

# Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire

Enterprise Partnership



# Annual Report 2017



**Apprentices Graduation,  
County Showground**



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**Small Business  
Minister  
Margot James  
visits Dunston  
Business  
Village**

# A Statement from our Chairman

The LEP exists to promote economic growth in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire. Working with central and local government we deliver key projects which will release the potential for growth.

Your LEP continues to be successful in attracting public funding into the area. The original City Deal, Growth Deals and European Funding will result in an inflow of £225m over the coming years. This in turn will leverage private sector investment of some £120m over the period.

The economy continues to perform strongly with unemployment continuing to fall, driven by strong business confidence and an economy that not only benefits from our central location but from a balance that many neighbouring areas can only admire.

The dominating factor over the period continues to be our future relationship with Europe. Business rightly expects a deal that will not only provide clarity as to our future trading relationship but one that will that continue to open up markets to a local economy that is global in outlook.

I have seen it as my role to ensure that the economy is expansionist, to work with neighbouring LEPs and to play a pivotal role in emerging structures that will stimulate more investment.

At the heart of this is the Midlands Engine, an area that runs from the North Sea to the Welsh border and is home to 440,000 businesses. This partnership bringing together LEPs, local authorities, universities and business will, by working with Government, seek to invigorate this £207bn economy by investing in transport and innovation and by growing trade.

We are also at the heart of the Constellation Partnership, which acts as a bridge between the Midlands Engine and Northern Powerhouse and is driven by HS2 and the undoubted growth potential it offers. The aim is to deliver 100,000 new homes and 120,000 new jobs

across the partnership area by 2040.

Finally, to our south we have the newly elected Mayor for the West Midlands Combined Authority and we shall need to form effective relationships with a body that will have growing influence.

The other key development has been the launch of the Government's Industrial Strategy. Your LEP has been extraordinarily active in helping to shape this and in particular we see the opportunity to work with Government and business to help reinvigorate the North Staffordshire economy through the development of a Ceramics Deal.

The focus of the LEP is subtly changing. Our original drive was to work to create more jobs. We have done this, with an estimated 35,000 extra jobs since 2011. We now need to focus on higher quality jobs and better paid ones. Not easy, but important if we are to develop an ever more successful economy. This means the LEP working to improve aspiration amongst young people and continuing our investment in skills. This will be backed up by encouraging new high level investment, including that from overseas.

We will only achieve this if we continue to work in what is a very positive way with all the LEP partners, who are to be commended on the positive way they work collaboratively for the benefit of the people of Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire.



David Frost CBE, DL  
LEP Chairman



# Introducing our LEP

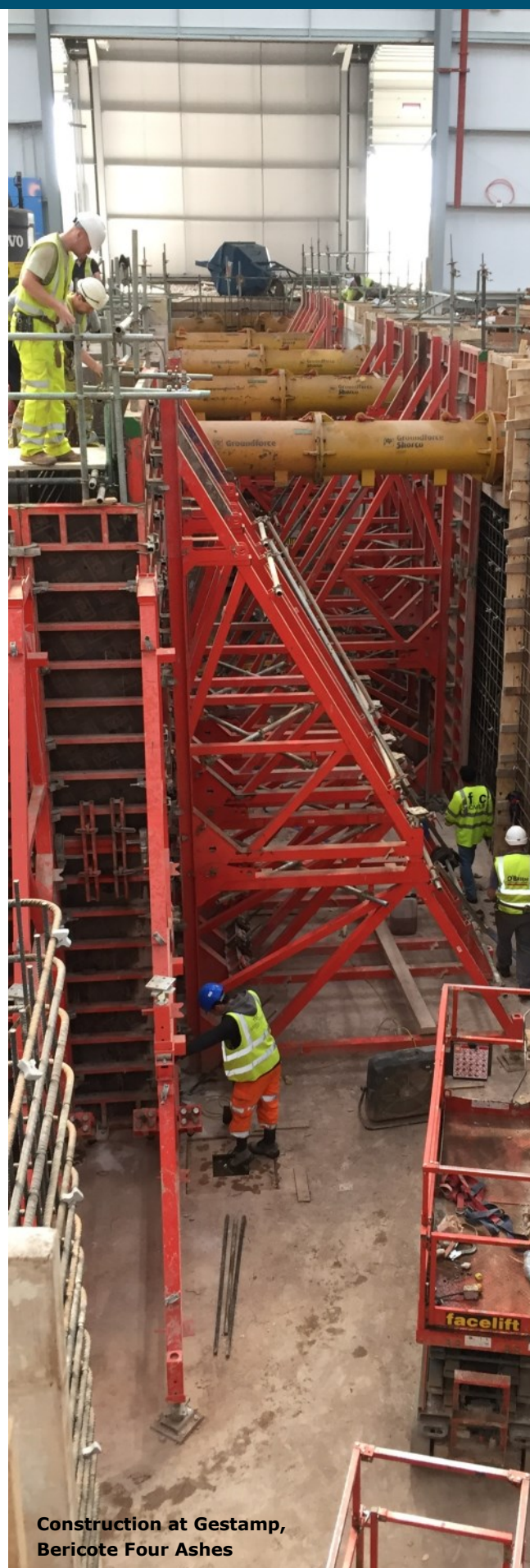
Local Enterprise Partnerships were established by the Government to bring all the stakeholders in local areas - from the private *and* public sectors - around the table to drive local economic growth. In total there are 38 LEPs across England.

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 the current and future workforce
- Developing and improving infrastructure to promote connectivity and mobility



**Construction at Gestamp,  
Bericote Four Ashes**



# How Does Our LEP Compare?


	 aged 16-64	 homes	 enterprises	 jobs	 GVA	 GVA pp	 Att.8 <sup>†</sup>	 % Full Time	 Av Salary
England	34.9m people	23.7m homes	2.3m enterprises	25.7m jobs	£1433bn GVA	£26k GVA pp	53.8% Att.8 <sup>†</sup>	69.5%	£28.5k
West Mids	3.6m people	2.8m homes	208k enterprises	2.5m jobs	£120bn GVA	£21k GVA pp	49.2% Att.8 <sup>†</sup>	69.7%	£26.3k
Our LEP	0.70m people	0.49m homes	38k enterprises	0.46m jobs	£20bn GVA	£18k GVA pp	48% Att.8 <sup>†</sup>	68.7%	£26k



Michelin  
Stoke-on-Trent

## Map Key:






### Transport Routes:

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

Urban Centres ..... 




Universities ..... 

### Map Statistics :

- Att.8<sup>†</sup> ..... 
- Dwellings\* ..... 
- Enterprises\* ..... 
- Working Age Population\* ..... 
- Jobs\* ..... 

