and thousands of local businesses and work with our Inward Investment team to promote Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire.
- ◆ We are attending international property exhibition MIPIM for the fourth time and MIPIM UK for the third time and pursuing the opportunities created by previous visits.
- ◆ We contribute to shared initiatives with other LEPs and local authorities, including the Midlands Engine and Northern Gateway Development Zone. We work with the Marches, Black Country, Greater Birmingham and Solihull, Coventry and Warwickshire, Worcestershire, and Warrington and D2N2 LEPs.

### Case Study — Partnership working on skills

Skills Staffordshire is a partnership of FE Colleges, private providers, Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce and universities.

Our vision is to work as a dynamic partnership creating the skills for Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire's economic future.

The partnership offers a collaborative approach to skills solutions for employers and key stakeholders, responding to the priorities for the LEP and working closely with Stoke and Staffordshire partners and employer groups.

Skills Staffordshire has successfully led employer events, collaborating on apprenticeship and sector based employer work, bidding for funding to support skills delivery and collaborated with the LEP.

Having operated for over a year, Skills Staffordshire is revising its priorities and offer to employers. With an expanded membership, the aim is to be able to present an end to end employer offer from entry to higher and degree level support. Also offered are a series of appropriate coordinated employer events, bridging gaps in employer programmes and importantly through joint bidding, bring much needed funding into Staffordshire.

Key to our work is that we are flexible, responsive and able to simplify the skills landscape.

Contact Skills Staffordshire by email on [enquiries@skillsstaffordshire.com](mailto:enquiries@skillsstaffordshire.com) or call on 03332409699.



# Milestones and Highlights

## October 2015:

MIPIM UK – London  
International Ceramics Exhibition - Jingdizhen

## November 2015:

LEP honoured in Federation of Small Business Awards – Birmingham

## December 2015:

Promoting Small Business Saturday – Stone

## January 2016:

Liberty Park rail bridge opens – Lichfield

## February 2016:

Growth Hub Roadshow – Uttoxeter

AgriSTEM building work starts – Rodbaston

Promoting Engineering with IMechE – Stoke-on-Trent

## March 2016:

Growth Hub Business Masterclass – Codsall

Growth Hub Finance Workshop – Stoke-on-Trent

LEP honoured in Better Business Awards – Westminster

Education Trust Apprenticeship Awards – Hanley

MIPIM 2016 – Cannes

LEP sponsors Sentinel Business Award – Stoke-on-Trent

Growth Hub Apprenticeships Event – Yarnfield

LEP Network Annual Conference – Westminster

LEP and Finest Business Breakfast – Longton

## April 2016:

Apprenticeship Levy Event – Stafford

Growth Hub Showcase – Stafford

SBEN/Growth Hub Climate Change Seminar – Trentham Lakes

Ceramics Expo - Cleveland, Ohio

## May 2016:

Hotspot Energy Event – Stoke-on-Trent

## June 2016:

Branston Locks road construction starts – Burton upon Trent

Bericote Four Ashes business site access work completed – South Staffordshire

Business unit construction starts, Redhill business park – Stafford

## July 2016:

Midlands Engine Summit – Nottingham

Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Apprenticeship Graduation Ceremony – Stafford

Meaford Business Park access completed – Stone

## August 2016:

Trinity Street improvements start – Hanley

## September 2016:

University Quarter improvements start – Stoke-on-Trent

AgriSTEM welcomes first students – Rodbaston

## October 2016:

MIPIM UK – London

LEP Annual Conference – Yarnfield Park



Meeting Business Secretary Greg Clark at MIPIM UK



# Balancing the Books

## Core Funds and Capacity Grant Funding

Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP is supported by government funding which it receives annually. This funding supports the operation of the LEP and the delivery of LEP strategic priorities. This has been matched by the contributions of staff and resources from Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Staffordshire County Council. In addition, other partners supply a considerable amount of time and contribute their invaluable expertise.



\* Including £84k carried forward from 2015/16

### Strategic planning £85,000

Allocation has been used to develop the LEP's strategic plan, the ESIF strategy, the low carbon strategy, the Growing Places strategy and NGDZ development work.

### Projects £191,000

Allocation has supported priority projects, grant programme management and commissioned research to support the development of bids to funding programmes.

### LEP delivery £260,000

Allocation has contributed to cross-LEP and partnership working, including the Midlands Engine, Midlands Connect and promotion of our area at MIPIM, plus the work of the delivery team.

### Engaging Business £48,000

Allocation has been used to support business and stakeholder engagement, the the LEP Executive's activities and events.





## Growing Places Fund

The Growing Places Fund allocated by Government is designed to unlock growth by addressing immediate infrastructure and site constraints whilst creating jobs and housing. Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire LEP has used the majority of its allocation to establish a revolving fund based on principles of investment, repayment and then reinvestment; the money used for projects will be paid back to us so that we can invest in more projects.



