

# Future Economy and Enterprise All Party Working Group– Executive Response Action Plan – DRAFT

Cabinet: June 16 2021

All Party Working Group Recommendation	Proposed action (or action already taken)	Timescale	Lead Officers
From investigation: <i><b>‘How can we in Staffordshire raise aspirations around lifelong career learning and upskilling, ensuring all local people can progress into ‘better jobs’ throughout their working life?’</b></i>			
<p>1 <b>Create an over-arching brand</b> – Aspiration Staffordshire</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivered by online channels: MyStaffs, social media/ explainer videos, ‘step by step guides’ and webinars</li> <li>• Possibly partner with tech companies (funding/set-up support/publicity)</li> <li>• Integrate what is already available out there.</li> <li>• Champion/showcase Aspiration</li> <li>• <b>‘Building Blocks’</b> – Staffordshire wide aspiration survey, with a comprehensive methodology design to ascertain:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Availability and relevance of Information about skills/careers/ jobs</li> <li>– Motivation – Attitudes and dispositions</li> <li>– Perceptions of access to training and better skilled jobs</li> <li>– Perceived opportunities/barriers</li> <li>– Individual confidence/capabilities</li> <li>– ‘Mine’ for future Influencers and champions</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Development of overarching <b>Staffordshire Story and brand identity</b> already completed and launched. County place branding work and Place Branding Manager are now in place, and we can ensure this ties into that overall approach.</p> <p>Already have key representation on the new Staffordshire Place Board from Staffordshire University and Keele University, as well partner who ran Staffordshire Business School and continues outreach programmes with the local education community.</p> <p>There is much activity on <b>webinars, step by step guides etc</b> already in existence. Next step is drawing together into an easily accessible, well-advertised place.</p> <p>Activity is happening around partnering with technology companies, including an organisation currently working with us around revitalising retail etc.</p> <p>Skills Hub activities include much of this recommendation but we are able to further promote access to training.</p> <p><b>Next steps:</b></p> <p>Further develop <b>network of Staffordshire Ambassadors</b> within higher education and in business, who can act as a vital link between students and potential employment</p>	<p>Review of progress and next steps in autumn 2021</p>	<p>Louisa Grocott, Clare Abbotts (SSLEP)</p>

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	<p>Establish and build <b>links between We are Staffordshire work and existing mentoring and training</b> opportunities within key partners such as the Chamber of Commerce</p> <p><b>Explore a dedicated taskforce</b> within higher education institutions, apprenticeship providers and key partners such as SSLEP to develop a strategy to retain young, skilled professionals in Staffordshire and improve the pathways to employment</p>		
<p>2 <b>Aspiration Staffordshire – ‘Toolbox’</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently a huge range of support available online but lacks somewhere to come together ‘under the same roof’ in Staffordshire – for ease of access</li> </ul>	<p><b>Staffordshire Story and toolbox</b> launched in late 2020 – opportunity to grow and develop this as a platform and make materials accessible via the new We Are Staffordshire website, which will have a dedicated ‘member portal’ for Ambassadors to access/download assets</p> <p>Options paper has been produced for feasibility re a <b>‘one stop’ digital platform for information</b>. A web based approach will offer the comprehensive signposting solution required, and consideration is already being given to the correct model.</p>	<p>Further development through summer 2021</p>	<p>Louisa Grocott</p> <p>Anthony Bamsey</p>
<p>3 <b>Aspiration Staffordshire - Ambassador Network</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cabinet member and Council officer leads</li> <li>• District / Divisional – Council members, local practitioners</li> <li>• Local Place – Schools, business, community groups</li> <li>• Linked through an online resource</li> </ul>	<p><b>Ambassador Network</b> is being developed as a central pillar of the Staffordshire placemaking work with a formal commitment process being developed in tandem with the new We Are Staffordshire website</p> <p><b>Programme of Ambassador events</b> scheduled bi-monthly as ‘show and tell’ of key updates and success stories in the county, as well as providing a platform for debate and networking</p>	<p>Ambassador Network launched already and in further development through 2021. Review of progress in</p>	<p>Louisa Grocott</p>

