

# APWG Chairs feedback

## CIr Simon Tagg:

*‘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?’*



## *Approach taken*

- Build on findings from last APWG 'How can Communities raise the level of Aspiration across Staffordshire'
- Convene Member workshops to Reviewed background information including local data, knowledge gained from skills/advisory panels, local industrial strategy, sectors at risk as a result of AI and automation and review the Education & Skill Strategy
- Hold a 'Think Tank' session with partner representation from across the county and sectors to gain an insight to shape development of an 'Aspiration Staffordshire' tool box
- Investigate the lifelong learning and skills pathway opportunities and careers guidance needed to raise aspirations starting early, supporting access to better jobs.
- Considered the development of a countywide residents (all ages) survey to ascertain the views regarding skills and aspirations.
- Considered appropriate and effective communication methods to raise the profile of this agenda and promote opportunities



## Background

- Research meetings:
  - First Member Workshop on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2019
  - Partner/Member ‘Think Tank’ on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2019 (participants included Early Years, Schools and Post-16 frontline practitioners)
  - Final Member Workshop 4<sup>th</sup> March 2020
  - Wash-up Session to finalise recommendations 16<sup>th</sup> March 2020
  
- Initial question breaks down into 4 areas (detailed on following slides)



# Themes – Early Years

## Current levels of aspiration (Findings):

- Impact on pre 4 year olds has a direct link to attainment & aspirations in later life
- Where aspiration is low in parents, it is low in children
- Cycle of lack of ambition often runs in families
- The behaviour change from school to home, impacts on children

## What needs to change:

- How do we get to families to support their understanding of engaging with their children?
- Training for staff working with children is highlighted as an area for improvement
- Whole family approach to engagement – grandparent buy in

## How do we get there:

- More direct activities to help engage parents & family members
- Parental engagement with schools and nurseries needs to improve (Raising Aspiration – Staffordshire University work relating to attainment)
- Encourage more social interaction between parents
- Harness the power of local community groups and organisations



## *Themes – Young People*

### **Current levels of aspiration:**

- Advice and guidance is key – children & parents often don't have access to information
- Careers advice needs to improve and start earlier
- Lack of knowledge of the world of work and work experience
- Disadvantage groups getting left behind

### **What needs to change:**

- Great visibility of careers advice earlier in the curriculum
- More engagement with employers - careers advice given by people with business/commercial/enterprise experience
- Better access to information on job/career paths, case studies for both children & parents

### **How do we get there:**

- Advice and guidance to include parents
- Employer support network – to work with schools to give advice and arrange career 'taster' days
- Use social media to inspire young people and showcase career opportunities
- Build a network local business champions & ambassadors



# Themes – Adults Upskilling and Reskilling

## Current levels of aspiration:

- Average working life involves 9 career changes - People don't manage change well
- Those with little or no skills tend to have less aspiration – need the most help
- Not enough access to training / career enhancement opportunities in the workplace
- Mismatch in what businesses need and what training providers are offering

## What needs to change:

- How do we support people to recognise skills needed in the future jobs market and help them to manage the change?
- Encourage succession planning in businesses
- Better business growth support for self-employed
- Life-long careers advice

## How do we get there:

- Support network – case studies / success sharing
- Career progression advice
- E-learning – Skills module building
- Effective social media awareness campaigns



# Themes – Adults and Lifelong Learning

## Current levels of aspiration:

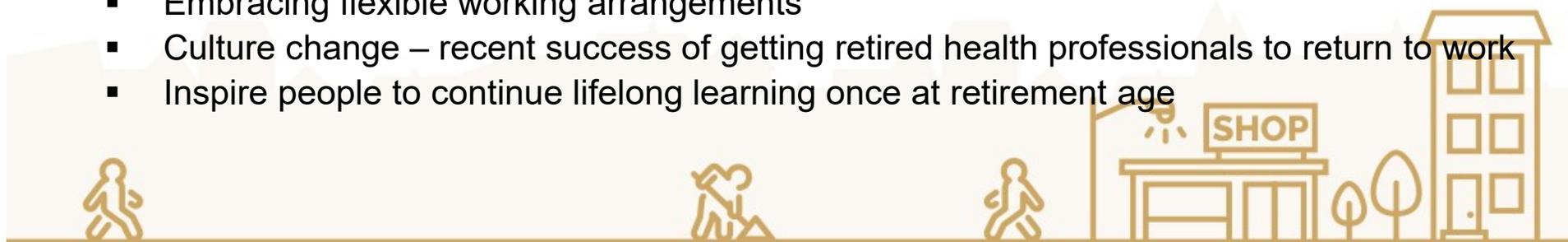
- Fear of failure & embarrassment
- Sections of older work force disengaged from training and upskilling
- Limited opportunities even though there is a deep reserve of experience