### Projects delivered and in progress

Projects delivered and in progress with Growing Places funding include the expansion of Dunston Business Village, near Stafford, a new factory and distribution centre for cable and tubing manufacturer HellermannTyton, Cannock, opening this autumn, the Leekbrook employment site, Leek, where infrastructure work starts this autumn, and the London House student accommodation, Stoke.

### £12.815m Committed

So far there have been nine bidding rounds for Growing Places. £12.815m has been committed to 13 projects leveraging £67.4m of total investment.

We have been able to commit more than the Growing Places fund sum because investment will be staggered over the coming years. This will give time for repayment of the initial investments allowing us to then reinvest.

## RGF Supported LEP Business Grants

The Jobs and Growth Fund provides RGF grants up to £1m to companies who wish to grow and create employment.

RGF3 was allocated completely and a second round RGF5 is currently under way with a target completion date of March 2017.

Figures as of September 2016

Total RGF5: £3.94m

RGF Committed: £2.63m

Jobs to be created: 607

Private Investment to Leverage: £25.37m

Number of Grants Approved: 31





# What's next for our LEP?

## LEP Challenges and Future Plans

**Governance for Delivery:** Having secured the City Deal, two rounds of Growth Deals and EU funding, our focus is on delivering the projects and programmes to achieve our objectives of a strong economy with more and better jobs. This involves a strong focus on governance for delivery and results.

**Future Growth Deals:** We have made a robust and well-evidenced submission for the third round of Growth Deal funding and continue to build our portfolio of the strongest projects for future funding.

**Increasing Confidence:** We believe that by building a track record of successful delivery we can secure further investment across our area.

With greater confidence in the ability of our LEP will also come the scope to have greater control over the funds that Government devolves to our LEP, increasing our capability to create jobs and grow the local economy of Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire.

**Devolution and Cross-LEP Partnerships:** National politics continues to focus on devolution of powers from central government to the regions. Our LEP is staying abreast of this agenda by working with our local partners in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire and, equally importantly, with regional neighbours on securing the best outcomes for our economy. Examples of this are our active participation in work on the Midlands Engine, the Midlands Connect transport strategy and the Northern Gateway Development Zone.

**Skills:** Our skills work this year has seen the publication of the LEP Education Trust's Skills Strategy and increasing business engagement in skills provision through locality projects and the advanced manufacturing and engineering skills hub.

This year has also seen an Area Review of further education, which has focused attention on the importance of colleges reconfiguring to meet the skills needs of business as well as the aspirations of learners. We will continue our partnership working and constructive challenge in the HE and FE sector, and highlight issues over attainment levels in schools, where our area still has pockets of poor performance.

The coming year will see our working with those prime contractors delivering ESF Employment and Skills programmes. We will closely monitor progress and ensure that provision meets local need, and that we secure positive outcomes for our local residents and businesses.

**The European Union and Brexit:** The LEP's aim is to ensure that the flow of funding that helps us create economic growth, more and better jobs and improved skills levels in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire is protected during the exit negotiations with the EU and in the post-Brexit economic landscape. We will be working hard to represent our businesses and communities, lobbying on issues such as future tariffs and a level playing field for access to international markets, and seeking a clear lead from government on future economic strategy to minimise the uncertainty over the future that can damage business confidence.



## Cooking on gas



A Staffordshire firm providing specialist equipment for the gas industry is making its mark in global markets after gaining £300,000 in funding from Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire's Jobs and Growth Fund to support its growth plans.

As a result, Orbital has been able to make a £3m investment in new premises at its UK headquarters at Cold Meece, near Stone, including new research and development facilities, and aims to use the expansion as the springboard for further international growth.

The firm, founded in 1984, manufactures a range of metering, analysis and safety systems for the oil and gas industry. Among other business areas, it is responsible for the odourisation equipment that adds the distinctive smell to the natural gas used in the UK, is introducing innovative and world leading sampling and analysis technology, produces commercial metering equipment for gas fired power stations and has recently diversified into working with the agricultural sector on systems making gas from bio-waste.

Funded by the Government's Regional Growth Fund, the scheme assists firms looking to locate in the area or seeking to expand their operations by offering grants of up to 20 per cent of the project value. To date it has approved grants totalling more than £6m, stimulating private sector investment of nearly £49m and has assisted 56 companies across Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire.

Orbital MD Richard Law said the funding had enabled the firm, which employs 130 people, to include a mezzanine floor in the new building to accommodate future expansion.

"Virtually everybody in the UK who uses gas will interface with Orbital products but very few of them have heard of us, even though we have built a reputation within the oil and gas industry as the go-to company to help solve their problems," Mr Law said. "But that low profile is about to change – we have a good news story to tell. We have set ambitious but realistic growth targets and are aiming to become a household name and a truly international business over the coming years."

Orbital became part of the CUI Global Group in 2013. CUI Global is a publicly traded company dedicated to maximizing shareholder value through the acquisition and development of innovative companies, products, and technologies.