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	<p>Ambassadors will act as key ‘salesforce’ for Staffordshire, providing spokespeople and key speakers for targeted events or investment roadshows in Birmingham, Manchester, London and internationally</p> <p>Working with SSLEP and Make it Stoke &amp; Staffs on aligned approach for key investment events such as MIPIM, where key Ambassadors will be key to promoting the Staffordshire offer (JCB, Lucideon, Moog etc).</p> <p>The LEP has supported the development of the <b>Stoke-on-Trent &amp; Staffordshire Careers and Enterprise Company Enterprise Adviser Network, including the Skills Hubs</b>. The Enterprise Adviser Network brings together schools and business leaders. There are now currently 85 Stoke and Staffordshire Schools in the network, of which 81 have signed-up to be Careers Hub schools.</p> <p>Entrust coordinates the <b>Staffordshire STEM Ambassador Hub</b> to help inspire young people in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. Entrust are currently engaging with 1,240 STEM Ambassadors who aim to understand the needs of employers and engage with pupils and teachers to develop vocational, professional and technical skills and competencies within the STEM arena.</p>	autumn 2021	<p>Nicola Kent, Lauren Hunt, Louisa Grocott</p> <p>Anthony Bamsey</p> <p>David Poole</p>
<p>4 <b>Post Covid-19 world</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raising Aspiration in Staffordshire has never been more important as we face the post Covid-19 challenges</li> <li>• A key pillar of the recovery</li> <li>• Online usage has accelerated as a means of communication, learning and interaction’</li> </ul>	<p>Understanding and reacting to the impacts of Covid-19, and building on progress so far, is a major theme of the next investigation below.</p>	See below	See below

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From investigation: *Given the impacts of Covid-19 and looking to our future local economy, how can we ensure that the Staffordshire workforce - of all ages - remain ambitious for their future, and how can we encourage entrepreneurship?*

First sub-theme: **Giving Support to existing businesses to help them to recover and grow**

5	<p><b>Places for businesses to grow:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create physical Enterprise Hubs as one stop shops for business support – town centre presence</li> <li>• Business growth units in town centres – use empty units, where possible, as low-risk popups</li> <li>• Introduce more small business units across the county – workshops needed more than office space</li> </ul>	<p>We have physical Enterprise Hubs, but need to <b>further develop what we have and explore need for creation of further new hubs</b>. There are 7 in Staffordshire with exploration around 2-3 more, including Shire Hall in Stafford as a pilot for flexible, creative and digital-targeted business space.</p> <p>Work is also underway to <b>make better use of existing SCC premises</b> to create space for business start ups, in the next year. Feasibility study is currently looking into areas this might need to target.</p> <p><b>Pop ups</b> could be trialled in town centre areas, and feasibility study may support this. These sites could stretch to showcase Staffordshire products or work with existing businesses to stock Staffordshire produce.</p>	<p>Feasibility study released May 2021</p>	<p>Nicola Kent</p>
6	<p><b>Networks, Mentoring and showcasing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentoring and peer support networks can be developed further, alongside showcasing positive Staffordshire examples – share inspirational examples between businesses.</li> <li>• Use parish-level and community networks, and councillors, to champion this approach in Rural /urban areas</li> <li>• Through a holistic communications package, promote the support that is <u>already</u> out there especially to hard to reach communities</li> </ul>	<p>Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce co-ordinate a lot of this activity already, including <b>peer support networks and manufacturing-related groups</b>. Recently completed a BEIS-funded series of peer-to-peer networks with another round forthcoming.</p> <p>A <b>mentoring programme</b> does already exist within Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce, so there is an</p>	<p>In development through summer 2021</p>	<p>Nicola Kent / Louisa Grocott</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider a financial incentive for businesses to get involved</li> </ul>	<p>opportunity to work with them to develop a collaborative mentoring programme, supported by local universities and colleges</p> <p>Feedback is needed from customer-side about where these new networks should focus and how they should be structured. Communications support will be required to spread this message</p> <p>Final draft of <b>rural economic strategy</b> has been developed. A task group of people will be assembled to focus on making it happen.</p> <p>As above, the <b>education, youth retention and diversity sub group</b> and the innovation and business subgroup could also support the creation of a mentoring programme between businesses and young professionals/those in education aged 18-25</p>		
7	<p><b>Staffordshire Business Branding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further develop the Staffordshire Brand, and consider rolling campaigns with local authorities &amp; Parishes and Chamber of Commerce partners, Business improvement districts (BIDs)</li> <li>Develop a Staffordshire-branded Amazon-style marketplace for local products and businesses to use as a platform</li> </ul>	<p>Roll out of the <b>Staffordshire place branding</b> continues with collaboration across key partnerships including SSLEP &amp; Make it Stoke &amp; Staffs plus the Staffs DMP.</p> <p>The work mentioned in row 1 could include <b>exploration of the local marketplace</b> concept and thinking around this will be developed as outlined in recommendation 5 through pop-ups and high footfall destinations.</p>	Feasibility study in April 2021	Nicola Kent / Louisa Grocott / Clare Abbotts (SSLEP), Lauren Hunt