## What needs to change:

- Recognition that transferrable skills can support the labour market
- Awareness of skills updates and refreshers
- Location & Transport are a barrier – can be overcome by online/home working?
- Business & work environment – is it set up for ‘older people’, physically and mentally
- Older members of staff seen as mentors and a key part of succession planning

## How do we get there:

- Sign posting and access to the right skills and training
- Holistic review of lifelong learning including health and well-being
- Embracing flexible working arrangements
- Culture change – recent success of getting retired health professionals to return to work
- Inspire people to continue lifelong learning once at retirement age



## *Education and Skills Strategy*

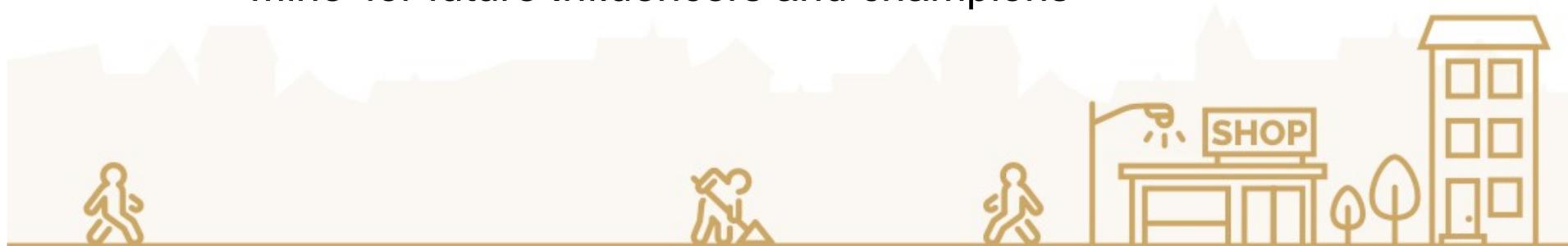
Whilst endorsing the Education and Skills Strategy members made the following suggestions:

- Make more use of existing channels with employers (SCC working relationships, LEP, Chambers, Federation of Small Business)
- A countywide survey to ascertain views regarding skills and aspirations would help to inform the work of Partnership
- Wider awareness & ownership of frontline staff and use of Champions and Ambassadors is key



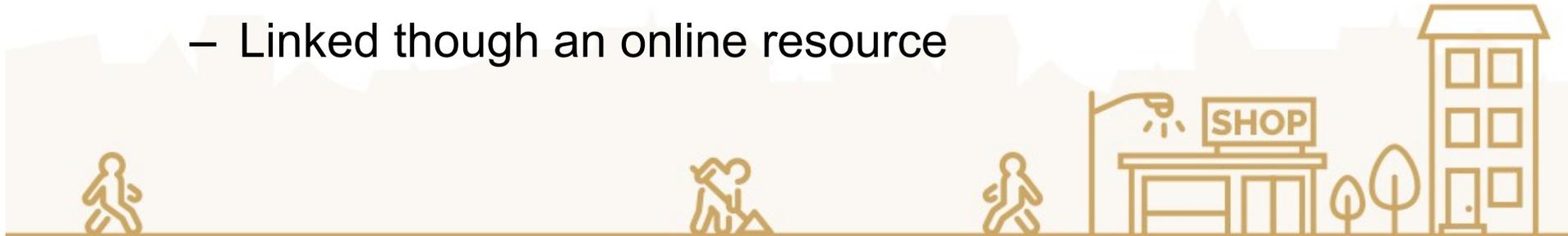
## *Recommendations to the Cabinet:*

- **Create an over-arching brand** – Aspiration Staffordshire
  - Delivered by online channels: MyStaffs, social media/ explainer videos, ‘step by step guides’ and webinars
  - Possibly partner with tech companies (funding/set-up support/publicity)
  - Integrate what is already available out there.
  - Champion/showcase Aspiration
- **‘Building Blocks’** – Staffordshire wide aspiration survey, with a comprehensive methodology design to ascertain:
  - Availability and relevance of Information about skills/careers/ jobs
  - Motivation – Attitudes and dispositions
  - Perceptions of access to training and better skilled jobs
  - Perceived opportunities/barriers
  - Individual confidence/capabilities
  - ‘Mine’ for future Influencers and champions



## *Recommendations to the Cabinet:*

- **Aspiration Staffordshire – ‘Toolbox’**
  - Currently a huge range of support available online but lacks somewhere to come together ‘under the same roof’ in Staffordshire – for easy of access
- **Aspiration Staffordshire - Ambassador Network**
  - Cabinet member and Council officer leads
  - District / Divisional – Council members, local practitioners
  - Local Place – Schools, business, community groups
  - Linked though an online resource



## *Recommendations to the Cabinet:*

- Post Covid-19 world
  - Raising Aspiration in Staffordshire has never been more important as we face the post Covid-19 challenges
  - A key pillar of the recovery
  - Online usage has accelerated as a means of communication, learning and interaction'

'Half the people on the planet are active on social media, 16-24 year olds spend more than 3 hours a day on social media, during covid-19 nationally the number of people using social media for 4 hours or more has rocketed'

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*Any Questions?*



# Future Economy and Enterprise - All Party Working Group

Final Draft Report  
Winter 2020



# Focus of 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?*

A decorative silhouette of a town skyline with various buildings and houses, rendered in a light beige color, positioned at the bottom of the slide.