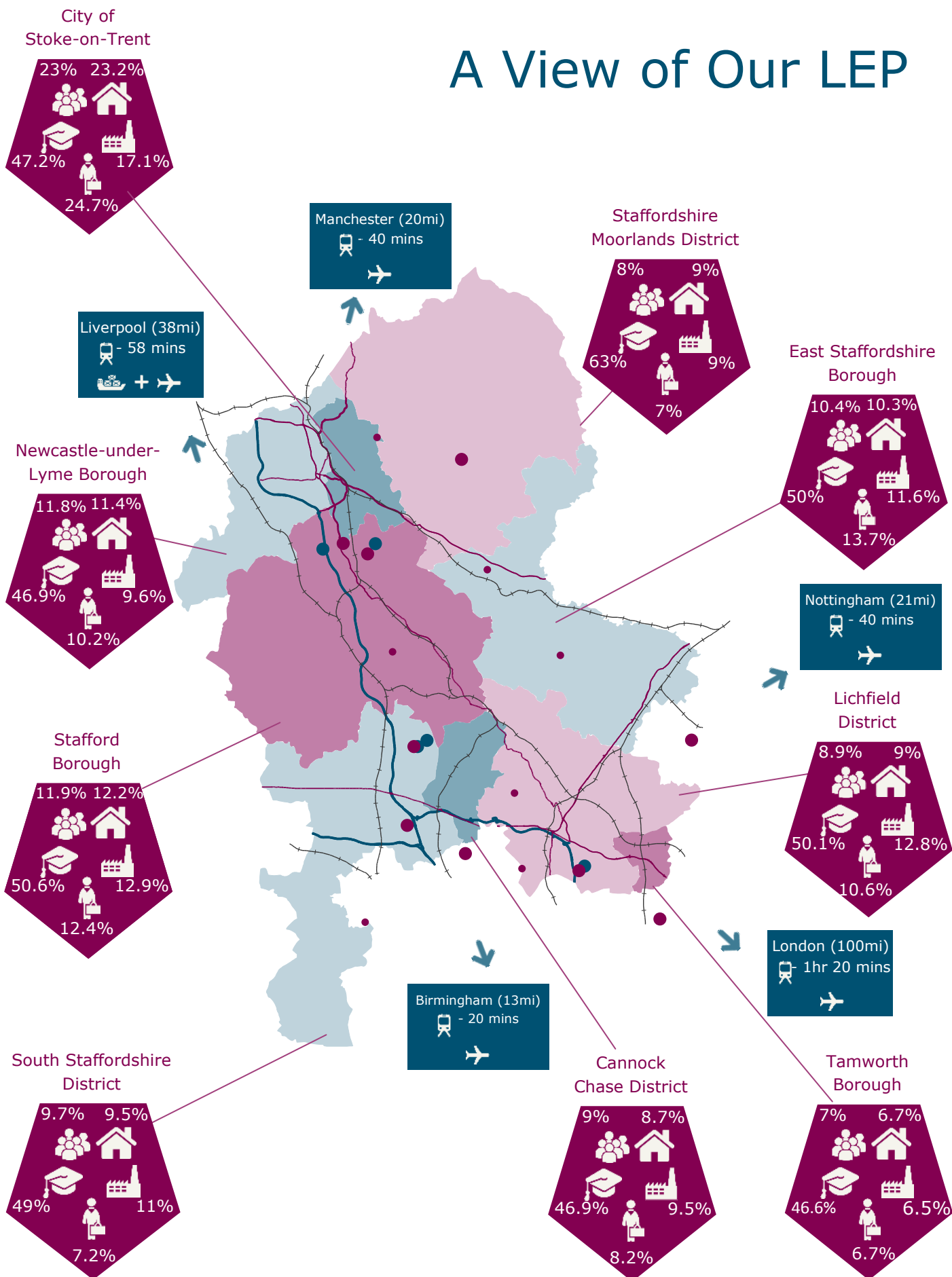
(\*as a percentage of total numbers in the LEP)

### Nearby Cities:

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

<sup>†</sup>Attainment 8 has replaced 5 grade A\* to C GCSEs including English and Maths and is based on average attainment in 8 subjects

# A View of Our LEP



# 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.



## Competitive Urban Centres

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



## 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.



## 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.





# Progress and ambitions

Our original Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) detailed our ambitions to drive rapid, sustainable growth in Stoke-on-Trent and develop competitive urban centres across the County.

The Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire economy has experienced strong growth over the past six years (+6%), complemented by strong employment growth, with our area having a higher rate of growth than nationally.

Our core advanced manufacturing sectors have performed well and we have maintained our unique specialisms in Energy Generation, Auto-Aero, Medical Technologies, Agri-Tech and the Advanced Materials sector, which is one of the most specialised in the UK. We are fortunate to be involved in two Enterprise Zones, Ceramic Valley and i54, which have enabled us to provide a blend of geographical and sectoral offers and reinvest business rates to unlock growth.

The local economy has changed significantly since 2011, when it was still feeling the effects of the economic downturn and local unemployment remained very high. Since then we have been very successful in generating a large number of jobs, increasing earnings and reducing unemployment to the point where we have been close to or at full employment for some time.

However, while productivity has increased in

## Growth since 2011

- 8% employment growth
- 6% GVA growth
- 13% growth in private sector employment
- 2% decline in public sector employment
- 35,000 jobs created
- 4,700 new businesses created
- 12% business growth (compared to 20% nationally)
- 8,700 new homes completed
- 19% increase in population educated to degree level

## Our Pledge



Target set in 2011  
To be achieved by 2021

terms of overall levels of Gross Value Added (GVA), relative levels of GVA continue to lag behind other parts of the country. Improving this is a key aim of the LEP, given that economic prosperity is fundamental to our local economy and to the quality of life of our residents. A vibrant and diverse economy, offering high-value, high-wage job opportunities and future prospects not only provides a more dynamic business environment but also puts more money in the pockets of our residents, so that they and their families can live the lives they want.

Our ambition is to grow our economy by 50% and generate 50,000 new jobs over a 10-year period. Strong jobs growth means we are easily on track to meet our jobs target. However, generating jobs to enable the previously large unemployed cohort of our residents to get work has meant that the types of jobs created have not yet enabled us to achieve our aim of growing our economy by 50%. We recognise that increasing productivity and supporting the creation of a greater proportion of high-value, high-wage job opportunities, while ensuring our residents are able to take advantage of these opportunities, will be vital to the development of our economy. Our ambition of 50:50:10 therefore remains a challenging target that we will continue to work towards.





# 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, 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.

**Advanced 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 and AMRICC - 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 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 Parks are international and award-winning leaders.

### Digital Technologies

**Digital** is becoming increasingly important to all sectors in the local and national economy. We have seen strong growth locally in this sector, particularly around key employment sites including Stone Business Park, Stafford Technology Park and Dunston Business Village. Continued growth will create high-value, high-wage jobs and support existing companies in the local area to take full advantage of digital technologies.

### Business & Professional Services

**Business and Professional Services** have a crucial role in supporting the growth of our priority sectors. The growth ambitions for our urban centres, particularly Stoke-on-Trent (including by creating a new central business district with a strong professional services offer), will draw in a growing base of professionals looking to support our indigenous businesses and capitalise on our excellent connectivity.

### Tourism & Leisure

Our national and international **tourism and leisure** attractions include Alton Towers, Drayton Manor, the National Memorial Arboretum, the Staffordshire Hoard, Cannock Chase, our canals network and renowned ceramics heritage. These attractions form the core of a much wider tourism offer that can both draw in day and short break visitors to our economy and help attract and retain families living locally.





## Four Ashes welcomes Gestamp relocation

Spanish automotive supplier Gestamp, currently based in Cannock, is relocating to a new state-of-the-art facility at Four Ashes Park in South Staffordshire, reaffirming the firm's longstanding commitment to the area. Gestamp's decision to move to a new purpose-built Staffordshire site was taken in September 2016, following the EU Referendum – a timely demonstration of investor confidence in the county and the UK.