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8	<p><b>Going digital</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that online working and cyber security, in particular, are addressed in local &amp; micro business economy through greater signposting to Chamber and partner support</li> <li>• Consider local authority partner campaigns, as above, to focus on this</li> </ul>	<p>This is recognised as a key challenge and a <b>major partnership campaign</b> has been underway around this, including work with Staffordshire Police, Action Fraud and others. Opportunities will be explored to do more around this.</p> <p>Chamber of Commerce run a government-funded scheme that helps individual businesses to recover from becoming victim of cyber fraud.</p>	Campaign continuing	Partnership work, Nicola Kent lead from SCC side
9	<p><b>Use of existing survey data</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extensive business survey data is already feeding into the county and partner response and gives an overview of sectors most affected and priority sectors for recovery</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p><b>Survey data is collated and used centrally</b> within Staffordshire County Council and its key economic partners. This helps to shape forward planning on the entire economic recovery agenda.</p> <p>Opportunity to develop <b>further surveys on key priorities</b> (climate, business, youth retention, regeneration etc) through Staffordshire placemaking work, <b>utilising novel technologies</b> to be explored further through placemaking work/Place Board.</p>	Further exploration through summer 2021	David Poole, Darren Farmer
10	<p><b>A focus on the Hospitality Industry</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following that local insight, consider grant and support programme specifically focused on a range of hospitality businesses that have been heaviest hit</li> </ul>	<p>Recent work with this industry has revealed some challenges around <b>resilient business practices</b> for companies in the sector.</p> <p>Opportunities are being explored for how to address this, but includes promotion to support already available, as above.</p>	Exploration through summer 2021	Nicola Kent, Andrea Sammons