Orbital's expansion plans are based on a firm Staffordshire foundation. Nearly all the material, construction and professional services for the new building were sourced from Staffordshire and neighbouring counties; the one exception being the steel, which came from South Wales.

"We are very proud of our Staffordshire roots and of being part of the local community," Mr Law added.

"We have a commitment to trade locally so that as we grow we will see other local companies grow with us – and that will benefit our region more generally.

"I'm a great believer in partnership working. We can get a lot more done if we form good partnerships with our supply chain, our customers and the organisations working to bring growth to Staffordshire."



# Partnership Board

Board members of the LEP are drawn from the private and public sector including voluntary, community and social enterprise representation and representation from higher education institutes. In total there are 23 board members. Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP is business-led and all board members have been appointed with the aim of creating a geographically and sectorally balanced partnership. The board is supported by a team drawn from across the local authorities and chambers of commerce. We see our LEP as a team effort.

## Private Sector Board Members

**David Frost CBE**  
(Chairman)

**Kerry Diamond** (Vice-Chair)  
CFO, Continental Engineering

**John Carr**  
Director, Global Air Projects

**Richard Cotterell**  
GM, Caterpillar (Perkins  
Engines)

**Jonathan Dale**  
Director, Denova International

**Judith Kirkland OBE**  
CEO, Business Enterprise  
Support

**James Leavesley**  
CEO, Leavesley Group

**Adrian MacLaughlin**  
MD, Dunston Business Village

**Sarah Montgomery**  
Chair, Destination Staffordshire

**Kevin Oakes**  
CEO, Royal Crown Derby

**Ken Stepney**  
MD, EQ Management

**Sara Williams**  
CEO, Staffordshire Chambers

## Local Authority Board Members

**Cllr Philip Atkins OBE**  
Leader, Staffordshire County  
Council

**Cllr Abi Brown**  
Deputy Leader, Stoke-on-Trent  
City Council

**Cllr Danny Cook**  
Leader, Tamworth Council

**Cllr Patrick Farrington**  
Leader, Stafford Borough  
Council

**Cllr Terry Follows**  
Member for City Development  
Stoke-on-Trent City Council

**John Henderson**  
CEO, Staffordshire County  
Council

**Cllr Elizabeth Shenton**  
Leader, Newcastle-under-Lyme  
Borough Council

**David Sidaway**  
City Director, Stoke-on-Trent  
City Council

**Cllr Michael Wilcox**  
Leader, Lichfield District Council

## Education & skills

**Prof Trevor McMillan**  
VC, Keele University  
(Higher Education)

**Len Tildsley**  
Principal, Buxton and Leek  
College (FE & Skills)

Trentham Gardens





# Partner Organisations

The Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership is made up of organisations who work with us to achieve our goals. As well as there being a core group of partners — who are often delivery agents for LEP commissioned projects and services — the LEP's success is secured through the flexibility to manage and cultivate partnerships with a host of other organisations where appropriate. The list below contains our core partners but does not represent the full extent of the LEP's partnership working.







## Growing agri-tech skills at new academy

South Staffordshire College has welcomed the first learners through the door of its new Rodbaston AgriSTEM Academy. The learners, who are working towards qualifications in motor vehicle maintenance and motorsport were welcomed to their new building at the start of the academic year in September.

The wide range of facilities at the new Academy includes construction vehicle simulators, renewable energies workshops, automotive/hybrid engineering workshops and multi-occupation construction areas.

The AgriSTEM Academy will also see the restoration of the historic Granary building, which will provide over 1,000sqm of additional learning space. Promising to transform the scale and quality of industry relevant training in the Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering (AME) and Agricultural Engineering and Technology (agri-tech) sectors, the Academy sees the introduction of new courses in

subjects including agricultural engineering, land-based technology and advanced manufacturing.

Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership has funded two-thirds of the AgriSTEM development through its Growth Deal Fund.

LEP chairman David Frost CBE said: "Improving skills levels in science and technology subjects is vital to help our economy grow, creating more and better jobs and a bright future for our young people. The agri-tech sector in particular will be a key part of growing the Staffordshire economy and the AgriSTEM Academy has an important role to play in this."

Graham Morley, Chief Executive Principal of South Staffordshire College said: "We're very proud to be able to provide individuals and businesses from across the region access to practical training that is unavailable anywhere else in Staffordshire."



# Contact Us

Get in touch with the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership through the following contacts:

## Chairman

David Frost CBE, DL – [chair@stokestaffslep.org.uk](mailto:chair@stokestaffslep.org.uk)

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General enquiries – 01785 719000 – [contactus@stokestaffslep.org.uk](mailto:contactus@stokestaffslep.org.uk)

## Media/Press Enquiries

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Alternatively you can write to us at:

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The official opening of Liberty Park, Lichfield



If you would like this information in large print, Braille, audio tape/disc, British Sign Language or any other language, please ring 01785 719000

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