Gestamp's new 550,000 sq ft facility has benefited from new access improvements off the A449 by Staffordshire County Council in a project funded through the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership as part of the Government's Local Growth Fund.

Ian Middleton, UK Chairman of Gestamp, said: "The company has had a presence in Staffordshire for many years and we therefore knew the many benefits of the location, not least the exceptional skills of the workforce and the ease of access to our customers around the country. With the support of the local authorities and LEP we were able to identify a site that will enable us to safeguard hundreds of jobs and continue to expand in the area in the long term."

The LEP, the county, Cannock Chase District Council and South Staffordshire Council worked in partnership with Bericote Properties

to enable the company to relocate within the county and present a premium site ready for development with many excellent attributes.

The Local Growth funding enabled the county council to improve site access and the trunk road junction, linking to the M6 and M54. The work involved improving the road access to the 52-acre site at Four Ashes, a prime location off the A449. The access on Gravelly Way was made safe and suitable for industrial traffic by widening the road and adding pavements and street lighting, and installing traffic signals on the Gravelly Way railway bridge.

Gestamp has taken just over half of the Four Ashes site, with space remaining for another 450,000 sq ft of industrial development.

The large-scale transfer of staff and equipment from Cannock to Four Ashes will begin in the first quarter of 2018 and will take approximately two years to complete. Gestamp has also applied for planning permission for a mixed use residential and commercial development for the Cannock site. A training centre is also a potential development, which would be an open industry facility.

LEP chairman David Frost CBE commented: "This is further proof that Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire is a great location for businesses to grow and flourish."

# 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

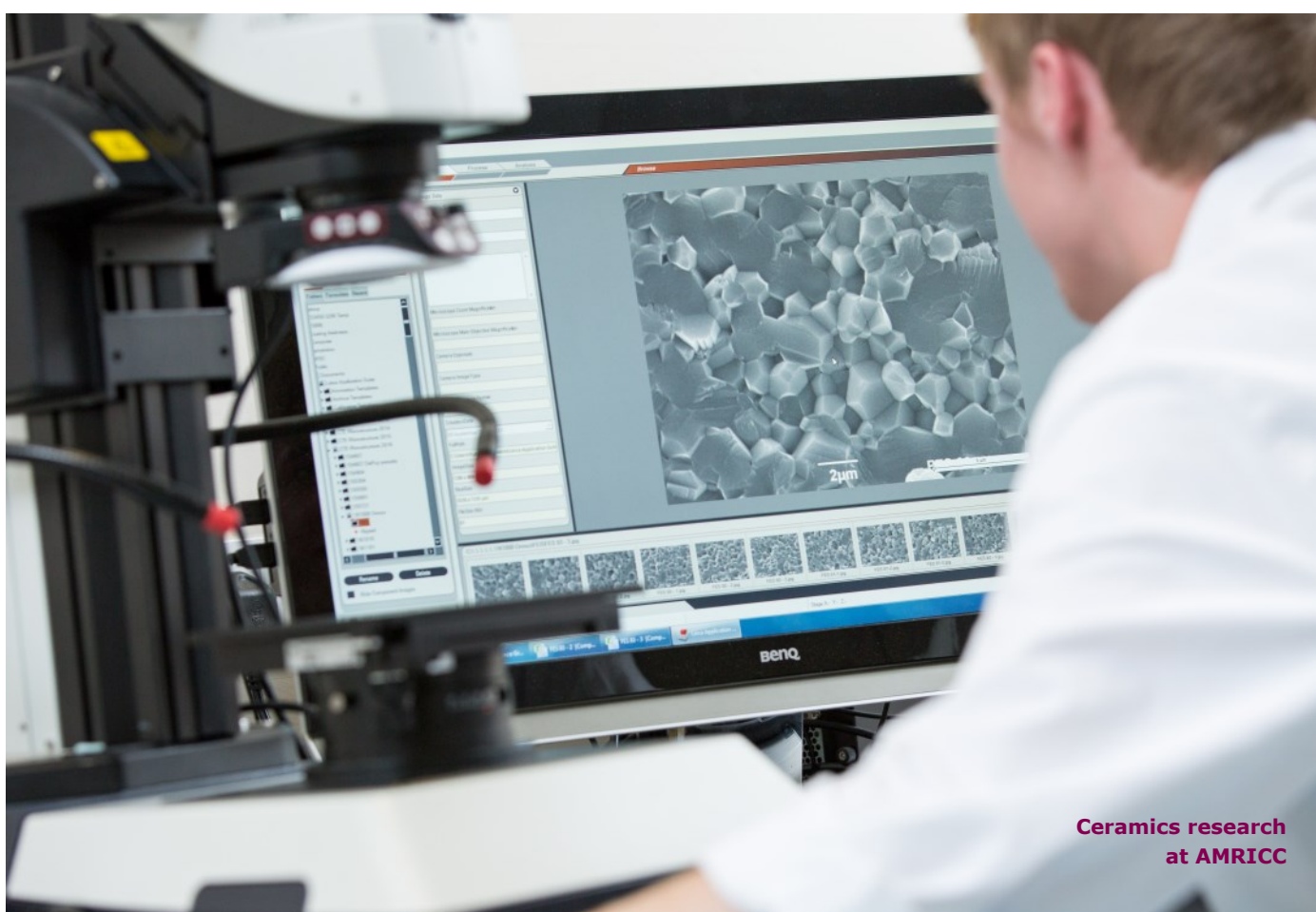
Supporting enterprise, both mature enterprises and entrepreneurs looking to start new ventures

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



Ceramics research at AMRICC

# 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, three rounds of the Local Growth Deal, and our allocation of European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF). The government funding allocated has enabled major investment with more to come in the future.

## Powerhouse Central City Deal:

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 for 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.

The District Heat Network in the City of Stoke-on-Trent saw the first section of pipework laid in September as roll-out begins on the initial 18 kilometres of heat network. The Smart Energy Network Demonstrator at Keele University signed up its first Staffordshire business, Powelectrics, in August to work with the programme.


Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Growth Hub offers business support across the SSLEP area and provides a range of support to encourage growth among local businesses in priority sectors.

Investment continues in a number of strategic locations around the City of Stoke-on-Trent using Growth Deal funding to improve transport links and access.

The Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering Skills Hub is providing state-of-the-art skills training across Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire.



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 Network 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 Local Growth 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 road access to Liberty Park, Lichfield, road and infrastructure works at Meaford Business Park, opening up an 85-acre brownfield site, and a new road at the Bericote Four Ashes site, facilitating investments including auto components manufacturer Gestamp's move to a purpose-built facility.

The Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering Skills Hubs' specialist training provision being delivered in Stoke-on-Trent, Newcastle-under-Lyme and Tamworth has now been joined by South Staffordshire College's AgriSTEM Academy at Rodbaston, the Science and Technology Centre at Stafford College, and the Dove Engineering Centre at the JCB Academy, Rocester, East Staffordshire.

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

During 2016/17 we successfully secured a further £23.3m of Growth Deal funding under round three. This £23.3m will be matched by a further £31.95m of other public funding and £28.38m in private sector funding, with the aim of delivering more than 3,100 new jobs, 1,400 new homes and 144,000sqm of commercial floorspace through a range of transport, employment site, skills and R&D projects. The skills equipment fund will support up to 3,000 existing and additional learners over the next three years.

