

**COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 15 FEBRUARY 2018**

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

**By Charlotte Atkins**

---

**Question**

What lessons has Staffordshire County Council drawn from the so called Preston model which aims to ensure that a greater share of the money the Council spends stays in the local economy?

---

**Reply**

The Deputy Opposition Leader of the Labour and Co-operative Party raises an interesting question in terms of the role of the UK and Staffordshire economy in a post-Brexit future. It is becoming increasingly clear from the referendum that we need inclusive growth with an economy that works for all.

The Staffordshire economy benefits from local, regional, national and global trade, and is part of the defining nature of our great shire market towns across the County.

I understand that in Lancashire, Preston's brand new Market Hall opened for the first time last week (February 12), underneath the recently renovated Victorian canopy, and the community have a lot to be proud of.

In Staffordshire however, we are forging our own way to support our communities; with a tailored economic strategy to build on our place-based industrial strengths. This is led by the business community with globally competitive advanced manufacturing and agri-tech sectors such as JCB in the North of the County, and the automotive sector illustrated by the JLR Engine Plant based at i54 South Staffordshire.

Nationally, Central Government are playing their part through the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, with the Secretary of State Greg Clark, supporting the Industrial Strategy, with the Automotive Sector Deal announced early this year (10 January 2018). The Ceramics Sector is also looking to take forward an ambitious Deal with the support of local partners.

Regionally, Staffordshire County Council are supporting agglomeration economics through Midlands Engine and forging new transport and connectivity links east to west through the Midlands Connects. Likewise, HS2 services at Stafford, Stoke-on-Trent and Crewe are set to reinforce Staffordshire as the Connected County with improved North to South links to Manchester, Birmingham, and London.

Locally, we are seeking to reinvigorate our changing High Streets through our bespoke District Deals and Town Deals, using a collaborative approach to working through complex regeneration proposals. In particular we are supporting anchor institutions to help support the 'Staffordshire Pound' such as the approach we have taken to the Keele Deal. Neighbourhood Planning is another way that we are supporting our more rural and parished areas so they are better prepared to secure infrastructure and shape development.

The Growth Hub services provided through collaboration between the Local Enterprise Partnerships, Chambers of Commerce and Local Authorities are continuing to provide our preferred delivery model in which entrepreneurs can receive tailored support to establish or grow their own business. The Growth Hub will often refer to local guilds or subscription based services, such as the Staffordshire Business & Environment Network and Chamber of Commerce 'Finest' network for professional services.

We as Staffordshire County Council Administration takes a commissioning approach to service design and delivery to secure the outcomes set out in our Strategic Plan. We will continue to take such a well-considered approach as we decommission and recommission services in the future as appropriate.

Without doubt the policy of this County Council of promoting prosperity for all residents which allows those who are able, to look after themselves, gives Staffordshire County Council the ability to focus its resources on the most vulnerable of our society.

To engender a policy which precludes skills, investment and intellectual input is one we could not support and is intrinsically centralist in its nature.

This administration welcomes input from responsible local, national and international sources and is proud of its position as a growth generator within the UK.