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Sub-theme 2: Giving new businesses and entrepreneurs the best start and ongoing support			
All actions below are designed to complement Staffordshire Start Up Prospectus:			
11	<p><b>Ongoing support and mentoring group:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mentoring support for new businesses is successful when carried out over 3 years, but support should be considered for extending this to 5 years to aid on-going growth</li> </ul>	<p>An option being explored for how to deliver this is around a specific business advisor whose role is to provide this support to the fifth year</p> <p>Staffordshire Start Up Scheme and existing mentoring support like Let's Do Business are great successes, but can run alongside the above.</p>	<p>Exploration during summer 2021</p> <p>Nicola Kent</p>
12	<p><b>'Matching for mentoring' scheme:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce a pre-start-up programme to match those with ideas to business-minded partners and support – 'Business Angels' approach</li> </ul>	<p>This has been explored previously but it can be challenging to find Business Angel partners in a rural county area. Options are being explored to identify and replicate successful approaches in other similar areas.</p>	<p>April 2021 for engagement with other areas</p> <p>Nicola Kent</p>
13	<p><b>Staffordshire Graduate Retention Programme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Across all sectors, develop a greater understanding of our graduate retention and in partnership with our Universities focus on improving the rate</li> <li>Consider how social circles for young entrepreneurs can be improved and developed</li> </ul>	<p>Partnership conversations with universities and FE colleges in the county will help to develop next steps on this recommendation and ties into wider place marketing work.</p> <p>A thriving cultural offer is a key aspect of this so town centre recovery from Covid will need to include this thinking.</p> <p>Incubation and start-up hubs, and/or newly converted pop up spaces being considered above could support this.</p> <p>Mentoring could be considered as per point 6.</p>	<p>Ongoing as part of other workstreams through summer 2021.</p> <p>David Poole, Louisa Grocott, Lauren Hunt/Caroline Mairs</p>

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		Education youth and diversity focus group (as a strand of placemaking work) will feed into this		
14	<p><b>Consider a Rural Business Loans scheme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building on the success of previous phases of the Staffordshire Business Loan Fund, establish a new phase business loan fund – using SCC investment for targeting rural SMEs as part of a wider joint approach covering the whole of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.</li> </ul>	<p><b>This scheme is now approved and is launching from 1 April.</b> Using £490k of SCC funding which is ringfenced for rural businesses, and partner input from Stoke-on-Trent City Council and BCRS, <b>£2million has been raised for this 5 year scheme</b>, with loans between £10k and £50k.</p>	1 April	Nicola Kent, Ian Jackson
15	<p><b>Accessible funding Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Historically some businesses are precluded from accessing funding currently by EU funding regulation red tape – when local arrangements to replace EU funding are developed, ensure (through lobbying or local design) that we avoid replicating that</li> </ul>	EU funding regulations will still apply until 2023, but we will explore any alternative funding options which emerge before then as we move towards the United Kingdom Single Prosperity Fund.	Ongoing	Nicola Kent, Sarah Simpson
16	<p><b>Ignite +</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Look to expand the pilot approach from FE colleges to include 6th forms and Schools as soon as is practicable</li> </ul>	<p><b>This scheme starts in September 2021.</b> Mature FE students are being directed into the Start Up scheme.</p> <p>A bespoke student start-up programme for young entrepreneurs, Ignite, has launched, delivered in an engaging and interactive way through an online platform. It is a 3 year, county-wide initiative designed to encourage young people to understand the basics of entrepreneurialism and enterprise. In year 1 it aims to engage 4,000 students through a dedicated programme leading to 300 engaged online with 100 taking the intensive 5-day programme. This will lead to a target of 20 business starts. <b>To be rolled out to School 6th Forms from 21/22.</b></p>	21/22	David Poole

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17	<p><b>Developing an Enterprise Ecosystem</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to work with local partners around extending out from Keele University and Staffordshire University) into towns and communities</li> <li>• Tap into Staffordshire University Catalyst centre development and Keele’s IC6 centre/ wider ‘Keele Deal’ pledges</li> </ul>	<p>As above, a thriving cultural offer will be key to getting the most economic benefit from the activity and ecosystems around our universities.</p> <p><b>Major bids recently into the Towns Fund, Future High Street Fund and support from the Community Renewal Fund</b> have seen major investment into Newcastle and other areas of Staffordshire, and work is underway about how to ensure the benefit of this is felt in wider areas, including around skills development.</p> <p>Regeneration and culture is another key focus area for Staffordshire placemaking work with an opportunity to explore a taskforce/subgroup of the Place Board together with key partners.</p>	<p>June 2021 deadline for Community Renewal Fund and Levelling Up Fund</p>	<p>District and Borough councils leading on Town Fund and Future High Streets Fund</p> <p>Anthony Hodge leading on Levelling Up Fund and Anthony Baines on Community Renewal Fund</p>
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