Total Investment Package  
City Deal and LGD 1, 2 & 3  
£343.91m for 2014/15 to 2020/21

£141.54m LEP funding  
£34.31m Government, Growing Places & EU  
£49.8m LAs & Colleges  
£118.26m Private Sector

### GD 1 Investment Breakdown

- £26.7m** - Etruria Valley
- £4m** - Lichfield Park Employment Site - Completed
- £4.2m** - Meaford Employment Site - Completed
- £1.9m** - Bericote Four Ashes - Phase 1 Completed
- £5.1m** - Branston Interchange
- £24.3m** - Stafford Western Access Route
- £5m** - Local Sustainable Transport
- £6.9m** - Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering Skills Hubs

### GD 2 Investment Breakdown

- £2.95m** - Tamworth Enterprise Quarter
- £7.71m** - Stoke-on-Trent city centre access
- £0.8m** - Leek Heritage Quarter
- £1.29m** - Rugeley town centre
- £2.66m** - Friarsgate, Lichfield

### GD 3 Investment Breakdown

- £8.58m** - Hanley-Bentilee link road
- £8.5m** - Doxey Road and Stafford access route
- £0.5m** - Spode Start-up Incubator
- £1.5m** - ROF Featherstone Strategic Employment site
- £1m** - Keele Science and Innovation Park Smart Innovation Hub
- £1.46m** - Local Sustainable Transport
- £1.76m** - Skills Capital Equipment Fund

# European Structural and Investment Funds

Despite 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 is still a member of the EU.

Much of the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP's total of £128.29m (at current exchange rates) indicative allocations from the European Regional development Fund (ERDF) and European Social Fund (ESF) is already committed and the Government has stated that, provided projects and programmes seeking EU funds are contracted by the date that the UK relinquishes its membership of the EU (March 2019), funding will be guaranteed even if delivery extends beyond the point of Brexit. In addition a proportion of EU funds allocated to the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP will be spent in our area given the overlapping geography of the two LEPs.

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 **Smart Innovation Hub** at Keele University as well as a **new business grant** scheme to support the conversion of redundant buildings for workshop and other economic uses across the rural areas of the LEP.

Under ESF, key programmes to develop skill levels, improve access to new jobs, apprenticeships and tackle disadvantage are being developed through the government's **DWP, Skills Funding Agency and Big Lottery** national programmes. Committed EU investment here is over £36m and programmes are under way and are supporting skills and inclusion initiatives to provide residents with opportunities to improve their employment prospects. These will benefit more than 18,000 people and 3,000 SMEs.

Funding under the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development is much smaller (£3.2m) but provides support for businesses in rural areas across manufacturing, tourism and food and drink sectors EAFRD programme. Recent EAFRD announcements include a rural broadband infrastructure programme providing support for businesses in remote rural areas to access high speed internet services.



## European Union European Structural and Investment Funds

### Planned commitments to date:



#### **Innovation—£19.1m**

Available for Applied Materials Research, Innovation and Commercialisation 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 investment finance schemes



#### **Low Carbon —£16.9m**

Available for Energy Demonstrator project and specific energy saving business diagnostic and support services



#### **Skills, Employment and Social Inclusion—£56m**

Available to support sector skills programmes, apprenticeships, work placements and employer engagement programmes supported by DWP, SFA and Big Lottery national programmes

Technical Support to Programme — £1.09m

## Firms flourishing as grant scheme boosts investment

A joinery firm making bespoke furniture, a sign-making business and a printers are among local enterprises seeing trade flourish thanks to help from the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Grants for Growth scheme.

The £2m European Regional Development Fund scheme provides capital and revenue grants for areas such as plant, machinery and equipment, specialist consultancy, initial market development, technical feasibility studies, and product and design development.

The first firm to receive funding from the scheme was Burton upon Trent-based Hardy Signs, which manufactures and installs bespoke signage. The company was given a £75,000 grant towards the purchase of a state-of-the-art UV Flatbed printer to improve quality and speed up production.

MD Nik Hardy has urged other firms to come forward and access the grants. He said: "The help and support we received from the Grants for Growth team, from writing the full application to procuring the new printer, has proven invaluable. We are delighted to have secured grant aid that will cement our position at the forefront of the industry in the West Midlands and I would encourage businesses to get their applications in."

Meanwhile a Stoke-on-Trent joinery manufacturing bespoke furniture and fittings received £20,000 from Grants for Growth towards its £70,000 investment project.

Winston Joinery, based in Fenton, has taken on an additional unit at its Ormonde Street base. The investment has also seen its production line expanded and the installation of a second spray booth, as well as new office space.

The company, which has a workforce of 33, provides fitted and bespoke furniture to the construction, retail, education and leisure industries across the UK. Winston Joinery and its associated company WJL Contracts have grown their turnover from £1 million to around £7 million this year.

Director Andrew Wagg said: "Had we not made this investment we would have had to look at



outsourcing which would have been problematic because we wouldn't have total control over our products. However, this has allowed us to facilitate the orders that we've already got and also go out and get more work."

And Stone printing and design firm Panda Press has stepped up production thanks to an £18,000 cash boost from Grants for Growth towards the cost of new equipment at its Newcastle Street premises. The money helped pay for a new high-tech digital press.

Panda Press director Nigel Passmore, pictured above right with studio manager Mark Fuller, said: "The fund has allowed us to add to our existing digital printing capacity with a high-specification press which has immediately improved our productivity and efficiency.

"It will enable us to find even more customers with high-end and exacting requirements. We have already seen growth as a result of this funding, which will in turn allow us to expand and capitalise on the investment."

Grants are available from £10,000 up to £250,000, matched by the applicant's own funds. Applicants must demonstrate how the investment will boost growth and create employment. The programme continues to June 2019, with a target of £2m grant available to businesses to lever in £4.5m private match funding.





## Ceramic Valley's key sites and opportunities

### Tunstall Arrow Developer – Network Space

Work commenced with a ground-breaking ceremony in August 2017 on the first phase of this prime warehouse and industrial development site. The development has secured its first tenant, Q-railing, with their new building now under construction. There will be five highly specified units available ranging from 10,000 to 41,000 sq ft.



### Highgate Ravensdale Developer – Clowes Developments

Tile Mountain opened their new warehouse and retail facility in April 2017 with plans to expand in 2018 with an adjacent unit of 90,000 sq ft. Plans are also under way opposite to the Tile Mountain units for a trade park development with 12 trade counter units totalling 74,000 sq ft, with Toolstation as one of the first business occupiers.



### Etruria Valley Developer - St Modwen

Etruria Valley is a prime development site at the heart of Ceramic Valley. DPD, one of the UK's leading time-critical distributors, were the first company to occupy the Enterprise Zone in April 2016, followed shortly after by Brindley Farm, a Greene King pub and restaurant. The West Midland Ambulance Service commenced operations from their new hub on site in July 2017, while a new leisure and training facility for bet365 is under construction and is due to open in early 2018.



# Powering the city's economic growth

The Ceramic Valley Enterprise Zone is part of an ambitious initiative to 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: Energy and Power Generation; Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering; Advanced Materials; Business and Professional Services, and Warehouse and Distribution.

Ceramic Valley was launched in April 2016 and is one of the country's best-performing enterprise zones with a significant amount of development activity in a relatively short period of time. Businesses are choosing to take advantage of Stoke-on-Trent's strong strategic location and the city's economic growth.