# Process and approach taken

- Engagement with partners and key officers – ensuring added value
  - First Member meeting 21<sup>st</sup> October – scoping session
  - Two engagement sessions with key partners from across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent
    - 9 November - **How can we support existing businesses, and help them to recover and grow?**
    - 16 November - **How can we give new businesses and entrepreneurs the best start and ongoing support in challenging times?**
  - Final Member themes session 25<sup>th</sup> November – draft recommendations
  - Finalised and tested recommendations
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# Background and starting point

- Smaller numbers of start ups than West Midland and England averages, but better survival rates
  - Many new businesses maintain consistent productivity rather than pursuing growth
  - Much lower R&D spend in Staffordshire than some neighbouring areas
  - Lower patenting activity than West Midlands and national average
  - Evidence that some businesses operate without basic business management processes
  - Many businesses have been forced to close or are only partially open due to Covid-19 lockdowns
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**Giving Support to existing businesses to help  
them to recover and grow**



# Findings

- Help is out there but we need to ensure the message gets out – system feels fragmented
- Balancing the day job with seeking support / pursuing growth is difficult and complex for many small businesses
- Positive promotion and encouragement to entrepreneurs could be very impactful
  - via case studies and as much showcasing as we can do, involving all our organisations
- There's a missed cohort (micro/home-based businesses) for funding support, who can often fall through the gaps
- Cyber security (and wider digital ability) revealed as an important focus area for Staffordshire businesses
- Town centres are not just retail – the whole visitor offer is more important than ever, and it will take real innovation
- Low-risk, pop-up retail can support entrepreneurialism and support the population and draw of town centres
- There is extensive data from surveys already being collated to help us understand which sectors are most affected
- Overall, need to create the stable market conditions for people to invest in.

# Recommendations

## 1. Places for businesses to grow:

- Create physical Enterprise Hubs as one stop shops for business support – town centre presence
- Business growth units in town centres – use empty units, where possible, as low-risk popups
- Introduce more small business units across the county – workshops needed more than office space

## 2. Networks, Mentoring and showcasing:

- Mentoring and peer support networks can be developed further, alongside showcasing positive Staffordshire examples – share inspirational examples between businesses
- Use parish-level and community networks, and councillors, to champion this approach in Rural /urban areas
- Through a holistic communications package, promote the support that is already out there especially to hard to reach communities
- Consider a financial incentive for businesses to get involved

## 3. Staffordshire Business Branding

- Further develop the Staffordshire Brand, and consider rolling campaigns with local authorities & Parishes and Chamber of Commerce partners, Business improvement districts (BIDs)
- Develop a Staffordshire-branded Amazon-style marketplace for local products and businesses to use as a platform

# Recommendations

## **4. Going digital**

- Ensure that online working and cyber security, in particular, are addressed in local & micro business economy through greater signposting to Chamber and partner support
- Consider local authority partner campaigns, as above, to focus on this

## **5. Use of existing survey data**

- 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

## **6. A focus on the Hospitality Industry**

- Following that local insight, consider grant and support programme specifically focused on a range of hospitality businesses that have been heaviest hit

Giving new businesses and entrepreneurs the  
best start and ongoing support



# Findings

- Lots going on around post- and pre-18, and it's timely to look at how this can be scaled or adapted
- Making links between schools and employers is hugely transformational
- Skills and leadership (lack of mentoring etc) can often be the obstacles to growth or diversification
- Fragmentation of support offer is still an issue throughout the system
- The key again is promoting support that's already available
- Graduate retention a big challenge but a key one
- Digital and network-based working cannot risk leaving some potential entrepreneurs behind
- Innovation and investment in networks could deliver huge impact
- We do not have a lack of new ideas, but commercialisation of them is low

# Recommendations

## To complement Staffordshire Start Up Prospectus:

### **1. Ongoing support and mentoring group:**

- 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

### **2. 'Matching for mentoring' scheme:**

- Introduce a pre-start-up programme to match those with ideas to business-minded partners and support – 'Business Angels' approach

### **3. Staffordshire Graduate Retention Programme**

- Across all sectors, develop a greater understanding of our graduate retention and in partnership with our Universities focus on improving the rate
- Consider how social circles for young entrepreneurs can be improved and developed

# Recommendations

## 4. Consider a Rural Business Loans scheme

- 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.

## 5. Accessible funding Opportunities

- 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

## 6. Ignite +

- Look to expand the pilot approach from FE colleges to include 6th forms and Schools as soon as is practicable

## 7. Developing an Enterprise Ecosystem

- Continue to work with local partners around extending out from Keele University and Staffordshire University) into towns and communities