

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 14 DECEMBER 2017

**Question to Mark Winnington
Cabinet Member for Economic Growth**

By Alastair Little

Question

With the recent figures for claimants for job seekers allowance and Universal credit in the county again being welcome news, could the portfolio holder comment on some initiatives which encourage business to locate or retain high paid, high skill jobs to the county?

Reply

Creating the right conditions for Staffordshire's economy to grow and create more better paid jobs remains a key priority for the County Council. Members will be aware of the County Council's support to the "Make It" Investment Service which has a target of creating and safeguarding 2,000 jobs in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent in 2017/18. The service specifically targets key sectors where there are higher value jobs, such as Automotive, Advanced Manufacturing, Life Sciences, Digital and Energy.

We're working on behalf of the Local Enterprise Partnership to help meet their ambitions of creating 50,000 jobs and growing the economy by 50% over the 10 years. Through the success of our "Growth Deal" projects we have recently secured 800 jobs at the Bericote Four Ashes site in South Staffordshire with automotive supplier, Gestamp relocating their production to a purpose built 450,000 square foot facility, following our intervention.

By investing in sites such as Innovation Centre 5 at Keele University Science and Innovation Park, Redhill Business Park in Stafford, and the highly successful i54 South Staffordshire we are creating the right conditions for further high value and skilled employment in Staffordshire.

The Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Growth Hub was established in 2014 with the purpose of helping to unlock private sector growth in terms of job creation, sustainable new businesses and new product/market development. It does this by extending the reach and impact of national initiatives and funds, and by a referral system which enhances the effectiveness of the business support infrastructure across Staffordshire. The Growth Hub has assisted more than 4,300 businesses since 2014, and develops co-operation among national and local providers and encourages the cross-referral of clients.

Through activity funded by the European Social Fund we are also delivering a high level skills programme with a value of almost £10 million which will reach benefit 7,600 people.