At the heart of an engineering and automotive triangle, creating a compelling supply chain of fer 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 have been a number of early developments which already account for more than 1,000 jobs, providing a positive start to the achievement of an ambitious target of 9,000 new 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 in the Enterprise Zone are already taking advantage of the benefits on offer, 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.





## The heat is on as network takes shape

Leek Road campus

A pioneering programme to bring a network of sustainable, low carbon and low cost heat energy to Stoke-on-Trent is under way.

Work is currently taking place to lay 700 metres of pipes underground between Leek Road and Boughey Road in Stoke. It is the first phase of four kilometres of piping around the University Quarter which, when completed next year, will mean that businesses and households will have the potential to connect to receive low maintenance, affordable heat, without the need for gas boilers in their properties.

It is the first step in Stoke-on-Trent City Council's innovative district heat network, a programme which secured multi-million pound investment through the Government's City Deal in 2014. The network will go on to see 18 kilometres of piping laid underground across the city. The council's ambitious pro-

posals have already mapped out the geology under the city to look into ways of tapping into naturally forming underground geothermal energy, which would heat the network, helping to power the local economy and provide alternative, sustainable energy for households.

The first pipes laid will be powered via an energy centre off Leek Road. A district heat network has the potential to cut the city's carbon footprint by 12,500 tonnes per year – the equivalent of 2,500 hot air balloons.

The proposals have taken months to carefully plan out, including ground conditions and utilities mapping. The initial network will create the potential for Staffordshire University, student and other residential accommodation, and other businesses to connect. It is hoped the first customers will be able to connect to the network from autumn 2018.

## Hilton Garden Inn brings economic boost

Work to build a Hilton Garden Inn hotel in Stoke-on-Trent city centre is set to start before the end of the year. Plans for the 140-bed hotel, which is expected to create more than 50 jobs, were first announced in March. The hotel will not only deliver an economic boost to the area but also provide high-quality accommodation, which could be critical to the success of Stoke-on-Trent's UK City of Culture 2021 bid, as well as providing meeting and conference facilities.

The new hotel will be delivered by Genr8 and the city council, showing the council's leadership and intent to drive the economy and accelerate growth. Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP is also set to provide a £2.95 million grant for the hotel development. Genr8 has started the tender process to find the main construction contractor for the hotel, which is expected to welcome its first guests in 2019. The hotel will be within walking distance of the main retail area, museum and theatres.



## Working together to champion innovation

The shared economic goals and the close working relationship between Keele University and the LEP were recognised in The New Keele Deal, launched in January 2017. The deal is a plan for Keele University and partners to realise benefits from research and innovation in order to generate economic growth, improve local health and care and put our region at the heart of the UK's transition to a lower carbon economy. The New Keele Deal brings together the LEP and university as partners alongside Staffordshire County Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council and the University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust.

The plan aims to harness the combined resources of the university and its partners to tackle underlying weaknesses of the local economy such as low levels of company innovation, R&D investment and inbound R&D funding.

Regeneris Consulting has estimated that, based on just four of the eight Keele Deal priority areas, the university's activity will lead to the creation of 700 additional jobs by 2026, and lift the annual contribution to the regional economy to around £250m.

Keele's 600-acre campus replicates a small town, with houses, accommodation, offices, laboratories and even a stately home, Keele Hall,

making it an ideal test site for smart energy. In addition to energy and CO<sup>2</sup> savings, the installation of a smart energy network on campus is being configured to give a platform to kick-start innovation in the burgeoning smart energy network sector, a significant potential source of high value activity for local businesses.

The Smart Energy Network Demonstrator (SEND) programme has brought in funding from the ERDF and UK Government. As well as the value of the main works to construct the network, the SEND supply chain development programme offers potential for SMEs. Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent SMEs are being recruited as Research, Development and Innovation partners in the project, through which they receive a fully funded research associate and support to develop commercial smart energy network products and services for future commercialisation. Examples include big data software solutions, control systems and the development of predictive technologies.

In parallel, the university is planning a real life test of a greener public gas supply through the HyDeploy programme, with £7m of Ofgem funding. HyDeploy again brings developing technologies to our area and could pave the way for a hydrogen blended lower carbon UK-wide gas grid.



**Keele University**

# Enterprise Support

The purpose of the **Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Growth Hub** is to help unlock private sector growth by supporting the development of sustainable new businesses, helping companies to grow and assisting new product/market development. It does this by extending the reach and impact of national and local initiatives and funds and by providing targeted support to enable local businesses to engage with business support opportunities.

A signposting and referral system enhances the effectiveness of the business support infrastructure across the LEP area by developing cooperation among national and local providers, and cross-referral of clients. The Growth Hub aligns business support with the needs of individual businesses with the use of a Business Diagnostic tool through its team of qualified business advisers.

The aim of the Growth Hub is to provide a first stop shop means of access to publicly funded business support to help all businesses based,

or seeking to be based, in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire. The Staffordshire Business Helpline—**0300 111 8002**—was set up to answer business-related questions, and provide guidance and ideas for business development. It covers all sizes of businesses from pre-start and start-up to established and, through working with partner organisations, ensures there are suitable schemes and programmes for all stages and sizes.

Staffordshire County Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council and the Greater Birmingham and Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce work together on the Growth Hub, concentrating on the priority areas identified by BEIS, DCLG and the LEP. A wider collaboration of partners assist with ensuring there are as few duplications and gaps in service as possible, uniting through the Enterprise Round Table to share business support information. This enables the Growth Hub to work across the whole of the geography and provide the same level of service to all businesses.

## Headline Achievements

The Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire Growth Hub has helped more than 4,300 companies find the support they need to start up or grow their business since the service was launched in April 2014. Nearly 1,500 were assisted in 2016/17 alone.

Of the 2016/17 total, 374 were pre-start or start-up businesses that had been trading for under a year. The Growth Hub has assisted a cumulative total of 935 start-ups since its launch.

In the last financial year, 160 people received Growth Hub support to help launch their own business.

More than 900 diagnostic reviews, which help to identify business needs, have been undertaken by the Growth Hub's advisers, with more than 500 diagnostics carried out in the last year alone.

Since its launch the Growth Hub has made 6,370 referrals to sources of public or private support for businesses.

The Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Business Helpline continues to reach an average of 70 new businesses every month and is averaging a total of 500 contacts a month, ranging from telephone calls and emails to webchats via the Growth Hub website at **[www.stokestaffsgrowthhub.co.uk](http://www.stokestaffsgrowthhub.co.uk)**. In addition targeted email newsletters are sent out on a weekly basis providing useful information to businesses on the helpline database.

# Skilled Workforce

The work of the LEP's Education, Skills and Employment Board is crucial in realising the aspiration to develop educational attainment and skills among all age groups, thus helping to ensure the successful future economic prosperity and competitiveness of Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire.

The board'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, and developing skills levels in advanced manufacturing, science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), alongside improved careers education and guidance.

## Headline Achievements

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

AMESH has delivered courses to over 2,800 learners in the first two years of operation. Stoke-on-Trent College has developed a new programme for Bentley Motors and JCB apprentices. South Staffordshire College has revised its engineering study programmes at Tamworth, introduced a range of new engineering apprenticeship programmes and has just delivered a two-year advanced apprenticeship in construction for 15 apprentices in partnership with Redrow Homes. Martec Training has developed an introductory course in electric and hybrid cars, delivered to more than 80 students to date, and has recently agreed a programme with local employers to deliver over 300 motor vehicle qualifications.

A **Young Ambassador Network** launched in July 2016 and has 23 young apprentices promoting apprenticeships. The

third Apprentice Graduation Ceremony was held in July 2017, helping to raise the profile of apprenticeships. More than 120 apprentices graduated.

### The Locality Project and the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC)

are developing education and industry relationships to improve the work readiness of secondary and sixth form students. Both projects support schools to embed enterprise, employability and careers into school policy, programme, curriculum and culture with a focus on employer led engagement activities via competitions, work experience and industry days. The projects currently work with 40% of schools in the county, with current growth plans for 100% coverage. We work with some 50 employers, Business Enterprise Advisors and an extensive network of CEC funding beneficiaries and external partners. More than 1,200 students from six schools and 40 employers attended the Tamworth District Careers Fair.

## Development Projects

The £5.4m **AgriSTEM Academy** at **South Staffordshire College's** Rodbaston campus opened in June 2017. It will enable a step-change in the scale and quality of industry relevant training for advanced manufacturing and engineering, and in agricultural engineering and technology sectors in the region. Its facilities include an advanced mechatronic lab, agricultural engineering and automotive/hybrid engineering workshops and an agritech/precision farming simulation lab. It is targeted to deliver an additional 349 apprenticeships and 100 traineeships by September 2018.

The **JCB Academy** has refurbished a former school to create a £1.4m **Dove Engineering Centre** to meet the increasing demand for apprenticeships. The building has the capability to develop technical skills across a variety of engineering disciplines. The centre includes an engineering science lab, a metrology lab, a mechatronics training room and a computer aided design training room all equipped with the latest state of the art equipment to improve skills in the engineering sector.

**Stafford College** has recently completed a £3.7m technology-rich and industry leading **Science and Technology Centre** significantly enhancing the provision of apprenticeships and traineeships. The centre will support the delivery of employer responsive apprenticeship and traineeship programmes in STEM subjects ranging from level 1 through to advanced and higher levels. Facilities in the Science and Technology Centre will include chemistry, physics and biology labs, an information technology suite, a cadco suite, and facilities for robotics and laser 3D printing.



# 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 such as Four Ashes and Meaford for development have raised our profile nationally and internationally.

Connectivity improvements include wider access to superfast broadband and better local transport. Creating attractive and vibrant town centres also has a significant role.

## Headline Achievements

The Local Growth Deal investment at **Branston Locks** has now completed opening up a major new housing and industrial development to the west of Burton upon Trent which will see the construction of 2,500 new houses, a new community centre including retail space, hotel and retirement home and a 50 acre employment site next to the A38 trunk road.

Following the completion of junction improvements to the A449, the relocation of car component manufacturer Gestamp to **Four Ashes Park** is proceeding at pace, with the development of a 550,000 sq ft state of the art facility which will safeguard 800 jobs.

The first phase of works related to the **Stafford Western Access Route** completed in June 2017, with upgrades to the A34 at its junctions with Browning Street and Greyfriars Place in Stafford. Further work to acquire the land required for the remainder of the route is continuing, with the road due to be completed in 2021, opening up a range of new development sites.

The first industrial unit at the former Meaford Power Station site was completed in July 2017 following on from a Growth Deal investment to open up the 85 acre **Meaford Business Park** (pictured)



with improved access to the A34. The 36,000 sq ft unit has been built speculatively by the developers St. Modwen. The site as a whole is able to accommodate up to 1.2 million square feet of office, industrial and warehousing floor space.

The **Superfast Staffordshire** programme continues to roll out new broadband infrastructure across Staffordshire in partnership with BDUK. A total of 474,000 premises now have access to 24 Mbps broadband.

Improvements to the **A50 near Uttoxeter** reached a major project milestone during July 2017 when the bridge beams to serve the new junction were successfully lifted place. Staffordshire County Council is delivering this key piece of national highways infrastructure on behalf of Highways England.

# Investment Services

## Headline Achievements

The Make It Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire investment service assisted 19 companies to relocate or expand within the LEP area during the financial year 2016/17. This resulted in the creation/ safeguarding of 2,138 jobs (1,301 created and 837 safeguarded).

An important development in the last 12 months has been the inception of the Midlands Engine Investment Hub and launch of the Midlands Engine Strategy. The Make It team is proactive in this partnership and secured £25k from the Midlands Engine Challenge Fund for a project focusing on foreign direct investment (FDI) in the technical ceramics and advanced materials sector. This enabled the team to coordinate joint trade and investment missions to events in the US and Thailand. In June 2017 we secured a further £30,000 from the Challenge Fund to develop a world-class proposition in advanced materials and coordinate further joint overseas missions.

A key element of lead generation is a calendar of events, marketing and campaigns. This includes international property show MIPIM and trade shows such as Automechanika in Birmingham and the Ceramics Expo in Ohio. The

Make It team also attended MIPIM UK 2016 with the Northern Gateway Development Zone (now the Constellation Partnership).

At MIPIM 2017 the team exhibited in the Midlands UK pavilion, which hosted some 50 events including HS2, Stoke-on-Trent's bid for City of Culture 2021, Stafford Gateway, Ceramic Valley and i54 Enterprise Zones and the regeneration of Stoke-on-Trent city centre.

Overseas lead generation included joint trade and investment missions with local companies exhibiting alongside the Make It team. Local companies Mempro and Jai Engineering joined the Ohio delegation and Keeling & Walker, Pebblevale, Hygan and EJ Payne attended ASEAN Ceramics, Bangkok.

The team is working with Breeze Strategy on a programme of lead generation through their Make It England initiative, identifying companies with plans to expand in the UK or Europe. Mostly these are high-growth, high-tech companies. Our structured approach to following up leads includes additional company research and bespoke communications.

Department for International Trade

figures for 2016/17 show that there were 21 successful FDI projects in the LEP area, an increase of 16% on the previous year, creating 536 new jobs and safeguarding 948. The LEP also secured three 'multi-region' FDI projects, which land in multiple UK locations where it is not possible to disaggregate the job numbers by LEP.

Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire has attracted significant investment from companies such as Kongsberg Automotive and Alstom/GE, creating new jobs. In addition, hundreds of jobs were safeguarded by Gestamp's decision to relocate within the county.

The Make It team regularly host Commercial Property Events which provide an opportunity to engage with property professionals and potential inward investors, raising the profile of the area. As well as supporting new investors the Make It team aids existing investors, recognising that a large number of new jobs created are from our indigenous companies. Make It has enhanced its approach to investor development with a key account management programme focusing on the top performing businesses in the area and additional high growth prospects.

## Two Smithfield proves a perfect fit for Water Plus

Water Plus, a £940m turnover joint venture between Severn Trent and United Utilities, chose Two Smithfield, Stoke-on-Trent as their new HQ last year. Created as a result of water deregulation in England in the commercial market, Water Plus took occupation of 38,300 sq ft of open-plan high specification office space, bringing 400 new jobs.

Sue Amies-King, Water Plus chief

executive, said "Stoke-on-Trent is equidistant from Severn Trent's offices in Birmingham and Coventry and United Utilities' base in Warrington. It is fitting that as a new company we should be looking towards brand new, efficient offices and, combined with its transport links and access to the city centre, Two Smithfield provides us with a perfect location."

Since its move Water Plus has won

contracts worth more than £45m and in April 2017, signed a deal worth £650,000 per year with vehicle servicing chain Kwik Fit to supply water to all 831 of its sites.

Make It and the city council worked together to provide the company with a base in One Smithfield prior to signing a leasehold on Two Smithfield, alongside an offer of financial incentives for this major new city employer.

## LEP makes life simpler for business

Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP has been honoured with the LEP Recognition Award by the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) for its pioneering work in bringing together the business community and regulators to change how local regulation is delivered and make life more straightforward for businesses.

The result is a Regulatory Charter, backed by organisations including local chambers of commerce and local authorities across the LEP area, Staffordshire Fire Service and Police, the Environment Agency and ACAS, which commits them all to ensure that regulation is proportionate, balanced and well targeted.

Karen Woolley, Development Manager for the FSB, commented: “We were absolutely delighted to award Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire with the FSB’s LEP Recognition Award for its work around the creation of a Regulatory Charter which was signed between 19 organisations, including the FSB, to provide a regulatory environment which promotes success in business.

“This initiative is an excellent example of trying to dispel some myths for small businesses and helping them to stay in business. Genuine businesses are not out to flout the rules but they may fall foul by being ill informed. Any measures which help a business to comply are welcomed and will only serve to create an environment which enables better business for all.”

Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP has brought a wide range of partners around the table to tackle issues around regulation and has encouraged businesses to get involved.

The LEP has set up an Enterprise Round Table, where business support organisations, including regulators, can share information and build knowledge. Regulators attend training sessions for LEP Growth Hub advisers and have input into how calls are handled by the LEP’s Business Helpline. One of the local partners, Lichfield District Council, has also created ‘Talk to Reg’ – an online directory explaining business regulation, which is now used nationally.

LEP chairman David Frost CBE commented: “We are delighted that this pioneering work has been recognised in the FSB award. It is very important that regulators should work constructively with business, so that we can all benefit from a streamlined system that is easier to understand and navigate.”

This was the second year running the LEP featured in the FSB awards – the previous year it was highly commended in the LEP recognition category for its Growth Hub’s work providing advice for small businesses.



Business support team leader Nicola Kent is pictured receiving the award, with colleague Matthew Shufflebotham from the Economic Regeneration Team, right, and John Poole, FSB Regional Chairman for Staffordshire and the West Midlands, left.



# Milestones and Highlights

## October 2016:

MIPIM UK, London

LEP wins FSB Recognition Award

LEP annual conference, Yarnfield Park

Small Business Minister Margot James addresses LEP conference and visits Dunston Business Village, Penkrigde

## November 2016:

Make It Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire Commercial Property Event, Wedgwood, Barlaston

## December 2016:

Work starts on Rugeley flood defence scheme

LEP sponsors Lunar Society lecture, Stoke-on-Trent

## February 2017:

LEP endorses Stoke-on-Trent City of Culture bid

LEP and Finest networking breakfast, Newcastle-under-Lyme

Make It Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire Commercial Property Event, Redhill, Stafford

## March 2017:

LEP exhibits with Midlands UK at MIPIM 2017, Cannes

Industrial Strategy consultations: Staffordshire University, Stoke-on-Trent; Drayton Manor, Tamworth, and South Staffordshire College, Rodbaston

LEP Apprenticeship Recognition Awards, Smithfield, Hanley

LEP sponsors Sentinel Business Awards, Stoke-on-Trent

LEP Network Annual Conference, Westminster

Local Government Minister Marcus Jones visits AgriSTEM, Rodbaston, and announces Growth Deal 3 allocation

Go Global Expo, Amsterdam

## April 2017:

Ceramics Expo, Cleveland, Ohio

LEP sponsors Stafford 'pop-up' high street and digital campaign

## May 2017:

LEP and Finest networking breakfast, Newcastle-under-Lyme

Tile Mountain opens, Ceramic Valley Enterprise Zone, Highgate Ravensdale site

## June 2017:

Official opening of AgriSTEM Academy, South Staffordshire College, Rodbaston

LEP exhibits at Staffordshire Chambers Let's Do Business event, Uttoxeter

Automechanika automotive supply chain event, Birmingham

## July 2017:

Official opening of Dove Engineering Centre, JCB Academy, Rocester

Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Apprenticeship Graduation Ceremony, County Showground, Stafford

Official opening of Tamworth Enterprise Centre

## August 2017:

Work Routes event celebrates job-finding successes, Hanley

ASEAN Ceramics Expo, Thailand

## September 2017:

Science and Technology Centre, Stafford College, welcomes first students

Make It Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire Commercial Property Event, Beaconside, Stafford



Meeting Ministers 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.

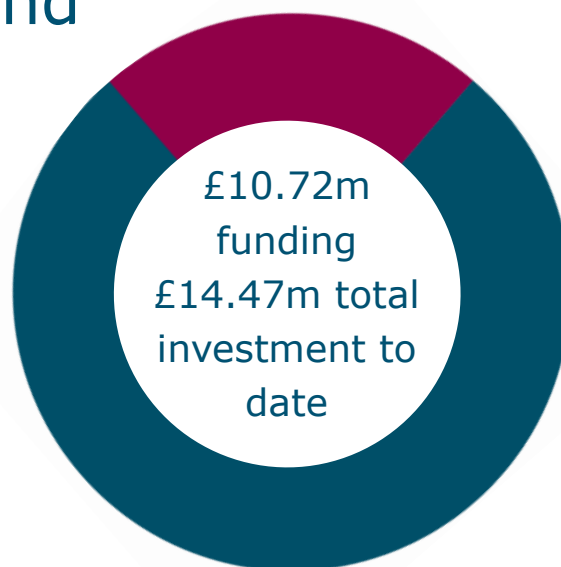


\* Including £168k carried forward from 2016/17

<p><b>Strategic planning</b> £80,000</p>	<p><b>Projects and programme development</b> £183,263</p>	<p><b>LEP office and delivery team</b> £274,560</p>	<p><b>Engaging Business and support</b> £130,000</p>
<p>Allocation has been used to develop the LEP's Strategic Plan, the ESIF Strategy, the Energy and Low Carbon Strategy, the Growing Places Fund review, regulation and Constellation Partnership development work.</p>	<p>Allocation has supported a wide range of Local Growth Deal and local economic development projects, the Skills Hub Ladder and the Careers &amp; Enterprise Company.</p>	<p>Allocation has contributed to cross-LEP and partnership working, including the Midlands Engine, Midlands Connect and promotion of our area at MIPIM, LEP Board activities and the work of the delivery team and office support.</p>	<p>Allocation has been used to support business and stakeholder engagement and has contributed to cross-LEP and partnership working including the Midlands Engine and Midlands Connect transport strategy.</p>

## 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, which opened in autumn 2016, Oak House Residential Care, and the London House student accommodation (Phases 2 and 3), Stoke-on-Trent.

### £14.47m committed

So far there have been 10 bidding rounds for Growing Places. £14.47m has been committed to 13 projects leveraging £70.563m 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 Business Grants

The Jobs and Growth Fund provided RGF grants up to £1m to companies who wish to grow and create employment. RGF5 funding of £3.945m ended in April 2017 and the Jobs and Growth Fund is now closed. The new Growth Hub Service, which is funded by ESIF for three years, is the new funding vehicle for local SMEs.

*Figures as of April 2017*

Total RGF5:  
£3.945m

RGF committed:  
£3.063m

RGF drawn down:  
£2.6m

Jobs created:  
428 (new)  
214 (safeguarded)

Private Investment to  
leverage: £30.8m

Number of grants  
approved: 38





# What's next for our LEP?

**Looking Forward:** Having been recognised by local partners and Government as the focus for the development and delivery of local economic strategy, we now need to look forward. The Industrial Strategy consultation set out a long-term vision which we hope will establish a more long-term, cross party approach for the future. The follow-on development of a local Industrial Strategy will be the next iteration from our Strategic Economic Plan. A business-led LEP is the one local body that has as its mission the development of all businesses. It involves business leaders who have offered to share their expertise and knowledge to help ensure that we focus our efforts on areas where we can make a difference and ask searching questions when required. The Government has begun a review of LEPs, and this will no doubt result in changes in role, but the bedrock of our LEP has to remain the support and participation of all of our partners, working collectively.

**Ensuring we deliver:** We have direct and indirect influence on a wide range of capital and revenue programmes. It is crucial that, having invested in projects, we get results. This requires us to monitor the progress of projects beyond their delivery and challenge their promoters to ensure that our commitments to Government are delivered. Our reputation is key in securing future funding.

**Demonstrating transparency:** As we have developed and the funding allocated to us has increased so has the obligation to be transparent in our decision making. We are substantially revising our website and have implemented an improved Assurance Framework.

**Increasing Confidence:** We have invested significant effort in building confidence in our area. This is critical in securing investment and developing a shared vision for the area. Confidence in the LEP as an institution will help us secure greater control over the funds that Government devolves, increasing our capability to create jobs and grow the local economy.

**Devolution and Cross-LEP Partnerships:** Our LEP plans to remain actively involved in cross-LEP initiatives. We will build on our involvement in

the Midlands Engine, Midlands Connect, the Constellation Partnership and the LEP Network in particular. We are continuing to stay 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.

**Skills:** We have established frameworks and put in place a number of initiatives, including increasing business engagement in skills provision through locality projects and investment in the Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering Skills Hubs. The next phase will be to invest in skills equipment more generally. We will also be taking a keener interest in the outcomes achieved to ensure that these initiatives address our skills weaknesses. This is a continuous activity and a collaborative initiative.

**The EU 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 that damage business confidence.

**Making the most of our opportunities:** Agility and ambition are the two cornerstones of the LEP. We are launching our revised Strategic Economic Plan and are actively supporting a Ceramics Sector Deal. The sector deal arose as a consequence of the publication of the Industrial Strategy. The sector has a geographical focus in our area with 39% of employment in ceramics being in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire. We will also work with other sectoral initiatives as they develop.

**Engaging with you:** For the LEP to be an effective voice it needs to engage and test out its thinking with partners across the area. We hold events, utilise social media, and welcome queries on a regular basis. All of these help us to advocate the needs of the area more effectively.

## Agri-Tech West: our productive new alliance



Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire is working in partnership with three other LEPs (Cheshire and Warrington, The Marches, and Worcestershire), Harper Adams University, South Staffordshire College and a number of other HE and FE partners to develop the agricultural technologies sector across this four-LEP area.

Research commissioned by our LEP and its partners was completed in late 2016 and identified a broad and diverse agri-tech economy operating across the four LEPs, with some commonalities and local strengths.

The research recommended that an Agri-Tech West alliance had a good basis for significant collaboration and integration between some sector operators, which could be promoted and enhanced through a joint programme of support.

The region has a broad agricultural and horticultural base, an abundance of large and small food and drink manufacturers, an established engineering and technology sector, and globally renowned land-based and STEM education institutions. Some

200,000 people are employed in the region's agri-food sector, equating to 13% of the region's population.

Agri-Tech West aims to help businesses across the food chain to increase productivity, profitability and environmental sustainability – connecting businesses to scientists, researchers, investors and, most importantly, each other to encourage trade, exporting and inward investment.

The Agri-Tech West work programme will support innovation and investment, the application of innovation, and skills development across the area's agriculture, agri-tech, horticulture and food processing industries.

The Agri-Tech West alliance has now appointed an Agri-Tech West Programme Manager to work across the four LEPs and other key organisations to coordinate partnership activities. This will include developing a website, engaging with businesses and organising workshops and events – with the aim of sharing knowledge and expertise to increase productivity.

# 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)

**Mohammed Ahmed**  
Senior finance business partner, National Grid

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

**Wendy Dean**  
MD, Strategi Solutions

**Paul Farmer OBE**  
MD, Wade Ceramics

**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

**Alun Rogers**  
Founder and director, risual

**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 Brian Edwards**  
Leader, South Staffs Council

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

**John Henderson**  
CEO, Staffordshire County Council

**Cllr Anthony Munday**  
Member for Greener City, Development & Leisure Stoke-on-Trent City 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 Liz Barnes**  
VC, Staffordshire University (Higher Education)

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



Shugborough



# 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 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.



Lord Bamford visits Dove Engineering Centre



## Skills boost as three new high-tech centres open to students

Stafford College has welcomed hundreds of students to its new Science and Technology Centre which opened in September.

The centre, part-funded by the LEP, is one of a range of new developments at the college, which is now part of Newcastle and Stafford Colleges Group (NSCG) following its merger with Newcastle College last November.

The £3.5m renovation of the college's old Broadeye Building began in January following a successful bid to the LEP, which provided £2m of funding to support the project, with NSCG contributing the remaining £1.5m.

LEP chairman David Frost CBE commented: "We are delighted to support this impressive new centre. These showpiece facilities will equip our young people with the science and technology skills that are vital for a growing economy.

"Encouraging young people to develop their skills to the full and creating more and better jobs are both key to ensuring that Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire has a thriving future as a great place to live, work and invest."

Spanning four floors, the Science and Technology Centre is a modern, purpose-built facility designed to inspire the next generation of scientists, engineers, innovators and creative thinkers. It contains state-of-the-art features including impressive biology, chemistry, physics and engineering laboratories, IT suites and a Lego education innovation studio, plus seminar

rooms, a boardroom and meeting rooms.

Meanwhile a new £1.2 m Staffordshire centre to train the apprentices of the future has been officially opened by JCB chairman Lord Bamford.

While the JCB Academy in Rocester is more commonly known for its school and sixth form, it also delivers apprenticeship training for leading businesses across the region and the high-tech Dove Engineering Centre has been created to deliver the JCB Academy's apprenticeship training programmes.

Lord Bamford unveiled a plaque at the new centre – housed in the former Dove First School – to mark its official opening. He said: "It's an exciting new chapter in the JCB Academy story and it will continue the good work in developing the engineers and business leaders of the future."

The former school building and associated land was purchased by JCB, with the £1million conversion costs funded by the LEP.

And South Staffordshire College brought together the UK's agriculture industry in June to celebrate the launch of its AgriSTEM Academy, which aims to address the fundamental economic and food security issues facing our farming community. The facility will provide market-leading and innovative training opportunities for the agri-tech and advanced manufacturing and engineering (AME) industries. The £5.4m showpiece academy was part-funded by the LEP, which contributed £3.8m from its Local Growth Fund allocation.

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